35th ANNIVERSARY
SAN FRANCISCO
ETHNIC DANCE
FESTIVAL
JUNE 7 - 30, 2013
HONORING CULTURAL LEGACY
World Arts West
I am excited to welcome you to the 35th Anniversary San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, a unique opportunity to savor the passion, wisdom, and beauty of dance rooted in cultures that span the globe. Together, the dances offer a glimpse into the richness of world dance and the essence of community celebration, ritual, and prayer.

The greater San Francisco Bay Area is home to the most magnificent and diverse dance community in the world, with over four hundred local dance companies sustaining a hundred different dance forms ranging from ancient to contemporary. The San Francisco Chronicle summed it up like this:

“Yes, we have various and glorious ballet companies. We have a hopping, popping, contemporary dance scene ranging from hip-hop to traditional modern dance to the farthest reaches of experimentalism. Still, a major reason that the Bay Area is or should be front and center on everyone’s list of top dance destinations is... an iceberg. That iceberg is the multitudinous, rich, belief-defying ethnic dance scene around here, and the easily visible tip of it is the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival.”

Throughout the Festival, you will see a breathtaking range of dance and music featuring thirty-five local dance companies often performing with special international guest artists, such as the legendary Pandit Birju Maharaj from New Delhi, India and master artists Peta Robles and Javier Gordillo from Peru. Some of this year’s Festival artists are working at the crossroads of cultural survival—for example, Chaksam-Pa artists are sustaining rare, sacred dances from Tibet while UKHA dancers offer a glimpse of rituals from the indigenous Tauladak/Solutucion Tribe living in the Visayan Islands of the Philippines. Other Festival artists are working at the frontiers of cultural innovation: It is thrilling to watch Charya Burt’s multi-media Cambodian dance piece accompanied by mesmerizing cello compositions by local composer Alexis Alrich, and Urban Jazz Dance Company’s stunning piece encompassing the poetic gestures of sign language.

Each dance form embodies and transmits many layers of meaning and, together, they reveal insights not only into the cultures which created and sustain each expression, but also into our shared humanity.

Dance and music, sustained by culture-bearers in every corner of the world, has been passed from one generation to the next and continues to spread throughout the Bay Area’s diverse communities. We are grateful to the artists who work so hard to share their cultural traditions with us. As always, the artistry is deeply inspiring and while I enjoy watching each dance performance individually, it is the collective experience that elicits a sense of awe and appreciation for the majesty of cultural wealth that can be experienced in the new globalized climate.

I love the way this Festival gathers the community together, and I thank you for participating both as audience member and, hopefully, as a Festival donor. May your spirit soar as mine does each Festival season!

With heartfelt thanks,

Julie Mushet
Executive Director

“When we dance together, we fill our hearts and our communities with hope...”

— ANTOINE HUNTER
2013 Festival Line-Up

WEEKEND 1

SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL
June 7, 2013

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YBCA LAM RESEARCH THEATER
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FESTIVAL making was guided by our goal of presenting a broad range of Festival’s artists and superlative performances that we saw throughout the year. Once again, we have had the very difficult task of programming Festival’s all-ages dance repertoire to highlight our vision for the future. Our goal is to see the performance opportunities expand for the extraordinary Bay Area dance community, from which all will benefit. Given the continued economic crisis at the governmental level, we call upon the Bay Area’s corporate and private angels (donors) to help us continue our effort to help Festival artists thrive. In light of all of the support that is given to various endeavors in our world, it is high time to support pursuits which affirm what is best about human life, our ability to create beautiful cultural achievements which strengthen communities and encourage cooperation and appreciation for diverse points of view. Our Festival has embodied these values for 35 years now in the Bay Area.

We strive for excellence and work hard to offer you an inspiring glimpse of the great internationally-rooted artistic wealth of Bay Area dance. We are hoping that you will want to see more.

Viva la Danse!

Carlos Carvalhal and CK Ladzekpo

Carlos Carvalhal, a native San Franciscan, is a distinguished dancer/choreographer of more than two hundred works for ballet, opera, musical theater and television. Among his many credits, he spent ten years on the San Francisco Ballet, then the Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas, Opera of Berlin, Opera of Bologna and Ballet Nacional de Venezuela as soloist, principal dancer and choreographer. He has also choreographed works for the SF Ballet as its ballet master and associate choreographer. He founded San Francisco Choreographer’s Fellowship during its first ten years. He has also choreographed for the SF Opera, Golden Gate Ballet and Dance Theater of Nielsen, among others. His U.S. and international performances include Caribbean Dance Drama, Bacchus, Ewbanks and The Nutcracker. Honors/prizes/awards include five from the National Endowment for the Arts, the SF Art Commission, the Critics’ Circle and Isadora Duncan Lifetime Achievement. He holds a B.A in Theatre and MA in Creative Arts from SF State University. Carlos returns for the 7th season as an artistic directors for this Festival.

CK Ladzekpo, artistic director of this festival and director of the African Music program at UC Berkeley says, “Zak has been largely responsible for making Oakland one of the premier centers of African dance in the US. His leadership as choreographer and director of Diamano Coura, his dedication to do what he loves even when the resources are so limited—I don’t know where the history of African dance would be without him.”

“In the beginning, we had to fight for theaters for African dance in the Bay Area, and join together to find funding sources. Zak has been at the center of this struggle. When he moved to San Diego, the African Heritage coali-
tion brought him back because we needed him. His strength is that he thinks about African, not just about Senegal, where he is from. He welcomes African dance professionals under a large umbrella, and sees ethnic dance as a way to bring people together. Began with the African Cultural Festival, and now with the Malonga Center, Oakland has become a major bringing young dance professionals from all over Africa. Now with the companies under one roof, people with common goals and common visions, we are a major arts destination. And he has been at the center of this reformative and professional African voice. He has also furthered multi-cultural policy for the benefit of all. When people are empowered they reach out to people naturally, and we go on the way.”

“Zak’s been doing this a long time. In fact, he and I met when we were kids, though we didn’t know it. In the 1990s, when Ghana was trying to gain independence, the United Nations and African leaders brought a delegation of young African performers to New York. Zak was among the young dancers in that delegation, and so was I. Here in Oakland, Zak could easily invite the young African professionals to come together to join his own group Diamo-

our important achievements. But, until then, we and Naomi (Diof) have always supported the dancers and drummers in following their own vision: reaching out to them, encouraging them to start new companies, showing them how to sustain themselves as artists. Zak is like the papa. I have great admiration for his longevity and his energy—at 75, he’s so energetic up there on the stage when he’s performing. We should have given him this award a long time ago.”

FROM THE FESTIVAL ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

In January, we were relieved to see the return of the Festival’s auditions, which serve as the important beginning of our Festival Season each year.

As you may remember, the cancellation of the 2012 auditions was necessitated due to the financial challenges resulting from moving the Festival from our much-loved home of 24 years, the Palace of Fine Arts. The Doyle Drive reconstruction project closed the parking lot at the Palace, and with building materials in the street surrounding the construction site, parking at the Palace became very difficult. Given the parking situation and the lack of public transportation serving the Palace of Fine Arts, we relocated to new venues while we waited to see what the future holds for returning to the Palace of Fine Arts after the Doyle Drive project completion.

This is the Festival’s third year away from the Palace of Fine Arts, and although we have found venues to continue our work, we speak for many thousands of dancers who long to return home to the Palace. To do so, we need much support and we ask that you consider becoming involved in our efforts for a permanent home where we can present the Festival’s artists year-round in a grand celebration of the world’s cultural legacy.

Our great hope is to see the Palace return to its original glory as a center for art and culture from around the world and it would be fantastic to see a vision and strategy to make this happen coalesced in time for its 100th Anniversary in 2015! We have recently formed a World Dance Leadership Council and will be working together to craft our vision and strategy throughout the remainder of 2013. The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, which will oversee the pending redevelopment of the Palace of Fine Arts, will soon be starting a proposal review and selection process. You can follow developments via the Festival’s website www.afroamericanfestival.org and on the Festival’s Facebook page and we urge you to get involved!

All that said, as the Festival’s Artistic Directors (our 7th season), we are proud to welcome you to the 30th Anniversary Festival. Once again, we have had the very difficult task of programming the four Festival weekends due to the abundance of excellent artists and companies, and we thank you for joining us throughout the Festival’s auditions process. As in past years, our decision-making was guided by our goal of presenting a broad range of cultural representation, with balanced dynamics and dramatic flow. Alas, there are, of necessity, many talented artists which we were not able to include...and we are very sorry for this.

2013 MALONGA CASQUELOur LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PRESENTED TO DR. ZAKARYA DIOUF
Dance Origins 2013

Over 500 performers presenting dance from 19 countries spanning 5 continents
Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl

WORLD PREMIERE | FRI, JUNE 7, NOON / CITY HALL ROTUNDA DANCE SERIES

Matlachines of Zacatecas is a Catholic processional dance as it is performed in the city of Zacatecas to honor the virgin of Guadalupe. The dancers follow a baquetilla, a captain, whose steps and postures signal commands. Everyone steps in the groove, while crossovers and exchanges shape crosses and circles, creating a footprint of the course. Traditionally a men’s dance, women now frequently dance Matlachines across Mexico and the southwestern U.S. During special events, dancers perform along pathways and in town squares in indigenous villages. Sometimes dancers weave their steps and patterns for several days—for example during a novenario, a nine-day period of prayer following someone’s death. When a dance gets tired, a family member takes his or her place.

The form and style of the dance shows a mixing of indigenous Mexican and Spanish elements. It’s generally thought to have originated with the conquistadores, as the name is the same as an old Spanish swordfight dance. It is also described as a morality play trumping good over evil. Christianity over “maga,” meanings, with beliefs that the Virgin Mary imagery is modeled after the Aztec goddess Tonantzin. Another version maintains an older indigenous style with concentric circles and a similar spinning in straight lines. And yet another version has the dance named for—and styled after—the Nahua malacotzin, an insect that spins. This account says Christian themes found the dance so beautiful they kept it, adding Christian imagery, crosses, and kneeling movements, and used it to attract people to the Church.

Maestro Erik Diaz learned this piece from Don Pedro Sanchez Ventura in Zacatecas in 2011 and created this World Premiere presentation. The company made their costumes, brightening them up for the stage. The direction of a dancer's sash signifies marriage status, and the overall design signals a dancer’s village or parish. In Zacatecas, Matlachines are dressed with a charron-style skirt adorned with beads, sequined religious imagery, and feather headresses with reed adornments. The dance is accompanied by drums, gourd rattles, and additional images, and feather headresses with reed adornments. The direction of a dancer's sash signifies marriage status, and the overall design signals a dancer’s village or parish. In Zacatecas, Matlachines are dressed with a charron-style skirt adorned with beads, sequined religious imagery, and feather headresses with reed adornments. The dance is accompanied by drums, gourd rattles, and additional images, and feather headresses with reed adornments.

