

Friends of CubaCaribe

Ken Barnes, Isabel Barraza, Ralph Benson, Diane Bosquez, Susan Boxer, Susan Brisseden-Smith, Neil Brobeck, Paul Brobeck, Emily Cabrera, Beverly Davenport, Shelley & Elliott Fineman, Georg Gottschalk, Peggy Handler, Jake Hodge, Chiyo Honde, Deborah Hubbard, Ramona Itule, Sharon Johnson, Robin Kallman, Jane Koegal, Virginia & Roger Low, Robert & Frances Low, Berta & Allen Low, Holly Millar, Doris Mitchell, Petra Nelson, Jean Nelson, Michael Nolan, Kate Northcott, Barbara Omundson, Sandy Owens, Patrice Pominville, Sharon Porter, Monica Pressley, Perry Reyes, Juan Carlos Sarimiento, Estelle Schneider, Nikki Sims, Joseph Smooke, Katy Wilcox, Sydney & Rosa Williams.

You can join this wonderful group of individuals. As a member of CubaCaribe, you will support authentic Caribbean Dance and Music in the Bay Area and beyond. Enjoy a splendid array of membership benefits. For information, write to cubacaribecamp@yahoo.com or call 510.273.2484

Master Classes

SUNDAY APRIL 22, 2007 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Afro-Cuban Haitian & Haitian w/ José "Cheo" Rojas & Michelle Martin

SUNDAY APRIL 22, 2007 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Afro-Cuban & Afro-Brazilian Modern w/ Ramón Ramos Alayo & Paco Gomes

SUNDAY APRIL 22, 2007 5:15 - 6:15 PM
Yoruban Religion Lecture w/ Yagbe Awolowo Onilu, Babalao Priest of Santería

The cost of each master class is \$16, You will receive a \$2 discount on classes with festival performance ticket stub. Lecture cost is \$7. Price of all 3 special events on Sunday is \$ 36. Tickets for master classes and lecture available at the door of the specific event. All events will be held at Dance Mission Theater - 3316 24th Street, San Francisco, CA.

Shaking off the Dust



A mixed program of dance and music
April 20 -22, 2007 Dance Mission Theater

Dedicated to Carlos Aceituno

2007 CUBACARIBE FESTIVAL: Shaking off the Dust

CubaCaribe Producers Kristina Ramsey, Ramón
Ramos Alayo, Deborah Valoma, Stella Adelman,
Jamaica Itule Simmons

Artistic Director Ramón Ramos Alayo
Lighting Designer Harry Rubeck
Sound Operator Andy Keefer
Graphic Design Jamaica Itule Simmons
Dj/Music Alfie

Thank you from Ramón Ramos Alayo to all the dancers, musicians, technicians and choreographers for supporting the CubaCaribe Festival and making this program possible. To Dance Mission Theater and Dance Brigade for their invaluable expertise, and especially to Debbie Lammam the organizers; Stella Adelman, Kristina Ramsey, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Deborah Valoma and friends of CubaCaribe and all the volunteers for lending their support.

A special thanks from Portsha Jefferson to the artists of Rara Tou Limen: I would like to extend a sincere thank you to you all; your time, energy and dedication to this project filled my heart. Iyayo, you have taught me so much over the years. I appreciate you, your knowledge, passion and artistic vision. I give thanks to my teachers in the United States and in Haiti. You all have been instrumental in my growth. Thank you, Wes, for your patience and continued support. I would also like to thank the Creator, my Ancestors, Lwa, and my Mother for introducing me to the joy of dance.

Upcoming Event: Cuba Camp Hawaii December 2007
www.cubacaribe.org

Program Notes

Based on the Pablo Picasso quote "Art washes away from the soul, the dust of everyday life," CubaCaribe presents a suite of performances by celebrated San Francisco Bay Area folkloric dance companies.

In the ripe hours after long days of toil, people throughout the Americas have relied on dance and song to shake off the dust. In the evenings, on the seventh day and during annual holy days, the populations of Brazil, Cuba and Haiti rested and celebrated. They fashioned percussion instruments out of everyday objects and danced to refresh the body and generate connections with the spirits. With every movement, they shook off the weary dust of the mundane.

Culture is tenacious. Despite the unrelenting hardships of slavery, tenacious people and displaced cultures survived by recounting stories and reenacting cultural norms. Dance, rhythm and song are oral and performative traditions well suited to carrying culturally significant information over generations. Writing about Haitian dance in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé*, Yvonne Daniel states, "... in signaling the names, musical characteristics, and movement of distinct African ethnic groups, Haitian history was encoded within the dancing body over time."

Many of the dances presented tonight are secular in nature – dances that punctuate the annual cycles of planting and harvest with lively music and social dancing. Others honor the divinities of African religions, transplanted to the Caribbean and South America. Intertwined with the European Catholic cyclical celebrations, these dances flourished above ground, but nonetheless drew their life sustaining nutrients from roots still planted in the complex diversity of African cultural memory. These African divinities, called lwas in Haiti, orishas in Cuba and oirxás in Brazil are distinct from one another, yet interrelated in a multifaceted system of intra-African syncretism.

CubaCaribe is dedicated to supporting the continued lifecycle of these traditions in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are also committed to the principle that dance and music feed the mind and body. We believe that racial, ethnic, gendered, economic and age-based barriers are breached through act of dancing together. Dance should not be left solely to the young, or the fit, or the professional.

