

38th ANNUAL
SAN FRANCISCO
**ETHNIC
DANCE
FESTIVAL**
.....
JUNE 3 - 19, 2016



Gamelan Sekar Jaya
Photo by RJ Muna

Welcome

to the 38th Annual San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival



We are thrilled to be back at the Palace of Fine Arts, our home of almost thirty years, where thirty-two inspiring local dance groups will present their dance and music from throughout the world.

We thank you for your participation and hope that you are moved to join our efforts to keep dance and music alive in the hearts and minds of people everywhere.

Great beauty lies in the depth and breadth of our shared humanity, and you will see many different cultural expressions that embody our core belief that diversity is one of our community's greatest assets.

And Still We Dance

by Janice Mirikitani

*From the sounds of work
Shaken from the fields, the streets,
docks, factories, railroads and sweatshops,
still we danced.*

*From projects and concentration camps,
plantations, detention centers, teepees and tenements,
refugee stations, multi-colored neighborhoods,
our bodies pushed forward for freedom,
and still we danced.*

*From festival to funeral to birthing,
from the womb to the grave,
we danced.*

*Echos from the many continents,
in slaveships or dark cargoholds,
or vessels of hope promising gold mountains,
finding exasperated hungry winter,
still danced*

*the transplanted, the escapees and adventurers,
pregnant with dreams;
and indigenous ones circling with spirits,
carrying stories in their bodies,
the dance.*

*An ocean shored,
A thunderstorm where lightning is born
filling the air,
cultures crossing like rivers,
traditions rooted like strong trees;
ancestral arms reach beyond our selves
here, creating anew.*

*Movement is necessity.
Like lovers who leap into each other's flesh,
maternity wards purple and noisy with birth,
as survivors of history,
still we dance.*

We dedicate this year's Festival in honor of Janice Mirikitani

Thirty years ago, Janice's poem *And Still We Dance* served as the inspiration for a documentary film by Ashley James about the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival*. The film premiered at the 1986 San Francisco International Film Festival, and has been screened thousands of times throughout the nation over the years.

A visionary, community activist, leader, poet, editor, and dancer, Janice is well known for her extraordinary work as Co-Founder and Founding President of the Glide Foundation, and we are thrilled to honor her as an accomplished artist.

Mirikitani has received three honorary doctorate degrees, graduated from UCLA, and received a teaching credential from UC Berkeley. She and her family were incarcerated in a Rohwer, Arkansas concentration camp with the mass internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Through her poetry and activism, she has remained committed to addressing the horrors of war, combating institutional racism, and advocating for women and poor people.

Her collections of poetry include *Awake in the River* (1978), *Shedding Silence* (1987), *We, the Dangerous: New and Selected Poems* (1995), *Love Works* (2001), and *Out of the Dust* (2015). She has edited several anthologies, including *Third World Women* (1972), *Time to Greez!* *Incantations from the Third World* (1975), and *Ayumi: A Japanese American Anthology* (1980).

Janice Mirikitani is San Francisco's second Poet Laureate, appointed in 2000. Her books of poetry and anthologies provide platforms for writers of color, women, youth, and children. She has also worked in civil rights causes for various multi ethnic communities, including the struggle for redress for Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII.

Together with her husband, minister and activist Cecil Williams, Janice coauthored the book *Beyond the Possible: 50 Years of Creating Radical Change in a Community Called Glide* (2013), which describes the mission of their foundation and its work of empowering marginalized communities in San Francisco.



Janice Mirikitani, Photo by Alain McLaughlin

On June 4th and 5th, Antoine Hunter will dance to a special reading of Janice Mirikitani's poem And Still We Dance in partnership with Youth Speaks. The poem will be read by Aleah Bradshaw, who was the winner of the 2015 Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam.

On June 19, there will be a screening of Ashley James film And Still We Dance at the Palace of Fine Arts at 1pm. Special thanks to the Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC) for their work to improve the resolution of the 1986 film for this 30th Anniversary screening.

Lineup

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Welcome from the Festival Artistic Directors



Carlos Carvajal and CK Ladzekpo

Welcome to the 38th year of this magnificent celebration of cultural heritage. We applaud the artists and wish we had more opportunities to showcase many more from throughout the Bay Area's world dance and music community!

In a region filled with such extraordinary wealth, we ask for everyone's help securing more resources to support our culture-bearers and ensure that children will get to experience the joy and transcendence that these art forms have to offer.

We have experienced the many ways in which sharing the beauty of world cultures helps to build appreciation for the people of those cultures, and now more than ever, our great hope is to help connect people in this positive, community-building way.

Viva la danse,

2016 FESTIVAL OPENING EVENT AT SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL

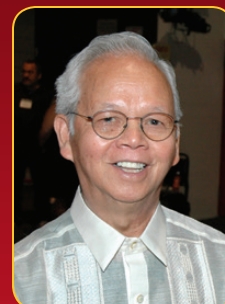
This year's *Festival* opens with a special performance by El Tunante, as part of the monthly Rotunda Dance Series.

El Tunante's Artistic Director Nestor Ruiz is a renowned national Peruvian dance champion who has called the Bay Area home for almost 20 years. Nestor and his dancers perform the marinera norteña, a lively form of Peru's romantic national dance form. The dance is intense and formal, with partners circling each other, never actually touching, and never taking their eyes off one another. Handkerchiefs flutter in the air, revealing what is happening in their hearts.

CARLOS CARVAJAL, a native San Franciscan, is a distinguished dancer/choreographer of more than two hundred works for dance, opera, and musical theater companies, as well as television productions. Beginning as a folk dancer, he went on to the San Francisco Ballet, then the Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas, Opera of Bremen, Opera of Bordeaux and Ballet Nacional of Venezuela as soloist, principal dancer and choreographer. He created more than twenty works for the San Francisco Ballet as its ballet master and associate choreographer. He founded San Francisco Dance Spectrum, creating over fifty works during its ten year tenure. He has also choreographed for the San Francisco Opera, Oakland Ballet, and Dance Theater of Harlem, among others. His full length ballets include *Cinderella's Crystal Slipper*, *Totentanz*, *Wintermas*, *Carmina Burana* and *The Nutcracker*. Honors/grants/awards include five from the National Endowment for the Arts, the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Critics' Circle and an Isadora Duncan Lifetime Achievement Award. He holds a BA in Theater and MA in Creative Arts from San Francisco State University. This is his 11th season as Co-Artistic Director of the Festival.

CK LADZEKPO, PhD, is the director of the African Music Program at the University of California, Berkeley. His is a distinguished career as a performer, choreographer, composer, teacher, and published scholar in the African performing arts. He is a member of a renowned family of African musicians and dancers who traditionally serve as lead drummers and composers among the Anlo-Ewe people of southeastern Ghana in West Africa. He has been a lead drummer and instructor with the Ghana National Dance Ensemble, the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies and the Arts Council of Ghana. He joined the music faculty of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1973 and continues to be an influential catalyst of the African perspective in the performing arts. Awards include two choreographers' fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Irvine Choreographer's Fellowship and the Ruth Beckford Extraordinary People in Dance Award. He has been a member of the faculty council of the East Bay Center for Performing Arts since 1974. This is his 11th season as Co-Artistic Director of the Festival.

Malonga Casquelourd Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients: Bernardo Pedere and Valerie Watson



Bernardo Pedere



Valerie Watson

We are proud to present this year's Malonga Casquelourd Lifetime Achievement Awards for Excellence in World Dance and Music to Bernardo Pedere and Valerie Watson. Their extraordinary artistry and masterful teaching have impacted the lives of thousands of people.

The award will be presented to Bernardo Pedere on the Festival stage the evening of June 11, 2016, and to Valerie Watson on the Festival stage the evening of June 18, 2016.

ABOUT BERNARDO PEDERE

Bernardo Pedere is the Artistic Director and choreographer of the Filipiniana Dance Troupe, formed in 1969 and whose name means "things Philippine." The group grew from its original membership of four couples to a nationally known dance company, performing at hundreds of venues and events including California Academy of Sciences, the Golden Gate Bridge 50th anniversary, and festivities for Pope John Paul's visit to San Francisco.

Filipiniana's repertoire remained focused on rural folk dance from various Philippine islands and the Spanish Colonial influences on indigenous styles. Bernardo is a master teacher of the following dance styles: Alahoy, Alegrito, An Marol, Ba-Ingles, Baruray, Binislakan, Esperanza, Himig Sa Nayon, Jota Pangasinana, Jotabal, Lubi-Lubi, Magkasuyò, Manang Biday, Panchita, Paso Doble, Paso Doble Burawefio, Polka sa Nayon, Polka Sala, Pukol, Sakuting, Tacon y Punta Danza, Tiklos, and Tinolabong. Bernardo is a former dancer with the National Philippine Dance Company and through his efforts, a dynamic cultural immersion sustained Philippine cultural practices among all members of the dance company and their families,

extending a legacy for future generations. Bernardo wrote: "In essence, Philippine folk dances capture the mood, character, and temperament of the people of the 7102 island archipelago bonded by the multi-cultural fabric of a variety of influences."

Bernardo also served for many years as a tireless volunteer for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, most recently as a member of World Arts West's Board of Directors.

ABOUT VALERIE WATSON

Valerie Watson was born in Chicago and began her dance training at the age of 4. She is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, performer, teacher, a wife, mother and grandmother. Valerie earned a BA in Dance and a MA in Adult Education from San Francisco State University. She began teaching in the Bay Area as Assistant Director of the Daly City School of Dance. Valerie retired at the age of 72, after teaching dance at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) for 35 years.

Valerie studied, performed, choreographed, and taught all levels of the following dance styles: tap, jazz, modern, Haitian, ballroom, Caribbean social dances, including salsa, merengue, chachacha, Afro-Brazilian, and Congolese. She studied with Katherine Dunham, Jean Leon Destine, Malonga Casquelourd, Akili Denienke, Frankie Manning, Carlos Acituno, Nadie Dieudonne, Tania Santiago, Djenane St. Juste, and Eddie Brown. She studied Haitian drumming for 10 years with Zeke Nealy and Baba Duru.

She was a featured dancer with the Pan African dance company Harambee, directed by Akili Denienke, and she is the Founder and Artistic Director of Alafia Dance Ensemble, which she started with talented CCSF dance students. Her travels to study dance have taken her to Cuba, Brazil, Nigeria, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Kenya.

Among her many honors, Valerie was made a chief by HRM Alayeluwa of Ikateland, Nigeria, for her contributions to humanity through the Arts, and Djenane St. Juste of Haiti acknowledged her for preserving Haitian Dance in the Bay Area.

Dance Origins

Map & Page # Group Name / Location

June 4-6

- 4 El Tunante / Peru
- 10 Shambhavi's International School of Kathak / Northern India
- 11 San Francisco Flamenco Dance Company / Spain
- 12 Harsanari / West Java, Indonesia
- 13 Ballet Folklórico Netzahualcoyotl / Veracruz, Mexico
- 14 Parangal Dance Company / Cordillera Mountains, Philippines
- 15 Chinese Performing Arts of America / China
- 16 Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA Kinuko Mototake Okinawan Dance Academy / Okinawa
- 17 Espiritu Andino / Bolivia, El Gran Chaco
- 18 Khaley Adouna African Dance & Drum with Domou Africa / Senegal, West Africa

June 11-12

- 22 Gamelan Sekar Jaya / Northern Bali, Indonesia
- 23 Aliah Najmabadi / Tajikistan
- 24 Ballet Folklórico Nube de Oro / Chihuahua, Mexico
- 25 AguaClara Flamenco / Spain
- 26 Chhandam Youth Dance Company / Northern India
- 27 LIKHA-Pilipino Folk Dance Company / Sulu Archipelago, Philippines
- 28 Nicaragua Danza, Hijos del Maíz / Nicaragua
- 29 Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers / Scotland
- 30 Jikelele Dance Theater / South Africa
- 31 Ensamble Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco / Nayarit, Mexico

Over 500 Northern California artists presenting dance and music from more than 20 world cultures spanning 5 continents

Map & Page # Group Name / Location

June 18-19

- 34 Belly Dance Cabaret - Alma; Khepri Dance Company / Egypt and Lebanon
- 35 Ballet Folklórico México Danza / Jalisco, Mexico
- 36 Charya Burt Cambodian Dance / Cambodia
- 37 Alafia Dance Ensemble / Haiti
- 38 Antoine Hunter of Urban Jazz Dance Company / US
- 39 Xpressions / Western India
- 40 Jubilee American Dance Theatre / Wisconsin, US
- 41 Tiruchitrambalam / South India
- 42 Juli Kim / Korea
- 43 Los Danzantes de Aztlán de Fresno State / Veracruz (Coyutla), Mexico
- 44 Ballet Lisanga Congolese Performing Arts Company / Congo, Central Africa

Our opening weekend features dances and music from Bolivia, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Okinawa, the Philippines, Senegal, and Spain.



Harsanari
Photo by RJ Muna

Weekend 1

June 4 & 5

In the Palace Lobby: music by Daniel Frías

Special presentation of the poem *And Still We Dance*, read by Aleah Bradshaw, 2015 Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam winner, featuring Antoine Hunter of Urban Jazz Dance Company

Shambhavi's International School of Kathak
Indian Kathak

San Francisco Flamenco Dance Company
Spanish Flamenco (Farruca)

Harsanari
West Javanese Jaipongan

Ballet Folklórico Netzahualcoyotl
Mexican Folkloric (Veracruz)

Parangal Dance Company
Filipino Traditional (Cordillera Mountains)

Chinese Performing Arts of America
Chinese Classical

Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA Kinuko
Mototake Okinawan Dance Academy
Okinawan Classical

Espíritu Andino
Bolivian Traditional

Khaley Adouna African Dance & Drum
with Domou Africa
Senegalese Traditional

Shambhavi's International School of Kathak

India

Tarana is a collaboration between Hindustani classical music and the pure dance sequence of North Indian kathak dance. It's danced as a complex interplay of patterns, as steps match musical rhythms and play them against the raga melodic scale. This tarana is composed in raga Shree, a morning melody. It is a creation of legendary vocalist Pandit Kumar Gandharva, in the rhythm known as drut tritaal, a fast cycle of 16 beats.

Indian classical kathak and Hindustani music evolved simultaneously over centuries to create a total performance form. Kathak finds its roots in 12th century North Indian temple arts, where storytellers called kathakas interpreted scripture—enacting characters, and telling stories with hand gestures, foot tapping, and music. In the 13th century, when temples were demolished during the Mughal invasions, the kathak form moved into Muslim royal courts. There, it merged with Persian and Arabic influenced Hindustani classical music, and the devotional dance became a fast, sophisticated court dance, performed for pleasure. After Indian independence, kathak was restructured for the stage, incorporating both the temple and court traditions. It's now known for its endless possibilities of rhythm, its fluid and graceful movement, natural acting, and dancers' ability to embrace and translate life experience.

Tarana is the name of a form created in part by Persian musician Amir Khusro. In the 13th century, he traveled to India to learn classical music. He found language was a great barrier to his studies, as Indian music was sung in poetic verse. He solved this by singing abstract syllables such as "tanom," "tom," and "tanana." This performance recreates the original tarana concept. The choreography merges with vocal music, recited rhythmic syllables, tabla percussion, bansuri flute, and string instruments.

