

Sekou Andrews: **The Artist's Story**

One fateful day, Sekou Andrews discovered a 7-page poem that his father wrote about him as he was being born. Suddenly it all made sense. Sekou had built his company on poetry, purchased his homes through poetry, proposed to his wife on stage with poetry, and had become one of the most successful full-time poets ever. He was literally the poetry that his father had set in motion. Poetry, however, was not his first muse.

Upon moving from the bay area to Washington DC, Sekou discovered acting and hip-hop and pursued them both through high school and college, at Pitzer College, where he received his B.A. in Sociology, eyes set on entertainment law. After working in several law firms and deciding law wasn't for him, he became an elementary school teacher, pursuing entertainment on the side. As much as Sekou loved the classroom, his heart was ultimately in his art. So, having built a name for himself on the poetry scene, he bravely joined the ranks of that societal anomaly known as "a full-time poet." He was not, however, resigned to the café and college touring life of a traditional performance poet. Sekou knew poetry could do more.

A fearless entrepreneur and innovator, Sekou began an unprecedented climb to success. His work was featured on major media outlets including ABC World News, MSNBC, Showtime, MTV, BET, and two seasons of HBO's Def Poetry. He shared the stage with such heavyweights as Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, Carlos Santana, Kendrick Lamar, and Maroon 5. He won the National Poetry Slam championship *twice*, featured in *two* national tours, and released *two* critically-acclaimed CDs, earning him the title of *most awarded artist in the nation's largest independent music organization*.

Teaming up with creative partner Steve Connell, the duo began inspiring sold out crowds at countless many high-profile events, including the Pasadena Pops Orchestra and the 2009 Inaugural Peace Ball. They performed at private events for Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Maya Angelou, Hillary Clinton, and Quincy Jones. Yet, not even their two successful shows - which electrified crowds at the Aspen Comedy Fest and garnered 3 Helen Hayes Award nominations – could satisfy Sekou's plans for this art form. He knew poetry could do more, still.

Intent on bringing poetry to the world's largest stages, Sekou created a new, cutting-edge form of speaking called Poetic Voice. As the world's leading poetic voice, his unique blend of inspirational speaking and spoken word poetry has amassed a platinum client list of the world's largest brands, such as Google, Viacom, Toyota, Nike, LinkedIn, and Paypal. Forbes magazine even called Sekou the "*the de facto poet laureate of corporate America*." Yet, all of this is merely tip-of-the-iceberg for this pioneer.

Sekou has a 7-page poem to live up to, and a legacy to leave. He will not rest until poetic voice is a household name in the speaking industry; until the words "broke" and "poet" are no longer synonymous; until he has helped millions of people find their voice; and until the world recognizes the success of poetic voice as irrefutable proof that poetry can do more.