Dance, rhythm and song are acts of daily solidarity. Through dance, we draw intersecting lines in space, mapping the interplay of relationships. Dance and rhythm and song are a call out to the spirits. In participating, we are suppliants to a state of grace.

As Daniel Yvonne states in the concluding sentence of her book, we "invite you to call upon your ancestors for remembrance and acknowledgment and to use these dances and their concepts to keep you healthy and strong, truly beautiful community citizens." Within this construct of dance and song, we are all dancers and singers. We invite you to dance.

Deborah Valoma
Associate Professor, California College of the Arts
Member, Advisory Council, CubaCaribe

Program

Konpayi

Artistic Direction: Michelle Martin

Muzik Gede

This instrumental music selection is a dedication to the lwa, Papa Gede, the deity of life, death, and procreation. lwa Papa Gede frequents cemeteries, acts as the guardian of children, and is responsible for the longevity of the Haitian people. These rhythmic conversations are a small selection of many in the Gede Yanvalou, Banda, and Mascarón family of rhythms.

Musicians: Scooter Fein, Karen Kirschling, Gaku Watanabe

Papa Legba, Ouvre bare pou nou (...we begin)

Atibon Legba is the deity of the crossroads, barriers, and open doorways. Atibon Legba opens the cosmic gates through which all energy must pass. Papa Legba symbolizes old age, respect, and wisdom and is saluted first in Haitian Vodou ceremonies. This piece is dedicated to him and to all of those who have come before us. It is also a tribute to those who are living, teaching and encouraging us to celebrate the richness, complexity, and beauty of the Haitian culture.

Choreography: Michelle Martin

Dancers: Konpayi - Stella Adelman, Christina Bazzaroni, Tanicia M. Bell, Carol Hill, Rita Pantaleon, Saba Sabina

Banboche! (...we continue)

Music: Boukman Ekspyans by Revolution

Dancers: School of the Arts, theater students: Shante Austin, Devary White, Rodney Jackson, Thomas Pang, Julia Rose, Erik Banks, Israel Barajas-Ramos, Danielle Decker, Tiffany Pham

Bateria Bay-Lleza de San Francisco y Grupo los Locos por Samba

Artistic Direction, Loco Bloco Drum & Dance Ensemble: Heather Watkins

Artistic Direction, Fogo Na Ropa Drum & Dance Ensemble: Regina Calilfa Calloway

Bay-Lleza

For this special event, two of the foremost San Francisco Bay Area Brazilian baterias have united in mourning and solidarity after the passing in 2006 of Maestro Carlos Aceituno, founder of the popular Fogo Na Roupá Grupo Carnaval and a well-loved master and teacher of capoeira.

Loco Bloco Drum & Dance Ensemble and Fogo Na Ropa Drum & Dance Ensemble have intimate ties and have set the standards of excellence for one another in the world of carnival performance art. Tonight, to highlight the solidarity of two families and their love and respect for Carlos Aceituno, they have collaborated under the name Bateria Bay-Lleza de San Francisco.

Both groups pride themselves on diversity of their multi-gendered, multi-cultural and multi-generational families of performers. Tonight they are honored to join forces in this collaborative project - a tribute to the strength, power, and beauty of women. In a sharp reversal of traditional gendered norms, an all-woman bateria plays for the all-male dance ensemble.

Music: Deusa do Ébano II by Ilê Aiyê

Soloist: Asatu Musunama Hall

Musicians: Bateria Bay-Lleza de San Francisco - Regina Calilfa Calloway, Heather Watkins, Fabiola Alejandre, Christina Allen, Maliyah Coye, Alma Herrera, Jasmine McClain, Kim Moore

Dancers: Grupo los Locos por Samba (men dance ensemble of Loco Bloco)

Jose Carrasco, Tony Ramirez, Ben Dickstein, Edwin Rodriguez, Ron Jackson, Joel Feal, Aaron Lechuga, Alfie Macias, Donald Saldana, Manolo Davila

Intermission

Las Que Son Son

Return to Oriente

This contemporary choreography is an unexpected fusion of movements derived from traditional Afro-Cuban dances such as masún, merengue, tumba francesa and others. These dances hail from the eastern part of the island - Cuba's Oriente provinces - where Franco-Haitian influence was dramatic and enduring after the influx of Haitian immigrants, both of European and African descent, during the Haitian revolution in the late eighteenth century. Sensual hip movements and French-Creole singing distinguish these dances as descendants of the Haitian lineage transported to Cuba. Song: Panamamue Tombe

Banda Gagá

Another important Cuban dance from Oriente is Gagá, derived from Rara, an important rural, street processional form from Haiti with roots in Kongo-Angola dance movement. Gagá is a communal processional dance, led by a lead dancer that travels from house to house, town to town during Holy Week, proceeding from small ensembles to large mass dancing. Gagá is marked by strong rhythms, exuberant energy, erotic movements and agile use of colorful banners.

Choreography: Silfredo La O

Costumes: Deborah Valoma

Dancers: Las Que Son Son - Stella Adelman, Cora Barnes, Isabel Estrada-Jamison, Mela Saunders, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Kristina Ramsey, Elizabeth Soberanes Herrejón, Deborah Valoma

Musicians: Afro-Cuban Drum Ensemble - Rogelio "Ñoño" Kindelan (musical direction & lead percussion), Susana Arenas Pedroso (vocals), Michelle Martin (vocals), Collin Douglas (percussion, Fri. & Sat.), Matthew Lucus (percussion, Fri. & Sun.), Jesse Weber (percussion, Sat. & Sun.), Jeff Chambers (bass, Fri. & Sat.)