Director Netza Vidal founded Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl in 1996. He was born in the city of Compostela, Nayarit, Mexico, and studied Mexican folkloric dance at the Escuela de la Danza Mexicana Jaime Buevuelalo. The dance company is currently composed of more than thirty students, with Netza leading both adults and children in different locations, including San Rafael, Concord, and Santa Rosa. Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl’s highest goal has been to research Mexican folklore and share with the world some of Mexico’s traditions. The company made their costumes, brightening them up for the stage. The direction of a dancer's sash signifies marriage status, and the overall design signals a dancer’s village or parish. In Zacatecas, Matlachines are dressed with a charron-style skirt adorned with beads, sequined religious imagery, and feather headresses with reed adornments.

facebook.com/ballet.netzahualcoyotl

Dance Origin: Mexico • Genre: Folklorico • Title: Matlachines de Zacatecas • Artistic Director: Netza Vidal • Choreographers: Erik Diaz, Netza Vidal, Klaesen, Gabriela Arellano, Samantha Arredondo, Sandra Castanos, Cosa Dosso-Done, Alejandra Duran Espinoza, Anjena Espinoza, Delia Espinoza, Loida Flores, Michelle Lopez, Netza Lopez, Estella Mares, Stephanie Reyes, Danilo Martinez, Sabrina Hinesman, Juan Carlos Marcano, Mayra Narvaez, Anthony Palacios, Alejandro Poleda, Stephanie Rojas, Stephanie Raygoza, Maria Elena Renteria, doctor, Francesca Rodriguez, Sarai Rodriguez, Danessa Sandholt, Diana Santamaria, Marisela Soto de Labo, Karin Tello, Ana Valverde, Jorge Valencia • Musicians: Erik Diaz (drums), Oscar Santamarina (drums), Gabriela Arellano (drums), Netza Vidal (violin)

Fogo Na Roupa Performing Company

WORLD PREMIERE | FRI, JUNE 7, NOON / CITY HALL ROTUNDA DANCE SERIES

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Julia Cheng and the “Corazon Del Barrio Award” from Mission Cultural Center. Recently in 2011, as well as Best of the Bay 2011, and a 2012 “Corazon Del Barrio Award” from Mission Cultural Center.

In a performance called Carnaval do Fogo, Fogo Na Roupa brings their unstoppable street party to the stage, dancing clothing costumes. A full contingent of drummers and dancers parading together—and their shared goal is euphoria.

The style is urban-derived, funky samba, inspired by Brazilian samba-reggae. It features the company’s unique, signature parading style, regalia, and movement—called “Fogolectric” by loyal fans. Samba-reggae is a music and dance form from Salvador, Bahia. It was developed by Brazilians of African descent as carnival parade music they could call their own, with elements from the reggae rhythms of Jamaica and Afro-Brazilian samba.

The dancers wear full carnival regalia. Red, green and yellow represent Africa; headpieces of toupee feathers honor Brazil’s indigenous people; and the regalia reflects the influence of both cultures.

The Brazilian Carnaval is an annual spring festival, held just before the period of Lent, when Catholics traditionally abstained from eating meat. As Carnaval was the final party before over a month of religious discipline, prayer, and repentance, it had to be a big one! Today, Brazilians are famous for their enormous, six-day, city-wide extravaganzas of dancing and singing in the streets. In southeastern Brazil, and in Carnaval celebrations around the world, small parties called blocos invite everyone to dance, but the parades are filled with skilled, extravagantly decked-out, and minimally-dressed samba schools. In San Francisco’s own Carnaval—celebrated the Sunday before Memorial Day—Fogo Na Roupa is known for fantastic and lively contingents, some two hundred dancers and drummers deep!

The dances and rhythms in this performance were inspired by the teachings of Mestre Carlos Acuñeto, which artistic directors Jose Rivera and Matti Henriquez continue to study and teach to company members. This piece was created and set for stage in 2012 by choreographers Matti Henriquez and Alicia Brooker. The music is played by the Fogo Na Roupa partners led by Jose Rivera, a full ensemble of parading drums playing Afro-Brazilian rhythms in “Fogolectric” style.

Founded in 1989 by Mestre Carlos Acuñeto, Fogo Na Roupa is a Bay Area, award-winning, Brazilian Carnaval dance and percussion company and carnival group, a diverse community of dancers, musicians, and carnivaleiros rooted in a study of Afro-Brazilian dance and percussion. Before his untimely passing in 2006, Mestre Acuñeto developed one of the largest, strongest San Francisco Carnaval contingents. Fogo Na Roupa, under the artistic direction of Jose Rivera and Matti Henriquez, continues to fire up the crowds. The group has won multiple San Francisco Carnaval Grand Champions, most recently in 2011, as well as Best of the Bay 2011, and a 2012 “Corazon Del Barrio Award” from Mission Cultural Center.

www.gofogo.com
This conversation began more than 1,000 years ago, among the ancient carvings, inscriptions, and complex court rituals of Cambodia’s Angkor Thom, where exquisite dances of prayer, prophecy, and kingship were born. In 850, the discussion traveled to France, when Cambodian King Siem Reap brought his Royal Ballet to Paris and French sculptor Auguste Rodin was enamored by the graceful postures and elegant hand gestures of the court dancers, saying how the dancers had “brought antiquity to life.” Rodin followed the ballet to the Colonial Exhibition in Marseille, creating one hundred watercolor sketches. He wrote that the dance that held the delicacy and beauty of flowers and a “natural knowledge of harmony and truth.”

The collaboration continues today with a new inspiration, affection, and respect. The melodies of a Cambodian girl-pect orchestra merge with a contemporary cello solo, as a celestial princess—Charya Burt—leads her dancers into a heavenly garden, symbolizing the magical world that captured Rodin. The choreography, grounded in classical form, reflects flowing brush strokes of Rodin’s watercolor sketches, with costumes also based on his drawings. Visual artist Mario Uribe responds in real time, sketching the dancers, and his artwork is projected as snapshots of dance in time.

Blossoming Antiquities was developed through a collaborative process, originated by Charya Burt. It’s a model beyond the “collage” presentation of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. World Arts West recognizes the San Francisco Bay Area as a unique center in the world for its strength and quality of culturally-specific traditional dance. This performance at the Legion of Honor begins a long-anticipated plan to foster multi-platform, multi-venue, city-wide events; to work with local arts organizations, local theaters, and community festivals. The year 2009 marked the opening of the Ballet Folklórico Costa de Oro Dance School, allowing the company the freedom to educate the youth and community about Mexico’s rich and beautiful history. The company has allowed them to perform for professional sports teams, television shows, and private events. The year 2009 marked the opening of the Ballet Folklórico Costa de Oro Dance School, allowing the company the freedom to educate the youth and community about Mexico’s rich and beautiful history. The company has allowed them to perform for professional sports teams, television shows, and private events.

Charya Burt is a graduate and former dance faculty member of the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Her training began in 1982 under the direction of the foremost dance masters of Cambodia. Charya has performed throughout the USA, including the Kennedy Center and American Dance Festival. A recipient of the Isadora Duncan Award for Outstanding Achievement in Individual Performance, Charya has been awarded numerous grants for her innovative new works including three from both the Irvine Dance in California Program and CCI Investing in Artists and Ideas from the Creative Work Fund.

www.charyaburt.com

Dance: Charya Burt • Genres: Traditional and Contemporary • Title: Blossoming Antiquities • Advisory Director and Choreographer: Charya Burt Dancers: Charya Burt, Chery Chauve, Sophy June Hull • Composer: Alexi Avitch • Musical Arrangement: Russ Lane (viola), Sterry Rindt (viola) • Live Visual Art: Mario Uribe

www.bfcostadeoro.com

SPECIAL FAMILY EVENT: BALLET FOLKLÓRICO COSTA DE ORO • OJO DE DIOS WORKSHOP SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 11:30AM, YBCA FORUM

Dancers: Hector Maria • Genres: Folklorico • Title: Ojo de Dios

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Joe and Susan Ducolet.

The Huichol are a relatively nomadic group, mostly living in Jalisco, Nayarit, and Zacatecas. When the Spanish arrived, these indigenous communities withdrew into remote regions of the Sierra Madre. Today, few outsiders are allowed to participate in Huichol rituals. The collaboration continues today with a new inspiration, affection, and respect. The melodies of a Cambodian girl-pect orchestra merge with a contemporary cello solo, as a celestial princess—Charya Burt—leads her dancers into a heavenly garden, symbolizing the magical world that captured Rodin. The choreography, grounded in classical form, reflects flowing brush strokes of Rodin’s watercolor sketches, with costumes also based on his drawings. Visual artist Mario Uribe responds in real time, sketching the dancers, and his artwork is projected as snapshots of dance in time.

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www.bfcostadeoro.com

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Dancers: Hector Maria • Genres: Folklorico • Title: Ojo de Dios

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Joe and Susan Ducolet.
COLECTIVO ANQARI

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Ann Gordon / Beldon Ashbel Good Company.

Luis Valverde presents Mistisikuri, an urban expression of indigenous Andean dance. It’s a joyful bale-aire from Ayamaras-speaking peoples near Lake Titicaca in the high altitude plains of the Andes, danced in the streets from La Paz to Puno and also along the pathways of Andean pueblos.

This performance recreates a festival scene where ensembles gather to play and dance. In the altiplano, a festival procession can last all day, a dance party fueled by community spirit, laughter, dance, drink, twirling dancers that resemble flowers, and the haunting panpipe flute.

The Kollau Altiplano is the home of Quechuas, Aymaras, Uros and Chipayas, ethnic groups living there since before the Incan empire. Seventy percent of the population still speaks the native languages. This dance is called siku in Bolivia, and sikumoreno in Peru. Sikus are the musicians and siku is the name for the panpipe flute, originally a pre-Columbian ceramic or bone instrument, invented and played in the altiplano. The siku is a two-part instrument, with each “half” sounding the alternate notes of a complete scale. Siku players use an interlocking technique to play a melody, a technique called trencizando, or “braiding.”

The Mistisikuri tradition performed here was developed in the 19th century in Bolivia and Peru among urban indigenous and mestizo (mixed descent) communities. They adapted the indigenous dance and music, “borrowing” the siku panpipe from the pueblos. They built shorter, higher-pitched bamboo pipes to play rapid, light-hearted music, and they also created a separate percussion section and added a corps of non-musician dancers. In the 19th century, to be of indigenous descent carried a social stigma, so the original Mistisikuri costumes were exotic, the clothing of sailors, matadores, and soldiers. The dance returned in its present form to the pueblos in the 20th century, and urban ensembles turned again towards indigenous dance. Colectivo Anqari is dressed according to this later tradition, with ponchos and ch'ullus, or woolen hats. The piece was created by Luis Valverde in 2012 and set for this presentation.

