



It was thrilling to see a record number of attendees (over 17,000!) participating in this year's *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival* – a magical month filled with breathtaking performances in new venues throughout the Bay Area. Hearts and spirits soared, communities celebrated, and many friendships were formed.

Then, just as we finished packing up and exited the theaters, the phone rang. It was San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee's office asking us to help the City put together the cultural programming to welcome and honor Hillary Clinton and leaders from 21 Pacific Rim nations attending the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. We worked for a month organizing 150 Bay Area artists to present an extraordinary evening that San Franciscans could be proud of, raising the bar for cultural diplomacy and showcasing the artistic and cultural diversity of our region.

With APEC festivities behind us, we jumped back into our *Festival* planning and fundraising work. We reserved performance venues for next year's *Festival* and began moving full steam ahead, excited about our plans and building upon the work of our past season's success.

As we began our annual routine of contacting and meeting with funders and philanthropic supporters, it quickly became clear to us that this year is markedly different. Each passing day brought more bad news and stacks of funding rejection letters, leading us to the difficult and sobering realization that we could not proceed on the *Festival* path as planned. Many funders and supporters that we spoke with have re-oriented their giving towards meeting the growing needs of public schools and families without food and shelter. As a result, the artists throughout the dance communities we are working with are struggling, even more than previously, to sustain their work.

Given these economic realities, we realized that we would need to do things differently this year in order to be able to present *Festival* programs in 2012.

Financially, it became necessary to lay-off more than half our staff, which resulted in the need to cancel the January auditions.

Currently, *Festival* Artistic Directors, Carlos Carvajal and CK Ladzekpo, are working diligently to curate *Festival* programs for June 2012. Our plan is to both commission new pieces from seasoned *Festival* performers and remount exceptional *Festival* performances from previous seasons. **The good news is that so far, on paper, another magnificent *Festival* is in the making, which will spotlight over 30 local dance companies and thousands of dancers.**

We are excited to announce that 500 national dance leaders will be coming to San Francisco next June for the annual Dance/USA conference to coincide with the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival*. We are planning ways for these visitors to best experience the *Festival*, raising the national visibility for our Bay Area dancers and hopefully creating touring opportunities for the future.

If we are able to raise enough money in the next few months, we will be able to realize this vision and present another inspiring dance festival, unlike anything else in the world.

You've heard it again and again, but it is true: **We can't do it without you. If you can help us, or know someone who can, please do.** If everyone reading this letter sends \$25, we will be able to proceed.

We are accepting donations online through our website at: www.sfethnicedancefestival.org.

Thank you and happy holidays to you and your loved ones.

Wishing you all the best,

Festival Board and Staff