Rara Tou Limen

Artistic Direction: Portsha Jefferson

Musical Direction: Lee "Iyayo" Hetelson

Yon Priye Pou Ayiti (A Prayer for Haiti)

(Friday & Sunday only)

A ritual dance originating in Benin, Yanvalou (meaning "I beg of you" in the Fon language) is a dance of supplication that honors and imitates the movement of the supreme snake lwa, Danbala. In Vodou, the pote mitan is a pole at the center of the peristyle (the public dancing space). It serves as the central channel of communication between the sacred world of the lwa (divinities) and ancestors and the profane world of the living. Yon Priye Pou Ayiti is a call for liberation, peace and progress to make Haiti a better place for all of her children.

Choreography: Portsha Jefferson

Soloists: Arielle Miles, Emerald Mitchell

Dancers: Saint Mary's College High School Dance Ensemble

Julie Andersen, Lauren Anthony, Alexandra Burns, Roxanne Colton, Leana Erby, Sheena Gordon, Lauren M. James, Kelsi Jensen, Arielle Miles, Emerald Mitchell, Anina Olivier, Christina Pinckney, Megan Tully, Olivia White

Manbo Ayizan

(Saturday only)

Ayizan is an ancient root spirit in the Vodoun tradition. Ayizan's name is a compilation of two words derived from the Fon language of Benin: ayi means "the earth" and zan means "sacred." Patron of the marketplace and public spaces, Ayizan brings the mysteries to the human domain. Her sacred tree is the palm, which she uses to protect and purify. Ayizan is also the ruler of the fringed palm frond that covers the faces of new initiates as they emerge from the djevo.

Choreography: Portsha Jefferson

Soloist: Portsha Jefferson

Nachons: An Ancestral Link (Old World to the NEW)

Suite 1 – Neg Daome

"Haiti is the child of Dahomey, Haiti is the child of Ginen" Haitian Proverb

The Dahomey (or Fon) is a nation located in Benin, Africa. Dahomean Vodoun is one of the oldest religions and is a fully developed and complex system of ritual, theology and worship. It is the mother, from which all forms of Vodoun practiced in the New World is derived. Many of the Vodoun gods, such as Legba, Ogou and Danbala were transported to Haiti during the centuries when enslaved populations were transported to Haiti. This piece pays homage to the fierce and noble warriors of Dahomey.

Choreography: Portsha Jefferson

Dancers: Tyrone Collins, Shawn Merriman-Roberts, Samad Raheem, Patrice Roland, Takeo Wong

Suite 2- Evolution!

Evolution is a contemporary fusion of jazz, old skool and traditional Nago movement (folkloric), spiced with Haitian Hip-Hop. Nago is the traditional dance and rhythm of the Ogoun family. Ogou is both heroic warrior and the master of iron. An entity of defense and war, Ogou's symbolic color is red. Evolution displays strength, unity and growth among women to claim our power. Respe to my folks in NYC for introducing me to this wonderful subculture of Haitian music.

Choreography: Portsha Jefferson and Esther Aviva

Dancers: Heather Easley- Kasinsky, Sabina Gebreab, Paulina Flint de Castro, Portsha Jefferson, Tyese Wortham

Drum Interlude "Yanvalou Suite"

Rada music originating from Dahomey

Musical Direction: Lee "Iyayo" Hetelson

Viv Rara!

Viv Rara! is a kanaval (carnaval) celebration showcasing the social organization of the Rara community including the majo jon (baton majors), pot drapo (flag bearer), colonel (colonel), wa and renn (kings and queens) and the machann (market ladies). Rara is the yearly festival in Haiti that begins on the eve of Lent, and builds for six weeks until Easter Week. Rara processions walk for miles through local territory attracting fans and singing new and old songs. It is a time of jubilant celebration!

Choreography: Portsha Jefferson

Dancers: Stella Adelman, Esther Aviva, Christina Bazzaroni, Tyrone Collins, Heather Easley- Kasinsky, Sabina Gebreab, Paulina Flint de Castro, Cassandra Hazen, Halima Marshall, Shawn Merriman-Roberts, Samad Raheem, Patrice Roland, Tyese Wortham, Takeo Wong

Drummers: Lee "Iyayo" Hetelson (lead), Karen Kirschling, Chris Fischer

Singers: Karen Ransom (lead), Christina Bazzaroni, Elizabeth Day, Coco Kelly, Nancy mac Morris. **Spoken word artist:** Gloria Yamato

Costumes: Regina Calloway of vivaARTS for Dahomey, Mui and Rara

Props: Patrice Roland

Profiles

Michelle Martin is the artistic director and choreographer for Konpayi, a San Francisco based Haitian dance ensemble. Martin studied with Katherine Dunham and masters of the original Dunham Dance Company. Martin also studied at the Alvin Ailey School of Dance, and with Jean Leon Destine and Richard Gonzales in New York City. Martin traveled throughout Nigeria, Cuba, and Haiti to study dance and music, its cultural meaning and historical roots in religious ceremony. In Haiti, she concentrated her studies near Gonaives at Souvinance, where the practice of Vodoun has stayed truest to its Dahomean heritage. As a specialist in Dunham Technique and traditional Haitian dance, Martin taught at several San Francisco Bay Area institutions including, Lines Contemporary Ballet, CitiCenter Dance Theater, Rhythm and Motion, Alice Arts Center, and currently teaches at Dance Mission and Mills College. Martin was an artist-in-residence with the San Francisco Unified School District since 1989 and is working with the School of the Arts High School in the Theater Department. Martin has worked with West African dance companies Bantaba and Diamano Coura, toured Nigeria with Wajumbe Cultural Ensemble, and was the assistant artistic director, choreographer, principal dancer and singer for the nationally acclaimed group Petit la Croix under the leadership of Blanche Brown. In addition to her work with her company Konpayi, Martin is also working with Jose Francisco Barroso's Cuban dance ensemble Obakoso.