Anqari is the name of the Ayamara deity that represents the wind. Colectivo Anqari is a collective of musicians dedicated to the performance of traditional music and dances of the Kollau Altiplano, a culturally-rich region in the heart of the Andes mountains. Formed in 2012 by artists with different backgrounds in Andean Music and Dance, the Colectivo focuses on the instruction, practice and promotion of traditional and understudied dance and music of the Altiplano. This repertoire is played upon indigenous wind instruments, and corresponds to the seasons and festivals during which it is played. Present acting Artistic Director is Luis Valverde.

http://www.facebook.com/colectivoanqari

Dance Origin: Bolivia and Peru • Genre: Traditional • Title: Mistisikuri • Artistic Director: Luis Valverde • Choreographer: Luis Valverde • Dance Musicians: Héctor Zapana, Héctor Sanz, Freddy Vizcarra, Freddy Vizcarra, Freddy Vizcarra

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Margarita and Herb Roseman.

Dance Origin: Boli via and Peru • Genre: Traditional • Title: Ngonorpa Dohn • Artistic Director: Tsering Wangmo • Choreographer: Master Norbu Tsering • Dancers: Nyima Gyalpo, Tsering Lodoe, Tsering Pelmo, Tsering Tsering, Tsering D. Sangpo • Musician: Tsering Wangmo, Tsering Yudokan

Ngonorpa Dohn is a purification dance to open the Tibetan Ache Lhamo Opera. It is adapted here for the stage not as performance art but as a precious blessing for community prosperity. To the calls of drum and crash of cymbals, local spirits of place and Tibetan deities are invoked through mantra-like chants, and the characters prepare for performance.

Lying behind the mountain of Shel Dorng, A-Ho – what a wonder – the Divine Juniper tree Incense purifies the air and invokes the gods, beautifying the gods’ spirits come from air, burn butter and boil flour. Chaksam Pa! I sing to you, May these songs and dances entice all minds towards the pure Dharma, path of rightousness.

Ache Lhamo Opera in an endangered dance-drama form, not usually seen outside of Southeast Asia. Its repertoire and performance are a UNESCO Performance Heritage.

14th-century Saint Thangtong Gyalpo is honored as its founder. He is also known as Bridgebuilder, for helping build fifty night suspension bridges over Himalayan rivers so pilgrims could reach sacred Buddhist sites. Prior to 1919, this sacred and secular opera traveled across the vast Tibetan landscape, imparting Buddhist history and ethics to villagers. It is now preserved in exile by artists trained at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) in Dharamsala, India. Chaksam-Pa learned the form at TIPA directly from opera master Norbu Tsering, now in his 90s, representing the last generation of teachers/performers to perform inside Tibet.

The clothing displays traditional bright colors and materials. The Ngonorpa dancer’s blue mask has auspicious symbols: sun, moon, and wish-fulfilling jewel. The jacket design is considered ancient and authentic and rings (shakos) or female deities wear headpieces with sacred mantras and images of protectors. The onstage setting is like that of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet; once the home of his holiness, the Dalai Lama. Ache Lhamo music is played on drum and cymbal, with the drummer leading the dance through the repertoire. The singers’ calls and motifs are complex and require years of practice, and the haunting vocals are meant to evoke an atmosphere in which other-worldly beings and spirits are present.

Chaksam-Pa was founded in 1989 by three graduate musicians of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, founded by His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, to preserve Tibet’s unique cultural heritage in exile. Chaksam-Pa is the only Tibetan opera company outside South Asia performing Ache Lhamo and this invocation dance annually during celebrations for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama’s birthday and also for Losar, the Tibetan New Year. This master dance company has been based in California for 25 years, offering this unique performance art—a UNESCO World Intangible Heritage—to a world audience in hopes of keeping it alive for another generation.

www.chaksampa.org
Sayap is from Maguindanao, in Mindanao’s Pulangi River basin. The region is Islamic—Maguindanao has three Sultanates—and its rich heritage is seen in this performance of the legend of a royal princess.

Once, the Sultan’s favorite daughter ran away to escape an arranged marriage. She fell in love with a man beneath her social class, and disguised herself in a sayap hat to meet with her true love. She saw her true love was not a common man, but a prince and the princess rode away happily in a decorated boat on the Pulangi River. Eric Solano created this U.S. premiere presentation. His choreography follows the arc of this traditional story:

The piece begins with Rayok, a sequence of storytelling chant. Then Kabangparangdeung brings us inside the royal house, as the groom’s kin whisper their intentions to arrange a marriage. Next, Kataung Engkonton reveals the continuous flickering of wrists to a rhythm called silong. The rest of the dances are Masking, the wearing of tabular cloth in preparation of the princess’ wedding. Sayap, the princess imitating her lover disguised in a sayap hat; Kunsang Mitangudanao, the flight between the groom and his rival, featuring ancient martial arts brought to the Philippines by Indonesian, Malaysian, and Chinese immigrants. Missaya, with handkerchiefs of Maguindanao’s royal colors, and flowers to show the princess’s feelings; Pagana, the royal banquet held when the princess returns; Sayagan, a dance recalling the epic of prince Bartugan; Singkil, the well-known Philippine dance with bamboo poles, showing the love triangles; Kaawing, the wedding; and Guinakit, where the boat with royal flags sails away.

The company learned the legend and dances for Sayap from Faisal Monal, appointed as cultural bearer and master artist by Maguindanao Sultanates; also from Bryan Batu Ellorino from the Philippines. Today’s performance includes special guests from Eskabo Daan (Filipino Martial Arts) and the music is by Kawayan Folk Arts on a palabunyan ensemble of dabakan drum and several sets of gongs.

Parangal Dance Company, under the direction of choreographer Eric Solano, is a Filipino Folk Dance Group based in the San Francisco Bay Area that aspires to inspire. The company’s mission is to give tribute to Philippine heritage by preserving and promoting authentic art, music, and dance through research, workshops, and performances. They aim to serve as a bridge, inspiring and connecting Filipinos to their roots to give them a sense of pride and identity, while educating diverse communities to foster awareness and appreciation of Philippine culture.

www.parangaldance.org

**PARANGAL DANCE COMPANY**

**Filipino**

This piece is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Audrey Barris and Randall Baran

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**EL TUNANTE**

Champion Peruvian dancer Néstor Ruiz presents the classic couple’s dance, La Marinera Norteña. The marinera is the Peruvian National Dance, a form with three distinct styles. In Lima, dancers perform the marinera Límense on the coast, the style is marinera costeña; and this performance of marinera norteña is from northern Peru—from Trujillo.

Like many dance and music forms in Peru, marinera norteña draws from Peru’s culturally-diverse communities, especially port towns where Spanish, African, and indigenous dancers shared traditional styles and rhythms. In 1893, during a concert with the dancer Rosa de Morales, Abadillo Guamán—he was also known as “El Tunante”—formally dubbed the dance la marinera, in homage to the Admiral of the Peruvian Navy. This elegant performance is like a seductive, stylized courtship with tightly synchronized sequences. In Peru, this dance is sometimes performed outside, with El Chalan—the male dancer—on horseback. Peruvian Paso horses are trained to battle dance steps, and the male riders lean gracefully towards their partners, women dancing barefoot in the dirt. In staged choreography, the men’s high steps imitate the horses’ and the women draw pictures on this floor with their expressive bare feet. Watch also for the very close partner dancing known as coquetear, and the championship level footwork of cuello and zapateo.
Choreographer Anuradha Nag presents Mere Dholna, a North Indian kathak performance.

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Susan and Jitu Somaya and others have been restaged to include artistic elements from contemporary choreography.

Kathak is one of the eight major forms of Indian classical dance. It has two principal forms of expression: abhinaya, the gestured storytelling aspect; and rrittta, the pure dance form. Mere Dholna is a rrittta choreography; it emphasizes the technical repertoire. This is an example of the Lucknow school of kathak, known for its grounded, sensuous, and subtle style and its spontaneous solos. Dancers stand in straight-legged position with toes pointing out. They stamp their feet in rhythmic play, splitting the time-cycle into triplets or quintuplets. Then, with a single step on the heel, they swiftly pirouette in timed unison.

My Beloved is a nritta choreography; it emphasizes the technical aspects of the dance. It has two principal forms of expression: abhinaya, the gestured storytelling aspect; and nritta, the pure dance form. Mere Dholna is a rrittta choreography; it emphasizes the technical repertoire. This is an example of the Lucknow school of kathak, known for its grounded, sensuous, and subtle style and its spontaneous solos. Dancers stand in straight-legged position with toes pointing out. They stamp their feet in rhythmic play, splitting the time-cycle into triplets or quintuplets. Then, with a single step on the heel, they swiftly pirouette in timed unison.

Kathak has both Hindu and Muslim roots. An ancient Sanskrit text (3rd century BCE) notes that the kathak's “dohra is dance for the divine peoples.” Long ago, ancient kathakars nested sacred bulls in Hindu temples. Gradually they added gestures, embellishments, and created a refined dance.

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GAMELAN SEKAR JAYA

This performance is made possible in part thanks to the generosity of Julie Milander

Tari Gabor is a modern arrangement of traditional offering dances from a Balinese temple—known as a ceremaj rejang—that are performed by women as community devotion. In the temple courtyard, dancers gracefully walk around; others dance backwards through the temple gate, welcoming holy water brought from a sacred spring. This dance is a prayer, and it is also presented in secular contexts, as an opening dance of welcome and goodwill to you, the honored guests.

In all Balinese performance, the dance and music is tightly coordinated, as performers seek perfect unity with each other in gesture, nuance, expression, phrase, and rhythmic change. With amazing in-the-moment speed, dancers cue musicians to start and stop, speed up, or accent beats. Dancers also respond intuitively to you, the honored guests.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya is a modern arrangement of traditional offering dances from a Balinese temple—known as a ceremaj rejang—that are performed by women as community devotion. In the temple courtyard, dancers gracefully walk around; others dance backwards through the temple gate, welcoming holy water brought from a sacred spring. This dance is a prayer, and it is also presented in secular contexts, as an opening dance of welcome and goodwill to you, the honored guests.

