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San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival Celebrates 40 Years

By [Dancers' Group](#)



This July, the [San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival](#) will return to the War Memorial Opera House for its 40th anniversary as the largest, longest-running, and most comprehensive world dance and music event of its kind in the US.

“[The Opera House] is a magnificent setting to celebrate the awe-inspiring Bay Area artists who are sustaining the world’s cultural traditions, shining as a powerful beacon for the power and beauty of diverse cultural inclusion,” said Festival Executive Director Julie Mushet. “It’s deeply gratifying to celebrate four decades of presenting these inspiring artists to ever-growing audiences, from the Festival’s modest beginnings in community centers to the grandest stage in San Francisco.”



One of the highlights of this year’s Festival is the performance by [Chuna McIntyre and the Nunamta Yup’ik Eskimo Singers and Dancers](#), who will present a dance that will be seen for the first time in over 200 years, in regalia that has taken nearly four decades to create.

Additionally, the Festival has announced a trio of new Co-Artistic Directors: Patrick Makuakane, Latanya d. Tigner, and Mahealani Uchiyama, as Carlos Carvajal and CK Ladzekpo become Artistic Directors Emeritus after 12 seasons as Co-Artistic Directors.



Makuakane is founder, Artistic Director, and Kumu Hula of San Francisco's renowned Na Lei Hulu i ka Wekiu Hawaiian dance company; Tigner is a dancer and choreographer at Oakland's venerated Dimensions Dance Theater, directs Dimensions' youth company, and serves on the dance faculty of UC Berkeley; Uchiyama is founder and Artistic Director of the Center for International Dance in Berkeley, Kumu Hula of Halau Ka Ua Tuahine, and is an award-winning choreographer and composer.

[AERODANCE](#) – Indian Folkloric (Gujarat)

[AguaClara Flamenco](#) – Spanish Flamenco

Ananya Tirumala – South Indian Kuchipudi

[Antara Asthaayi Dance](#) – North Indian Kathak

[Arenas Dance Company](#) – Afro-Cuban

[Bolivia Corazón de América](#) – Bolivian Folkloric (Tarabuco and Potosí)

[Caminos Flamencos](#) – Spanish Flamenco



[Charya Burt Cambodian Dance](#) – Cambodian Classical

[Chinyakare Ensemble](#) – Zimbabwean Traditional

[Chitresh Das Youth Company](#) – North Indian Kathak

[De Rompe y Raja Cultural Association](#) – Afro-Peruvian

[Ensamble Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco](#) – Mexican Folkloric (Tabasqueño)



[Hermanos Herrera](#) – Mexican Folkloric

[Kim Shuck](#) † – Poet Laureate of San Francisco

[Leung's White Crane Lion & Dragon Dance Association](#) – Chinese Dragon Dance

[Los Danzantes de Aztlán, Fresno State](#) – Mexican Folkloric (Huapangos)

[Mussel Rock Cloggers](#) – Appalachian Clogging

[Nimely Pan African Dance Company](#) – Liberian Folkloric

[Nunamta Yup'ik Eskimo Singers and Dancers](#) – Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo



[OngDance Company](#) – Korean Traditional and Contemporary

[Parangal Dance Company](#) – Philippine Folkloric (Meranao)

[Te Pura O Te Rahura'a](#) – Tahitian 'Ōte'a and 'Aparima

[Vinic-Kay \(La Gente y El Canto\)](#) – Mexican Folkloric

[Ye Feng](#) – Chinese Contemporary



The Festival's Malonga Casquelourd Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in ethnic dance and music will be presented to four artists who have had extraordinary impact on the field:

- Lily Cai, Founder and Artistic Director of [Lily Cai Chinese Dance Company](#)
- [Patty-Ann Farrell](#), the Festival's Lighting Designer and Auditions Stage Manager, who has been a part of the Festival team since it launched in 1978
- Chuna McIntyre, Founder and Artistic Director of [Nunamta Yup'ik Eskimo Singers and Dancers](#)
- Jamila Salimpour (In Memoriam), Founder of Bal Anat, and a major influence on belly dance in the United States for more than 50 years.