Heather Watkins co-founded Loco Bloco Drum & Dance Ensemble with Jose Carrasco in 1994. Watkins has studied and performed music, dance and theater for over twenty-five years. She was a member of Escola Nova de Samba, Fogo Na Roupa, Ceedo Senegalese Dance Company, and Aisha Aku Dance Company. Heather toured internationally with Mingus Amungus as a percussionist and dancer, performing in the Berlin Jazz Festival, International Istanbul Jazz Festival, Monterrey Jazz Festival, Belgium, Cuba, as well as, numerous Bay Area venues. Heather is a visual artist as well and has collaborated on several mural projects in the Bay Area including commissioned piece in the Oakland Convention Center and the West Oakland Senior Center.

Loco Bloco Drum & Dance Ensemble is a celebrated non-profit organization, offering performing arts programs for children, teens and young adults rooted in the multi-ethnic Mission District of San Francisco. Founded in 1994 by artists and activists of color, Loco Bloco provides free classes in percussion, dance and theater to thousands of youth from low-income communities. Drawing from African, Latino and Indigenous cultural currents, Loco Bloco empowers youth of color by connecting them to art forms reflective of their cultural heritage. Loco Bloco's programs provide youth consistent contact with community-based artists of color who act as teachers, mentors and role models. Loco Bloco artists pass on their skills and passion, thereby empowering youth to make healthy choices in their lives. Loco Bloco offers free classes to thousand youth in twenty schools and community centers; participates in five cultural exchanges with youth and art communities; and has won Grand Prize three times in San Francisco's Carnival Parade.

Regina Califa Calloway is artistic director of Fogo Na Roupa Drum & Dance Ensemble and brings to the group her extensive history of training in dance and music with leading African and Cuban masters. Since 1990, Calloway has been implemented programming and coordinated promotional events for Fogo Na Roupa Drum & Dance Ensemble. As an instructor, scholar, and performer, Calloway brings to the company a unique history of research and expertise in African dance and drum culture.

Fogo Na Roupa Drum & Dance Ensemble was founded by Carlos Aceituno in Oakland in 1989 and consists of both a performing company and an award winning Grupo Carnavalesco (Carnaval Group). The name Fogo Na Roupa, means "Clothes on

Fire,” and is symbolic of the blazing energy generated by the group’s lively rhythms and dance. Fogo Na Roupa opened for internationally acclaimed Brazilian recording artist Carlinhos Brown, Olodum, and Carlos Santana. Fogo Na Roupa participated in cultural exchanges with Brazil’s first Bloco Afro, Ilê Aiyê, and with Timbalada. For four consecutive years, Fogo Na Roupa was a Carnaval Grand Prize Winner and received awards in numerous parades, including San Francisco’s Chinese New Year and Cinco de Mayo Parades. In 2005, Fogo Na Roupa was awarded the San Francisco Carnaval Grand Parade Championship in recognition of the creativity and cohesive design style that defines the group.

Rogelio “Ñoño” Kindelan was born in Guantanamo, Cuba and came to the United States as part of a cultural exchange with the non-governmental organization, Cuba Puente, in July 1997. Prior to his arrival in the San Francisco Bay Area, he studied at the University of Santiago and at the Centro Nacional de Superación de la Enseñanza Artística (CSNEA) where he received the equivalent of a Masters of Fine Arts in 1987. After, he was professor of percussion and principal music director of Ban Rra Rra, the renowned Cuban dance ensemble originally from Guantanamo and now based in Havana. Kindelan studied percussion with Julian Gali, was a member of the Escuela Nacional de Arte in Havana and worked as director of La Escuela de Arte de Nivel Medio. As a master of all Cuban drumming rhythms, he currently teaches percussion in the San Francisco Bay Area, including the specialized Cuban-Haitian rhythms dominant in the eastern provinces of the Cuba.

Las Que Son Son (we are who we are) is a newly reconstituted group of dancers from diverse backgrounds brought together by a mutual interest in ethnic dance. Las Que Son Son dancers are professionals in many fields including visual arts, Spanish translation, graphic design and education. The all-women ensemble is trained by some of the most prominent Cuban, Haitian and Brazilian dance instructors in the San Francisco Bay Area, including Ramón Ramos Alayo, Susanna Arenas Pedroso, Jose “Cheo” Rojas, Royland Lobato and more. The mission of Las Que Son Son – to study and perform dance in a collaborative atmosphere – is based on the notion that dance is a vital cultural and artistic practice that shapes community and builds solidarity among diverse races, ethnicities and ages.