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SHABNAM DANCE COMPANY

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of J. Morgan Chase California Branch

Arabah—Four—is a World Premiere of modern belly dance from choreographer Shabnam—a performance celebrating the future of belly dance and summoning the vitality and life-energy of the four elements:

Earth is a drum dance, featuring the grounded Arabic rhythms of Saiidi, Baladi, and Falah with earthy and grounded movement. The beating of the drum symbolizes the sound of the beating heart of both humans and the Earth. The circular shape of the drum symbolizes the Earth and cycle of life.

Wind features movements from the tradition of Zāīr—a women’s healing ritual of drumming and dancing from Eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Zāīr is performed to harmonize the inner and outer worlds, and the mesmerizing movements often bring on a spiritual trance. Here, the dancers’ swaying hair evokes the power, motion, and energy of the wind.

Fire is a performance of raks al shamadan, a daring balancing act performed with a candelabra—a headpiece adorned with candles.

Water features a high-energy solo, a rhythmic finale of thundering finger cymbals and wave-like body movements to evoke the flowing nature of water.

Persian-American Shabnam first learned belly dance as a child when it was commonly performed at family celebrations. Baladi—Middle Eastern dance—evolved from one of the oldest forms of dance and it is still evolving. Belly dance is known in Greece as cifte telli, in Turkey as rakkase, and in Egypt as raks sharki. In America, it’s known as the flashy stage version called “Oriental dance.”

Modern choreographers like Shabnam continue to add their personal and contemporary touch. Shabnam brings western staging and an athleticism and physical strength to belly dance, evoking empowerment and feminity. In this performance, the dancers also honor glitz and glamour, with modern costumes in the old Cairo style of draped skirt and glistening sequined and beaded tops. They play the middle eastern tabla, or darbukkah, as the lead voice of percussion, a drum traditionally played only by men.

Shabnam Dance Company was formed in 2010 with the goal to perform visionary and artistic interpretations on Near Eastern dance and to elevate the dance form for presentation on theatrical stage. All dance company members are hard-working apprentices of Shabnam, award-winning dancers with countless first-place titles. Artistic Director/choreographer and dancer Shabnam is a multi-award winning performer and perhaps the most decorated belly dancer in the world, with an extensive repertoire in Near Eastern dance. She is dedicated to sharing the beauty of the art form, performing, teaching, and motivating women of all ages, shapes, and sizes at her dance studio on Grand Avenue in Oakland, California.

www.shabnamdancecompany.com

Dance Origin: Middle East and USA • Genre: Belly Dance • Title: Arba'ah

Arba’ah—Four—is a World Premiere of modern belly dance from choreographer Shabnam—a performance celebrating the future of belly dance and summoning the vitality and life-energy of the four elements:

Earth is a drum dance, featuring the grounded Arabic rhythms of Saiidi, Baladi, and Falah with earthy and grounded movement. The beating of the drum symbolizes the sound of the beating heart of both humans and the Earth. The circular shape of the drum symbolizes the Earth and cycle of life.

Wind features movements from the tradition of Zāīr—a women’s healing ritual of drumming and dancing from Eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Zāīr is performed to harmonize the inner and outer worlds, and the mesmerizing movements often bring on a spiritual trance. Here, the dancers’ swaying hair evokes the power, motion, and energy of the wind.

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www.shabnamdancecompany.com
The performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Nick Heldt

If you ask me what do I love the most, I will answer my Peruvian Black Rhythm. For its wit and for its salt.

Ritmos Negros Del Peru means Black Rhythms of Peru, and this performance brings to life an Afro-Peruvian dance party. Six dances summon the unrelenting rhythms of freedom.

DE ROMPE Y RAJA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
WORLD PREMIERE

The set begins with Feostio, a contemporary Afro-Peruvian number, and the next piece, Landó, exhibits ancient and ritual syncopations. Next, Zalaloo is named for the intricate a capella footwork contest, and Panalivio, an old mourning song, evokes memories and rhythms from slavery times. The final dance sequence is Zamaacuca and Merimira. The zamaacuca was born in poor neighborhoods as an early World interpretation of Spanish affection: Peruvians of European descent regarded it as a lower-class style. It is a style with plaintive Andean rhythms, and it evolved further into the Argentinian zamba, the Chilean and Bolivian cuacas, and the Mexican chilena—and the Peruvian marinera, the national dance of struggle, independence, passion, and love.

Afro-Peruvian music, song, and dance are a single continuum of rhythms, developed during Peru’s colonial period, when Africans, brought to Peru as enslaved workers, helped their symphonies with the lively dance and music of Spanish colonists and indigenous Peruvians. These forms have been celebrated, preserved, and reinvented by countless drumming hands and dancing feet. Ritmos Negros Del Peru is based on traditional dances, choreographed in 2012 and set for this stage by Gabriela Shiroma in collaboration with master artists Peta Robles, Braulo Barrera, and Javier Gordillo. The song was composed by Pedro Rosales. The company learned the traditional dances from master dancers of renowned Afro-Peruvian ensembles Peru Negro, Mamea; Familia Vásquez, and Familia Batumbrombo. The costumes celebrate the colors of the Peruvian flag: red for blood, war, slavery, suffering, passion, love, and life; white for peace, purity, soul, survival, spirituality, and freedom. Afro-Peruvian music relies on percussion instruments developed by the Afro-Peruvian community. Cajón is the wooden box drum, popularized by dock workers played on crates. The qandera is a donkey jaw with loose teeth, shaken as rattle or scraped rhythmically with a stick. The caíta is a kidded box derived from the collection box in Catholic churches.

De Rompe y Raja was founded in 1995 as a cultural organization dedicated to preserving and promoting traditions and culture from the coastal region of Peru, whose music and motifs of European, African, and indigenous peoples intersect. Gabriela Shiroma is Artistic Director.

www.facebook.com/pages/De-Rompe-y-Raja-Cultural-Association

Dance Directors: Peru • Genre: Afro-Peruvian • Title: Ritmos Negros Del Peru • Artistic Director: Gabriela Shiroma • Choreographers: Braulo Barrera (cajón), Javier Gordillo (dance), Peta Robles (cajón), Mario Yanes (percussion), Gabriela Shiroma (original idea) • Musicians: Braulo Barrera, Fernando Pimentel, Josué Gordillo, Josué Hermines, Peta Robles, Pedro Rosales, Rosa Los Santos, Gabriela Shiroma • Dancers: Rosaura Ferreira, Dayna Palma, Erica Santacruz

SANGOL, WEST AFRICA

A Master Senegalese drummer and griot (repository of the oral tradition) leads this high-intensity celebration of the Wolof people, presenting three sabar dances:

The first dance, Barra M’baye, is a traditional rhythm and dance performed for newborn children to protect them from evil spirits and other unknown dangers. Next, Diak is the name for a type of original creative rhythm to which dancers create their own improvised steps. The final piece, Thiebou Djeune, is a dance of high energy and joy. Its title is the name of Senegal’s national dish of marinated fish to honor the country’s premiere dancer who was a great cook.

Sabar is known as a dance of sensuality, flirtatiousness, and expression that uses every part of the body, from the arms and legs to the eyes. Its choreographic combinations are less weighty to the ground than other African styles, incorporating lots of jumping, arm movement, and high knee lifting. The movements of beauty, strength, and grace are accentuated by colorful costumes. Women wear bold jewelry and traditional head wraps, ankle-length dresses with skirts underneath—called lepas—and long sleeves to emphasize the arm movements.

Master Drummer Cheikh Tairou M’baye guides the performance, choosing beats and patterns, gesturing and moving about the stage to interact with the drummers and audience. He also plays syncopated counterpoint to the fundamental rhythms. In Senegal, West Africa, sabar drums once communicated in villages over long distances, and the dance that accompanied the drum solo became known as sabar. Sabar drummers strike high-pitched accents with a stick in the right hand, while playing a tenor timbal or a center bass beat with the left. Rhythms are fast and highly energized, often emphasizing the upbeat. The family of sabar drums include the lead drum, the rider, and the supporting drums: mbeng mbenga, lamb, biol, and fomba. Its choreographic combinations are less weighty to the ground than other African styles, incorporating lots of jumping, arm movement, and high knee lifting. The movements of beauty, strength, and grace are accentuated by colorful costumes. Women wear bold jewelry and traditional head wraps, ankle-length dresses with skirts underneath—called lepas—and long sleeves to emphasize the arm movements.

Cheikh Tairou M’baye and Sing Sing Rhythms is a drum and dance company of Wolof griots that originated in Medina, Senegal and was called to the drums at an early age. Under the guidance of his grandfather, master Sabar drummer Mama Bouna Basse Gueye, Cheikh’s love for his family’s tradition blossomed.

Dansza Grigs; Senegal, West Africa • Genre: Traditional • Title: Barra M’baye, Diak, Thiebou Djeune • Artistic Director: Cheikh Tairou M’baye • Choreographers: Cheikh Tairou M’baye, Bakk, Bak, Thiebou Djeune • Musicians: Bakk, Bak, Thiebou Djeune • Dancers: Bakk, Bak, Thiebou Djeune • Box: Bakk, Bak, Thiebou Djeune • Artistic Director: Cheikh Tairou M’baye • Musician/dancers: Bakk, Bak, Thiebou Djeune • Title: Barra M’baye, Diak, Thiebou Djeune • Dance Origin: Senegal, West Africa • Dance: Traditional • Title: Barra M’baye, Diak, Thiebou Djeune • Dance Origin: Senegal, West Africa • Dance: Traditional • Title: Barra M’baye, Diak, Thiebou Djeune • Artistic Director: Cheikh Tairou M’baye • Dance Origin: Senegal, West Africa • Title: Barra M’baye, Diak, Thiebou Djeune • Artistic Director: Cheikh Tairou M’baye • Dance Origin: Senegal, West Africa
In the Tang Dynasty, 618-907, trade flourished along the Silk Road, bringing progress and prosperity to China. This water sleeve dance is described in old writings as an example of the wonderful entertainments provided by wealthy families and in the royal court, where the Emperor was honored like a god. It is also known from the Beijing Opera. Traditionally, more elaborately costumed dancers moved in a sedate and formal manner. Choreographer Yang Yang—who studied water sleeve technique under master Wei Ying Wang and worked with Dance Drama and Opera House of China in Beijing—takes a modern approach. Her dancers wear simple hairstyles so they can jump and turn, and their contemporary athleticism and control appears as effortless, dignified grace.

The costumes are traditional with a modern touch. They are made in China, of fine Chinese silk, an art form perfected by the Chinese at least 3,000 years ago. The musicians surround the dancers, playing Chinese zither, a string instrument with 18-23 strings and a movable bridge. Guzheng is played by plucking strings with the right hand, and plucking the left hand on a string to sound harmonics. This Tang Dynasty instrument is the ancestor of the Japanese koto, among other instruments.

