A Song of Triumph
The History of Black Music
A New Work by Maestro Curtis

Featuring The Curtis Family C-Notes and The Song of Triumph Ensembles

Saturday, April 23, 2022 at 1:00 PM
Yerba Buena Gardens Festival
“Open the ears of your soul and allow the heart of your mind to experience the Black American never-ending ‘Song of Triumph.’

A Song of Triumph is a continued, unfinished painting of color, sounds and textures that unveils an historical journey through musical time-travel of American Black humanity. This story of the descendants of predominantly West African slaves, a new people, recognized as Black people, also referred to as African Americans reflects the contributions of American Black culture and how it has revolutionized and impacted the world, crossing all ethnic color lines. European hymns and bible verses used to indoctrinate African slaves into white supremacy distorted Christian views for control and domination were repurposed by the slaves themselves in what is known as ‘the invisible church.’ This institution gave birth to the spirituals and field songs that spawned blues, gospel, rock and roll, folk, country, R&B, funk, jazz, egggae, and hip hop. This is a story that cannot be told without the ubiquitous and revolutionary role of the Black church and the ‘Second Age of Enlightenment.’

As a descendant of African slaves having grown up in Jim Crow Era Louisiana, and later a different kind of ‘Jim Crow’ in the 60s in San Francisco, my vision with this continued work-in-progress is to tell the story (via music and sound consciousness) of the journey of the descendants of West African slaves (Chamba, Wolof, Yoruba, Igbo, Mbundu, Bakongo, Fon, Mende, Fulani, Abron) who, despite hundreds of years of tyranny and treacherous abuse, created and preserved a beautiful and powerful new culture unique only to the American Black experience. The original American classical music, a gift that has been emulated and admired throughout the world. Because of the vast gravity of this ongoing work I have abbreviated this journey into roughly one hour and twenty minutes, integrating both live and some pre-recorded compositions written specifically for this project. Welcome to A Song of Triumph: The History of Black Music. We pray that you see this piece as one of many paintings in a series as a reflection in time—as though you were experiencing a picture on a wall.”

—Maestro Curtis, Artistic Director of “A Song of Triumph: The History of Black Music”
Community Music Center presents

A SONG OF TRIUMPH: THE HISTORY OF BLACK MUSIC

a world premiere!

Saturday, April 23, 2022 at 1:00pm
Yerba Buena Gardens Festival
760 Howard Street, San Francisco

Artistic Director, Composer: Maestro Curtis
Associate Producer: Nola Curtis

Song of Triumph Music Ensemble:
Maestro Curtis
The Curtis Family C-Notes
Juan Escovedo
Larry Douglas
Ken Little
Ricardo Scales
Tony Bolivar
Tina Bryant
Neil Stallings

Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble and Featured Vocalists:
Dorothy Morrison
Reverend J.R. Hall
The Curtis Family C-Notes
Tina Bryant

Featured Performers:
Bishop James Adams
Kam Krzy
OVERTURE

“Mother Earth and Father Sun Smile on this Day”

Juan Escovedo, Maestro Curtis

ACT I

“Peace and then They Came”

Juan Escovedo, Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

SCENE I

Imagine somewhere in West Africa, during the Middle Passage: an agrarian society, specifically the countries near the coastal regions are celebrating a successful harvest, singing songs of gratitude. And then they came! European men, with whom Africans once traded peacefully, are now armed with rifles, hunting down men, women, and children, killing anyone who fights back. Flames spread throughout the villages as some manage to escape, screams are ringing through the air. West African people are captured, yoked together, bound by the neck, hands and feet shackled, forced to march to the shore where the slave ships await their stolen human cargo.

SCENE II

“In the Belly of the Whale, A Cry for Home”

The Curtis Family C-Notes

“Song of Pain and Cry of Redemption”

Reverend J.R. Hall, Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

Chained, in the belly of the ship, it’s hard to breathe, the only light seeps through the seams of the ship. There are rows of slaves stacked on top of each other, who lay almost in spoon-like fashion, many forced to lie in their own and each others’ waste. Many who did not survive the Middle Passage were thrown overboard.