Portsha Jefferson is the founder and artistic director of Rara Tou Limen. Jefferson served as a principal dancer and singer with Group Petit La Croix for seven years with veteran dancer and educator Blanche Brown. She has also performed Haitian dance with Reconnect Dance Ensemble and Afro-Cuban dance with Emese and Obakoso. In 2003 and 2007, Jefferson traveled throughout Haiti to research regional dance, song and music. Her concentrated study took place in Gonaives at Lakou Badjo, where Nogo (Yoruba) traditions are preserved and in Tanp Souvenance Mistik, a Vodou community that celebrates its Rada (ancient kingdom of Dahomey) heritage. She studied at Ecole Nationale Des Arts (ENARTS), at Vivian Gauthier’s school of dance with Cadet Jean Evans, and conducted independent study with Peniel Guerrier of Ballet Folklorique Tamboula D’ Haiti. For the past nine years, Jefferson has taught creative movement and Afro-Haitian dance in schools, community centers and studios, including The Young Performers Theater, the San Francisco Arts Education Project, Westlake School of the Arts, Opera Piccola, and Swivel Arts. Currently, Jefferson is artist-in-residence in Oakland, Berkeley and SF public schools and instructor at City Dance Studios and Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts.

Lee “Iyayo” Hetelson is the musical director of Rara Tou Limen. For more than fifteen years, Hetelson studied the ritual music of Haitian Vodou, with a focus on the complexity and diversity of Haitian regional repertoire. He has participated in Vodou ceremonies in California, New York and Haiti, including a three-day ceremony with renowned Mambo Mama Lola and the elaborate Vodoun ritual at Tanp Souvenance Mistik in Gonaives, Haiti. He has performed in the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, the Bay Area Dance Series and Collage de

Cultures Africaines. Hetelson also accompanied dance classes at Laney College and Mills College in Oakland, City College of San Francisco and the College of Performing Arts in Philadelphia. He served as musical director for leading dance companies, including Petit La Croix and Bamboche. Currently, Hetelson is the coordinator for the Music of the World Program at Oakland Youth Chorus.

Rara Tou Limen Afro-Haitian Dance Ensemble, (Rara [rah-rah] – a musical band on foot, a moving community festival, and a celebration of Haitian pride; Limen [lee-may] – to shine bright, illuminate) is a Haitian folkloric ensemble composed of dancers, musicians, singers and practitioners who have studied with some of the pioneers of the art in both Haiti and the United States. Rara Tou Limen was founded in 2004 by artistic director Portsha Jefferson, with Lee “Iyayo” Hetelson serving as musical director. The ensemble’s mission is to educate audiences in the richness of Haitian culture through artistic interpretation of religious ceremonial dance and celebratory dances of Kanaval. Rara Tou Limen was prominently featured at San Francisco Black Film Festival (2005) and participated in various dance festivals including SF Carnaval. Most recently, the company performed at the de Young Museum, “Hastings to Haiti Partnership Celebration” and at UC Berkeley’s “Beyond Visibility Conference.” The continuing political strife and economic difficulties in Haiti reinforce the importance for Rara Tou Limen to represent Haiti’s culture and dance, thereby reinforcing Haiti’s long tradition of strength and solidarity.

Dj Alfie a.k.a. Alfie Bateria a percussionist, drummer, salsa casino dancer, music teacher and DJ. He is well versed in Brazilian, Haitian, West African, Cuban, Puerto Rican and North American styles of percussion and serves as co-musical director of Loco Bloco Dance & Drum Ensemble. Dedicated to helping youth and adult artists acquire the skill to express themselves dynamically through music and dance, he teaches Afro-Brazilian percussion ensemble (bateria/bloco) at Loco Bloco, the Windsor Bloco and at the SF Arts Education Project. In addition, Alfie teaches classes in salsa casino and salsa casino rueda. Dj Alfie’s weekly DJ residency is at “Golden” in the Pasaporte Room alongside DJ WaltDigz, where you can hear his eclectic and soulful collection from the four corners of the earth with a strong Salsa-Timba chop. Dj Alfie played music for many CubaCaribe events, including Cuba Camp II (2005), Cuba Camp Hawaii (2006) and will be playing at the Latino Heritage Week in Hawaii later this year. DJ Alfie will be mixing the best in Cuban music throughout the Third Annual CubaCaribe festival.

CubaCaribe Mission Statement

CubaCaribe was established in 2003 with the mission to preserve and promote the vibrant artistic and cultural traditions of the Caribbean and its Diaspora communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founded on the principle that music, dance and visual arts have the power to unite people of diverse perspectives, ethnicities and backgrounds, CubaCaribe coordinates educational programs to foster understanding and appreciation of Caribbean, especially Cuban, arts and culture. CubaCaribe organizes classes, performances, educational outreach programs, and exhibitions that support and uphold Cuban and Caribbean dance, music, visual art and culture.

CubaCaribe organized and produced the first CubaCaribe Festival in 2005 and the second in 2006, both located at Dance Mission Theater. Each festival offered consecutive weekends of groundbreaking performances by the award-winning Afro-Cuban modern dance ensemble, Alayo Dance Company, and many other leading Cuban, Haitian and Brazilian folkloric and popular dance companies. In addition, CubaCaribe has organized Cuba Camp I (2003), Cuba Camp II (2005), and Cuba Camp Hawaii (2006), which is the only dance camp on the West Coast dedicated to teaching Cuban performing arts.

8

thank you

Ramón Ramos Alayo gives many thanks to all the dancers, musicians, technicians and volunteers for supporting the CubaCaribe Festival and Alayo Dance Company. To Dance Brigade and Dance Mission Theater for their invaluable expertise, and especially Debbie Lammam and the organizers; Stella Adelman, Kristina Ramsey, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Deborah Valoma. To the friends of CubaCaribe and to all the dancers for believing in my ideas and giving your time, energy and dedication.

