

ABOUT THE BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

The Black Theatre Troupe, Inc. has provided training and performance opportunities for Phoenix Valley multi-ethnic and disadvantaged artists since 1970.

First organized under the direction of Helen K. Mason, former City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Supervisor, the troupe has not only managed to outlive several far-better funded performing arts organizations, but has evolved and expanded through some of the Valley's most turbulent economic times.

In the early 1980's, after learning that the route of the Papago Freeway would require the demolition of their original facility on Third Street and Moreland, Black Theatre Troupe created a *Building Relocation Task Force*, which was able to raise the necessary \$300,000 to purchase their present home, now named the Helen K. Mason Center for the Performing Arts.

The Black Theatre Troupe is very proud of their theatre space adjacent to the City of Phoenix's cultural district. This district, comprised of the Margaret Hance Deck Park, the magnificent new Phoenix Central Library, and the renovated Phoenix Art Museum and Theatre Complex - is a shining example of the community's support for a downtown arts core. This theatre wants to continue to grow with Phoenix, continuing to provide a voice for the under served community.

Some of their most highly acclaimed productions include *Five Guys Named Moe*, recently re-produced by Arizona Theatre Company because of it's successful beginnings with Black Theatre Troupe in Spring of '97; The European touring version of *The Black Nativity* created by Langston Hughes; and the ever loved *Mama I Want to Sing*.

David Hemphill, the theatre organization's producing artistic director, enjoys a noteworthy camaraderie with both the valley's leading theatre artists and arts community as a whole. He has currently collaborated with Actors Theatre of Phoenix for the world premiering production of *White Picket Fence*, written by valley local but world-renown playwright Michael Grady. He is also currently in collaboration with the Theatre Arts department of Northern Arizona University for an upcoming musical production.