SCENE III

“On the Auction Block”

Maestro Curtis

Captured slaves are led off the ship, are beaten, forced to clean themselves, and are placed on the auction blocks to be sold. The prospective buyers examine their naked bodies, as if they were cattle.

SCENE IV: THE INDOCTRINATION OF CHRISTIANITY

“A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth”

Reverend J.R. Hall, Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles
“The New Land of Indoctrination”  
Maestro Curtis  
*Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles*

Taken to the plantations they are given new names, stripped completely of their identity, culture, and deities and taught a new religion. Anyone speaking their native language is beaten. The exceptionally large male slaves become the work horses of the fields and for entertainment are forced to fight each other for sport. Many female slaves are raped on a daily basis, men who are hard to “break” are raped and beaten publicly—into submission or death. Slaves are not allowed to learn to read or write, and any who are found out to have learned to read are beaten (if not killed). All slaves who attempt to escape are made examples of to deter further noncompliance.

**ACT II**

“The Invisible Church and The Revolution”  
Maestro Curtis  
*Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles*

“A Song of Triumph”  
Maestro Curtis  
Sermonette: *A Road to Triumph*

**SCENE I: FIELD SONGS AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

“There’s No Rest for the Weary”  
Maestro Curtis  
“Wade in the Water”  
Traditional Spiritual  
“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”  
Wallace Willis  
*Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble*

Hymns that were used to indoctrinate the slaves and teach them to speak English, are now being used as codes to guide them to freedom.

**SCENE II: CIVIL WAR**

“We Must Fight for Our Freedom”  
Maestro Curtis  
*Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble*

“Battle Hymn of the Republic”  
Julia Ward Howe  
*Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble*

*Songs of Freedom: Black and white men now fight alongside one other to preserve the Union. Lincoln uses Black slaves to win the war. Many slaves see this opportunity as a bid for freedom, but some refuse to turn against their masters.*
SCENE III: RECONSTRUCTION

“Where Children Play”  
Maestro Curtis

“My Man is More than Enough”  
Maestro Curtis

Call and Response  
Maestro and Nola Curtis

Sermonette: *Triumphantly We have Traveled*  
Bishop James Adams, Ricardo Scales, Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble

*Black people are free!* Black men are elected into offices and are allowed to vote, but Black and white women are still not granted suffrage. Barbershop quartets emerge. Black businesses, banks, grocery stores, and commerce are thriving for some 12 to 15 years. Doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs flourish, and “Black Wall Streets” emerge: Bronzeville in Chicago, Illinois; Hayti in Durham, North Carolina; Sweet Auburn in Atlanta, Georgia; West Ninth Street in Little Rock, Arkansas; and Farish Street in Jackson, Mississippi. Black centers of wealth in Rosewood, Florida; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and more are all burned to ruins.

“‘Til Then” (in the style of the Mills Brothers)  
Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus, and Guy Wood

The Curtis Family C-Notes

ACT III

“Peace and then They Came Back”  
Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

SCENE I: BLACK MINSTRELS AND DIXIE JAZZ

“Jim Crow Raises its Ugly Head”  
Maestro Curtis

Larry Douglas, Ricardo Scales, Tina Bryant,  
Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

*Former plantation owners, still bitter from the war, along with disgruntled poor whites deconstruct Reconstruction. New Black church movements begin, such as Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist (ACE, AME), Church of Christ, Sanctified, etc. Black artists flourish during the Harlem Renaissance, including jazz musicians Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Hazel Scott.*
SCENE II

“Walking Up the King’s Highway”  
Mary Gardner & Thomas Dorsey

Sermonette: The Gospel Pearls Medley

Bishop James Adams, Larry Douglas, Ken Little, Dorothy Morrison,
Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles

Composers Thomas Dorsey, Lucy Eddie Campbell, Charles Albert Tindley, W. Herbert Brewster, and Charles
Price Jones (Church of Christ) became the founders of gospel music, and created the first significant
musical composition book known as the “Gospel Pearls”. This book helped to drive the validity of gospel
music as a staple in American art form.

During this same period the emergence of Dixie inspired Big Band with artists such as Duke Ellington,
Count Basie, Chick Webb, Jimmie Lunsford who brought class to jazz and energized the world.