The costume is traditional—a dupatta scarf, a dholi blouse, and a ghagra skirt that flares out as dancers spin. Ghugroos ankle bells, worn in every Indian classical form, play a leading role in kathak: every beat is captured, sounding the ring of bells with rhythmic tapping feet.

The piece was created in 2012 by choreographer Shambhavi Dandekar, founder of Shambhavi's International School of Kathak. She has been performing and teaching kathak since 1990. Before moving to California with her family in 2012, she primarily taught out of Pune, India, where she founded her dance school. Shambhavi learned kathak dance from her mother, renowned Guru Maneesha Sathe. She also learned Indian rhythm and aesthetics from tabla maestro Guru Suresh Talwalkar. Members of the company are students of Shambhavi and/or her mother.

kathakshambhavi.com

Dance Origin: North India • **Genre:** Kathak • **Title:** *Tarana* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Shambhavi Dandekar • **Dancers:** Meenal Chakradeo, Shambhavi Dandekar, Ashwini Gogate, Radhika Gokhale, Priyanka Mehendale, Snehal Katre-Parelkar, Shruti Naik Patankar, Sarveshwari Sathe, Meera Tamhankar • **Musicians:** Ruucha Bhawe (rhythm recitation), Prasad Bhandarkar (flute), Kunal M (rhythm recitation), Saneyee Purandare (vocals), Vikram Shrowty (Indian slide guitar), Ashish Tare (tabla)

San Francisco Flamenco Dance Company

Spain

In the pure flamenco idiom, the piece called *Farruca* is accompanied primarily by guitar. In this presentation, however, dancer-choreographers Melissa Cruz and Kerensa DeMars follow their inspiration to include as a lyrical introduction the beautiful song *Vidalita*. And they set their duet to intricate guitar melodies, vocals, and palmas hand-clapping. The *farruca* style was traditionally danced only by men. Here, the two women summon their flamenco angels, performing the dance with precision and focus: a choreography of powerful staccato footwork, strong lines, and sharp rhythmic changes.

Flamenco is the dynamic and emotional art form born in Andalucía, Spain. Its roots are in Roma, Moorish, Andalucian, and Sephardic music, and it found its modern form—and an audience—in the lively cafes of 19th-century Seville. Flamenco's foundation is its music—the song. Cante jondo, deep song, is the dark song of poetry at flamenco's heart; *Vidalita* is part of the cantes de ida y vuelta, flamenco styles influenced by Spanish migrations to South America. The lyrics sing of lost love:

*...y en ella te canto, Vidalita
el dolor que siento.
Ya se secó el arbolito
donde cantaba el pavo real
ya se murió, mi china querida
ya no la vuelvo a ver más...*

*...and in my sorrow I sing to you,
Vidalita, and the pain I feel.
The little tree has withered
where the peacock used to sing
My love has died
I'll never see her again...*

The *farruca* style was created at the turn of the last century by the Seville-born dancer, Faico, of the flamenco family known as Los Pelaos. It has become an established dance within the flamenco lexicon, and has been expanded upon and reinterpreted by many artists from Antonio Gades to Carmen Amaya. The last remaining dancer of the Pelao dynasty, Toni "El Pelao," mentored Kerensa DeMars during her

studies in Spain. Here in the Bay Area, Melissa Cruz and Kerensa DeMars are known for another radical move: dancing *farruca* in sleek-lined dresses, using their masculine bolero jackets like the baile de mantón flamenco shawl. Their performance today proves flamenco's exceptional popularity outside of Spain, growing over the past sixty years. The dancers developed this marvelous presentation as well-known dancers in Bay Area's flamenco community—a vibrant community of visiting artists from Spain and skilled local artists trained in Spain.

The piece was created in 2013 as a collaborative choreography by Melissa Cruz and Kerensa DeMars for the production *Flamenco*, and reset with new music in 2015. The San Francisco Flamenco Dance Company presents live flamenco dance performances every Sunday night in the heart of San Francisco and special events year-round. Led by Artistic Director Kerensa DeMars, the SFFDC will present its next production, *Mares*, featuring guest artists from Spain, at the Brava Theater September 17-18, 2016.

sanfranciscoflamenco.com

Dance Origin: Andalucía, Spain • **Genre:** Flamenco • **Title:** *Farruca* • **Artistic Director:** Kerensa DeMars • **Choreographers/Dancers:** Melissa Cruz, Kerensa DeMars • **Musicians:** Daniel Frías (guitar), Azriel Goldschmidt (vocals)

WORLD PREMIERE

Harsanari

West Java, Indonesia

The Sundanese title of this piece, *Enggalkeun*, means “to hurry something up.” The singer urges the man to quickly declare his love, because in West Java the man has to make the first move.

This duet is an example of the popular style known as jaipongan. In the late 1960s, when Indonesian President Sukarno called for a Sundanese indigenous art, Dr. Gugum Gumbira created this new choreography, merging traditional forms. He pulled elements from pencak silat martial arts and from the classical dance form tari keurseus. Another important source was ketuk tilu, a social dance involving a soloist improvising with members of the audience—a dance whose elements evolved from ancient rural folk forms and fertility rites. As Dr. Gumbira created jaipongan, he also drew ideas from Western modern dance and ballroom. These days, the dance form appears just about everywhere, from weddings to aerobic studios, and the spirited music inspires rapid-fire drumming competitions. Choreographed jaipongan pieces like today’s are also frequently performed.

In 1976, Dr. Gumbira and his wife, singer Euis Komariah, formed the Jugala company for recording and performing jaipongan. Dr. Gumbira still leads Jugala as the primary company devoted to jaipongan as he conceived it. Harsanari’s choreography was created in 2014 by two of Jugala’s primary dancer/choreographers: Achmad Farmis, S.Sn. (man’s part) and Diah Agustini, S.Sn. (woman’s part).

The female costume adapts traditional ketuk tilu costume with a wrapped top and sarung batik skirt, flowers, gold jewelry, and a belt—a style commonly worn for Indonesian stage performance. The male attire is from Indonesian martial arts, with sarong, stagen waistband, and batik head cloth. The recorded music was composed 1978 by Dr. Gumbira. It is performed by Euis Komariah and Jugala’s jaipongan orchestra, a Sundanese gamelan of metallophones, gongs, drums, rebab spike fiddles, and suling bamboo flutes. Musicians engage in a call and response with the singer,

who vocalizes in a form called seunggak. The name “jaipong” arose naturally during performance: musicians used syllables while performing drum patterns—“blak ting pong”—and audiences shouted “ja-i-pong!” in response.

Harsanari is a San Francisco-based Indonesian dance company founded in 1997 to promote appreciation of traditional Sundanese dance and culture in America through participation and performance. Under the leadership of Michael Ogi, Harsanari focuses on classical and folk dance forms of West Java, and includes dances from Sumatra in repertoire. Harsanari performs at cultural events throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Since 2000, Michael has studied regularly in Bandung, West Java with Achmad Farmis and Diah Agustini. Both Mr. Farmis and Ms. Agustini have visited San Francisco to teach the company.

harsanari.org

Genre: Sundanese Jaipongan • **Title:** *Enggalkeun* • **Artistic Director:** Michael Ogi • **Choreographers:** Diah Agustini S.Sn., Achmad Farmis S.Sn. • **Dancers:** Rachella Farmis, Michael Ogi

WORLD PREMIERE

Ballet Folklórico Netzahualcoyotl

Mexico

For indigenous communities of Veracruz—Totonac, Nahua, and Huastec people—*La Danza de Huahas* is an important folkloric danza, based on the people’s relationship to the solar year and its real and spiritual connection to agricultural life.

The Mexican state of Veracruz is about 20% indigenous-speaking people whose ancestors lived by hunting, fishing, and farming corn, beans, chili peppers, and squash. Their culture was first conquered by Aztecs. When the Spaniards arrived in 1519, about 250,000 people still spoke Totonac dialects.

La Danza de Huahas is ceremonial and impressive, as dancers beat hand drums, stomp boots, and slide forward in intricately patterned lines. Their precision expresses devotion to gods and land, and they summon rain and abundance. The ritual choreography links agricultural patterns to divine aspects of the sky—specifically to the sun and seasonal cycles. Men mount a rotating wooden wheel, and they call forth the spirit of the sun. The wheel represents time’s rotation and the revolution of the universe, the basis of creation and genesis of cosmic life.

This vibrant folkloric danza is famous for its bright headdress made of reeds interwoven with paper and ribbon. In Veracruz, a similar, larger headdress is worn for *Danza de Los Quetzales*, a ritual representation traced back to ancient Mesoamerica, honoring the sacred quetzal bird, representative of the sun, virility, fertility, and water. That headdress resembles the male quetzal bird’s ruffled crown. In *Danza de Huahas*, the headdress evokes the sun, another divine messenger from the heavens.

This performance, a premiere for the company, is created by artistic director Netza Vidal based on choreography by Miguel Belez Arceo, founding director of the Ballet Folklórico of the Universidad Veracruzana. Arceo’s mission was to stage folklore with a deep respect for the original canons.

Netza Vidal founded Ballet Folklórico Netzahualcoyotl in 1996. Born in Compostela, Nayarit, Mexico, he studied Mexican Folkloric dance at the Escuela de la Danza Mexicana with Jaime Buentello Bazán. For twenty years, he has been an instructor and director of Mexican folkloric dance, beginning his career as dance director at San Rafael High School in Marin County. Vidal is the general and artistic director, leading his company with its own unique style, costume designs, music, and choreography. The company is currently composed of more than one hundred students from many different cultures. The company’s mission is to empower the community and to educate the general public by providing a greater understanding and appreciation for Mexican culture and folklore through music, dance, and traditional art forms.

[facebook.com/ballet.netzahualcoyotl](https://www.facebook.com/ballet.netzahualcoyotl)

Dance Origin: Veracruz, Mexico • **Genre:** Danza • **Title:** *La Danza de Huahas* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Netza Vidal • **Dancers:** Cristina Alvarado, Daniela Alvarado, Catalina Aldana, Crystal Avalos, Ayanna Badias, Nathalie Bautista, Jada Becerra, Lucero Carreño, Zazil Chacon, Natalie Davilla, Alexandra Duran, Angela Espinoza, Delia Espinoza, Leslie Espinoza, Alfredo Felix, Leilah Garcia, Daniela Gocobachi, Daniel Gomez, Rocio Lopez, Sofia Lopez, Jacqueline Mares, Christian Mendoza, Juan Carlos Morales, Mia Olivarez, Ana Palomares, Alfredo Ramos, Kimberly Ramos, Denise Rodriguez, Lizeth Rodriguez, Xanat Rodriguez, Miguel Tapia, Karla Toledo, Netza Vidal, Oscar Zamora

Parangal Dance Company

Philippines

Parangal Dance Company presents indigenous cultural dance from the rugged Cordillera Mountain Range in Northern Luzon. For the Ga'dang and Kalinga people, these dances and rituals pay homage to the gods, connect with the spirit world, and honor traditions on Earth.

The first section, *Mayag si Kararwa*, or *Calling of the Soul*, is an ancient healing tradition unique to Ga'dang communities of the Paracelis municipality. It is rarely practiced in today's mostly Christian villages, and Parangal learned it from Ga'dang elders. In this ritual, a medium—makammang—enters a trance to channel the spirit world, calling back a human soul that has wandered off in sickness or after death. He stands at the foot of stairs in an afflicted person's house, rolling down a sacred cloth to invite the soul's return. The parent puts a sipat bead on the medium's hand as payment; the assistant places a bowl of rice to catch the footprints of the returning soul. After the rite, the community celebrates with an eagle-like *Tontak* dance.

The second part, *Manlinawa Biyeg—Home and Harmony*—shows dances from Kalinga villages high in the Lubuagan mountains, a remote indigenous region that did not fall under Spanish-Christian influence. Here, Parangal presents Bay Area resident Jenny Bawer Young, a Kalinga culture-bearer from Lubuagan. These dances are from the prosperous and culturally-rich Kalinga community:

- *Gayang-gayang*, depicting flying birds;
- *Manbuka*, showing villagers working and singing, "Let's build rice terraces. It is a source of life;"
- *Kalasag*, a warrior dance;
- *Bodong*, showing a peace pact between elders known as pangat;
- *Salip*, demonstrating courtship dances from three Kalinga areas: slow-motion pieces from Balbalan; and Tinglayan/Lubuagan dances resembling eagles;
- *Lilay*, a finale dance for unity and peace among the Kalinga and Ga'dang.

The percussive Kalinga music is played by Parangal Dance Company and American

Center of Philippine Arts on gangsa gongs in the tuppaya rhythm. The traditional clothing is created by families and communities of the Philippine culture bearers of this presentation.

Eric Solano created the pieces in 2015, drawing on 2014 field research, learning steps and music from cultural bearers and master artists: Jenny Bawer Young and Cirilo Sapi Bawer for Kalinga; Amparo Mabanag and Margareth Balansi for Ga'dang. This is Parangal's first Cordillera presentation at our *Festival*.

Parangal Dance Company creates awareness and advocates for Philippine indigenous people's culture, traditions, and stories through attire, music, and dance. Parangal was founded in 2008 and its name means "tribute."

parangal.org

Dance Origin: Philippines • **Genre:** Traditional –Paracelis, Mountain Province, and Lubuagan, Kalinga, Northern Luzon • **Title:** *Kopyan Chi Biyeg* • **Creative Director/Choreographer:** Eric Solano • **Music Director:** Major Julian • **Dancers:** Eden Alcomendas, Amado Rey Arcilla, June Arellano, Brian Batugo, Vanessa Gomez-Brake, Alexander Cedillo, Marissa Cruz, Marielle Cuison, Mark Diao, Jason Walse-Dominguez, Christine Joy Amagan Ferrer, Veronica Forbes, Ritchel Gazo, Victoria Hafalia, Ronald Inocencio, Gilbert Laylay, Maryjo Malabuyo, Michael Macayan, Jonathan Mercado, Stephanie Montemayor, Divina Ojascastro, Nathan Perucho, Joseph Racca, Maria Lauron-Ramos, Kim Requesto, Ophelia Nombrao Sampang, Jet Tagle, Ieda Torio, Dio-Ann Valmores, Jacoby Young, Jenny Bawer Young, Denise Wong • **Musicians:** Vanessa Gomez-Brake (solibao), Eric Dong (gansa), Ervin Lopes (gansa), Herna Cruz-Louie (gansa) Zach Raha (gansa, tongatong), Eric Solano (gansa), Denise Wong (tongatong), Bawer Young (tongatong, pateteg)

Chinese Performing Arts of America

China

Blue Vase Spirit illustrates a fantasy based in local history, an elegant performance of Chinese classical dance. The setting is the dock of San Francisco's Pacific Mail Steamship Company, once located in what is now the city's South Beach neighborhood. A cargo of blue and white porcelain vases arrives at the docks, and Chinese dockhands are reminded of their homeland. Reading the workers' sorrow, the vases appear as dream spirits, giving comfort and blessing to the poor men far from home. The costumes by Beijing Dance Academy show a blue floral design on white, typical of a Chinese porcelain vase.