Friends of CubaCaribe

Ken Barnes, Isabel Barraza, Ralph Benson, Diane Bosquez, Susan Boxer, Susan Brisseden-Smith, Neil Brobeck, Paul Brobeck, Emily Cabrera, Beverly Davenport, Shelley & Elliott Fineman, Georg Gottschalk, Peggy Handler, Jake Hodge, Chiyo Honde, Deborah Hubbard, Ramona Itule, Sharon Johnson, Robin Kallman, Jane Koegal, Virginia & Roger Low, Robert & Frances Low, Berta & Allen Low, Holly Millar, Doris Mitchell, Petra Nelson, Jean Nelson, Michael Nolan, Kate Northcott, Barbara Omundson, Sandy Owens, Patrice Pominville, Sharon Porter, Monica Pressley, Perry Reyes, Juan Carlos Sarimiento, Estelle Schneider, Nikki Sims, Joseph Smooke, Katy Wilcox, Sydney & Rosa Williams.

You can join this wonderful group of individuals. As a member of CubaCaribe, you will support authentic Caribbean Dance and Music in the Bay Area and beyond. Enjoy a splendid array of membership benefits. For information, write to cubacaribecamp@yahoo.com or call 510.273.2484.

Funded in part by
Zellerbach Family Fund



Alayo
DANCE COMPANY

3 threes & traces

April 26-29, 2007
Dance Mission Theater

3 threes & traces

CubaCaribe presents the 2007 season of Alayo Dance Company with the debut of Ramón Ramos Alayo's latest work, Three Threes & Traces. In this choreographic diptych, Ramos crafts a series of layered, yet seamless, compositions in which he simultaneously elaborates on and diverges from the traditional language of Cuban popular and modern dance forms.

artistic director

Ramón Ramos Alayo

alayo dance company

Ramón Ramos Alayo, Tina Banchemo, Amy DaSilva, Antoine DeVinci Hunter, Megan Janssen, Aja Randall, Laura Serghiou, Patricia West Sotelo, and Oscar Trujillo.

guests Amy Bandera, Alexis Miller, Justin Kennedy

live music

Patricio Angulo & The sonando Project

Darren Smith: tenor & baritone saxophone, flute, vocals

Bob Crawford: piano

Fred Randolph: bass

David Flores: traps, vocals

Patricio Angulo: congas, vocals

lighting Jodi Fedder

sound operator Andy Keefer

costume design Deborah Valoma & Ramón Ramos Alayo

graphic design Jamaica Itule Simmons

Agualibre (formerly O-Maya), Albino!, JazzMafia, and more. He is also the director and founder of the Bay Area's eleven-piece salsa orchestra Rumbaché (formerly Quimbombó), which performs at all the major salsa clubs in the greater Bay Area. The Sonando Project's current focus is the Afro-Caribbean interpretation of Stevie Wonder tunes.

Websites: www.rumbache or www.myspace.com/latinsteviewonder

Costumes

Deborah Valoma is an artist, educator, and writer. As an associate professor and chair of the textile program at the California College of the Arts, her special field of research is history of textiles. She graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a B.A. in anthropology and California College of Arts and Crafts with an M.F.A. in textiles. Valoma's artwork has been published in journals and exhibited at national institutions, such as de Young Memorial Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Valoma writes on historical topics and has curated several exhibitions, including a retrospective of a premier Native American basket weaver in California. Valoma served on the boards of various community-based art organizations dedicated to the preservation of traditional visual and performing arts. She was a founding board member of the Julia Morgan School for Girls, a board member of BrasArte and is currently serving on the advisory council of CubaCaribe. Valoma has collaborated with Ramón Ramos Alayo on costume design and has written program notes on historical topics related to choreographic content for several Alayo Dance Company's productions.

Notes on the costumes for Traces: Deborah Valoma

The first time I visited Havana, I was struck by the use of bold color. Cubans favor strong-bodied colors of all kinds, but blues and greens dominate. Hand painted blue and green cars flash past architecture painted with horizontal stripes of blue and green. A few days later we drove to the beach in a steaming hot truck loaded with sleeping children. There, on the horizon line, just past the white sand, lay green then blue then almost violet – a liquid palette of shallows and depths used to paint the Cuban urban landscape.

profiles

Alayo Dance Company, now in its fifth year, was founded by Ramón Ramos Alayo with the mission to fuse Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric, and popular dance. Ramos eloquently cites movements, narratives and concepts from each tradition, using a synthesized language to articulate his aesthetic vision. Alayo Dance Company is the resident company of CubaCaribe and performs throughout the San Francisco Bay Area at venues such as Dance Mission Theater, Sonoma Country Wine Theater, and La Peña Cultural Center.

Ramón Ramos Alayo is a dancer, teacher, choreographer and the founder and artistic director of the Alayo Dance Company and CubaCaribe. Ramos was selected by the Cuban government to study dance in Santiago de Cuba at age eleven. In 1990 he earned a masters degree in contemporary and folkloric dance and dance education from the Havana's National School of Art. He was the principal dancer with Danza del Caribe, Narciso Medina Contemporary Dance Company and performed in Cuba, Europe, Canada, Belize and the U.S. Since moving to California in 1997, he has performed with some of the most respected choreographers in the San Francisco Bay Area, including Robert Henry Johnson, Kim Epifano, Sara Shelton Mann, and Joanna Haigood. Ramos currently dances with Robert Moses' Kin and teaches Cuban popular dance, Afro-Cuban modern dance and children's movement at several local dance studios and schools. In 2001 Ramos founded Ire Ile, an all-woman Cuban popular dance group and in 2002 founded the Alayo Dance Company. As director and choreographer, his work is an innovative fusion of Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric and popular Cuban dance. Ramos has choreographed and produced six full-length dance performances: *Anoraña de Una Epoca* (1999); *Mis Sueños, Mis Ideas* (2003, 2004); *A Piece of White Cloth* (2004, 2005); *La Madre* (2005); *After Rain* (2006). In 2003 Ramos co-founded and became artistic director of CubaCaribe. Ramos has received grants from Cash (2005), Zellerbach (2005) and Lef Foundations (2005). Most recently he received the prestigious Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation's "Emerging Choreographer Award" to develop original choreography that will be premiered at Dance Mission Theatre in November 2007. Alayo Dance Company was featured in "Dance Across America," published in National Geographic Magazine (2006) and Ramos was an Isadora Duncan Dance Award nominee for the ensemble performance of *Los Guedes*, performed at CubaCaribe Festival (2006).