“When the Saints Go Marching In”  
Traditional
Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

“Take the ‘A’ Train”  
Billy Strayhorn
Ricardo Scales, Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

SCENE III: BEBOP—A NEW INNOVATION IN BLACK MUSIC

“The Triumph Swing Blues in F”  
Maestro Curtis
Tony Bolivar, Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles

Improvisation

Tony Bolivar, Larry Douglas

SCENE IV: DOO WOP

“Head Over Hills”  
Maestro Curtis
The Curtis Family C-Notes

ACT IV: CIVIL RIGHTS

“We Shall Overcome”  
Reverend Charles Albert Tindley
Song of Triumph Choral Ensemble

“No Rest for the Weary”  
Maestro Curtis
The Curtis Family C-Notes
SCENE I

“The Song of Triumph”

Maestro Curtis

Song of Triumph Music Ensemble


SCENE II

“Frisco Scene and Oakland Funk”

Maestro Curtis

Song of Triumph Music Ensemble

The Revolution of San Francisco, Oakland and the East coast that changed the world forever. Sly Stone, Gil Scot Heron, the Isleys, and many more tell a new story and speak of Black pride.

SCENE III

“Happie Hippie”

Maestro Curtis

Maestro Curtis and The Curtis Family C-Notes

SCENE IV: A NEW GOSPEL

“Oh Happy Day”

Edwin Hawkins

Dorothy Morrison, Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles

“A Song of Triumph”

Maestro Curtis

Sermonette: Triumphanty We March On

Bishop James Adams

“Song of Triumph” Hip Hop

Maestro Curtis and Kameron Birks

Kam Krzy, The Curtis Family C-Notes,
Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles

OUTRO

“Oh Happy Day”

Edwin Hawkins

Dorothy Morrison, Song of Triumph Music & Choral Ensembles
PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

MAESTRO CURTIS:

Maestro Curtis, PhD is a husband, father, musician, producer, composer, sound alchemist, scholar, author and martial artist with a strong background in Jazz, classical, gospel, blues, RnB, funk, country, world and sacred geometry music. He holds three bachelor’s degrees: 1) Piano and Vocal Music, 2) Radio, Television, and Film Production and 3) Speech and Theatre; and two Master’s Degrees: 1) Music Theory/Orchestration and Arranging, and 2) Philosophy; and a PhD in Human and Organizational Development/Symbolic Analysis with an emphasis on Educational Leadership and Change.

Maestro has been performing since age 3 and has over 50 plus years’ experience in the recording industry. He has produced, written for and/or shared the stage with such artists as Lenny Williams (lead singer of Tower of Power), Al Green, Phyllis Hyman, Patti Labelle, The Average White Band, The Yardbirds, The Ojays, El Debarge, Pete and Juan Escovedo, Ricardo Scales, George Benson, “Fatha” Earl Hines, Billy Preston, Gospel legend and Grammy recipient Dorothy Morrison (the original singer of “Oh Happy Day”), other Gospel giants including the Rev. James Cleveland and the Hawkins Singers and Andre Crouch, and blues legends B.B. King, Little Milton, Bobby Bland, Fillmore Slim and John Lee Hooker. While attending college Maestro played with Jazz icons including the Count Basie Orchestra (directed by Frank Foster) and the Duke Ellington Orchestra (directed by Mercer Ellington), He has played for Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Williams, Ben Riley, Larry Gales, Charlie Rouse, Carmen McCrae, Abbey Lincoln and Sarah Vaughan. He has also produced music with such legends as Hubert Eaves III (D-Train), Grady Wilkins (The Whispers), Maurice White (Earth, Wind and Fire) under the Kalimba Records label to mention a few, and for his own contemporary jazz/RnB group, Xpression, whose debut album, “Power”, went Gold. He has performed for Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, and political leaders and dignitaries from all over the world. Maestro Curtis is also co-author with David Gibson of “The Art of Producing” (The very first book on producing music used in classrooms and by producers all over the world). “Stro” as known to many is CEO of JazzyBoo Entertainment where he creates music for motion pictures, television and stage and produces local artists.