Artistic Director Ann Woo (narrative and music arrangement) and Yang Yang (principal dancer and choreographer) created this piece to remind us that America is a nation of immigrants—hopeful, hardworking people who continue to share stories of sweat and tears. Their inspiration was a contemporary Chinese song, *Away From Home*. Its sorrowful lyrics tell us: *The spring shower has awakened the young leaves. The fallen leaves are flowing in the brook. I am thinking of my loved ones far, far away.* Ann writes, "This poignant story from San Francisco history has surely been reenacted many times."

In 1867, Pacific Mail Steamship launched the first regular trans-Pacific steamship service linking the US with Asia, bringing West Coast furs to Yokohama, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, and returning with Chinese porcelains, lacquers, teas, and silks. Pacific Mail also transported Chinese immigrants to California—laborers who finished the transcontinental railroad and contractors for San Francisco's salmon canning industry—communities that vastly enriched California's economy and culture. In the 1800s, ordinances restricted housing and employment for anyone born in China. From 1882 to 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act sadly prevented many immigrants from reuniting with families they'd left behind.

Han Chinese Classical Dance is an ancient, demanding, refined, and expressive form, rooted in five millennia of imperial culture and folk tradition. In 1919, dedicated artists systematically documented Chinese dance and introduced its formal teaching, merging elements of refined dance, folk opera, and European ballet with flips, spins, and tumbling from Chinese martial arts. One unique element is the ladies' rapid heel-to-toe mini-step; they glide across the stage as if floating. The form also gives particular attention to "bearing," a grace emerging from inner feeling, connection to breath, and state of mind. In Chinese classical dance, movements are led by the spirit, culture imparted by the Divine.

Founded in 1991, Chinese Performing Arts of America's mission is to introduce Chinese culture as an integral part of American society, and to promote cultural diversity through collaboration and international cultural events. CPAA's headquarters is a 14,000 square foot facility in San Jose, an incubator of over 40 teachers who teach their arts to 2,000 art enthusiasts every week.

chineseperformingarts.org

Dance Origin: China • **Genre:** Classical • **Title:** *Blue Vase Spirit* • **Artistic Director:** Ann Woo • **Choreographer:** Yang Yang • **Dancers:** Christina Cheng, Allie Dong, Felisha Fan, Elaine Huang, Virginia Jian, Agnes Ko, Jennifer Pan, Tiffany Wang, Xin Wang, Kailyn Xu, Michelle Xu, Yang Yang

Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA Kinuko Mototake Okinawan Dance Academy

Okinawa

In this meditative performance of traditional Okinawan dance, the dynamics of the songs are of special importance: a song with a relaxed pace is followed by a faster song. To begin, *Kui nu Hana—Flowers of Love*—expresses the somber, sweet agony of lovers separated by distance. The lyrics reveal more:

It is snowing in the garden and the plum flowers are in bloom. / My sweet lady's warm heart is as gentle as the tropical summer breeze. / In my garden there are no plum blossoms, so why do I hear the cry of the nightingale night after night? / It is not the nightingale at all. It is my Prince, whose sweet melody and alluring song calls to me, drawing me into my garden to embrace the love of my dreams.

The second song, *Iwai Bushi—Song of Celebration*—conveys a couple's happiness when they are reunited where springtime flowers bloom:

In the valley of Nakazato, flowers bloom beautifully throughout the land. I'd like to share the blossoms with you.

The piece showcases Okinawa's traditional aesthetic sensibility, developed during the Ryukyuan era, 15th to 19th century. The island-kingdom had exceptional shipbuilding and maritime skills; and it used them to command prosperous trade routes in the China Sea—between China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Over time, in the aristocratic Ryukyuan court, the ritualized gesture and song of Okinawan prayer blossomed into a stylized performance of inner thought and emotion. Centuries of trade brought new inventions and art forms to Okinawa. For example, the musical instruments for this piece are the 3-stringed sanshin, like the Japanese shamisen, and the taiko drum. The song *Kui nu Hana* is no doubt a cultural appropriation from Japan as snow never falls, and plum blossoms are not very common in the subtropical Ryukyus. The musical scale is similar to a Japanese scale, with parallels elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The dance

techniques and gestures are also of Japanese origin.

The *bingata* style kimono is stenciled with flowers, birds, waves, and clouds: as the dancers changes pace, bright designs intensify or calm the mood.

Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA Kinuko Mototake Okinawan Dance Academy was formed in the Bay Area in 1996 with the goal of making Okinawa traditional arts live long and to pass them down to younger generations in the US. Kinuko Mototake offers classes to introduce the unique cultural aspects of Okinawa through dance, costumes, and music.

Dance Origin: Okinawa • **Genre:** Traditional
• **Title:** *Kui Nu Hana; Iwai Bushi* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Master Kinuko Mototake • **Dancers:** Mieko Merrill, Master Kinuko Mototake

Espíritu Andino

Bolivia

The geography of Bolivia includes the Central Andes to the west, the Amazon River to the east, and in the southeast, El Gran Chaco, a vast geography of plains and virgin deciduous forest shared by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay. El Chaco is the hottest and driest region of Bolivia. About 300,000 people—mostly mestizo or indigenous—live in the region's many small towns.

This performance takes us to a celebration around a fire pit in El Chaco. Women gather and greet each other, and the men come in from the fields, relieved the long workday has ended. *Espíritu Andino* presents three dances, accompanied by guitars, bombo, and violin.

Chacarera is a flirtatious dance. It's a game of advance and retreat, with the men demonstrating their skilled *escobilleo* footwork, a smooth and rapid form of *zapateo*, trying to impress the women. The *chacarera* has roots in Spanish flamenco, with some movements originating in daily farm tasks.

The popular *El Gato—The Cat*—has a quick *alegría* rhythm related to the *chacarera*. Musicians will often improvise sly lyrics to the song or stop to tell a joke. Here, the dancers joke around with hand shaking, jumping, and elaborate foot work.

The Bolivian *cueca*, *Cueca Boliviana*, changes flavor in different regions, showing typical spirit characterized in music and dance. For example, the *cueca* in La Paz is formal, slow, and elegant; the form from El Chaco—on today's stage—is *Cueca Chapaca*, lively and fast. It's danced with enthusiasm and happiness: dancers can jump and run through the whole song. It's a beloved national dance. The women exhibit their dancing skills with the deft swirling of skirts; a section featuring the sound of rapid unison *zapateo*; and the fast *jaleo* section, with its language of twirling handkerchiefs used in the game of seduction.

The musicians perform the song, *Corazon de Sudamérica—Heart of South America*—singing of a great love for their country:

*Pueblos valientes y altivos
Unidos por siempre hermanos
Del altiplano a los valles
Del amazona a los llanos...
...Bolivia patria querida
Yo soy tuyo y tú eres mía*

*Brave and proud people
Brothers forever united
From the highlands to the valleys
From the Amazon to the plains...
...Bolivia, beloved homeland
I am yours and you are mine*

The costumes were made in Tarija, Bolivia. The women wear long flower-print skirts in warm colors, ruffles, and flowers in their braided hair. The style evokes the colonial era. The men wear cowhide hats and pants, with flamenco-influenced shirts and boots; with gaucho baggy pants and ponchos to keep warm in the strong wind.

Jacqueline Gumucio is Artistic Director and choreographer, with assistance from Dexter Fernandez and Olivia Betancourt. Jacqueline learned these dances in Bolivia with Ballet Folklórico Boliviano. *Espíritu Andino* is a company with a mission to demonstrate the folklore that is Bolivia through music and dance. The group was founded in 2003 on the principle of teaching Bolivian dances to all who wish to learn.

[facebook.com/BolivianDanceTeam](https://www.facebook.com/BolivianDanceTeam)

Dance Origin: Bolivia • **Genre:** Traditional •
Title: *Chacarera; El Gato; Cueca Chapaca*
Artistic Director: Jacqueline Gumucio
Choreographers: Olivia Betancourt, Dexter Fernandez, Jacqueline Gumucio • **Dancers:** Olivia Betancourt, Jairo Caballero, Dexter Fernandez, Jacqueline Gumucio, Raquel Zegarra • **Musicians:** Georges Lammam (violin), Eddy Navia (guitar), Gabriel Navia (guitar), Fernando Sanjines (bombo)

Khaley Adouna African Dance & Drum with Domou Africa

Senegal

Wango is from the Toucouleur tribe living in Fouta Toro in the Senegal River Valley of Northern Senegal and Southern Mauritania. They call themselves “Haapulaar’en,” meaning: those who speak pulaar,” the first language of the Fula people. The Toucouleur live in many parts of Western Africa. They are Islamic and have close-knit patriarchal communities, so courtship and marriage have long been a formal arrangement between families. This presentation of *Wango* honors Toucouleur marriage beliefs and practices—with celebratory dance and drum.

This dance represents events over several days of a traditional wedding. The men have validated the marriage at the mosque. The bride’s mother and aunt have confirmed her virginity, and she is taken to her new husband’s home, where the families celebrate. The female relatives of the bride play with her and tease her, to congratulate her on entering a new stage of life. Relatives and friends dance solos and finally the bride dances, affirming she is chaste. Families gather to witness the washing of the bride’s bedclothes from her first night of marriage.

Wango is a high-energy dance particular to this ethnic group. Dancers open their arms and hands wide, and they move from left to right, forward and backwards, as if giving and receiving gifts of fabrics, shea butter, soaps, and kola nuts. The costumes showcase the tribe’s bright and unique fashions—the famous Toucouleur gold earrings, hair adornments, and indigo-dyed clothing. The women’s facial markings represent traditional tattooing and scarring designs. Throughout the dance we can hear the prominent sabar drum that is always present in Senegalese dance. It’s joined by three other drums: djembe, djoun-djoun, and tama.

The piece was created in 2015 by Oumou D. Faye and Danielle DeLane. Oumou was born in Senegal and performed with Ballet Sinemew and Ballet Bakh Yaye, and was

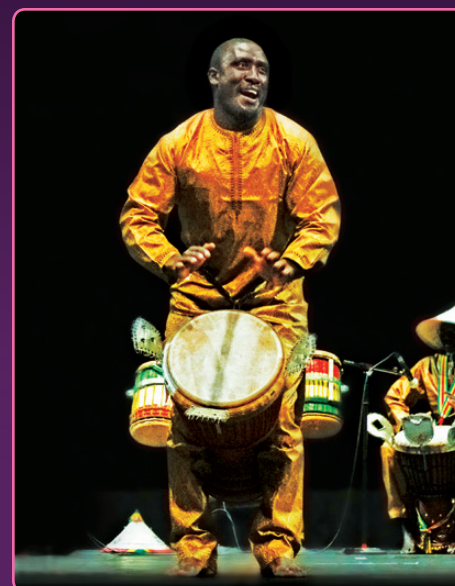
trained in Toucouleur dance tradition. Danielle learned Toucouleur dance from Naomi Diouf, Mariama Basse, and Idy Ciss: she recently traveled to Senegal, and chose this piece to display the variety, beauty, and grace of the Toucouleur people.

Khaley Adouna African Dance & Drum is a collective of performing artists based in the East Bay, formed in 2006 to further promote cultural arts by creating opportunities for independent artists to collectively share their talents with the Bay Area community. The company performs for audiences and conducts dance and drum workshops, also supporting and promoting touring artists and their events while in the Bay Area. The artists of Khaley Adouna are accomplished men and women of all shapes, sizes, and ages, bringing a diverse range of skill to the stage and community.

khaleyadouna.com

Dance Origin: Senegal, West Africa • **Genre:** Traditional (Toucouleur) • **Title:** *Wango* • **Directors/Choreographers:** Danielle DeLane, Oumou D. Faye • **Dancers:** LaTashia Bell, Sennie Clark, Danielle DeLane, Oumou D. Faye, Darian LaFoucade, Dedeh LaFoucade, Nikka Maynard, Diene Sagna, Christopher Scott, Sherice Tyler • **Musicians:** Mbor Faye (djembe), Ousmane Gueye (sabar), Samba Guisse (djoun-djoun, tama)

A Special Acknowledgement of the Festival’s Musicians



For 38 years, this festival has been called the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, and yet it has always been just as much about music as it is about dance.

Mbor Faye performing with Khaley Adouna African Dance and Drum, photo by Steven Blumenkranz

The musicians of Khaley Adouna African Dance and Drum have performed on our *Festival* stage with different dance groups over the years, which is true for many of the talented musicians that you will see performing alongside the *Festival* dancers. The music and dance support one another in intricate ways, and the *Festival* is only what it is because of this magical dynamic that is often taken for granted.

The Bay Area’s local drumming community is especially impressive, with accomplished artists teaching and performing year-round. One of the most important local teachers is our *Festival* Artistic Director CK Ladzekpo, who is a member of a renowned family of African musicians and dancers who traditionally serve as lead drummers and composers among the Anlo-Ewe people of southeastern Ghana. CK founded the African music program at the University of California, Berkeley, which was the first non-European music program

at an American university. He cracked open the door for the study of world music and has been continuously teaching *African Music, Drum, and Dance* at UC Berkeley since 1973. His knowledge is vast, and he is well known as one of the best translators of traditional West African spiritual concepts of life.

Studying drumming with CK is a philosophical endeavor, and his students learn the ways in which drum rhythm principles, particularly polyrhythms, can be used to help one navigate life’s obstacles. For the Anlo-Ewe people of southeastern Ghana, there is only one word for both dance and music as they embody a wholeness in spirit. In Anlo-Ewe culture, when someone gets sick, the healer is called, and the healer’s first question is, “When did this person stop dancing?” The diagnosis begins from that starting place. CK has said that there is a drum rhythm to heal all maladies, and there is much to learn from our drum masters.

This weekend, we encourage you to keep an eye out for Georges Lammam, who is performing with Espiritu Andino on violin. Georges is a breathtaking musician who will also be playing during weekend three as a featured artist at our Belly Dance Cabaret, as well in a series of innovative cross-cultural transitions on stage throughout the program.

Weekend 2 features dances and music from India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and Tajikistan.



Nicaragua Danza, Hijos del Maíz
Photo by RJ Muna

Weekend 2

June 11 & 12

In the Palace Lobby:
Music by Vinic-Kay (La Gente y El Canto)

Gamelan Sekar Jaya
Traditional North Balinese Kebyar

Aliah Najmabadi
Tajik Traditional

Ballet Folklórico Nube de Oro
Mexican Folkloric (Chihuahua)

AguaClara Flamenco
Spanish Flamenco (Martinete)

Chhandam Youth Dance Company
Indian Kathak

LIKHA - Pilipino Folk Ensemble
Filipino Folkloric (Tausug and Maranao)

Nicaragua Danza, Hijos del Maíz
Afro-Nicaraguan

Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers
Scottish Traditional

Jikelele South African Dance Theater
South African Zulu, Xhosa, and Migrant

Ensamblés Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco
Mexican Folkloric (Nayarit)

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

WORLD PREMIERE

Gamelan Sekar Jaya

Indonesia

Pudak Sinunggal is named for the mystically fragrant pudak flower mentioned in early Indonesian poetic texts. “Sinunggal” means “solo” or “standing alone.” In this presentation, a group of women dance in the androgynous bebancihan style, with a wide stance—shoulders held high and body kept taught—creating an image of masculine power.