Tina Banchero received her B.A. from SUNY, Buffalo in dance and women's studies. She has been performing with Dance Brigade and other local dance companies for the last seven years. Banchero served as the artistic director of the GRRRL Brigade and the Jr. Grrrl Brigade Companies. Banchero has also thoroughly directed the Dance Mission Theater's Youth Program for the last six years.

Amy Bandera is a Latin-American style competitive ballroom dancer and

3 threes & traces program

3 threes

Artistic Direction & Costumes: Ramón Ramos Alayo

elements

Choreography: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Music: Antonio Pinto

Dancers: Aja Randall, Patricia West Sotelo, Oscar Trujillo

moments

Choreography: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Music: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Dancers: Tina Banchero, Megan Janssen, Laura Serghiou

metamorphosis

Choreography: Narciso Medina

Music: Tomita

Dancers: Amy DaSilva, Aja Randall, Patricia West Sotelo

intermission

traces

Artistic Direction: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Costumes: Deborah Valoma

danzon

Music: Patricio Angulo & The Sonando Project

Dancers: Alayo Dance Company

danzonete

Music: Patricio Angulo & The Sonando Project

Dancers: Ramón Ramos Alayo & Tina Banchero

mambo

Music: Patricio Angulo & The Sonando Project

Dancers: Alayo Dance Company

rumba

Music: Patricio Angulo & The Sonando Project

Dancers: Alayo Dance Company

traces

Music: Elenton Nelson, Gustavo Santaolalca, Jaques

Morelenbaum, Ryuichi Sakamoto

Dancers: Alayo Dance Company

program notes

Three Threes (Elements, Moments & Metamorphosis)

In what author Jalal Toufic calls an “untimely collaboration,” Ramón Ramos Alayo’s *Three Threes* is a conversation with the acclaimed Cuban choreographer Narciso Medina’s seminal work, *Metamorphosis*. Medina’s award winning choreography debuted over twenty years ago and has since achieved the status of cultural icon in the Afro-Cuban modern dance world. Medina called out, and a generation later, some Cuban choreographers have felt compelled to respond.

Ramos does not answer Medina’s work with a sequel, but unexpectedly, honors his predecessor by choreographing a prequel, or rather, a pair of prequels that intersect with the third. Ramos’ dual compositions, *Elements* and *Moments*, investigate the nature of relationship and the set the stage for Medina’s commentary on the process of transformation.

Through the use of pointed titles, Ramos deftly defines the preconditions of transformation – substance and time. Further, by elevating Medina’s piece to the final chapter and emotional climax of a narrative triad, Ramos crafts an even more forceful reading of *Metamorphosis* than as a stand-alone oeuvre. Ramos’s strategy in *Elements* and *Moments* is to lyrically soften boundaries, thereby intensifying Medina’s already breathtakingly intense work.

Ramos uses his signature style of close in, relational movement to poetically comment on the nature of intimacy, singularity, and unity. Cleverly using a self-similar structure, Ramos constructs a tri-part composition exactly similar to the smaller parts of itself. The braided architecture of *Three Threes* reflects the closeness of dancers movements. Three times, three bodies cluster in space to create three cohesive entities, which in turn, intersect to form an integrated whole.

Traces

In *Traces*, Ramón Ramos Alayo fuses Cuban popular dance with Afro-Cuban modern in a collaged composition of likeness and difference. Though these dance forms coexist and influence one another, rarely are they merged seamlessly in one chorographic

composition. For the first time in the repertoire of Alayo Dance Company, Ramos embroiders the framework of Afro-Cuban modern dance with threads of popular Cuban dance movement.

Ramos’s modern dancers travel the history of Cuban dance, tracing with their bodies the rise and fall of popular forms such as *Danzón* (ca. 1879), *Danzonete* (ca. 1929), *Mambo* (ca. 1943) and finally, *Rumba*. Spanning decades, these dances embody the shifting complexities of Cuban history. Each familiar gesture mirrors the multifaceted identities and economic realities of Cuban society.

In *Traces*, Ramos presents this lineage in rough chronological order, punctuating the modern dance vocabulary first with *Danzón*, typically danced in the early years of the twentieth century by the restrained upper classes. Moving through *Danzonete* to the lively *Mambo* of the fabled Havana nightlife in the 1950s, the choreography eventually circles back to *Rumba*, an expressive, low-bodied, street dance of the lower classes. With its distinct African origins, *Rumba* is defined simultaneously as a gathering, a music and a dance. Only in recent decades have Cubans, perhaps as an expression of cultural unity, embraced the form as the nucleus of Cuban dance and music.