THE CURTIS FAMILY C-NOTES:

The Curtis family, known professionally as The Curtis Family C-Notes, and “The San Francisco first family of song” cover all genres of music, especially from Baroque to the ’60s and ’70s-inspired San Francisco/Oakland bay area sound. Maestro Curtis (Papa C) alongside his wife, Nola Curtis (Mama C), are dedicated proud members of the faculty at the Community Music Center where their 5 children also receive their music education. The eldest, 17-year-old Zahara, sings and plays guitar, violin, drums and percussion. Nile, 16, sings and plays bass. At 14, Isis rocks ukulele, drums and the piano alongside her sister Kiki, 13, who sings and plays (left-handed) the electric guitar and keyboard. Phoenix, the youngest Curtis at 11, sings and plays piano, bass, guitar, violin, drums and anything she can get her hands on. The entire family sings and plays instruments, they each enjoy singing lead as well as background. Their most notable appearances to date have been performances for Inaugurations for political figures and world leaders, SF Giants, The Golden State Warriors, Season 16 of America’s Got Talent and the internationally aired holiday commercial for JCPenney of whom they collaborated with Breed Music. a Holiday anthem, “Joy, Comfort and Peace.” The Curtis family are now under The Metz entertainment group and Jazzy boo Entertainment and are gearing up for a national and world tour promoting the release of their debut album, “Awaken.”
**BISHOP JAMES ADAMS:**

Native San Franciscan Bishop James Adams is a highly decorated civic leader, advocate, and community organizer in the tradition of great clergy who hold political leaders accountable and continue the fight for meaningful change and true equality. With a passion for Christ, and a passion for community, as seen in his published writings such as Radical Evangelism, and his work as the chairman of the board of the St. John Community Development Corporation, Bishop Adams is working to bridge the gap between the community and faith.

**TONY BOLIVAR:**

Tony Bolivar is the youngest of four saxophone brothers, and an accomplished musician and educator. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from San Jose State University. He sings and plays saxophones, clarinets, flute, trumpet, bass guitar, and keyboards. He is the co-founder and musical director of the autistic band, The Dream Achievers, which has performed from Canada to China. He was a member of the U.S. Air Force Band at Offutt AFB. Was the instrumental and vocal teacher at Christian Community Schools in Fremont, CA from 1999–2017. He has taught private lessons for over forty years, and is currently a full-time musician and educator in the Coachella Valley. He conducts an advanced musician camp every summer for special needs students at Friends of Special Needs in Fremont.

**TINA BRYANT:**

Tina Bryant is a professional pianist, organist, director, writer, singer and producer. Her musical styles include gospel, jazz, and classical. She has been playing the piano since the tender age of 7, and began playing piano for churches at 15. She has also played on programs with Kirk Franklin, John P. Kee, Daryl Coley, Hezekiah Walker, Ed Kelly, the Oakland Symphony, Bobby Jones and many more. She had the great opportunity to travel to Italy to tour and play for The Gospel Girls from Oakland, CA in December 2004. Tina has also served as Minister of Music in several churches ranging from Southern to Northern California. Previously she served as Asst. Minister of Music at 1st AME church in Oakland.

Tina is currently the lead musician for the Capitol City Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Sacramento and accompanies Minister Tim Posting at Mt. Calvary Church in Fairfield. She has her own production company, “JLB Music Productions”, where she writes and produces her own music.

**LARRY DOUGLAS:**

Larry Douglas has ruled as one of San Francisco’s top trumpet and flugelhorn players for more than four decades, with a tone that the Dean of American Jazz Critics, Leonard Feather, described as “velvety and silky.” In addition to leading his own electro-acoustic group, The Larry Douglas Alltet, Douglas has worked with musicians such as Ray Charles, Freddie Hubbard, Chuck Berry, Albert Collins, Sun Ra and Rufus , Carla Thomas, Pete and Juan Escovedo, and Maestro Curtis (Jazz Hieroglyphics and Sol Funkestra). He was the trumpet player and music director for Johnny Otis and His Orchestra, and later became the tour manager and musical director for his Shuggie Otis’s Rite World Tour. His playing is featured on four albums including the Grammy-nominated Spirit Of The Black Territory Bands. His debut solo album, Dedications, was released in 1985, received a great response from fans in Europe and the Eastern Bloc.