Over centuries, Indonesian dance and music co-evolved inseparably. Dancers merge with music, seeking unity in every gesture, nuance, expression, phrase, and rhythmic change. A fluttering hand mirrors a rapid musical figuration; when a deep gong sounds, a glance falls. Movements derive from nature—the swaying of a tree, opening of a flower, bathing of a bird in a pool. Dancers also portray archetypal Balinese characters who are halus (refined) or kasar (coarse), or something in between. Balinese dance has long been central to sacred activities at temples and springs, and today’s secular concerts also include dancers. The art is learned through direct transfer, a master teacher conveying everything through kinetic sensation. Adjusting a posture perfects a movement; a smile conveys gentleness; a fiery glance demands an aggressive move. Teachers sing gong strokes, drum accents, and melodies—fusing musical connections in the dancer’s mind and body. With a deep understanding of musical forms, a dancer’s movements cue musicians to begin, change pace, or create musical accents.

The music is from a kebyar-style gamelan, a gong orchestra with a great number and diverse tuning of gongs—created in the village of Menyali in the 1940’s, in Northern Bali. Virtuoso musicians play unbelievably fast, hitting between each other’s beats, while the low kebyar gong sustains musical structure. *Pudak Sinunggal*, created by Bapak Putu Kota (music) and Bapak Sindu (dance), also first appeared in 1940’s Menyali. It was reconstructed by renowned kebyar master Bapak I Made Keranca in 2014, with artistic support from Çudamani, taught to Gamelan Sekar Jaya Guest Dance Director Ni Luh Andarawati, and set

for our stage. Guest Music Director Ida Bagus Made Widnyana leads the 20-musician ensemble. The costume shows the pudak flower’s palm frond shape in the headdress and bodice, and traditional bebancihan short pants and pleated over-skirt allow for the wide plié stance of the androgynous form.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya is a Bay Area company specializing in Balinese music and dance. Founded in 1979, GSJ has performed internationally—from New York’s Symphony Space, to the Hollywood Bowl, to remote Balinese villages. The only group outside of Indonesia to receive the Dharma Kusuma, Bali’s highest award for artistic achievement, GSJ is renowned for its exploration of traditional and modern forms through long-term residencies with Bali’s finest artists. Its mission is to foster artistic exchange between Bali and the US through residencies, workshops, performances, and the creation of innovative new works; and to share the excitement of this exchange.

gsj.org

Dance Origin: North Bali, Indonesia • **Genre:** Classical North Balinese Kebyar Dance • **Title:** *Pudak Sinunggal* • **Director:** Emiko Saraswati Susilo • **Choreographer:** Bapak Sindu; reconstruction by Bapak Keranca • **Guest Dance Director:** Bapak I Made Keranca • **Guest Music Director:** Ida Bagus Made Widnyana • **Dancers:** Gamelan Sekar Jaya Company dancers under the direction of Guest Dance Director I Made Keranca • **Musicians:** David Aue, Lani Arofah, Phil Cox, Austin De Rubira, Bea Deering, Tom Deering (gong kebyar coordinator), Sara Gambina-Belknap, Todd Greenspan, Vanessa Harris, Steve Johnson, I Made Keranca, Clarence Magno, Lauren Miller, Rick Phillips, I Made Putrayasa, Anya Rome, Bruce Salvisberg, Peter Steele, Ida Bagus Made Widnyana, Rob Wilkins

Aliah Najmabadi

Tajikistan

In *Ayomi Ishq*, soloist Aliah Najmabadi presents a traditional Tajik form called shashmaqom, meaning six maqoms. A maqom is a musical form with a set tonal scale, rhythmic pattern, melodic development, and expression of emotion. The maqom for this dance is called rast, known for expressing the spiritual resonance of God.

Shashmaqom has a unique vocal style of sung poetry, devotional songs. In the poem for this piece, by Persian poet Saadi Shirazi, human love is used as a metaphor for The Beloved, who is always The Divine. The dancer brings the poetry to life, her movement in space drawing us into the meeting place of poetry, music, and dance. As she spins, punctuating her movements with sharp, staccato wrist articulations, she personally identifies with each poetic line. Her expansive gestures create elongated lines as she reaches in longing. The defining moment of a shashmaqom performance arrives with the singer’s climactic “awj,” building in intensity, a spiraling towards the cosmos and return to Earth again.

This excerpt from the poem *Ayomi Ishq* is in Persian/Tajik, translated by Marus Noyostov:

*Ishq ra aghaaz hast too anjom nist
Komi har jooyandara akhi rist
Orifaaan ra intihaya komi nist
Har kasi ra nomi mashuqhe ki hast
Mebarand mashuqhe maa ra nom nist*

*Love has no beginning and no end
The goal of every seeker is the path’s end
The enlightened ones’ thirst never ends
Whoever has a name of the beloved
Our beloved has no name*

The dancer’s Northern Tajikistan dress is also symbolic. An old text on Sufi color theory by Najm al-Din Kubra connects the color white to the soul and spiritual aspiration. The fitted dress enhances spins; the dancer also wears jewelry, a crown, and a brocade coat embellished with gold embroidery. The

shashmaqom form has been designated a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage shared by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Shashmaqom lyrics were politicized in both countries, supporting nationalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The bilingual canon is being revisited, and this piece is in Tajik.

Aliah Najmabadi choreographed this piece in 2015 based on years of study in Central Asia, with grateful acknowledgement to her tireless teachers and mentors. Dedicated to preserving and revitalizing performing arts of Central Asia, Iran, and diaspora communities, she served as Program Director in Tajikistan of the Tajik Dance Initiative; Assistant Director/Principal Dancer of Ballet Afsaneh, 1998-2008; dancer, Wan-Chao Chang Dance, 2008-2011; and on the Isadora Duncan Dance Award Committee, 2010. Her Masters of Music, Performance degree is from SOAS, UK; UCLA Bachelor’s degrees are in Iranian Studies and World Arts and Cultures.

Dance Origin: Tajikistan • **Genre:** Traditional
Title: *Ayomi Ishq* • **Choreographer/Soloist:** Aliah Najmabadi • **Composer:** Nerya Aminov • **Musicians:** Sonja Drakulich (vocals), Gary Haggerty (tarhu), Yasin Sumits (dutar)

WORLD PREMIERE

Ballet Folklórico Nube de Oro

Mexico

Imagine we are near a Mexican rancho in the state of Chihuahua, where a street celebration is about to begin. The conjunto norteño band—El Origen, from Chihuahua—opens up the festivities. It's *Una Noche en Chihuahua, A Night in Chihuahua*, a fiesta for a quinceañera, a girl's fifteenth birthday and her coming of age. The young quinceañera, in her white and gold dress, greets her friends and she's crowned with a tiara—la corona—signifying she is now a woman. The young men and ladies then accompany and encircle her in the first dance, *Mi Reina*. Next they will show us how three polkas are danced, Chihuahua-style.

Santa Rita, a renowned polka, is dedicated to the region's patron saint, Santa Rita de Casia. This choreography shows an estilo alzado, an elegant straight-backed style, the posture inspired by ballroom dances of Spanish Mexico. To honor the Mexico-US border, Erik Díaz includes country-style steps from Texas and an elegant tejano cowboy-style of dress.

Parque Anáhuac is named after the park where musicians practiced. (One of today's musicians helped create this fast-paced polka.) The difficult kicks and jumps allow dancers to demonstrate their skills, as each couple moves together.

Sobre los Rieles—On the Railroad Tracks—is also an old song in a new polka form. The choreography of circles and constant movement suggests a moving train.

The state of Chihuahua lies in northeast Mexico, bordering southeast Texas. When 19th-century Czech and Polish immigrants brought their culture to the region, communities took to European polkas and waltzes, accordions, brass instruments, and beer; and now they own them with a unique Mexican style. Polkas and marches (some of them becoming folk tunes called corridos, sung to relay messages in the Mexican Revolution) became favorites on the ranches in Chihuahua.

Choreography and staging are by Erik Noé Díaz. Díaz and Maestro César Alejandro Orta of Chihuahua investigated the steps and

sequences to create a choreography exhibiting intricate footwork with energy and excitement. Díaz expresses his gratitude for the cultural interchange and the evolution of these dances, saying, "This piece is a tribute to three great maestros whose talent and creativity brought us a great part of Chihuahua folklore: Maestra Leonor Ávalos Zaragoza; Maestro Antonio Rubio Sagarnaga; Professor José de Jesus Dominguez y Torres; with many thanks also to Maestro César Alejandro Orta for all his research and guidance."

Ballet Folklórico Nube de Oro is a nonprofit dance organization founded in 1995 with the purpose of teaching and preserving Mexican folkloric dance. Nube de Oro's goals—the development of its dancers' education, and pride and promotion of cultural dances—have been consistent for 20 years. The group, which began with 25 dancers, is now over 60 dancers strong and still very committed to sharing with youth and the community. The Artistic Director is Irma Hernández Abella.

bfndo.com

Dance Origin: Mexico • **Genre:** Folkloric (Chihuahua) • **Title:** *Una Noche en Chihuahua* • **Artistic Director:** Irma Hernández Abella • **Instructor and Choreographer:** Erik Noé Díaz • **Costume Design:** Lidia Yulemy Carbajal, Roberto Rayos • **Dancers:** Irma Hernández Abella, Alexis Atherley, Daniel Atherley, Adrian Becerra, Elisa Cabrera, Tatiana Córdova, Erik Noé Díaz, Elías Guerrero, Karina Gutiérrez, Maya Gutiérrez, Adelissa Hernández, Brenda Yuliana Hernández, Connie Laborin, Jován López, Alexis Oversen, Briana Partida, Osvaldo Ramírez Vidales, Gabriel Salgado, Marisela Salgado, Josué David Sánchez, Luis Héctor Sánchez, Abdiel Trejo, Daniel Trejo • **Musicians:** Grupo Norteño El Origen: Isaac Aguirre (saxophone), Mauricio Tarín Flores (accordion, vocals), Osvaldo Alejandro Guadarrama (tecnico), Edgar Iván Gutiérrez (bajo sexto), Raúl Alberto Ramírez (drums), Francisco, Javier Sáenz (tuba)

AguaClara Flamenco

Spain

AguaClara Flamenco presents an eloquent and fierce performance of Spanish flamenco called *Martinete*. The martinete is one of the oldest, most intense song forms or palos in flamenco repertoire. It is a cante jondo, or "deep song," from the family of unaccompanied cantes known as tonás, where haunting vocals are bare and prominent. The performance is demanding, with strong footwork, expressive marking steps, and surprising exchanges of energy and repose.

Flamenco history is shrouded in the dark years of the Spanish Inquisition. Cante jondo is often called an echo of human suffering, born and evolved in Seville's 16th-century forges, where Sephardic, indigenous Andalusian, Moorish, and Gitano gypsy blacksmiths labored without hope. The martinete is named for the Spanish martillo—hammer—and singing is traditionally accompanied by palmas (handclapping), stamping, and the ring of a hammer striking an anvil. The coplas—verses—are often only fragments, and many contemporary singers improvise the lyrics, honoring flamenco's traditional freedom. The lyrics you'll hear today sing of Triana, a historically Gitano neighborhood of Seville:

*Ay en el barrio de Triana
No hay pluma ni tintero
para escribirle a mi mare
Que hace veinte años que no la veo.*

*In the neighborhood of Triana
There is no pen or ink
to write to my mother
who I have not seen in twenty years*

This performance is a new choreography within the framework of traditional letras (verses) of martinete, and debla form of martinete, set in 2015 by Artistic Director Clara Rodríguez. The martinete was originally a song, and Antonio El Bailarin adapted it for dance in the 1950s as a masculine form. Many dancers feature it in performance, and it's increasingly danced by women, for love of its percussive zapateado footwork. Flamenco music and dance are inseparable expressions: Clara's choreography

emphasizes the minimal and lyrical quality of the cante and the trance-like rhythm—its effect on both dancer and audience. The somber costuming mirrors the dark symbolism and themes of cante jondo, with a feminine design.

AguaClara Flamenco was formed in 2011 in Oakland by dancer/choreographer/musician Clara Rodríguez, recognized as one of the leading flamenco performers of the region. Rodríguez has performed in the flamenco tablaos of Granada, Spain, the Jaipur Palace of India, in Portugal, and has been a featured soloist in productions throughout the US, including the Paramount Theater, War Memorial Opera House, Yerba Buena Center, and Palace of Fine Arts. AguaClara Flamenco presented two full-length works in 2012 and 2015 at the Cowell Theater in San Francisco.

aguaclaraflamenco.com

Dance Origin: Andalucía, Spain • **Genre:** Flamenco • **Title:** *Martinete* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Clara Rodríguez • **Dancers:** Sandra Durand, Alice Glasner, Maha Hamdan, Andrea La Canela, Claudia Barros-Morrison Yuli Norrish, Clara Rodríguez • **Musicians:** Marlon Aldana (cajón, djembe), Roberto Zamora (vocals)

WORLD PREMIERE

Chhandam Youth Dance Company

India

*Yato hasto, stato dristhi
Yato dristhi, stato mana(ha)
Yato mana, stato bhava
Yato bhava, stato rasa*

*Wherever go the hands,
so follows the gaze
Wherever go the eyes,
so follows attunement of mind
Wherever goes the mind,
so follows expression of feeling
Wherever goes expression of feeling,
there goes mood, flavor, essence*

In *Yato Bhavo, Stato Rasa*, hand gestures, movements and rhythms invoke the grounded Earth, the fluidity of water and wind, and the pure light of fire. As all things move within infinite space, dancers fly across the stage to present atman—the soul’s essence—liberated and celebrated in joy.

This performance focuses on nritta, the abstract dance aspect of the classical Indian dance form known as kathak. It also evokes moods with the interplay between dramatic music and movement. The performance begins with three ancient Sanskrit verses, as the dancers’ movements evoke eternal cycles of destruction and creation, death, and rebirth. The first verse evokes the progression of the subtle feelings in the dance; the second pays homage to the gurus: the Creator Brahma, preserver Vishnu, and destroyer Maheshvara (Shiva). The final verse also has a universal theme, evoking space, time, matter, and eternal soul, as well as physical elements of wind, fire, water, and earth. As we hear the spoken rhythm syllables called bols, we are reminded that the body dances on Earth as a spiritual offering. The bols are symbolic: “ta” for the body; “thei” for the ground; and “ei” for The Lord.

The costume is in the angikar style with close-fit churidar pants, and shows ancient and modern Hindu and Muslim origins, with flowers and colors reflecting elements in space and time. The Hindustani music is composed by the late Pandit Chitresh Das and Jayanta Bannerjee in the ubiquitous rhythmic cycle of tintal, with six-

teen beats in four equal divisions. “Tin” means “three” and “tal” means “clap”: practitioners often keep beat with three claps and a wave.