The Court Dance of Tang Dynasty is a World Premiere for the company, choreographed by Yang Yang, CPA’s principal dancer, a graduate of Beijing Dance Academy.

Chinese Performing Arts of America (CPAA) is under the direction of Ann Woo. Founded in 1991 as a 501(c)3 organization, CPAA is chartered to introduce Chinese culture as an integral part of the American society through performing arts. In twenty-two years, CPAA has established itself as an acclaimed art institute in the Bay Area. The headquarters of CPAA in West San Jose is home to some thirty local art groups under the same roof, serving as a community center for the cities of San Jose, Cupertino, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale.

www.cpaasv.org

Dance Origin: China • Genre: Classical • Title: The Court Dance of Tang Dynasty • Artistic Director/Choreographer: Ann Woo • Dancers: Christina Cheng, Mike Davis, Virginia Jiao, Angely Jia, Shen Yu, Yuanyu Su, Jia Thompson, Michelle Xu, Yang Yang, Yun Zhang • Musicians: Cliff Liu Guzheng Ensemble

OREET

Egypt and Israel

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Sydney Firestone

Oreet presents a solo set that puts a new twist on contemporary Egyptian belly dance: Modern Shimmy.

She begins with an upbeat piece that features slow and lyrical, ancient melodies—an instrumental version of the Egyptian pop song “Taka Cim.” Next she performs a drum solo, the traditional finale of a belly dance performance. This dance is usually performed while standing in one place, to emphasize isolation movements of the hips and belly. The song merges Egyptian, Turkish, and Latin rhythms, highlighting Oreet’s control and precision as she matches every body movement to the intricate beat.

Middle Eastern belly dance is an ancient and beloved folk dance form with unrecorded origins. Most contemporary dancers say it is a dance form created “by women for women,” a style not originally meant for men’s eyes. Most importantly, its history is an oral history and a danced history, passed down by women. The flashy form we know today—including the revealing two-piece belly dance costume—was invented in the 1920s. Choreographers re-invented the ancient form for large and extravagant stage performances in Cairo cabarets, and for Hollywood-inspired sequences in Egyptian film.

Oreet learned the dance in her homeland as traditional dance, from the women in her Yemeni and Sephardic Israeli families. It was danced—as in many Middle Eastern homes—as a celebration of femininity. From both family and teachers she learned that undulations of the torso could instruct a young woman about her woman’s body; the shoulder shimmies was about breast-feeding, and pelvic shimmies were great exercise to ease childbirth. Women danced as encouragement during childbirth, and in joyous celebration once the baby was born.

Oreet’s choreography is based on a modern athleticism and she adds graceful ballet-inspired movement to the high-energy belly dance of her Middle Eastern roots. Her costume is a modern twist on an Egyptian style: the exposed belly is from the old Cairo design, and the silver wings are a grand, contemporary touch. Oreet created the introduction piece in 2012 and the drum solo in 2008.

Oreet, creator of SharQui—the Bellydance Workout®, is an award winning performer, choreographer, and teacher. Her specialty is high-energy belly dance style called Modern Egyptian dance, a contemporary, innovative twist on traditional Egyptian style that fuses modern dances, ballet, and Middle Eastern dance from Oreet’s Yemeni/Israeli roots. Oreet certifies dancers and fitness professionals in her SharQui® format nationally and has recently expanded her teaching presence on the West Coast.

www.sharqui.com

Dance Origin: Egypt and Israel • Genre: Belly Dance • Title: Modern Shimmy • Artistic Director/Choreographer/Soloist: Oreet J.S.
Flamenco is an art form from southern Spain, with three main elements: cante is song, baile is dance, and la guitarra provides the melody. Much mystery surrounds flamenco’s origins, as it was not until the 15th century that the form became known to the general public. It was born in a region dominated by diverse cultures and civilizations over the centuries, including seven centuries of Muslim rule. Its roots are said to be from Spanish Moors, Spain’s Roma people, and the popular songs and dances of Andalucia. The art developed during flamenco’s Golden Age (1869-1910) in southern Spain’s cafés, known as cantantes. There it found its definitive form, including the canta jondo, or deep song, a serious form expressing deep feelings. The farruca music is in a somber 4/4, the only flamenco form wholly in minor mode.

Flamenco is a continuously evolving art form, where dancers and choreographers develop unique styles; some keeping close to tradition, and some pushing boundaries, adding contemporary elements. In the 1940’s, Carmen Amaya danced the farruca and marked woman’s emancipation in the flamenco world, and women have continued to dance this form ever since. La Tania is the choreographer of today’s performance, setting Tierra for our stage. She created this piece to widen her company’s already broad understanding of flamenco forms—to experience a style that is more masculine in nature. The dancers follow tradition by wearing the men’s high waist pants (traje corto) and a full-sleeved blouse. La Tania Baile Flamenco was formed in 2009. In 2006, La Tania, after touring for many years with the company she previously founded—La Tania Flamenco Music and Dance—decided to settle in the Bay Area and establish a school. As part of that school, La Tania looks to develop professional local dancers. La Tania Baile Flamenco presents professional presentations as well as yearly student recitals.

www.lataniaflamenco.com

Dance Origin: Spain • Genre: Flamenco • Title: Tierra • Artistic Director/Choreographer: La Tania • Dancers: La Tania, Gina Guerraunce, Lisa Kobolz. • Musicians: Roberto Aguilar (guitar), Tregar o tton (violin)

VISHWA SHANTHI DANCE ACADEMY

Prakriti - Abiding in Nature is a sacred bharathanatyam dance that celebrates and manifests the cycles and rhythms of nature. The piece is based on the Gandharana Veda, and it begins with chants from the Rig Veda, describing the original creation from darkness:

A thousand eyes and a thousand feet, Had the Cosmic man He encompassed the entire universe, And exceeded it by a hand

And the dancers perform to create the world again. Wearing costumes with nature’s hues and temple jewelry, solo and group dances form geometric patterns to summon the elements. The dancers form a circle for space; star shape for wind; triangle for fire, semi-circle for water; and square for earth. They also evoke the rays of the sun, cycle of days, planetary movements, undulating rivers, strong lines of tall mountains, and the gentle blooming of flowers. The piece ends in a prayer, Shanthi mantra, from the Upanishads, an invocation for abiding life in nature, and everlasting harmony and peace.

Indian classical dance has ancient and divine origins. Long ago—to save humanity from its vices—Bruma, created the Natya Veda, the fifth scripture, taking speech, music, expression, and aesthetic experience from the four existing Vedas. Then Ilia Bharathra added dance movements he learned from Shiva; and Indian dance has been traced through artwork and literary works for at least 2,000 years. Choreographer Shreelata Suresh says, “Dance is a sacred movement of the limbs with deep divine feeling. The songs are devotional love songs with the dancer as devotee and God as her beloved. There is so much competition from cinema and TV and ideas of western culture, where many people think of ancient dance as mere entertainment or recreation on the physical plane. Today, it’s only more important to emphasize the sacred nature of this dance.”

Vishwa Shanthi Dance Academy was founded in 1999. Vishwa Shanthi means “universal peace,” and the company promotes universal peace through dance, yoga, and allied arts, restoring the sacred and spiritual significance of these arts by helping audiences appreciate them for more than their entertainment or physical value; as a means to elevate their consciousness. Shreelata Suresh teaches students the art form of Bharathanatyam, which she considers a sacred art and a fusion of music, rhythm, sacred geometry, yoga, worship, therapy, sculpture, poetry, harmony and beauty.

www.vishwasanthis.org

Dance Origin: South India • Genre: Bharatanatyam • Title: Prakriti (Abiding in Nature) • Artistic Director/Choreographer: Shreelata Suresh • Dancers: Prakriti Amur, Vishnu Ilavarasan, Soumya Dhika, Jamnati Kumar, Sindhu Hari, Sanda Pillai, Sutheya Radvahan, Chandini Ramch, Samiksha Rau, Shreelata Suresh

www.indiandanceacademy.org

Dance Origin: South India • Genre: Bharatanatyam • Title: Tierra • Artistic Director/Choreographer: La Tania • Dancers: La Tania, Gina Guerraunce, Lisa Kobolz. • Musicians: Roberto Aguilar (guitar), Tregar o tton (violin)
BALLEU FOLKLÓRICO MEXICO DANZA

Mexico

Mexico Danza presents a set of lively ballet folklorico dances from Mexico’s Nuevo Leon, a northeastern state that borders Texas.

The suite begins with Vive Linarete, a dance that pays tribute to the city of Nuevo Leon. This elegant choreography is for women only, and its slow pacing is designed to show off the dancer’s concise and delicate footwork. In the second dance, Cafe Roma, the men amp up the energy, joining in for the couples dances in their sombreros and leather jackets. Finally, El Circo—The Circus, exhibits the most representative dance style from the region, a distinctive norteño instrument, the German button accordion.

Nueva Leon shares most of its music, dancing, and other cultural expressions with the rest of the northern Mexico. Ballet folklorico is the name for Mexico’s ballet dance, choreographed by that has origins in dances from nineteenth-century Europe. The Czechoslovakian polka was introduced to Mexico by German immigrants in the mid-1800s and it quickly became a favorite. Polka means “half-step,” and it is recognizable by a rapid shift from one foot to the other. German settlers in the Nuevo Leon brought other popular forms, such as the cha-cha (chotis), a slower form of polka, and the varoniana, a Bohemian partner dance that was a craze in Victorian ballrooms.

Regionaltanlos (people from Nuevo Leon) adopted and modified European forms. Over the years they created the distinctive norteño style, a style more elegant and dignified than the original dances, and also more aggressive. These dances have a strong beat, a series of complex partner moves, complicated turns, and a lot of joyous foot stomping and yelling. This set was created five years ago by Jose Vences.

The music from Nuevo Leon is played by a conjunto norteño. The word conjunto means “combination” and the band is a Mexican folk ensemble reflecting its German roots. It has a 12-string guitar-like bajo sexto, double bass and drums; and the most distinctive norteño instrument, the German button accordion.

Ballet Folklorico Mexico Danza is a Hayward-based Mexican folk dance company, founded in 1991 by Rene Gonzalez. Since 1992, with the collaboration of Martin Romero of Mexico City, the dance company has grown to include individuals of all ages and nationalities who originate from diverse communities throughout the entire San Francisco Bay Area. This dance company was created to educate the community and bring a cultural understanding and pride to this multi-ethnic East Bay community.