Douglas has collaborated with flute/saxophone player, and director of the jazz program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Dr. Karlton Hester since the late-1970s, playing with Hester’s groups, the Contemporary Jazz Art Movement and the Hesterian Musicism.
The recipient of a bachelor’s degree in instrumental music education from Florida A&M, and a Master of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory, Douglas shared his knowledge with students at Aptos Middle School, from 1981 to 1990, and Galileo High School of San Francisco since 1991. He also teaches Black Music: Jazz, Blues, & Popular Music in American Culture, a jazz history course at Vista Community College.

**JUAN ESCOVEDO:**

Juan Escovedo of the famed Escovedo family released his first solo CD, THE J, on November 8, 2021, at his official record release party at Yoshi’s, Oakland. As a child, Juan taught himself to play bongos, congas, trap drums, timbales, percussion, and other instruments. When he turned 14, he went from studying with his father, Pete Escovedo, to proudly performing with him.

Juan has toured, performed, and recorded with many artists, including Prince, Tony Toni Tone, Patti LaBelle, Amerie, Chingy, Jody Watley, Lou Bega, MC Hammer, Lionel Richie, En Vogue, El DeBarge, Maestro Curtis (Xpression), Freddie Hubbard, Barry White, Herbie Hancock, Ricardo Scales, Teri Lynn Carrington, Bobby McFerrin, Tito Puente, Cheryl Lynn, Raphael Saadiq, Bobby Womack, his sister Sheila E., and, still, his father, Pete Escovedo.

Juan tours, writes, and records as a solo artist, with his father’s Latin Jazz Orchestra, and with The E Family: his father, his brother, Peter Michael Escovedo, and his sister Sheila E. The E Family’s latest CD, “Now & Forever,” which features guest artists Prince, George Duke, Raphael Saadiq, Gloria Estefan, Joss Stone, Israel Houghton, and Earth, Wind & Fire, includes three songs co-written and produced by Juan.

**REVEREND J.R. HALL:**

From the concert hall to the pulpit, Reverend J.R. Hall has used his God-given musical gifts and electrifying preaching style to inspire and change lives. As a vocalist, solo artist and member of singing groups, touring both the United States and internationally, notably with Oakland’s own Walter and Edwin Hawkins and the Love Center Choir, performing on stages with the likes of Ricardo Scales and the famous Escovedo family, just to name a few.

**KAM KRZY:**

Born in Oakland California, his musical journey started in 2017. Due to an extraordinary style and provocative lyrics, he embodied and embraced his fitting nickname: “Kam Krzy”. An acronym meaning “Keep Rising Toward Zenith Year”. Constantly evolving his sound with Los Angeles based Producer & Engineer Clooney. Partnering with Bay Sound Records and In Yo Face Films are scheduled to film a series of music videos showcasing material of upcoming performances. Kam’s mark on the industry is one that is going to be everlasting. For more information view him on all platforms @Kam_Krzy

**KEN LITTLE:**

Ken Little has been playing music in the Bay Area for over 40 years. He was trained in classical music at San Francisco Conservatory, where he studied piano and music theory. His formative years began when he was a teenager playing for New Providence Baptist Church, where he learned how to play gospel music. He was first introduced to musical theater by Dr. Rhonnie Washington at San Francisco State University. His big break came when introduced to the late Stanley Williams, founder of Lorraine Hansberry Theater by Arvis Strickling-Jones. He served as musical director for numerous productions of Langston Hughes’ “Black Nativity” and five productions of “A Soulful Christmas,” which is the theater’s current holiday production.
Most recently he has served as musical director for the west coast premiere of “Bessie: the Musical” at the Margaret Lesher Theater in Walnut Creek, where he not only played piano, but made his acting debut in the role of Mr. Pickles, Bessie's pianist. Ken also engages in musical production and has his own studio. “I am humbled to have been blessed with the gift of music. For me, this journey never ends. It’s a marathon not a sprint.”