The Chhandam Youth Dance Company is an elite pre-professional kathak group, ages 8–18, undergoing rigorous training in kathak as well as theory, history, philosophy, and mathematics. Established in 2002 to give the next generation comprehensive training under renowned Pandit Chitresh Das and senior disciples, CYDC performs locally, nationally, and internationally. These rising leaders in the arts participate in mentorships and events, raising the profile of kathak and the classical arts.

kathak.org

Dance Origin: North India • **Genre:** Kathak • **Title:** *Yato Bhava, Stato Rasa* • **Director/Choreographer:** Charlotte Moraga • **Dancers:** Ishani Basak, Gauri Bhatnagar, Ishani Chakraborty, Ojaswee Chaudhary, Sarina Chitre, Amidala Geetaumesh, Esha Gupta, Shreeya Indap, Ishika Kamchetty, Shreya Khandewale, Vanita Mundhra, Shruti Pai, Meera Pala, Richa Patwardhan, Ruchira Rao, Atmika Sarukkai, Anushka Shah, Kritika Sharma, Saavani Vaidya

LIKHA - Pilipino Folk Ensemble

Philippines

LIKHA-Pilipino Folk Ensemble presents *Hariraya*, regional dance forms from Muslim Tausug and Maranao communities in Mindanao, southwestern Philippines. The first dance, *Kasanduayan*, is from the Maranao ethnic community living near the volcanic Lake Lanao—a festival dance, traditionally performed during a royal procession for entertainment. The Maranao are known for their mysticism, royalty, and beauty, evident in their music and dances, and known for nobility and grace even while walking. The women carry beaded and multi-colored umbrellas for shade, and they dance with fine kini-kini footsteps.

The second dance, *Pangalay*, is a form developed before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to the Philippines, an ancient form related to classical dances from Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia, based on a Buddhist concept of male and female celestial angels. The dance comes from the Tausug, the People of the Current, who live in coastal villages raised above the shore on stilts. Tausug dancers’ graceful hand gestures show a rare dexterity and flexibility of the shoulders, elbows, and wrists—and the movements are amplified by elongated brass janggay fingernails.

The final dance, *Kuntaw Kabkab*, is the popular dance form of the indigenous Tausug martial art form called markuntao, and also known as silat, a form also seen in Tausug communities in Malaysia and Indonesia. The fans are called kabkab, and they represent weapons in the dance.

Today, we are fortunate to hear a Philippine kulintang gong ensemble play melodies for the Tausug and Maranao dances. Large gongs, called agungs, create interlocking rhythms, while gandingan—talking gongs—create short melodies. A dabakan drum keeps tempo, and the tausug music also includes a wonderful gabbang bamboo xylophone.

Kasanduayan was originally choreographed by Ramon Obusan and re-choreographed for LIKHA by Artistic Director Rudi Soriano. *Kuntaw Kabkab* is a premiere presentation for the group—a version learned by Rudi Soriano from

Estevez Jonell Nava, with choreography set by Michael Palad. Soriano learned the pangalay form as a child and later from Tausug princess Aida Amilbansa, and this choreography is also by Michael Palad. Ed Cruz and OJ Pahati learned the music for *Kuntaw Kabkab* and *Pangalay* from ethnomusicologist Dr. Bernard Ellorin.

Founded in 1992 by Rudi Soriano, LIKHA-Pilipino Folk Ensemble believes in the power of dance and music to share the beauty of Philippine culture. Today, LIKHA strives towards this mission with diverse programs and performances. LIKHA has represented the Philippines in 11 international festivals. The company also works to expand its repertoire, researching, developing and nurturing relationships with diverse communities throughout the Philippines, allowing them to maintain authentic costuming, props and instruments. LIKHA continues to share within the Bay Area’s communities, with free adult workshops as well as a school program at two different East Bay sites.

likha.org

Dance Origin: Sulu Archipelago, Philippines • **Genre:** Folkloric (Tausug and Maranao) • **Title:** *Hariraya: Kasanduayan; Pangalay; Kuntaw Kabkab* • **Artistic Director:** Rudi Soriano • **Music Director:** OJ Pahati • **Choreographers:** Michael Palad, Rudi Soriano • **Dancers:** Ashley Acosta, Liza Allen, Emmanuel Benisano, Abraham Cabangbang, Christine Carandang, Lolita Castillo, Cat Diaz-Centeno, Raymond Centeno, Irene Coyco, Aiden Cruz, Beverly Cruz, Dylan Cruz, Gary Cruz, Malaya Cruz, Tina Cruz, Isabella Cuenco, Manuel De Vera, Maurice Fortner, Cienna Kahrobaie, Patrice Katigbak, Elsa Manlangit, Warren Manuntag, Scarlet McClure, Chris Muñoz, Mae Oliveros, Michael Palad, Ida Parcon, Ephraim Piñeda, Leia Piñeda, Rudi Soriano, Paulino Tamayo, Chariss Wong • **Musicians:** Andrew Capule (agung), Ed Cruz (kulintang), Isaac Cruz (babandil), RP Cuenco (debakan), Angelo Macaraeg (gabbang), Moses McClure (babandil), Melody Valdez (agung)

Nicaragua Danza, Hijos del Maíz

Nicaragua

Somos Nicaragua Multiétnica—We are Multiethnic Nicaragua— is a set of dances from Nicaragua's Miskito Coast. This North Atlantic region is home to indigenous people—Miskitu, Mayagna, Ramaki Criollo, and Garífuna—and many people also have British and/or African ancestry. For nearly three hundred years, from 1633 to 1905, British traders exchanged guns and furniture for cocoa, rubber, wood, and animal skins; and British colonists imported thousands of enslaved Africans into the region for plantation work. The Miskito Coast is a North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, and many of its communities live by farming, small-scale hunting, and herbal pharmacy. They speak mostly Miskito and Creole.

The first dance, *Un Gigante Que Despierta—A Giant Who Wakes*—presents the 1982 song by Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy, a celebration of natural beauty and cultural diversity with Caribbean rhythms, calypso, soca, and reggae. The diverse choreography by Grace Torres includes Afro-Haitian and Afro-Peruvian moves, and costumes evoke Miskito dress and the blue, blue sea. The lyrics sing:

*From this land flint and honey are gone,
gold and jade
none of this stayed*

*Remaining are remnants of language:
Miskito, Sumo, and Rama; together
with Creole*

*Where there are no longer cities nor ceremonial
temples, cassava and pejibaye stayed.*

*Between blasphemy and prayers, English
and Spanish, a foreign country is born in
my heart.*

*An awakening giant on the coast,
unstoppable, afraid of nothing.*

The second dance, *Las Sirenas—The Mermaids*—is a Miskito dance with an ecological message. In traditional indigenous cosmology, God, creation, and nature form a sacred triangle. Guardians—Unta Dukia for rain; Swinta, forest animals; Prahaku, air; Planta Uhra, marshes—warn humans to use resources respectfully or risk disappearance, disease, or even death. The beautiful mermaid Liwa Mairin, protector

of waters, is featured here. Men throw nets and row, as she singles out a dancer disrespectful of nature and seduces him away.

The final piece, *Tulululu Pasa*, is from the Creole community, people of African and British descent. When African dance was prohibited, communities syncretized European dance and African rites. This Palo de Mayo (May Pole) dance is now a joyful rite for procreation, with a decorated tree, springtime dress, and traditional African pelvic movements, celebrating sensuality, fertility, and abundance.

Somos Nicaragua Multiétnica is based on research by Nicaraguan choreographer Cleopatra Morales Montiel and created by choreographers Luis León, previously of Ballet Folklórico Nicaraguense under Francisco González, and Grace Torres, formerly of Ballet Folklórico Tepenahuatl under Maestra Blanca Guardado.

Nicaragua Danza, Hijos del Maíz was founded in 2011 to keep Nicaraguan culture and traditions alive. Their mission is to teach compatriots who are born in this country the diversity of the Nicaraguan character through dance.

[facebook.com/pages/
Nicaragua-Danza-Hijos-del-Maiz](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nicaragua-Danza-Hijos-del-Maiz)

Dance Origin: Nicaragua • **Genre:** Afro-Nicaraguan • **Title:** *Somos Nicaragua Multiétnica* • **Artistic Directors/Choreographers:** Luis León, Grace Torres • **Dancers:** Ostmar Aleman, William Alvarez, Levent Asyali, Natalia Chevez, Flor Díaz, Jenny Espinoza, Dara Fonseca, Luis León, Hector Marin, Analucía Pérez, Rebecca Pérez, Tobi Thomas

Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers

Scotland

A nonstop suite of five dances celebrates the social exuberance, kaleidoscope geometry, and challenging footwork of Scottish dance, as Dunsmuir performs traditional highland, step, and country social dance. Artistic Director Ron Wallace sets patterns and staging to music by famed Scottish composer Muriel Johnstone, considered by many to be the greatest living composer of the genre.

The first dance, *Glenfinnan*, is highland dance originating in Scotland's north countryside, a form representing nationalistic views over centuries. The dancers' exaggerated and challenging kicking and leg-sweeping represents the kicking off of English trousers—in other words, kicking off the English who forced the Scots to wear them. And of course, there's the joyful dance of returning to the kilt.

Smailholm Tower, a men's dance with echoing patterns, is named for a 15th-century signal-fire tower built on the English-Scottish border. It's a form called strathspey, danced with masculine style. The time is 4/4 common time: a quick down beat followed by a longer beat creates a short/long effect. The hands and arms represent the antlers of the highland stag.

Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers opens with the women performing fancy footwork in a jig, with a light, happy, dotted 6/8 rhythm. The men join for a patterned reel of four, connecting arms, executing patterns part of this social dance for centuries.

The Black Grouse is a hardshoe percussive dance from the western isles, the oldest Scottish dance formation after the circle, dating back to the 1600s. Eight couples elaborate on the square and chain with spins and special steps.

The finale, *The Gary Thomas Rant*, was written for the company's assistant director, Gary Thomas. To be clear, in Scottish music, a rant is a guid (meaning, "good," in Scots) thing—a tune with many notes at the beginning of a musical phrase. The piece is from an old dance form of Scottish ballroom dance, exemplifying the energy enjoyed by Scottish country dancers

around the world, raising spirits with dizzying, mesmerizing patterns.

This piece was choreographed by Ron Wallace for the 2016 *Festival*, as a tribute to Muriel Johnstone, in gratitude for her hundreds of tunes that touch on the traditional and stir hearts of dancers and musicians. Musical instruments today are traditional fiddle, flute, and piano. Costumes are ladies' ballroom dress, and men's kilts. In these modern kilts, pleats are stitched down flat; otherwise, the style and woven tartan design of this national garment has changed very little over time. Tartans here represent Scottish clans including Brodie, MacDonald, Gunn, MacWilliam, Weir, Robertson, and McNeill of Barra.

Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers was founded in 1981 as a company dedicated to keeping alive the spirit and form of Scottish dances, old and new. The company repertoire spans four centuries of dance tradition.

dunsmuirscottishdancers.org

Dance Origin: Scotland • **Genre:** Highland, Step, and Country Dances • **Title:** *Glenfinnan: A Tribute to Muriel Johnstone* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Ron Wallace • **Dancers:** Ethan Bailey, Jared Bailey, Levi Bailey, Glenn Brownton, Mark Burt, Kathy Clark, Kristi Closser, Mary Counihan, Morris Fung, Ann Glenn, John McComas, Cally McCondochie, Dwayne McQuilliams, Mary McQuilliams, Jane Muirhead, Irma Novak, Pat O'Brien, Sylvain Pelletier, Mary Prout, Shari Salis, Cindy Sobrero, Lisa Strouse, Michael Turano, Victoria Williams, Tim Wilson, Tom Winter • **Musicians:** Donald Robertson (percussion), Gary Thomas (piano/keyboards), Ron Wallace (recorder), Michele Winter (fiddle), Steve Wyrick (fiddle)

WORLD PREMIERE

Jikelele South African Dance Theater

South Africa

Yizani is a traditional initiation ceremony from migrant Zulu and Xhosa tribes, presented as South African Township Theater. The initiate is a sangoma medicine healer.

The opening dance, *Amarasharasha*, invokes spirits of ancestors. Next, *Nco Ndo* is performed in a community gathering. Dancers poke fun at their friend, and the song—*Nomhlotshazana*, by Artistic Director Thamsanqa Hlatywayo—sings: *Did you see Nomhlotshazana? With ashy skinny legs? Back up Nomhlotshazana!* Finally, *Whistle Dance* builds the energy of the initiation. Originally a rural dance with reeds, it's now an urban dance with whistles, performed for love of dance and to preserve tradition.

This sangoma healer is seer, priest, and shaman. She throws bones, reads signs, and ascertains influences, in order to solve physical, spiritual, or emotional problems. A sangoma—male or female—is born with a powerful ability to heal, and a calling can manifest at any age. Initiation occurs through a force of nature—with the help of spirits of a forest or river, or in the vitality of thunder and lightning. Thamsanqa emphasizes this receptivity to an elemental power: “People chase after lightning bolts with a spear trying to connect with the energy, and some people catch it—in a positive or negative manner.”

The dancers wear ankle shakers as musical instruments, made of amarasharasha nuts and pebbles in cloth pockets, synchronizing sound and movement. They wear beads and skirts for beauty and creativity, and effects inspired by traditional initiate clothing. In rural communities, a sacred goat is slaughtered and its parts are used in ceremony: the hair, meat, sacred goatskin, an inflated gallbladder tied in the sangoma's hair.

Township Theater is South African black urban theater developed during apartheid by Gibson Kente. Through expert storytelling in dance, theater, and mime, black communities shared

what was actually going on in people's lives. This transformation of an authentic South African cultural phenomenon to contemporary stage was developed as a repertory piece for Jikelele Dance Theater by Thamsanqa. He grew up in South Africa and learned these dances from first-hand observation of Sangoma healing rites. Associate Director Andrea Vonny Lee is responsible for the staging of Jikelele repertoire.

Jikelele Dance Theater was co-founded in 2012 in Oakland by Thamsanqa Hlatywayo and Andrea Vonny Lee. The company performs traditional dance and Township Theater developed during the apartheid era in the Bay Area and first presented by World Arts West in 2015. The company was created to teach, inspire, and create artistic works to revive Township Theater and other African-derived cultural traditions that are rarely experienced or in danger of being lost entirely

[facebook.com/JikeleleDanceTheater](https://www.facebook.com/JikeleleDanceTheater)

Dance Origin: South Africa • **Genre:** Zulu, Xhosa, and Migrant • **Title:** *Yizani* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Thamsanqa Hlatywayo • **Associate Director:** Andrea Vonny Lee • **Dancers:** Imani Abernathy, Shay Australia, Yvonne Henderson, Phindi Latha, Ammar Lee-Fowler, Sade Monette, Tommy Nguyen, Tiffany Rabb, Samantha Serrano, Lindi Weshangase • **Musicians:** Thamsanqa Hlatywayo (drums), Tacuma King (drums)

WORLD PREMIERE

Ensembles Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco

Mexico

The state of Nayarit, on Mexico's lush central Pacific coast, is known for sugar cane, tobacco, mango, fourteen varieties of bananas, and the world's tallest corn. From this fertile region, Ensembles presents two distinct forms of dance: *Danza Huichol* and *Sones Nayaritas*.