Artistic directors are Rene Gonzalez and Martin Romero, and Romero is the master of the adult performing group.

www.mexicodanza.org

HĀLUAU O KEIKIALI‘I’I

Hula Pahu—Sacred Dances presents hula pahu dances once used only for ceremony. The movements—hula basics—and the rhythms of the sacred shakuhaku pahu drum, are specific, and different from that of the hula pāipa (hula with gourd drum).

It’s rare to see this form on a contemporary stage. chants, dances, and drums to honor the gods and the elements: E o Kahēkū, written by Hākiliālani Holt, is a song for chief A‘i Kahēkū. It also honors Kānehālani, god of lightning and thunder—King Kamamahehā’s father—who tattooed half his body black. This new choreography is built on a rarely used set of basic hula movements.

O ‘Ikeleka ha‘o i o ka hou, A‘i ha‘aheo, wāhā ‘i ka lani ‘Ikeleka is a new piece, honoring hula goddess Laka who dwells in the deep forest, and sometimes emerges to check out what we’re doing.

E ka akua o ka nahelehele, E ola ika’i, ka wao Goddess of the winds, you bring life from the mountains and inland.

Nā Nalu o Hawai`i is a traditional song with a difficult chant and beat, learned from Rae Kahikulaulani Fonseca. It’s an old migration chant, honoring the ocean, calling out surf conditions, wave patterns, and canoe landings on Hawai`i Island.

The dancers perform barefoot, wearing lilo and ki`pea (clothing and lei) with colors to reflect the songs. Although the materials are modern, dancers hand-sewed the garments in the traditional way, hand-dying materials, and stamping personalized patterns.

Kumu Kawika Alfiche says of these new choreographies, “A very small set of hula pahu dances have made it through from antiquity to today. Some lineages shy away from creating new work in this tradition; for them hula pahu is not something you create. However, I come from a lineage that believes in new creations. These songs are a respectful attempt to “create in tradition.” A`ohe pau ka `u `ulu ka nahelehele—Not all knowledge is contained in one school.”

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Kumu Kawika Alfiche is Kumu Haʻi, Artistic Director, and Choreographer for Hālau o Keikiali‘i and Director for the Kaʻulualii Hawaiian Cultural Center, South San Francisco. The company, founded in 1994, tours throughout the US, Mexico, Japan and the Pacific Rim. The dancers—ages five to eighty-five—study Hawaiian dance, chant, and culture extensively with Kumia Keikiali‘i. Kumu Kaia Keikiali‘i has been Tiare Maka-Olanolan Clifford of Hawai`i, Kaua`i; Kumu Hula Harriet Kauhelepua Kauhelepua-Spalding of Kealakekua, Hawai`i; and in 1996, Kumu Hula Rae Kahi‘aluani Fonseca of Hilo, Hawai`i. In March 2007, Kawika was one of six at Rae Fonseca’s only `unik (traditional graduation). Also a Hawaiian musician, Kawika has released original songs on two CDs: “Hali‘a” and “Keikiali‘i.”

www.keikiali.com

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www.keikiali.com
There are more dancers than sheaves of rice in the rice fields in fall, coming to the Sansa dance. When you dance Sansa, dance elegantly. Pick the most elegant dancer for your bride.

Ensohza Minyoshu

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Josephine and Ashish Sharma.

There are more dancers than sheaves of rice in the rice fields in fall, coming to the Sansa dance. When you dance Sansa, dance elegantly. Pick the most elegant dancer for your bride.

Sansaodori is a folk dance from the northern prefecture of Iwate, near Morioka City, and said to have been a celebration when the gods banished a troublesome demon. This presentation shows a few of some thirty-three traditional variations on a theme. During these dances, you will see the masked tappi carry a “teaching dance”, a loosely interpreted variation of the dance that is coming next, before the other dancers join in. The tappi carries a stuffed weasel and wears a mask depicting Kyotosuke, a foot whose mouth is twisted as if it’s blowing on fire; and the other dancers move in circular patterns with large, flowing sweeps of the arms.

The opening variation is Ayumi-dakko, a stepping and walking dance. Yon-dakko, one of the seven basic dance variations of Sansaodori, Taue-odori-kazushu is a rice-planting dance with movements that evoke rice blowing in the wind. Shishi-odori-kazushu is a variation, loosely based on traditional lion dancing. Hicho is a dance meaning “leading to the end” and is often next-to-last, another pair variation. Rei-odori is a stylized bowling dance that always concludes the performance.

Sansaodori features dancing musicians playing oedo taiko drums and dissonant hayashi bamboo flutes.

The company studied Sansaodori with Michelle Fuji, a student of Japanese master dancer Shohei Kikuchi and Japan’s respected school of folk dance, Warabiza. Group member Clare "Jiro" Hess received permission to visit the Sansaodori’s village of origin, near Moriski City, and said to the generosity of Riaz Taplin / Artthaus.

Xpressions

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Blue Tassel / Artthaus.

Jai Jai Rajasthan—Victory to Rajasthan is a showcase of folk songs and dances from diverse village within India’s northwestern state, Rajasthan. Here is praise to the vibrant life in that charming town Thar Desert, once the land of the Rajasthani kings:

Glory to my land, Rajasthan. I cannot sing and dance enough in its praise...every grain of sand in this desert echoes as I sing “Jai Jai Rajasthan!”

The dance styles presented are:

Ghoomar, from the Bhi Tribe and adopted by many Rajasthani communities, with a distinctive pirouette, measured steps, and a graceful waving dance. A new bride dances ghoomar when entering her husband’s home. The songs tell of young dancing women from Manvar, and of women dancing for Lord Shiva’s wife, Gauri.

Chari, a dance of the Kisharagh region. As women walk miles for water they balance chari pots on their head. In performance, they burn cottonseeds in these pots, so their processions create illuminating patterns. The song compares the beautiful chimi seed to beautiful Rajasthani woman.

Tenah Taal, a devotional dance from Kaamad communities. Tenah refers to the thirteen brass manjiras or symbols that dancers hold upon their costumes. The song tells of devotees singing, dancing, and praying to Saint Baba Ramdev.

Kalbeliya, from the Sarpas of the Kalbeliya snake-charmer community when the nomadic Kalbeliya has caught snakes and traded snake venom. The dance movements and costumes resemble serpents, and the music is from the snake-charming ban or pungi flute. These days, Kalbeliya is performed as entertainment, celebration, or for cultural pride, and it’s protected as an UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The song means “jump in” and sings of joy, spirit, and ancient traditions. Chakri, performed by nomadic Karur girls who earn their livelihoods dancing at celebrations, showcases the beautiful costumes with chakri spins. The song is Jai Jai Rajasthan.

All of their Rajasthani costumes and jewelry, from head to toe, establish identity, religion, economic rank, and social status. The ghaghara skirt is worn short, to show foot ornaments; its width and pleats mark prosperity. Various tribes—Baniyas, Bihls, and Gairas—deck up in jewelry, including bangles in the hair and the chuda bangles of metal and coconut shells. This piece was choreographed and set in 2012 by Sridhrya Eashwar.
**DIAMANO COURA WEST AFRICAN DANCE COMPANY**

The Leopard Ballet is an excerpt from a Liberian dance drama of the same name, from the folklore tradition of the Vai Tribe. The story takes place in a village threatened by a leopard. When the king’s daughter is killed by the leopard, he calls his best hunters to hunt down the terrifying animal, offering as a reward his other daughter in marriage. Thus begins the danced battle with the leopard, and the piece ends in a community celebration of victory.

The story is a folktale written in 1970 by Liberia’s prominent novelist Bai Tee Moore. It’s based on a similar event from ten years before in a village of the Vai people (Moore’s own community) of Cape Mount County in Liberia. Moore worked at the Ministry of Culture and the Liberian National Cultural Group turned his folktale into a living piece of folkloric ballet, now a national treasure. He spoke often about the significance of honoring Indigenous Liberian culture. Upon his death in 1998, Liberian author and politician Wilton Sankawulo wrote, “The best tribute we can pay to the memory of Bai Tee is making our culture part of our daily life, for culturally we are dressed in our own making…”

The Vai people use whole body ceremonial masks that transform dancers, signifying another being has entered the dance. In this piece, the leopard mask shows movements of the animal and signals that the dancer is taken over by its spirit. White chalk is a sign of purity and blessing, worn by hunters for protection.

The music is traditional, and it is specific to harvest, animalistic representation, and celebration, calling everyone together.

The Leopard Ballet was learned from Nimlya Napla, and re-staged by Napla and Naomi Diouf with additional choreography by Ousseny Kouyate and Ibrahim Diouf and some aspects from Dr. Zakarya Diouf’s Serrar tradition. Costumes are by Nimlya Napla, and music is by Mbayou Diouf, Dr. Zak Diouf, Mory Fofana, Mohammed Kouyate, and Darian LaFoucade. The piece had its U.S. debut this year at Oakland’s Malonga Center for the Arts.

**DIAMANO COURA'S MISSION**

Diamano Coura West African Dance Company is a nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to the preservation, education, and appreciation of traditional West African music, dance, theater, and culture. Since its inception in 1975, Diamano Coura, under the direction of Emmy Award-winner Dr. Zak Diouf and Artistic Director Naomi Diouf, has implemented its mission through ongoing workshops, performances, youth programs, national and international touring engagements, lecture demonstrations, community outreach, and creative partnership programs with renowned artists and performing companies. Diamano Coura in the Senegalese Wolof language means “those who bring the message.”

Diamano Coura’s founder and master drummer Dr. Zakarya Diouf is the recipient of the 2013 Malonga Casquelourd Lifetime Achievement Award. We will honor Dr. Diouf at the June 22, 8pm performance.

**BOLIVIA CORAZÓN DE AMÉRICA**

From the Altiplano—the Andes’ twelve-thousand foot high inland plain—here is a presentation of Kusilfa, Plumas y Barones—Dances of Feathers and Fools.

The first piece, Surf Siquiri, is an UNESCO Intangible World Heritage dance from indigenous Aymara and Quechuan communities, dating back to 800 BCE. It is thought to be originally a hunting dance and “surf” is the Quechuan name for the American Pigeon, a large flightless bird similar to an ostrich. Siquiri is a musical form performed by marching musicians playing the “siku,” the Quechuan name for the zampoña panpipes.

Local history tells the Incas once teaching the giant birds to dance to the pipes, opening their wings, spinning in place, and shaking their heads as if in courtship. In this piece, the dancers’ magnificent feather headdresses represent the bird’s Breasts and their movement mimics the bird’s turn. Bolivia Corazón De América unites the ancient choreography with contemporary ballet-based movements, to amplify the suri’s delicate movements and its majestic ability to fly. The dance also shows a character named Tata Kusillo trying to play with the birds until they run off. His children arrive, filling the stage with jumps, turns, and tricks.