**DOROTHY MORRISON:**

Grammy-winning American Gospel singer Dorothy Morrison was born in Longview, Texas and grew up in Richmond, California. The seventh child of ten, Dorothy showed early signs of talent. She began singing at the age of 13 and released her first single “I Am Free”, while singing with her siblings as ‘The Combs Family’. Dorothy’s continued exposure while appearing with her family at church events led to her talents being noticed by others in the San Francisco and Oakland Bay Area. In the 1960s, she then joined the Edwin Hawkins Singers and was the lead vocalist on the Grammy Award-winning Hall of Fame hymn, “Oh Happy Day”. She toured with Edwin Hawkins, Van Morrison, Boz Scaggs, and Delaney and Bonnie, among others. She appeared on TV shows including *The Carol Burnett Show* and *The Tonight Show*. Dorothy’s appearance at the 1969 Big Sur Folk Festival is included in the film *Celebration at Big Sur*; with the Combs Sisters, she sang “All God’s Children Got Soul,” her solo single that made the Billboard Top 100. She re-recorded “Respect Yourself” with Huey Lewis and the News for their album *Soulsville*, released in 2010. She is currently a member of the Blues Broads of Marin County.

**RICARDO SCALES:**

Ricardo Scales (world renowned) comes from music royalty (mother Patience Scales) He is a San Francisco legend, also known as the “Black Liberace.” He is a versatile and beloved concert pianist who has played for five U.S. presidents including Bill Clinton, major diplomats, and dignitaries from all over the world. He has been performing at The Top of The Mark in San Francisco’s historic Nob Hill for over 30 years and his concerts at The Cliff House are legendary and remembered fondly by Billy Joel, John Travolta, Dolly Parton, and a host of noteworthy iconic spectators. He has recorded over 30 albums and is considered one of the greatest pianists born in Arkansas and raised in San Francisco. Ricardo has worked in the music industry well over 50 years and is the President and CEO of DGRP and Bay Sound records and studios where he engineers and produces renowned and local artists as well as music for commercials, television, and motion pictures. One of Ricardo's musical compositions can be heard in the Ron Howard pilot of the weekly series “Parenthood” and his music is played and heard all over the globe. His music has made the smooth jazz billboard charts for many decades. His time is also spent as the minister of music for the famed Jones Memorial United Methodist Church developing and running the church choir. Ricardo is a prodigy of the San Francisco Conservatory and he teaches music to the young and the seasoned community-at-large.

**NEIL STALLINGS:**

Guitarist extraordinaire and San Francisco native Neil Stallings, another San Francisco legend, has shared the stage with King Floyd, The Four Tops, Albert Collins, Big Mama Thornton, Sly Stone and The Platters. A man of few words, Neil lets his guitar do the talking. He has also opened for great artists such as War, Funkadelic, Johnny Winter, B.B. King, Jimmy Reed, Tower of Power, The Chambers Brothers, Mandrill and Freddy King. Neil is also an experienced vocalist, delivering each song with a rich, soulful interpretation and is a very dynamic and physical performer. He continues to tour all over the U.S. and overseas.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community Music Center wishes to thank Yerba Buena Gardens Festival for its partnership in presenting “A Song of Triumph: The History of Black Music,” as well as express our immense gratitude for the talented composers, performers, guests, supporters, staff, and crew who made this important commission possible.

The Black Music Studies Program and Song of Triumph are made possible by a generous grant from the Sahm Family Foundation.

All music written and composed by Maestro Curtis is protected by copyright laws.

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COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTER: A CENTURY OF MUSIC FOR EVERYONE

The Community Music Center (CMC) is celebrating 100 years of music for everyone! A non-profit music school and performance space with branches in the Mission and Richmond Districts, CMC makes high-quality music accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, regardless of financial means. Last year, CMC served 2,872 students of all ages and awarded nearly $2.8M in tuition assistance. CMC offers online and in-person music lessons and classes on over 30 instruments and a wide range of musical styles, including jazz, blues, Latin, pop, folk, rock and Western classical. The commission and premiere of “A Song of Triumph: The History of Black Music” are part of CMC’s Black Music Studies Program launched in the Fall of 2021. Learn more about the CMC Centennial celebrations at sfcmc100.org.
ABOUT CMC’S BLACK MUSIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Community Music Center is proud to launch the Black Music Studies Program developed and taught by faculty members Maestro Curtis, PhD (Dept. Head of BMS) and Nola Curtis (voice faculty member and music scholar). In addition to being well-known teachers and performers, the Curtises, along with their five children (who are CMC students), make up The Curtis Family C-Notes, aka San Francisco’s “First Family of Song,” and America’s Got Talent season 16 quarter-finalists.

