

The George Faison Philosophy

George Faison, the recipient of numerous honors and awards for his contribution to American history and culture, is a Master artist who has spent four decades altering consciousness through his artistry. He as philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum asserts art is transformative. This magnanimous choreographer, writer and activist, proclaims art is a vehicle through which an artist has the power to change perceptions and affect the path of humanity. Though he was born during a period which America had laws to manacle his spirit and limit his aspirations, George Faison has created an impressive portfolio of films and plays which speaks universal truths and informs the twenty first century artist how one can use the humanities to affect social change. Art is consciousness. It is a representation of that which is being. It is the artist's eternal quest to represent a miniscule moment in time, a perception of reality which will cause the observer's lens to reconsider its construction of the seen. It is a tool which has untold impact, unforeseen power, a determinant which can take the mind into realms of insight, fluidity and there create new possibilities for the public consciousness. Artists have the ability to create an intellectual revolution. However, as Nicholas Maxwell argues in *From Knowledge to Wisdom: a Revolution for Science and the Humanities*, it is the utilization of this knowledge and the ability to transform knowledge into wisdom that will produce the weapons necessary to create social change. He as philosopher and activist Jean-Jacques Rousseau recognizes that one can be shackled by his belief systems and it is the destruction of these systems of thought that can ignite revolution. When one studies socially conscious artists such as George Faison, one realizes that both Rousseau and Maxwell are correct. Faison and other artists were a part of the second American Revolution – the Civil Rights Movement. He, his business partner Tad Schnugg and his colleagues used their art, their knowledge and their wisdom to consciously wage war against a system of thought which sought to bind them. They were born free and they would not be bound.

Jacques Rousseau says in *The Social Contract* that, "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they." Most Americans perceive of themselves as masters, not slaves. However, when one is burdened by the weight of laws which restrict his humanity and the future appears as if there will be no change, he is a slave to this knowing. George Faison was not a slave to his knowledge. He studied the humanities and used his knowledge to enhance his ability to act on stage and screen, write and become a social activist. He used his art forms at every turn to heighten public consciousness.

The study of Humanities is the study of that which is the manifestation of the human experience. It is art. It is literature. It is history. It is language. It is theatre. It is music. It is the philosophy that

has nurtured belief systems and the religion which dwells in the souls of men. The Humanities cross the boundaries of categorization and become law, anthropology and dare to include areas of the social sciences. The study of the humanities asks one to develop and hone skills which are analytical, critical and speculative in nature. For, it is a knowledge of the humanities that gives one the ability to perceive the world through the eyes of those who shed light upon the human condition.

George Faison in collaboration with his business partner Tad Schnugg desires to preserve his legacy and share his ideology with the next generation through the development of an organizational structure which designs evolving programs such as the Respect Project.