The second piece, Kusilfa, features the dance of the traditional Andean clown said to represent many characters: a roguish devil, the Andean tiwula fox, and the parody of a Spanish colonizer. Kusilfa’s origins are not certain. His crazy and devilish attitudes are similar to the Greek god Dionysus and his earthiness is connected to the Aymara concept of Manq’ha Pacha, the spiritual-physical dimension of Earth’s depth, profound thought and feeling, and realms of the past.

Choreographer Hidro Fajardo learned this dance in Bolivia and choreographed it for his world premiere in 2013. The brightly colored costumes are similar to those worn in the Bolivian Andes, and musicians play regional instruments: zampoña panpipes, lute, bombo drum, khusa flutes. The zamponas parrpicas are the favorite traditional instrument of the Lake Titicaca region in present day Bolivia and Peru, flutes that mimic the high mountain winds.

Bolivia Corazón de América was formed in 2000 by Susana Salinas to connect Bolivian American children to their heritage. It continues to showcase Bolivia’s rich and varied heritage dance from indigenous Aymara and Quechan, communities, dating back to 800 BCE. It is thought to be originally a hunting dance and “surf” is the Quechuan name for the American Pigeon, a large flightless bird similar to an ostrich. Siquiri is a musical form performed by marching musicians playing the “siku,” the Quechuan name for the zampoña panpipes.
For this World Premiere performance, Conference of the Birds, a tale of spiritual awakening: 

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Elaine Connell.
LOWICZANIE POLISH FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE OF SAN FRANCISCO

From Poland’s high Beskid Mountains, sixteen dancers present Songs and Dances from the Region of Żywiec. The next dances are: Songs and Dances from the Region of Poland’s high Beskid Mountains, sixteen dancers present ŁOWICZANIE POLISH FOLK ENSEMBLE are from home-based Polish shoemakers and seamstresses for The dancers’ decorated wool pants and leather kierpce shoes with fiddle, bass fiddle, and the thin reed pipes easily made by A traditional Kapela folk band plays in ywiec mountain style leaps, graceful and energetic rolls, squatting dances, and rapid and rhythmic push-ups. The simplest acrobatics bring to mind the shepherd boy testing his strength—jumping over his own foot, hooked cane, or hat. A traditional Kapela folk band plays in Żywiec mountain style with fiddle, bass fiddle, and the thin read pipes easily made by shepherds. At a shepherd party, you might hear bagpipe or accordion, or perhaps only simple handclapping and singing. The dancers’ decorated wool pants and leather kierpce shoes are from home-based Polish shoemakers and seamstresses for everyday mountain wear.

Poland
This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Clare and David Gostinew.

ŠLOWICZANIE POLISH FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE

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LIKHA - PILIPINO FOLK ENSEMBLE

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Bernarda Pedero

Artistic Director Rudi Soriano learned Binanog-Banog from Mitchu Mordeno on a research trip to the Philippines in 2005. He choreographed this performance in 2013, adding contemporary Philippine folk movements and theatrical elements for the stage. Traditional movements include the small, repetitive side-steps with hands to the side, and the sweeping and flying movements that imitate the flight of the bird. In the Philippines, the eagle dancer wears a simple costume of silky cloth with long draping sleeves: today’s costume was made in the Philippines of rooster feathers. The music is also traditional to the Tumandok/Suludnon tribe, with instrumentalists setting the dynamics and the beat, improvising on four gongs and two goat skin drums, sticks, and wood.

Choreographer Rudi Soriano created this presentation to share these rarely-seen forms of Philippine dance and translate them for a wider audience. The Tumandok/Suludnon, also known as Panaynon Sulud, are an indigenous Visayan group of people living in the Capiz/Lambunao mountainous area of Panay, Visayan Islands, Philippines. The group is small and is called a lost tribe: they kept their traditional culture hidden and unaffected by Spanish colonization. This group is known for its banog dance, a dance showing a close relationship with the animal world. The banog is the Philippine Eagle, the rare and powerful Philippine National Bird. Now endangered due to deforestation, it is one of the largest eagles in the world, up to 3 1/2 feet long and weighing up to 16 pounds. A different banog dance is also known in Mindanao.

The banog dance is also known in Mindanao.

Festival Global Impact Spotlight

A few years back, LIKHA’s Artistic Director Rudi Soriano traveled to the island of Palawan in the Philippines and studied with Batak tribal chief Narino Maniapao. The Batak are one of the Philippines’ ancient tribes, and for thousands of years, they have lived deep in the Philippine forest as nomadic hunters, fishermen, and farmers.

When Rudi returned to San Francisco, he created a piece called Sembra for our 2008 San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival stage. That year, the Festival was awarded $100,000 funding to bring over and present 50 international artists as part of an initiative to present international artists in San Francisco. This new funding allowed LIKHA to bring Narino Maniapao and three other tribe members to San Francisco to participate in the June Festival. Prior to this journey, Narino had never left his island, nor traveled on an airplane.

When Narino arrived in San Francisco, he was gifted a video camera, which he subsequently used to record his appearances. His performance on the Festival stage with LIKHA, offering a breathtaking invocation chant reflecting a profound reverence and connection with the natural world, the performance got a standing ovation, which the tribal chief illustrated to show to the rest of his tribe upon returning home. LIKHA also organized workshops for Bay Area artists to have the opportunity to learn directly from Narino before he left.

The lasting impact of Narino Maniapao’s trip to perform in our Festival was tremendous. The young people of his tribe had previously disinterested in their cultural traditions—their interest shifting to what was being imported from western “wealthy” cultures. When they saw their tribal dance and music presented on an American stage by Filipino-American dancers and musicians, they were deeply moved and became re-interested in sustaining their traditions once again.

To read more about LIKHA’s impact, visit our blog at http://sfethnicdancefestivalblog.org/
SUHAILA DANCE COMPANY

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of ASN Natural Stone, Inc.

Egypt and Lebanese Born

In this set of Middle Eastern dance—incorporating both Egyptian and Lebanese belly dance—choreographer Suhaila Salimpour revives two beloved classical Arabic songs with her signature modern approach.

The first song, Khayef Marrah, sings of longing. The dance is the dream of a man who yearns to fall in love. Feminine forms move in and out of focus, because, when love calls, we must obey, but I haven’t heard it calling yet. Only if I find the one... The second song, Ana Kol Masou El Toba, tells of tortured love: How many times did you leave me? Never again will I believe your words! But just meet me once again! The choreography of the second song is dynamic, filled with movement, energy, and drama.

Current Suhaila Dance Company members train under the artistic direction of Suhaila Salimpour, daughter of legendary Jamila Salimpour. Suhaila began developing her own belly dance format at the age of 12 and has been teaching workshops globally since. Her pioneering style is known for its “layering” of traditionally separate aspects of the dance: vibrations, figure eights, and isolation movements. In 2000, she launched her comprehensive and technique-based belly dance certification program.

www.SuhailaInternational.com

Dance Origins: Egypt and Lebanon • Genre: Belly Dance • Title: Khayef Marrah, Ana Kol Masou El Toba • Artistic Director/Choreographer: Suhaila Salimpour • Executive: Raheel Duff, Anna Horn, Cheryl Lee, Esthera Palacios, Lisa Price, Johanna Priek, Andrea Sonderski (co-director), Lori Tamashke, Tina Toy

WORLD PREMIERE

GRUPO FOLKLÓRICO RAÍCES DE MI TIERRA

Mexico

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of ASN Natural Stone, Inc.

La Feria de San Marcos is a suite of dances from the San Marcos Fair in Mexico’s northern state of Aguascalientes.

The festivities open with Danza de Ferrocarrileros—The Dance of the Railroad Workers, bringing us across the state to the Feria Nacional. The world dance relates to folk tradition, as differentiated from ballroom dance. In Las Bordadoras, or The Embroiderers, the woman dance with happy expectation, hoping to earn the tiara of festival queen. Vista Alegre and Viva Aguascalientes bring lively displays of regional music and dance, including a show of floreo de reata (trick roping), couples pairing, and the energetic celebration Aguascalientes is known for.

The San Marcos Fair began as a small indigenous religious event in the 1600s. In the 1800s it grew larger, as part of a harvest festival, and today it’s a national fair lasting three weeks. Several million visitors celebrate it, and they celebrate with just about everything from food, high fashion, nightclubs, and theater to cockfights, wild animals, rodeo, casinos, and bullfighting. The fair has also become a yearly showcase for the arts, especially contemporary music and folkloric dance. The dances presented today were created for the San Marcos Fair by two of Aguascalientes’s talented and influential folkloric choreographers: Maestro Jorge Alfredo Rodriguez (Vista Alegre) and José Luis Sustaita (Viva Aguascalientes). Raíces de Mi Tierra learned them in Aguascalientes in 1998 from Professor José Luis Sustaita Luevano. Gloria Rodriguez staged today’s presentation.

The wardrobe is in the regional, semi-formal festival style. El Charro, the charro, wears fitted pants and short bolo jacket, his finest silver corbata tie, and sombrero. The women wear colonial dresses with panes of lace and embroidered grapes, flowers, or fighting roosters.

This year, Raíces de Mi Tierra celebrates its 17th anniversary as one of Sacramento’s premier Mexican dance companies. It was founded as CSU Sacramento in 1995 by Roxana Reyes to create a family of college students and alumni dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Mexican dance. In 2013, the group expanded to include “Raíces Infantil”, a children’s performance company, and welcomed the talented work of instructors Gloria Rodriguez, Karen Angel, and Fernando Castro to the organization. The company has a strong commitment to community: it produces and presents performances, hosts workshops, and teaches folklórico dance in local schools.

www.RaicesCulturalArts.com

Dance Origins: Mexico • Genre: Folkloric • Title: Danza de Ferrocarrileros (Dance of the Railroad Worker), Las Bordadoras (The Embroiderers), Vista Alegre y Viva Aguascalientes • Artistic Director: Jesse Reyes • Choreographer: Gloria Rodriguez • Dancers: Karen Angel (Instructor), Edith Becerra, Fernando Castro, Marisol Garcia, Esteban Gutierrez, Mario Heredia, Gloria Rodriguez, Sara Rodriguez, Emilio Izuz, Lila Sandoval, Nicole Vargues, Ramona Villarreal
Soloist Antoine Hunter presents Risk, an improvisation that draws on diverse forms such as ballet, jazz, traditional African, hip-hop, gospel, modern, and American Sign Language. The piece begins in silence. When the music rises, the dancer lets his body respond. Hunter is deaf, and the unusual structure of his performance is designed to show how—he and other deaf dancers—feels a musical beat, and how he responds energetically through the athletic body. Hunter says, “Deaf is another culture, with different methods.” He calls his unique style American Sign Dance.