The Black Music Studies Program is a tuition-free program designed to inspire and empower students by learning and experiencing the foundations, innovations, and expansion of American music given to the world by the descendants of west African slaves of the Atlantic slave trade in America, the Caribbean, Brazil and Europe. The course aims to give students a deep sense of love, respect, and appreciation for the contributions of Black culture, which has impacted and crossed all ethnic and color lines. The Black Music Studies Program is a carefully designed program that includes lectures, workshops, and interactive participation to explore the history of Black music, including vocal and instrumental music. CMC students who complete varying levels of the coursework will be eligible for certificates of completion. Learn more about the program online at sfcmc.org/black-music-studies-program.

YERBA BUENA GARDENS FESTIVAL

For over two decades, the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival has presented free outdoor music, theater, circus, dance, poetry, and children’s programs with artists from the Bay Area and around the world. Yerba Buena Gardens is located between Mission Street and Howard Street and Third and Fourth Streets in downtown San Francisco. For more information, visit ybgfestival.org.
SONG OF TRIUMPH ARTISTS

Bishop James Adams, Activist, evangelist, and pastor

Tina Bryant, Composer, producer, singer, pianist, played on programs with Kirk Franklin, John P. Kee, Daryl Coley, Hezekiah Walker, Ed Kelly, the Oakland Symphony, Bobby Jones, and many more

Tony Bolivar, Activist, professor, music minister, creator of Dream Achievers (an ensemble of musicians with Autism touring the U.S. and internationally), also performed with the likes of Andraé Crouch and Alvin Slaughter

Maestro Curtis, PhD is a husband, father, community activist, educator, musician, producer, composer, sound alchemist, scholar, author and martial artist with a strong background in Jazz, classical, gospel, blues, RnB, funk, country, world and sacred geometry music. Maestro Curtis is lead composer and artistic director of A Song of Triumph: The History of Black Music.

The Curtis Family C-Notes, San Francisco’s “First family of song” with notable appearances including performances for Inaugurations for political figures and world leaders, SF Giants, The Golden State Warriors, Season 16 of America's Got Talent and the internationally aired holiday commercial for JC Penney. Curtis family youth (Zahara, Nile, Isis, Kiki, and Phoenix) are CMC students, Curtis family parents, Maestro and Nola are CMC faculty.

Larry Douglas, Residency/co-director/lecturer. Long time Bay Area music educator, music director for Johnny Otis and Shugie Otis, Ray Charles, and many more

Juan Escovedo of the famous E Family: Sheila E., Papa Pete Escovedo, and Peter Michael Escovedo

Reverend J.R. Hall, Minister and singer (from the famed Edwin & Walter Hawkins Singers), who has performed gospel music in the biggest arenas in the world

Kam Krzy, Rising hip hop star, born in Oakland, California. “KRZY” is an acronym meaning “Keep Rising toward Zenith Year”

Ken Little, Residency/lecturer (played with gospel legends James Cleveland, James Carr, Tim Toston), performed at the Gospel Music Workshop of America, music producer, composer, and choir director

Dorothy Morrison, Grammy Award-winning singer of “Oh Happy Day,” Edwin Hawkins Singers, toured/recorded with Huey Lewis and the News

Ricardo Scales, Legendary concert pianist, composer, and music producer who has played for celebrities, and dignitaries from all over the world, including five American presidents, known as the Bay Area's “Black Liberace”

Neil Stallings, Legendary Bay Area guitarist who performed and toured with King Floyd, The Four Tops, Albert Collins, Big Mama Thornton, Sly Stone, and The Platters, to name a few