In Cuban popular dance, there is an emphasis on human connection. The movements are not simply patterned steps counted out at intervals. Rather, they constitute a visceral and visual language of relationship – personal, social, economic and racial. Referencing the intricate, and sometimes fractured, social history of Cuba, Ramos uses these popular dance forms to weave his dancers into multiple liaisons and finally into a social whole.

Deborah Valoma

Associate Professor, Chair Textile Program, California College of the Arts

5

teacher. She has performed and competed in ballroom dance for the past eight years in venues throughout the U.S. Most recently she placed 1st in the SF Open Dancesport Championships Pro-Am Open Latin Event. In addition to dancing ballroom, Amy also studies the original forms of these dances including cha-cha, rumba, son, salsa, samba and flamenco. Amy has a doctorate in psychology and works as a licensed clinical, testing and forensic psychologist in San Francisco and Marin Counties.

Amy DaSilva graduated from New College of the University of South Florida with a B.A. in art history. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1998, she began studying Brazilian, Haitian, and Cuban folkloric and contemporary styles and continued her studies in modern dance. DaSilva has performed with Aguas da Bahia, Collaborative Performance Troupe, and Paco Gomes. DaSilva currently dances with Anne Bluethenthal & Dancers and teaches creative movement classes for children throughout the Bay Area. She has been member of Alayo Dance Company since 2006.

Antoine Devinci Hunter is a dancer, actor, writer, choreographer and dance instructor from Oakland. Hunter began his studies in dance at Skyline High School with Dawn James. He studied West African Dance with Master C.K. and Betty Ladzekpo, and studied at the Paul Taylor Summer Intensives. He has performed with Nuba Dance Theater and The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. Hunter attended the California Institute of the Arts and is studying toward a B.A degree in dance at St. Mary's College in the LEAP Program. He is a faculty member at East Bay Center of the Performing Arts, co-director and teacher at Urban Ballet in Richmond, dance instructor for Dance-A-Vision Ent, and rehearsal director and instructor at the Ross Dance Company. This is his third year dancing with Alayo Dance Company. Through his dedication to dance, Hunter hopes to demonstrate to those with hearing disabilities (or any disability) that it is possible achieve their dreams.

Megan Janssen was raised in Ashland, Oregon where she took her first dance class at the age of three. She danced and performed classical ballet and modern dance throughout childhood with the local youth dance company, Generation Y. After high school Megan pursued her interests in sustainable design and permaculture and traveled to Hawaii and Costa Rica to study these interests. After moving to San Francisco, Janssen has been studying sustainable interior architecture, guiding wilderness trips and dancing. She started dancing with Ramon Ramos Alayo in 2004 and began rehearsing with Alayo Dance Company in October of 2006.

Justin F. Kennedy was raised in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Kennedy graduated from Wesleyan, earning a dual degree in dance and ethnic studies. During his college career, Justin studied ballet, modern dance, dance composition, Bharata Natyam (South Indian classical dance), West African Dance, and Flamenco. Kennedy has attended dance intensives such as Barnard Summer Dance Study, The Ailey School, Nutmeg Ballet School, and American Ballet Theater. Kennedy also studies Afro-Cuban dance, Afro-Haitian dance and the traditional dances of the Dominican

6

Republic. Kennedy currently performs with Alonzo King's LINES Ballet Repertory Ensemble and teaches hip-hop dance to high school students in the Mission District at the Jamestown Community Center.

Alexis Miller grew up in Nantucket, Massachusetts, where she began her training in ballet at age four and modern dance at thirteen. While at Connecticut College, she spent a semester in Paris dancing and studying art history. Miller graduated with a B.A. in French and dance. After traveling to New Zealand in 2005, she quite unexpectedly landed in San Francisco in the. She now takes studies dance and works at ODC and is a member of RAWdance.

Aja Randall is originally from St. Louis, Missouri. In 1999, Randall graduated from Stephens College with a degree in dance and a minor in education. She moved to San Diego, California with her husband in 2000 and danced for two years with Majelate Collective Dance Ensemble and worked on projects with Sadie Weinberg. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area over three years ago, she began dancing with Alayo Dance Company.

Laura Serghiou is originally from the island of Cyprus. Since moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1993, she has attended ballet, modern and jazz classes at San Francisco Dance Center. In 1999, she graduated with a Masters degree in Art Education with a specialization in dance from Stanford University. Serghiou has been dancing with Alayo Dance Company since 2004.

Patricia West Sotelo is an Oakland based dancer, choreographer, and elementary school teacher. She has received a B.A. in English, dance, and education at U.C. Berkeley and a M.A. in Education at San Jose State University. Patricia has worked with Bay Area Repertory Dance, Capacitor, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin, Levy Dance, and several independent choreographers. Patricia is currently a member of both Alayo Dance Company and Joe Goode Performance Group. This is her fifth year dancing with the Alayo Dance Company.

Oscar Trujillo is a Cuban-American performer, choreographer and teacher. Oscar is currently co-director of GROUP and Cubana Cero Productions. Oscar has worked with Capacitor, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, ADEO, Dandelion Dance Theater, Kajiyama and Navarette, Element Dance Theater, and Mary Carbonara dances and others. This is his fourth year with Alayo Dance Company.

Music

Patricio Angulo is originally from Los Angeles, but has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for the last twelve years. Angulo initially studied classical percussion, but eventually concentrated on Afro-Caribbean rhythms, studying intensively under world-renowned percussionist Michael Spiro. Angulo has performed with local artists such as Fito Reinoso's Ritmo y Armonía, Dr. Loco and his Rockin' Jalapeño Band, Charansón,