

Fierce Love

Written by Alaina Lewis



For an African American male life may sometimes seem like an on-going battle. But the one comfort that resides in the struggle is that you don't have to fight the entire world to get some recognition for your cause.

Now when you add a second layer to the problem, and consider the plight of the homosexual African American male, you know that the struggle gets a little deeper, and the world isn't always willing to open arms and allow you to live without borders.

But, then came Fierce Love.

Somewhere deep down in the recess of our heart lies an uninhibited love; a love that concentrates more on the strength in a feeling rather than implementing any type of discretion on who's sharing the bond. Fierce love is an honest union, one that lets all the senses be free and the alliance of two individuals to be expressed on any and all levels without hindering that connection to adapt to the discriminatory world outside those walls.

The title Fierce Love takes on many different meanings, but the most important ideology is that those two words describe a freedom that the African American community of the homosexual persuasion, should feel of themselves and their unhindered choice to just be, without apology to the world around them.

Building on this infectious theory, and bringing a candid reality to stages all over the world, three men, Brian Freeman, Djola Branner, and Eric Gupton, who nicknamed themselves Pomo Afro Homos, a shortened version of Post Modern African-American Homosexuals, decided that the best way to provide truth, is to teach truth to the public through a play they wrote entitled Fierce Love: Stories of Gay Black Life.

Inspired by the unrepressed nature of In Living Colors infamous "Men On Film" sketch, the play is composed of 12 different vignettes that shadow the life and times of gay Black men. The

Fierce Love

Written by Alaina Lewis

stories are told through an honest perspective, one without limits, that gives both the audience and its host the comfort to share the world through their eyes and dispel any stereotypes synonymous with a group often misunderstood for expressing their free will.

The play, which once toured the world in the 90s, is now being reprised by Minneapolis' own Twin Cities Black Gay Pride group, and premieres at the Pillsbury House Theater on Chicago Avenue under the direction of Harry Waters Jr and produced by Earnest Simpkins July 30 and 31.

"I think there is such a need for something like this to be done in the Twin Cities." Simpkins said. "There's no space in which Black gay men can tell our stories, authentically, unapologetically and unequivocally, in a space which we're not tokenized, we're not stereotyped and where we're not the hairdresser. But this play creates a space where we can connect with each other as well as our greater community and say, 'you know what, these are our stories, our struggles, our fears, our victories, and our tears.' I think this piece is one that's going to introduce and create the space to show the world who we are."

Simpkins, who is also the President of Twin Cities Black Pride, not only produced the play, but acts in it as well along with TCBP's Vice President Jason Jackson, who also knows all too well the importance of gay black males having a voice in this community.

Rapper Kevin "Kaoz" Moore joins the two along with a host of others to assist in bringing forth this production.

For two nights only, we'll be given an intimate doorway into the lives of gay black men, and some of the roles they play being a part of our community and often misunderstood by a society that chases biased ideas rather than actuality. The play is real, raw, and without a doubt a critical necessity in creating understanding, love, and awareness for all.

This play isn't just for the GLBT community, it's for any and everyone who's ever dared to love; fiercely, honestly, and without reservation.

The play runs at the Pillsbury House Theatre, July 30 and 31. Shows are at 7:30 pm with a ticket cost of \$15. Group discounts are now available online: Parties of five or more receive a \$5 discount. Tickets may also be purchased at <http://pillsburyhousetheatre.org/>