This performance is unusual in that it incorporates American Sign Language (ASL) as a form of dance, and it makes us aware that movement is a form of language, a language that is nonverbal and gestured. ASL may well have originated in the 1800s, from the intermixing of French Sign Language and local sign languages in Connecticut’s American School for the Deaf. Some signs resemble the object or actions they refer to, and others have evolved to gestures that seem to have no relation to their topics. Like dance, signed language is performed within the medium of space, and like dance, ASL’s gestures and postures are linked in time to create meaning.

Members of the Deaf community tend to view deafness as a difference in human experience rather than a disability. Antoine Hunter studied deaf culture and has developed a new vocabulary in what he calls “Deaf Culture of Dance.” He has also referred to his style as “raw energy, rooted in freedom, uncontrollable passionate bombastic dance.”

Antoine Hunter is an American deaf choreographer, dancer, speaker, model, actor, writer and actor/dance/ASL instructor. He is currently President of Bay Area Black Deaf Advocates and Founder/Director of Urban Jazz Dance Company. Hunter was born deaf and was raised in Oakland. He began dancing with Dawn James at Skyline High School. He then studied and performed with many modern, jazz, and hip-hop dancers and groups, including: Reginald Ray-Savage and Zalla Miram/Savage Jazz (two of his greatest mentors), Ramon Ayuso, Robert Moses’ Kin Dance Company, London’s Sign Dance Collective, Zaccho Dance Theater, Kim Epifano, Ross Dance Company, and Paul Taylor’s School. He has been awarded numerous awards and teaches dance at East Bay Center of the Performing Arts, Dance-a-Vision Entertainment, Shad Anderson Dance Center, and Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts. He dedicates his talents to his Creator, Zula Hunter, his family, and to the deaf and African American communities.

www.urbanjazzdance.com

URBAN JAZZ DANCE COMPANY

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Susan and Jitu Somaya

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www.urbanjazzdance.com

Dance Origin: United States • Genre: American Sign Language Dance
Title: Risk • Artistic Director/Choreographer: Antoine Hunter

EL WAH MOVEMENT DANCE THEATRE

This performance is made possible, in part, thanks to the generosity of Esther and Calvin Li

West Coast Haitian dance pioneer, Blanche Brown joins El Wah Movement Dance Theatre in a ceremony that raises the positive energy: Rele Tout Bon Moun Yo—Call All the Good People. The style is from Haiti (Ayiti) and it features the song ‘Priye Djo’—an adaptation of a traditional Haitian prayer chant song from the Lakou Souvenans.

Call Bon Dye (Good God), Call Bon Zanj (Good Angels), call all the people, all the children, because we want things to change! This dance is a compilation of choreography and rhythm from the Rada Nation, a dance to summon an uplifting of spirits, urgency, and a call to action. Choreographer Colette Eloi recently visited Haiti, and she says, “The piece is dedicated to all the beautiful people of the world who responded to the call when Ayiti was hit by the devastating earthquake. Drummers, dancers and singers together uplift the beautiful spirit of Ayiti. Let’s re-build Ayiti’s White House—that’s why we dance so hard, that’s why we sing so loud!”

To begin, dancers summon the Lwa spirit to open the door for positive opportunity. Then the intensity builds with two Rada rhythms. (Rada is the name for both the titles of Lwa practice and also the pantheon of ‘cool’ spirits from West Africa.) The first rhythm, Nagi, is for Lwa Ogou, hero and protector spirit. A soloist represents the spirit of Ogou, dancing with a machete to symbolize justice, cutting away deceit and negative energy. Then a Mayi rhythm calls down Rada Lea.

El Wah Movement means Movement of the Lwa (Haitian spirit) or “Movement of the Soul.” The company was founded in 2005 by Colette Eloi, born out of a communication dance she created with Ruth Beckford and Lala Jenifer for Katherine Dunham’s memorial (conceived by Carolina Himes.) The company is also a creative product of Project Reconnect, whose mission was to find and celebrate connections between cultural arts of the African Diaspora and Africa. Colette currently teaches at Laney College. El Wah Movement’s mission is to continue passionately in support of Haitian oral, musical, and dance traditions to create, inspire, and connect.

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.

The Vision of World Arts West:
The World United Through Dance

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Pandit Birju Maharaj is an internationally renowned kathak dancer with an extraordinary mastery of rhythm and expressive abhinaya. He has been hailed by the New York Times as “a virtuoso of the finest nuance” and is the recipient of many awards including India’s second highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan.

“He is a living legend alright, but humility could well be Pandit Birju Maharaj’s middle name. The maestro credits all his amazing feats to “the blessings of Lord Krishna and the love of the people of this country.” — The Times of India

We would like to thank the Indian Consulate and Indian Consul General Nagesh Parthasarathi, as well as the Indian Council of Cultural Relations for bringing Pandit Birju Maharaj to San Francisco to be part of this year’s Anniversary Festival. We honor Maharaj for his tremendous contributions to sustaining classical Indian dance, and acknowledge his legacy through this year’s breathtaking performances by Tarangini School of Kathak Dance, led by Anuradha Nag.

The San Francisco Bay Area has emerged as the cultural epicenter for dance from around the world. Dance is thriving throughout our diverse communities and the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival is the hub, often credited for being a key factor in creating the vibrant dance environment.

The truth is that there are few stages in the United States where dancers sustaining traditional dance forms are presented with respect and professional production standards. Most presenters who include ethnic dance as part of their season’s offerings are presenting dance companies touring from abroad, rather than American artists who live and work right here. Our local dancers, featured in this Festival, are at the heart of our communities, and they are doing important work beyond sustaining and sharing beautiful cultural traditions.

Prominent Harvard professor Robert Putnam has written “the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of we.” He advises that “to strengthen shared identities, we need more opportunities for meaningful interaction across ethnic lines where Americans (new and old) work, learn, recreate, and live.”

The Festival is a portal that reveals the face of America and serves as a beacon for creating a new, broader sense of we that will serve the future well—strengthening our communities, our region, and our country.

Please join us and consider supporting the Festival in one of the following ways:
• Tell people about what you have seen at the Festival
• Use the envelope inserted into your program book to send us a donation to support our programs
• Become involved as a dancer, volunteer, or sponsor
• Buy a raffle ticket

FUNDRAISING RAFFLE / TICKETS: $20
Each ticket increases your chance to win
Winners will be selected on July 1st, 2013
Grande Prize: Roundtrip tickets to India on Emirates Airlines
Other prizes include a deluxe stay at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, a spa package at the Mandarin Oriental, Park Hopper tickets for Disneyland, and a two-night stay with dinner and drinks at the Clift Hotel

For more information, please visit www.worldartswest.org
This year’s Festival would not have been possible without the contributions of the many individuals listed below. We urge you to consider making a tax-deductible contribution to allow us to present the 36th Annual San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival in June 2014. For details, please visit www.sfethnicdancefestival.org.

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Amanda Almonte is a highly respected Bay Area arts leader, over forty years of experience in dance education and performing arts. She is the founder of Ensemble Ballet Folklorico de San Francisco and served as its first Executive Director. She studied dance in Chicago at the Keith Akon Dance Academy, a School of Dance Drama, and the Art Institute of Chicago, dancing with the Ballet Antaeus de Federico and studying under the University of Illinois, where she created a program for teaching Latin American & Mexican folklorico dance. Her Mexican folklorico instructors include Jose Masias, Pilar Cerrigo, Federico Rodriguez, Silvia Losango, Carlos Monerro, and Zenon Samson. She studied flamenco with Carmen Amaya, Lucie Cascais, Rosa Moras, and participated in intensive flamenco workshops in Seville, Spain. She has served in many advisory capacities including the Latin American Advisory Group of the Oakland Museum's Bay Area dance community and Director of World Arts West from 2001-2011. Her current role has included event design and entertainment agency positions.

Sharaosa Rose is a dance teacher, a dance critic and a patron of the performing arts. She has been a teacher at the Alhambra Dance Company (http://www.ahambari.org) since 1987 when she began teaching young children in the classical Indian dance style, Bharatnatyam. A keen critic of dance, she has published written reviews of a variety of dance performances in many local newspapers and magazines published in both India and the USA. Sharaosa received her advanced dance training under the guidance of Mythil Kumar, Artist Director of Alhambar Dance Company and performed her arangetram (solo dance debut) in 1997. Sharaosa has conducted joint workshops with other performing arts schools such as the San Jose Cleveland Ballet Company and the Arligh:Repository Theater and has given several lecture demonstrations on Bharatanatyam in places as far as Russia and Austria. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Alhambra Dance Company. In addition to her passion for performing arts, Sharaosa has been an executive in the technology industry for over 30 years.

Lily Cai is considered a major authority and resource in Chinese dance. Lily is a passionate dance innovator, working both within traditional Chinese dance forms and blurring new territory in the contemporary dance realm with her Lily Li Chinese Dance Company. A native of Shanghai and former principal dancer with the Shanghai Opera House, Lily Cai has been a prominent member of the Bay Area’s dance community since her arrival in 1983. Founder and Artistic Director of the Lily Li Chinese Dance Company and the Lily Li Chinese Dance Foundation, Lily has choreographed dozens of works expanding traditional Chinese dance forms into contemporary realms. Through this innovative work, her Lily Li Chinese Dance Company bridges the continuum from past to contemporary from magnificently court dances of China’s imperial court to today’s incorporates original music and multimedia designs. The company has an extensive touring schedule, serving as one of San Francisco’s foremost cultural ambassadors around the country.

Gloyd “Bobby” Cappie is an acclaimed folkloric dancer, singer, storyteller, dancer, and percussionist. He has dedicated his life to sustaining Afro-Cuban culture in the Bay Area, an accomplished historian, teacher and storyteller. He sings in many languages, English, Spanish, and R&B, and tours the Midwest and the East Coast teaching about the history of the Afro-Cuban experience in the United States. He brings with him an authenticity of the culture, sharing its lessons for the youth.

Sharada Bose is an acclaimed folkloric singer, storyteller, dancer, and percussionist. She has dedicated her life to sustaining Afro-Cuban culture in the Bay Area, an accomplished historian, teacher and storyteller. She sings in three languages: English, Spanish, and Lucumi, the mother tongue of the descendants of the Yorubas of Nigeria.

Wayne Hazzard is a native Californian and is proud to continue his work in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has been a prominent member of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and the Hawai’i Music Awards since 1987. He has been a member of the Dance and Drama Association of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and the Hawai’i Music Awards since 1987. He has been a member of the Dance and Drama Association since 1987. He has been a member of the Dance and Drama Association since 1987.
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