Ojos de Dios is a ceremonial dance from indigenous Huichol living in the remote Sierra Madre, adapted in 2015 by Artistic Director Zenón Barrón. The Huichol are indigenous to Mexico, related to the Aztecs, and their name means “healer” or “prophet.” Their deep reverence for nature, place, and the elements is reflected in important symbolism. Dancers' faces are painted with the Ojo de Dios, the Eye of God. Its four corners symbolize sacred cardinal points, as the Huichol hold sacred places in the East, in the Pacific Ocean in the West, Durango in the North, and Jalisco in the South. The costumes are Huichol replicas, with eagles, deer, and snakes embroidered, applied, and painted. The men's hats are decorated with thorns and eagle feathers.

Zenón tells us, “Every year, the Huichol people reenact their history by remembering and repeating ancient ceremonies. Their peyote-corn traditions bring the wisdom of the old ones to each new generation. Dancers embark on a visionary journey, playing roles and temporarily losing their human identities to become living ancestor-deities. They are guided by spirit guides of the Huichol shamans, mostly animal allies such as wolves or deer. Kauyumari (Our Brother Deer) is considered the most significant guide, a guiding energy when the shaman is in a trance.”

The second dance, *Sones Nayaritas*, presents Mexican rural melodies called sones. These embody the joyful expression of the mountain region fiesta, the excitement of coming of age, and the proud spirit of the mestizo—Mexico's mixed culture of indigenous Mexican, Spanish, and African. The sones from Nayarit are mostly anonymous: an authentic popular expression,

and there's a strong indigenous influence, both in music and in the execution of the steps.

Ensembles Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco was founded in 1992 by individuals committed to preserving the tradition of Mexican folk dance, and a mission to promote it with quality and authenticity. Their work showcases how Mexican folklore is a continually evolving dance form based on tradition and ritual that touches performers' and audiences' souls. Tours abroad include various states in Mexico and China. In 1999, Ensembles began bringing its own productions and original pieces to the stage with extraordinary success.

ensembles-sf.com

Dance Origin: Mexico • **Genre:** Folkloric (Nayarit) • **Title:** *Danza Huichol; Sones Nayaritas* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Zenón Barrón • **Dancers:** Maria Anaya, Salvador Arellano, Ariana Barraza, Meredith Belany, Marisela Benavides, Manuel Cuellar, Mayra Cuevas, Linda Gamino, Monica Giese, Juan Gil, Natalie Hernandez, Alejandro Ledesma, Priscilla Lopez, Claudia Martinez, David Martinez, Christian Ortega, Jeannette Quintana, Raul Ramos, Erik Rubio, Viviana Ruiz, Mario Sosa, Lupita Troncoso • **Musicians:** Vinic-Kay (La Gente y El Canto): Zenón Barrón (drum), Fernanda Bustamante (violin), Manuel Constancio (guitar), Kyla Danish (violin), José Roberto Hernández (guitar/vihuela)

Weekend 3

June 18 & 19

Belly Dance Cabaret Artists

Dancers:

Khepri Dance Company *Egypt and Lebanon*
Alma *Egypt*

Musicians: The Georges Lammam Ensemble
featuring Susu Pampanin

Ballet Folklórico México Danza

Mexican Folkloric (Jalisco)

Charya Burt Cambodian Dance

Cambodian Classical

Alafia Dance Ensemble

Haitian Traditional

Antoine Hunter of Urban Jazz Dance Company

American Sign Language Dance

Xpressions

Indian Folkloric

Jubilee American Dance Theatre

United States Regional Social Dances

Tiruchitrambalam

Indian Bharatanatyam

Juli Kim

Korean Traditional

Los Danzantes de Aztlán de Fresno State

Mexican Traditional (Veracruz)

Ballet Lisanga Congolese Performing Arts Company

Congolese Traditional

*Our final weekend of performances,
featuring dances and music from
Cambodia, the Congo, Egypt, Haiti,
India, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico,
and the United States.*



Tiruchitrambalam
Photo by RJ Muna

Belly Dance Cabaret: Alma and Khepri Dance Company

Egypt and Lebanon

We are pleased to open this weekend's performances with a *Belly Dance Cabaret*. The performance follows the modern structure created by Lebanese dancer Badia Masabni for the 1920s Cairo stage. Khepri Dance Company opens the cabaret with *Alf Leyla wa Leyla*; Alma presents a lyrical and free-spirited solo, *Aziza*; and Khepri ends with *Foundations*, a drum solo with special group choreography.

The form—modern raks sharqi, often called belly dance—evolved from the Middle Eastern and North African folk dance raks beladi, danced by women in their homes. Badia Masabni took belly dance to another level with extravagant stage performances, adding grand entrances, veils, wide traveling steps, upper body isolations, and lines and shapes seen in western ballet. The earthy and intimate raks sharqi transformed to a cosmopolitan, sophisticated form, and it continues to evolve today.

Khepri Dance Company's first piece features the song *Alf Leyla wa Leyla, One Thousand and One Nights*. The singer serenades his beloved, praising the night sky and wishing to stay awake all night with his love, hoping the sun will wait to rise. The costume celebrates Cairo's vintage aesthetics, and Andrea Sendek's choreography, inspired by Cairo's Golden Era, includes almost everything belly dance: western chassé and chaîné turns, rib locks, pelvic locks, vibrations, shimmies, undulations, and figure eights. Khepri's second number, *Foundations*, lends a fresh perspective to the classic drum solo, with an advanced finger-cymbal composition and traveling across the stage. Percussionist Susu Pampanin composed the second half of this piece in a mesmerizing 6/8 Moroccan rhythm. Andrea Sendek founded Khepri Dance Company in 2015 out of a desire to create new work. Company members are lifelong dancers and have a combined three decades of raks sharqi training. Khepri Dance Company presents innovative work rooted in traditional dance forms from the Middle East.

Soloist Alma presents the classic Egyptian raks sharqi piece *Aziza*, originally choreographed for a 1954 film of the same name. Alma's interpretation draws inspiration from Golden Era Egyptian dancers, and also from her ongoing collaborations with the musicians who accompany the piece, The Georges Lammam Ensemble featuring Susu Pampanin. The story tells of *Aziza*, who leaves her lover. He begs her to return; she cannot be persuaded, deciding instead to remain happily independent, running free like the wind. The music has a melodic form associated with *Aziza*'s free and airy energy. As the song develops, the melody echoes the conversation between *Aziza* and her lover. Alma believes that dance makes a direct connection to the spirit of the land; the rhythmic drums pulse like a transcendent heartbeat. She began her studies in Middle Eastern dance with Sandra Heiser and continues to develop a style inspired by the Golden Era dancers.

andreasendek.com
almabellydance.com

KHEPRI DANCE COMPANY

Dance Origin: Egypt and Lebanon •
Genre: Belly Dance • **Title:** *Alf Leyla wa Leyla; Foundations* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Andrea Sendek • **Dancers:** Gina Bruno, Andrea Sendek, Lucille Ynosencio

ALMA

Dance Origin: Egypt • **Genre:** Belly Dance •
Title: *Aziza* • **Choreographer/Soloist:** Alma

Musicians: The Georges Lammam Ensemble featuring Susu Pampanin • Amina Goodyear (riq, duf), Terri Anne Gutierrez (percussion), Khader Keileh (keyboard), Georges Lammam (violin), Susu Pampanin (tabla), Mohini Rustagi (percussion)

Ballet Folklórico México Danza

Mexico

Dances From the State of Jalisco presents choreographers Martín Romero and Rafael Zamarippa's signature high-energy footwork and swirling of skirts. This is ballet folklórico, pioneered in the 1950s when Amalia Hernández merged folk traditions with ballet's pointed toes, raised arms, and geometric patterns. Jalisco is famous for the mariachi band; lively dances from European polka, waltz, and bolero; its ranchera themes of love, nationalism, and nature; tequila parties; spicy stew; and this group's final number, *Jarabe Tapatio*.

The dances are:

El Llano Grande, evoking Jalisco's natural beauty, green plateaus, tropical rainforest, semi-arid plains, and conifer forests;

Pelea de Gallos, to a song from Aguascalientes, in which fighting roosters with flying serapes jump and bump, artistically trying to knock each other down;

El Gusto, a festival song with footwork to exalt the ladies' swirling skirts;

La Negra, claimed by both Colima and Jalisco, honoring a black locomotive that once traveled between them. Chugging rhythms introduce lyrics about love: *Little black woman of my sorrows, eyes like fluttering paper. You tell them all yes, but you don't tell them when. I live in suffering. I want her here with her silk shawl I brought her from Tepic*. Amalia Hernández originally choreographed this piece for couples: México Danza stages an open choreography with dynamic circles. To claim it for Jalisco, women wear ranchero dresses designed after the gualote turkey.

The finale is *Jarabe Tapatio*, also known as the *Mexican Hat Dance*. A *Tapatio* is a person from Jalisco, and *jarabe* is instrumental music: this song might be one of Jalisco's rare original *jarabes*. It was banned for mixed couples by the colonial government, and revived in honor of independence, in joyful, sensual freedom. The Jalisco music features guitar, bass, vihuela five-string guitar, and trumpet.

French-influenced men's charro outfit were worn by wealthy hacendados, with gold/silver buttons and velvet sombreros. The women's Jalisco dress is European-influenced with flairs of ribbons.

Hayward-based Mexican folk dance company Ballet Folklórico México Danza, was founded in 1991 by René González. With the collaboration of Martín Romero of Mexico City, the company has grown to include individuals of all ages and nationalities from diverse Bay Area communities.

González and Romero each have over thirty years of dance experience at national and international levels. The group originated as an after-school program to keep children from drug use and gang activities. México Danza helps students of all ages develop as artists in a unique, disciplined, and cultural environment.

mexicodanza.com

Dance Origin: Mexico • **Genre:** Folkloric (Jalisco) • **Title:** *Dances from the State of Jalisco: El Llano Grande; La Mariquita; Pelea de Gallos; El Gusto; La Negra; Jarabe Tapatio* • **Artistic Directors:** René González, Martín Romero • **Choreographers:** Martín Romero, Rafael Zamarippa • **Dancers:** Blanca Alvarez, Elyssia Alvarez, Estela Alvarez, Iliana Alvarez, Rigo Amador, Alberto Anguiano, Alexa Chavez, Abril Diaz, Zara Diaz, Steven Ekejiuba, Melissa Flores, Humberto Gutierrez, Miguel Guzman, Chava Hernandez, Audy Jimenez, Lupita Juarez, Edgar Lepe, Jena Macias, Natalia Macias, Norberto Martinez, Magdalena Nevel, Arianna Perez, Nancy Perez, Oscar Perez, Leslye Ramirez, Gavino Camba Ramos, Samantha Romero, Rurik Sanchez, Sergio Segura, Sofia Segura, Gizelle Taleno, Rafael Valero

WORLD PREMIERE

Charya Burt Cambodian Dance

Cambodia

Heavenly Garden renews an ancient understanding of heavenly perfection. In an idyllic garden, a princess and her maidens journey in search of eternal beauty, embracing the majestic, peaceful natural world. Charya Burt's expressive new choreography transforms the boundaries of tradition, incorporating live singing, spoken word, and classical Cambodian gesture and movement. The music, by Cambodia's revered percussive Pin Peat Court Orchestra, is traditional accompaniment for court dance, shadow theater, dance-drama, and temple ceremony. In this style, familiar motifs illustrate entrances, exits, and movements like flying or walking, and a chorus usually narrates. In this piece, Charya sings—

*Join with me, my maidens, as we journey
to the heavenly garden.*

*When we arrive our hearts will be filled
with delight.*

*Feel the soft, pulsating wind as we gaze
on nature's bounty*

*Offering our own beauty to that which
surrounds us.*

*Begin now to dance peacefully - happily
Smelling the intoxicating aromas of
surrounding flowers*

Let us capture this majestic moment.

This exquisite form is traced back to carvings, inscriptions, and court rituals of the Khmer Angkorian Period more than a thousand years ago. Long a medium of prayer and prophecy, its loss was immeasurable when the Pol Pot Regime (1975-79) systematically prohibited dance, religion, and ritual ceremony: an estimated 90% of all Cambodian artists perished under this regime. Through the dedication and generosity of dance masters who survived the killing fields, classical dance has been revived, and is today a beloved egalitarian art form. This piece was created in 2014 to evoke the defining legacy of the Cambodian people, as a mesmerizing expression of myth and spirit.

The princess' dress reflects formal Khmer attire worn by queens or brides—tight-fitting shirts with sequined sash, and elaborate

jewelry, belts, and headdress, made with golden metals. The dedication of Cambodian dancers extends into the dressing room, as they are traditionally sewn into their costumes for two to three hours; and most of the costume is made by hand.

Charya Burt Cambodian Dance—established in 1993 after Artistic Director Charya Burt immigrated to Northern California from Cambodia—preserves and promotes Cambodian dance through instruction, workshops, performances, and new works. Charya has performed throughout the US. She studied with Cambodia's dance masters learning the full repertory of classical dances at Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh. She was a traditional artist and dance faculty member at the Phnom Penh Royal University of Fine Arts. Company members are long-time students of Charya and of Khmer Arts Academy, Long Beach. Company presentations in 2015 included Marin Showcase Theater, Mexican Heritage Theatre, San Jose, and UC Santa Barbara.

charyaburt.com

Dance Origin: Cambodia • **Genre:** Classical •
Title: *Heavenly Garden* • **Artistic Director/**
Choreographer: Charya Burt • **Dancers:** Charya
Burt, Reaksmei Lath, Sophy Julie Nuth,
Khannia Ok

Alafia Dance Ensemble

Haiti

Soley honors Saint Soley, the sun, in a bright Haitian light. Soley is the primary source that balances energy and light, a source that is distant and also powerfully close. This is a theatrical representation of a Vodou prayer.

Soley grew mostly from the peasant mountainside outside of Port-au-Prince, where Vodou is a religion. Cosmological energies provide inspiration to all Vodouists to learn nature and embrace it. Vodou also deeply honors Grammet (God), ancestors, and closely available spirits called lwa. Priests and priestesses—Ougan and Mambo—have equal power to call the lwa to organized ceremony, to heal and initiate people. Lwa Soley fights against injustice—sending light into darkness, trust into miscommunication, awareness, and justice into community.

The performance begins with the song *Soley*, and the choreography symbolizes the trilogy of the sun family, reminding us the new generation carries new responsibility:

*Soley o Atidanyi Boloko Soley O Papa'm se
Soley o manman'm se Soley o ato mwen'm
vini pou'm klere, Soley o*

*O Sun! Soley my spirit of Atidanyi Boloko/
My father is the sun/My mother as well is
the sun/And I am here to shine, O my sun*

Each dancer finds a personal connection to *Soley*, moving closer to mystery—with the beautiful Haitian movement, *parigol*, “aware of the road, searching for safe journey.” As dancers unite, their movements—called *mayi*—evoke travel between our world and the spiritual one. Dancing in unison, they share their new understanding, and celebrate the many interpretations of *Soley*.

The piece was created in 2014 and set for stage in 2015 by Madam Florencia “Fofó” Pierre, choreographer, actress, and Mambo Vodou priestess; with a deep spiritual connection with lwa, and dedication to preserving traditional Haitian dance. Madam Fofó also created and

designed the costumes: to bring light and blessing, invoking Saint Soley. The traditional African Haitian rhythms—*parigol* and *mayi*—are performed with live percussion and accompaniment, expressing a message of hope, love, and perseverance for Haitian cultural heritage. The choreography embodies and celebrates community and the rising of Haiti once again.

Valerie Watson founded Alafia Dance Ensemble in 1995 in order to showcase the intricate beauty of Afro-Haitian dance and music. A professor of dance at San Francisco City College since 1980 and a 3rd-generation Dunham dancer and teacher, Watson began the company with students in Afro-Haitian classes, a tradition that continues. Alafia Dance Ensemble has performed in many venues including the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival*, Haitian Flag Day Celebration, Great American Music Hall, Maitri's Annual Fundraising Event, Konbit 2nd Annual Haitian Dance, Music and Arts Festival, CubaCaribe Festival of Dance and Music, Spring Inspiration, and San Francisco City College Dance Concerts. Valerie Watson and Mariella Morales are co-directors of the ensemble.

[facebook.com/Alafia.Dance.Ensemble](https://www.facebook.com/Alafia.Dance.Ensemble)

Dance Origin: Haiti • **Genre:** Traditional • **Title:** *Soley* • **Co-Artistic Directors:** Mariella Morales, Valerie Watson • **Choreographer:** Florencia “Fofó” Pierre • **Dancers:** Adrian Arredondo, Tia Covington, Daniel Derrick, Brigitte Knight, Olivia Lopez, Mariella Morales, Rita Pantaleon, Carmela Rocha, Sarath Sok, Catalina Tapia • **Lead Musician:** Zeke Nealy (drums) • **Musicians:** Joe Churchill (drums), Jaan Jap Dekkar (drums), Sakoto Miyoshi (drums), Ozbe (bell), Florencia “Fofó” Pierre (vocals), Shaker Joe (chekere)

Antoine Hunter of Urban Jazz Dance Company

United States

Antoine Hunter presents an urban jazz dance solo, *The Silence*, in his original form, American Sign Language Dance. This lithe and powerful dancer is a member of the deaf community, and his choreography includes movements from American Sign Language, as well as components from jazz, modern, and classical American dance. The piece is about honoring yourself and others. It's also about American Sign Language (ASL) as a form of dance and dance as a language, nonverbal and gestured.

The dancer's body paint includes images of fire, water, and handprints, elements of the world. His red pants signify the blood connection that runs through our veins, and the music has a heartbeat rhythm. Antoine's signing speaks a poem he wrote in high school, responding to segregation and urging people to work together. The choreographic styling evokes separation and silence.

Antoine says, "I know for hearing people, my words remain silent, as if I come from another world. But through my dance, I think people can better understand my silent world. At the end, I want the audience to join together in signing, to signal we are all one spirit. I hope people leave feeling we can all coexist, be part of each other's lives in some meaningful way."

Members of the deaf community understand deafness as a difference in human experience. Antoine Hunter studies deaf culture and is actively developing a new vocabulary in the "Deaf Culture of Dance." He dances in respect for ASL, because from its origins as an 1800s merging of French Sign Language and signing in Connecticut's American School for the Deaf, ASL has been a visible language, like dance. It's a means of communication that works with gestures and postures linked in time to create meaning—by visibly resembling things, or referring to them with abstract gestures.

Antoine Hunter is director of Urban Jazz Dance Company, an Oakland company that for ten years has performed all over the world. He dances in part to silence, and in part to the music of American jazz and other musical styles. His mission is to show people around the world, no matter where they are or who they are, that they, too, can reach their dreams. The company was formed to support and understand disabled and deaf artists, using the arts to speak their truth about the world we live in. One of Oakland's well-known dancers, Antoine Hunter is also a beloved dance teacher. Zahna Simon is his co-director.

urbanjazzdance.weebly.com

Dance Origin: United States • Genre: American Sign Language Dance • Title: *The Silence* • Artistic Director/Choreographer/Soloist: Antoine Hunter

Xpressions

India

Oh God, I have come to your doorstep to sing your praise. You are most kind and benevolent.

From India's state of Maharashtra, *Jai Jai Maharashtra—Tribute to Maharashtra*—presents devotional folk dance from rural Indo-Aryan Marathi people, whose history looks back more than two millennia. These dances are Maharashtra's cultural treasures.

Dindi expresses love for Lord Vithal (Krishna). Each year, for 700 years, varkari pilgrims have undertaken a spiritual journey—up to 300 kilometers on foot—to Pandharpur Temple, singing and dancing in trance. The song *Maauli Maauli* proclaims a desire to see Vithal.

Gondhal invokes peace. Devotees dance all night, singing *Aai Bhavani* to praise Mother Goddess Bhavani. Platform offerings—coconut, grains, nuts, leaves, flowers, and plant stalks—signify the Goddess' presence. Gondhali artists initiated with shell necklaces perform a prayer, circling and spinning with torches, reenacting Bhavani's battle against evil.

Jogva means alms given to Jogtins—rural children who travel as devotees. Turmeric smeared on foreheads, carrying images of Devi, they sing and dance in praise, rolling heads as Devi enters body and soul. Their song, *Aaicha Jogva Magen*, promises the Goddess will provide. This age-old jogva tradition is disappearing; concerned social workers hope to end it.

Lezim evolved from Maratha warrior training into a favorite dance during ten-day celebrations for Ganesha, the elephant-headed God. In community processions, dancers perform lines and circles, steps and squats, singing *Morya* for a famous devotee, creating music with cymbals and lezim rods with jingling discs.

Artistic Director Srividya Eashwar set this piece in 2015. Her choreography is influenced by Bhakti-Devotion traditions passed down for centuries; she learned the dances growing up in Maharashtra. The folk songs for *Gondhal* and *Jogva* are centuries old. Modern devotional songs accompany *Dindi* and *Lezim*. Traditional

instruments include the Maharashtra sitar; dhol, mridanga, and tashe flat drums; veena; cymbals; and the single-stringed tuntune.

The women wear choli blouses and nine-yard nauvari saris. The Gondhali men wear tight churidar pants with flowing angarkha tops, cowrie-shell necklaces, stud earrings. Mawli- warrior turbans are traditional, as are the varkari pilgrims' headpiece, kurta, and dhoti. The dancers' jewelry is made in Kolhapur and Pune, inspired by Maratha and Peshwa Dynasties. The color symbolism is important: red for sensuality, purity, auspiciousness, Shakti; saffron for sacredness, fire, and a quest for light; yellow for knowledge, peace, and meditation; green for nature, life, and happiness.

Established in 2003, Xpressions is a leading dance group in the Bay Area specializing in Indian folk dance traditions. Led by Artistic Director Srividya Eashwar, Xpressions dancers take great pride in presenting traditional choreography blended with new techniques. They have won multiple awards at local dance competitions, and have presented house productions, workshops, and performances at school and community events, collaborated locally with other cultural groups, and raised funds for nonprofits.

xpressionsdancemusic.com

Dance Origin: Maharashtra, India • Genre: Folkloric • Title: *Jai Jai Maharashtra—Tribute to Maharashtra* • Artistic Director/Choreographer: Srividya Eashwar • Dancers: Shreya Adloori, Vibha Arun, Akshata Atre, Anjali Bathula, Surabhi Biyani, Sonika Biyani, Srividya Eashwar, Radha Ganesh, Aanchal Garg, Tania Godbole, Alisha Gupta, Neeti Indiresan, Riya Jorapur, Meghan Lamba, Rhea Lamba, Isha Maniyar, Maya Mohan, Shreya Munnangi, Rujuta Munshi, Treya Parikh, Kavya Shah, Medha Shah, Reha Shah, Ria Sonecha, Ananya Srinivas, Swetha Srinivasan, Anna Purna Subbanna

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

WORLD PREMIERE

Jubilee

American Dance Theatre

United States

The Pioneering Spirit: Dances of the Big Woods is a set of social and regional dances from American pioneers. The title comes from the Laura Ingalls Wilder book about 19th century pioneer life, *Little House in the Big Woods*. The tunes, dances, and setting were inspired by the books: this performance takes us to a clearing by a small cabin in the Wisconsin woods.

Although early religious leaders warned against its evils, regional dance survived and thrived as American society evolved. Pioneers carried European dance west, and their inventiveness stepped up in community gatherings, when musicians brought out fiddles, guitars, and mandolins, and gentlemen farmers and gentle-frontierswomen danced the night away.

In *Money Musk*, neighbors greet each other with walking, curtsies, bows, step dancing, clogging, and English country dance. Next, in *Old Dan Tucker*, there's a flirtatious choreography and a play-party—a form adapted from children's games to sidestep religious prohibitions. The lyrics are by Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904), and the melody is probably much older. Next, *Arkansas Traveler*, a lively circle dance first mentioned in the 19th century includes choreography by Don Allen, adding a bit of English country and polka to stylized western/pioneer dance. The fiddle tune repeats, so it could go on forever.

The fourth dance, *Virginia Reel*, to the song *Devil's Dream*, links back to English and possibly Scottish country dance. Performed in long sets, it features the do-si-do, where couples pass around each other right shoulder to right shoulder. Next we see Waltz, danced to *Lover's Waltz* by Jay Unger. This original choreography has Czech and Austrian influences, an English four-person formation called the "hey," and the modern ballroom "whisk." Finally, *Virginia Reel* is danced again, to the old-time *Irish Washerwoman* from 1609.

The clothing sets the piece in the 1860s, with hoop skirts of 1800s crinoline inspired by open-cage styles of 16th to 17th-century

farthingale and 18th-century pannier. Shortened dresses and tight pants allowed freedom of movement for popular dances of those days—the quadrille, cotillion, and reel.

This piece was staged and choreographed by Becky Coulter unless otherwise noted. Formed in 1999 by Hilary Roberts, Jubilee American Dance Theatre is a unique performance ensemble, bringing to life dances, music, songs, and stories from Appalachia to Swing Era dance halls to Cajun Country, from North American Whalers to Baja California to America's immigrants. Jubilee transports audiences to another time and place. Directed by Becky Coulter since 2009, Jubilee's work is set in context: the costume staff carefully researches and reproduces authentic costumes of each era. Music directors recreate regional and historical musical styles. Jubilee is proud to feature musical direction by Joe Weed on fiddle.

jubileedance.com

Dance Origin: United States • **Genre:** United States Regional Social Dances • **Title:** *The Pioneering Spirit: Dances of the Big Woods* • **Artistic Director:** Becky Coulter • **Assistant Director:** Hilary Roberts • **Choreographers:** Don Allen, Becky Coulter • **Dancers:** Mitchell Allen, Carol Braves, Dee Brown, Anil Comelo, Becky Coulter, Lew Douglas, Deborah Evenich, Diana Greenleaf, Jay Jackson, Carl Kanzaki, Mal Mead, Steve Rottell, Ellen Schwartz, Jim Smith, Lonnie Stevens, Betsy Strome, Ruth Suzuki, Eve Tarquino, Barbara Vernon, Nancy Weston • **Musicians:** Martha Kendall (bass, vocals), Suzy Mead (vocals), Tony Phillips (mandolin), Jim Tepperman (guitar), Joe Weed (fiddle)

Tiruchitrambalam

India

Thillana is the traditional concluding piece of a bharatanatyam dance performance. It's a presentation of non-narrative pure dance and lyrical verse. An eight-beat adi tala cycle supports these graceful dancers, in fluid, calculated patterns of rhythm and pause. The musical scale is Madhuvanti, typically a sweet raga (melodic framework) for the foundations of love. In exhilaration and joy, the lyrics honor the guru as beloved teacher, as close as a second mother.

*You gave us the world's wealth of knowledge;
You gave us intelligence and wisdom, O Guru!
When I was at an impressionable age you
taught me right from wrong.
So, you too are my mother.
You taught me to sing, dance
and play lovely musical instruments.
Your blessing manifests in my heart and
eradicates all the darkness and
ignorance that surrounds me.*

—from the Tamil

In bharatanatyam, as in all Indian classical dance, a dancer's body is divided along a vertical median. Most moves originate from the half-sit stance called aramandi, defining space along straight lines or in triangles in relation to the ground or to the body median. Bharatanatyam dancers relate typically to spiritual stories, giving insight into human relationships, performing with three main elements: nritta is the intense rhythmic footwork; nritya is expressive gesture; and natya is theatrical presentation.

The dancers wear a costume stitched from a South Indian silk sari, with fan-like pleats arranged in the center. The pleated fan allows for ease of movement and it opens up dramatically when the dancers perform the quintessential bharatanatyam aramandi stance. The musical composition of this thillana is by Madurai R. Muralidharan: it features the mridangam—a two-faced drum—violin, flute, vocal music and cymbals, as well as the dancers' ankle bells.

Tiruchitrambalam School of Dance, founded by Deepa Mahadevan, gives students a firm grounding in theoretical and practical aspects of the "Dandayudapani Pillai" style of bharatanatyam, as passed on to her by her teacher, Usha Srinivasan. She is currently continuing her training with Madurai R. Muralidharan. Student dancers from Tiruchitrambalam also assimilate additional vocabularies, incorporating other styles of bharatanatyam as they progress toward compositions. Tiruchitrambalam dancers are also encouraged to incorporate social and feminist critique in their interpretive performances, in both traditional and contemporary compositions. Deepa Mahadevan is a PhD candidate in performance studies at UC Davis.

[facebook.com/
tiruchitrabalamschoolofdance](https://www.facebook.com/tiruchitrabalamschoolofdance)

Dance Origin: India • **Genre:** Bharatanatyam • **Title:** *Thillana* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Deepa Mahadevan • **Dancers:** Shruthi Aravindan, Aditi Gopalan, Navya Maitri Konda, Sumanapriya Krishnakumar, Deepa Mahadevan, Lakshmi Ramesh, Akshaya Sekharan, Kiran Umesh

Juli Kim

Korea

Juli Kim presents *Salpuri*, a traditional Korean dance listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The dance expresses the sorrow of human relationships and separations, and an angst coming from unsatisfied desire. It is the most challenging form of Korean classical dance, and it depicts a traditional Korean woman of an ancient era. She moves with deep inhales and exhales of breath, beginning slowly and then gaining speed as her emotions rise, creating a mesmerizing intensity. Korean dance expresses life's heavier aspects with an inner lightness as Korean dancers move continuously and yet often seem to remain still. Performances are meant to mirror the eternally revolving elements of darkness and light, yin and yang, fluidity and stillness. Performers lead each step with the heel, holding the body in check, creating a thousand fluid lines in their circular paths and turns.

“Sal” means “bad spirit” and “puri” means to “unwind,” and traditionally, *salpuri* was a dance of spiritual cleansing. It was a crucial part of Korean culture for five thousand years, beginning in shamanistic rituals and moving into the realms of court dance, folk, ritual, and modern dance. In the centuries-old indigenous practice of shamanism, a female shaman begins to remove the *sal*—a curse, or negative energy—by absorbing it into herself. Then, to banish the *sal* from her own psyche, she performs the *salpuri* dance. It is also a rite that brought peace to the spirits of the dead and led them to heaven, especially helping widows find peace after the death of their husbands.

During Korea's Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897), professional *kisaeng* entertainers developed the form and style, resulting in present-day *salpuri*, now frequently performed as an artistic expression. The choreography on today's stage was handed down from unnamed master teachers to their selected students through several generations, and then taught to Juli Kim by Master Lim Mi Ja. The work has gone through modifications and was recently reconstructed by Juli. A small improvisational

ensemble of percussion, strings, and a deeply sorrowful female voice accompanies the dance.

Juli Kim works with devotion to spread awareness of Korean culture to the younger generation and to non-Korean ethnic groups. She taught Korean dance for La Cañada Preparatory School and Flintridge Preparatory School in Southern California, among many others. She has also collaborated with Dancecorp, Lula Washington Dance Theatre, the Latino Dance Project, and other dance companies to promote diversity. Her most notable work was the production of the Friendship Concert in memory of the Los Angeles riots, to raise scholarship money for inner-city children. She holds a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from University of Southern California.

Dance Origin: Korea • **Genre:** Traditional • **Title:** *Salpuri* • **Choreographers:** Master Lim Mi Ja, Juli Kim • **Soloist:** Juli Kim

Los Danzantes de Aztlán de Fresno State

Mexico

Twenty-two lively dancers from Los Danzantes present *Sones, Huapangos, and Alegrías from Coyutla*, dances from the Totonicapán region of Veracruz. These dances are of Indio-mestizo (Indigenous-Spanish-African) origin and are often sung in the Totonacan language.

The town of Coyutla, historically traced to 1777, is nestled in the Sierras of central Veracruz, and often called *La Perla de la Sierra*, the Pearl of the Sierra. Today, there's a wedding in town, and—as the artistic director tells us—“The men dance gallantly with a beer in hand and the women dance in their beautiful quexquen garments.” At Coyutlan weddings, husbands and wives dance with different partners, because they see each other every day. This custom is reflected here, as the bride and groom move around the dance floor.

The dancing begins with two huapangos. The first is *La Escoba—The Broom*. It's based on a Totonaca maxim—from an old folktale—that if you allow a woman to sweep your feet, you'll be destined to marry a widow or a divorcee. The women dance with brooms and the men jump to avoid them. The second is *Xanath*, a love song named for a flower in Totonacan language. The dancers' strong footwork shows the enthusiastic and vigorous style of a Coyutlan fiesta. The final dance is *La Banda*, the town's favorite, trademark alegría. One couple ties a long sash into a bow with their feet, a bow that binds the bride and groom in new unity.

Coyutla is close to the Huasteca regions of Veracruz and the state of Puebla, so two indigenous cultures—Nahuatl and Totonaca—are reflected in its language and musical traditions. A mestizo-indigenous fusion enriches and strengthens the local music and dance culture in three musical genres: *Sones Coyutecos*, *Sones Huapangos*, and ceremonial music associated with religious or cultural rituals. Los Danzantes de Aztlán de Fresno State was proud to present the original work of native Totonacan Professor Alfredo Luna Santiago, primary researcher and choreographer of this material for the first time in the US in 2015.

The costumes are traditional and currently worn by Totonaca women in the town of Coyutla. Many of the beautiful quexquen ponchos are embroidered with flowering branches, representing family trees. Women make this garment for their weddings and will also wear them when they are buried. The colored ribbons signify: sky (blue), mother earth (green), purity (white), mourning (purple), maize (yellow), fertility/menstruation (red), and devotion to the Virgin Mary (pink).

Los Danzantes de Aztlán Mexican Dance program was founded in 1970 in the Chicano and Latin American Studies Department of California State University, Fresno. Utilizing beautiful, authentic costumes and precise dance execution, the company has been a success with audiences wherever it has performed. Currently directed by Dr. Victor Torres, the group has consistently earned top awards at international folkloric dance competitions (in Mexico and in the US). They have performed in Spain, Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Arizona, and Washington and are the only Mexican folkloric dance group in the CSU system to be recognized as an official ambassador of the University.

danzantesdeaztlan.org

Dance Origin: Veracruz, Mexico • **Genre:** Traditional (Coyutla) • **Title:** *Boda Coyuteca: Sones, Huapangos, and Alegrías from Coyutla* • **Artistic Director:** Dr. Victor Torres • **Assistants:** Mayra Aceves, Ashley Avalos, Karen Hernandez, Juvenal Moctezuma • **Choreographer:** Professor Alfredo Luna Santiago • **Dancers:** Mayra Aceves, Ernesto Aguirre, Vanessa Arce, Ashley Avalos, Mayra Cano, Nicholas Castro, Isabel Frutis, Diana Garcia, Karen Hernandez, Stephanie Martinez, Juvenal Moctezuma, Estevan Parra, Gil Ramirez, Jesse Rodriguez, Osvaldo Rodriguez, Auston Romo, Lorenzo Taja, Benny Thongoanse, Chabeli Torres, Emilio Torres, Mario Vasquez, Pader Vue

Ballet Lisanga Congolese Performing Arts Company

Central Africa

Within the central forests of the Congo basin, *Etumba-Essombi* is a warrior dance among bantu-speaking Mongo people. Here, an all-woman dance company performs this traditionally male dance. A tribe prepares to fight for protection from neighboring warriors. With drum song, chant, and dance, they bind in solidarity and call to ancestors for protection and spiritual strength. The choreography and movements of this dance are unique among Congolese dance forms. As tribal leaders meet and agree to war, warriors perform a choreographed battle with deft, quick footwork. Wielding shields and swords, their shoulders go one way as their hips go another.

The Congo is home to one of the oldest sacred practices of Central Africa, a religion of divination called Bulamanganga. This religion was in existence centuries before Africa's colonization and is practiced today by several tribes, including the Mongo. The religion—and Mongo tribal structure—emphasizes ancestor worship and honors spirits of the natural world responsible for fertility and sorcery.

The Mongo are one of the Congo's three largest ethnic groups. Although they work in the local and national economy, attend schools, and many have converted to Christianity, they've also kept a strong tribal and ethnic identity. Their society is based on kinship, lineages, and covenants. In rural life, traditional beliefs and practices are most alive, and it's an old practice represented in this dance. In the countryside, Mongo are hunters, using ropes with nooses, nets, bows and arrows, and long stabbing spears, as well as fishers and farmers. The costume shows a rural design, with body paint and other symbols to represent power and fortitude.

The drum has critical importance in any African dance ritual as a symbol of life and the continuity of heritage. At the heart of Ballet Lisanga's *Etumba-Essombi* beats the vibrant energy of the traditional sacred Congolese ngoma drum—with ancient rhythms called *Etumba* and *Essombi*, used throughout the centuries at

births, weddings, funerals, and healing rituals. In the Congolese tradition, these powerful drums sounded communication between villages and called to spirits of ancestors to journey across lands to offer protection and blessing.

Ballet Lisanga was created in 2004 to preserve and promote the Congolese performance tradition and to carry on the work of their teachers who passed on before them. Artistic Director Renée Puckett was a member and Assistant Director of the late Malonga Casquelourd's cherished Fua Dia Congo Dance Company, as well as the Ceedo Senegalese Dance Company. Fua Dia Congo participated in some of the first *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festivals*.

balletlisanga.com

Dance Origin: Congo, Central Africa • **Genre:** Traditional • **Title:** *Etumba-Essombi* • **Artistic Director/Choreographer:** Renée Puckett • **Company Assistant:** Neema Foster • **Dancers:** Shauna Badger, Glenna Baker, Lauren Dunford, Neema Foster, Leta Hately, Bontle Willis Jacobs, Kreshenda Jenkins, Kellie Star Jones, Rasheda Jones, Pam Lige, Jia Taylor, Dominique Walker • **Musicians:** Saul Arrechea (ngoma), Kele Nitoto (ngoma), David Palacios (ngoma)

Auditions Panelists

YVONNE DANIEL is a Professor Emerita of Dance and Afro-American Studies from Smith College in Massachusetts who trained mainly in the Bay Area. She is a specialist in cross-cultural dance performance and Circum-Caribbean societies. Her credits include three books: *Rumba, Dancing Wisdom, and Caribbean and Atlantic Diaspora Dance*; four documentary videos; over 35 juried and solicited articles on Caribbean dance; and many choreographies based on Caribbean dance practices. Dr. Daniel was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and has won Visiting Scholar positions at the Mills College Women's Leadership Institute and the Smithsonian. Her book on sacred performance in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Brazilian Candomblé won the de la Torre Bueno prize from the Society of Dance History Scholars for best dance research in 2006. Dr. Daniel continues to write and give presentations in both academic and community settings.

MARÍA DE LA ROSA, native of San José, has studied for 25 years with masters of Mexican dance and music; taught traditional arts for 20+ years; and performed throughout California and in Hawai'i and Mexico, primarily as a dancer with Los Lupeños de San José, and was the Artistic Director for the company for three years. Honors include selected works to the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival*; collaborations with the Limón Foundation, NY; "Champion of the Arts" by San Jose Mercury News; Artist Fellowship for Choreography by Arts Council SV; and grants and honors for new works including 2014 NPN Creation Fund award. In 2013, she choreographed *MACARIO*. María's music collective, DíaPa'Son, performs throughout the Bay Area and opened the 2013 San Francisco Son Jarocho Festival. She has been a faculty member, performing artist, and administrator at Mexican Heritage Plaza and East Bay Center for the Performing Arts and is currently an artist in residence at La Peña Cultural Center. María earned her BA and Masters from Stanford University.

MALIA DEFELICE is best known for her knowledge of authentic Mid-Eastern and North African dance, including Raqs Sharqi, and various regional folkloric dance styles of Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf and the Levant. She has an academic background in cultural anthropology with a focus on dance and ethnomusicology. For over 40 years she has been a dance and musicology researcher, educator and entertainer within the Middle Eastern, North African, and non-Middle Eastern communities of the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Her mentors include Jamila Salimpour, Aisha Ali, and Ibrahim Farrah. Additionally, Malia performed for 10 years as a core dancer with Rosa Montoya's Bailes Flamencos. Malia conducts ongoing classes, workshops, and seminars and has performed as a soloist and with her Middle Eastern Dance Ensemble in the 1979, 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996 *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festivals*.

IAN MICHAEL ENRIQUEZ is the current director of the Barbary Coast Cloggers, a nonprofit dance company promoting American step dance. He began his dance career studying African dance forms at Oberlin College and continued his studies at the City College of San Francisco, where he earned their certification for his work. His first company experience was with the London Marching Boys in the mid-90s, bringing dance to the Pride parades around the United Kingdom. When he moved to San Francisco, he began a similar company that evolved to dancing on stage infusing Asian movement sensibilities into other dance forms. He started clogging in 2003 and has taught classes at the Oberlin Dance Commons and City Dance Studios. He has followers all across the world and his clogging routines are commonly taught in Australia,

Germany, and Taiwan among other places. The Barbary Coast Cloggers have opened for Faith No More and received a standing ovation at the Nations of San Diego Dance Festival. He has also started Mussel Rock, a co-ed company under Barbary Coast.

RASIKA KUMAR is a bharatanatyam performer and choreographer, steeped in tradition but with contemporary sensibilities. She is currently the Associate Artistic Director of the Abhinaya Dance Company of San Jose (ADC), having studied under her mother Mythili Kumar, Artistic Director of ADC, and other renowned teachers. Since 2005, Rasika has been a soloist, principal dancer, and choreographer for all of ADC's performance seasons. Her choreography has been featured in the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival* and San Francisco WestWave Festival and has earned her an Arts Council of Silicon Valley Performing Arts Fellowship (2008). Rasika's collaborative rhythmic arrangement with Franco Imperial of San Jose Taiko garnered an Isadora Duncan Award in the Music category (2011). She won the Lakshmi Viswanathan Award from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Chennai, India) for her solo performance in the 2014 season.

DAVID LEI co-founded the Chung Ngai Dance Troupe (traditional Chinese dance) which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year, Chinese Performing Arts Foundation in 1994, and in 1995, co-founded the Academy of Chinese Performing Arts with two studios in the South Bay and over 600 students. His exposure and interest in world dance started when he joined the board of World Arts West in 1995. He is currently on the board of the Asian Art Museum, Center for Asian American Media, Friends of the Bancroft Library, and the Chinese American Community Foundation.

SHARLYN SAWYER is a prolific dance artist, choreographer, and director whose career in the performing arts spans 45+ years. As the Artistic/ Executive Director of Afsaneh Art & Culture Society – Ballet Afsaneh, a company she founded in 1986, she has choreographed and produced dozens of original works, as well as expanding traditional Central Asian dance forms for contemporary theater presentations. Her knowledge of many world dance forms, lifelong intensive study, and creative passion have allowed her to make significant contributions to world dance. Her company has had a major influence on the preservation and development of Persian/Afghan/Central Asian dance at a critical time in its history. The company garners the support of many prestigious grant awards, has presented its work locally and internationally at major venues, and has participated in the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival* since the early '70s. Afsaneh Art & Culture Society – Ballet Afsaneh also produces world dance/music events and concerts in the Bay Area, including *Festival of the Silk Road*, and the *NeekOn Festival* in Golden Gate Park.

GABRIELA SHIROMA is the Director of De Rompe y Raja Cultural Association, and is a choreographer, producer, dancer, teacher, and cultural activist who has been teaching and producing Afro-Peruvian dance and musical events in the Bay Area for over 20 years. Gabriela has completed research in Ghana, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, and Peru, and has taught at universities across the US. She has coordinated workshops in several countries and most recently organized the first *cajoneada* in the US in June 2014, celebrating the 160th anniversary of Abolition of Slavery in Peru. She also founded Atajo de Negritos de San Francisco which participated in the cultural traditions of Chinchu, Peru this past December as the first formal group of *zapateadores* from the US.

The Mission of World Arts West:



Our mission is to support local artists sustaining the world's diverse dance traditions by providing needed services and performance opportunities, and to create opportunities to experience and learn more about world arts and cultures.

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From the President of the World Arts West Board of Directors:

There is a saying reminding us that “nothing in Nature lives for itself. Rivers don't drink their own water. Trees don't eat their own fruit.” Similarly, the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival* does not exist by itself or for itself. The *Festival* happens only because of the generosity of hundreds of dedicated and hard-working members of our extended community. This event is emblematic of the beauty found when we recognize our own unique gifts, offer them generously, and graciously accept the offerings of others.

Our uniqueness is being recognized nationwide. A recent review in the *New York Times* acclaimed, “I know of no regular event that more effectively, more movingly, recommends this country's diverse inclusiveness than the annual San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival.”

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank the artists, funders, advisors, staff and the many volunteers for all of your contributions. Because of you, we are emblematic of what is possible to achieve as a fully integrated society. After all, “living for others is the rule of Nature.”

Māhealani Uchiyama

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We especially thank **Robert Cole** and **Mark Heiser** for their leadership, and **Eddie Orton** and **Julia Cheng** for their generous guidance and financial support of these efforts.

The saga continues, and information is available at pofoundation.org

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