



## 2024 ARTIST BIOS/COMPANY HISTORIES

### WEEK ONE (June 7-9, 2024) at DANCE MISSION THEATER

**Company Name:** Agua Doce Dance

**Artistic Director:** Stephanie Emmanuela Da Silva

Agua Doce Dance is led by Stephanie Emmanuela Da Silva. Da Silva is a dance artist with an MFA in dance and choreography. She immersed herself in the Afro-Brazilian dance culture of Salvador from 2007-2012, living there as a student, a professional dancer, a teacher and a designer. In the Bay Area she has danced with TWDC's Diaspora Dance Co, Yabas, Tropicalismo, Sambada and Amor do Samba. She has choreographed Tannery Winter Dance Concert, Saint Mary's College, Santa Rosa Junior College, Cabrillo Community College, Ethnic Dance Festival, Santa Cruz Dance Week, the Ebb and Flow Festival, SJDance Co, Yemanja Arts Festival at Brasarte and CubaCaribe Dance Festival. She has taught dance at ACDA, UCSC, SRJC, Saint Mary's College, and is a resident teacher at the SCBT and Harbor High School, and more.

**Company Name:** Cunamacué

**Artistic Director:** Carmen Román

Cunamacué is a performing arts company founded in 2010 in Oakland by Carmen Román with the purpose of bringing visibility to the presence and cultural knowledge of the African descendant population in Peru. Cunamacué brings awareness of Peru's African descendants by sharing their deep cultural history through music and dance. Cunamacué promotes the continuity of Afro-Peruvian culture, representing it as a living, vibrant and evolving form whose music and dance can be used as a means of contemporary expression.

**Company Name:** Folklo Ayisyen Lakay

**Artistic Director:** Laure Fleurentin

F.A.L Haitian dance, songs and music company is a performance company and non-profit arts organization incorporated in the state of California. Our mission is to foster and promote Haitian heritage and representations of diversity through music, dance and art. Director Laurie Fleurentin was born in Port-au-Prince and received her education at the Ecole Nationale des Arts. She was a principal dancer in Viviane Gauthier Dance Company and came to the United States 12 years ago to teach dance. She dedicates her time to choreographing and teaching at San Francisco State University, Destiny Arts Center, The Beat, Dimensions Dance Rites of Passage, and at many public schools throughout the Bay Area.

**Company Name: Grupo Experimental Nago**

**Artistic Director: Temistocles Fuentes Betancourt**

Grupo Experimental Nago is dedicated to the preservation and development of Afro-Cuban culture through dance and music, particularly on the culture of Oriente Province in Eastern Cuba reflecting Afro-Haitian influences. Nago is the first company in the SF Bay Area dedicated to this form. Temistocles Fuentes Betancourt is the Artistic Director. He has over 40 years experience as a principal dancer, regisseur, professor and choreographer with the Ballet Folklorico de Oriente. In Santiago de Cuba, he served as regisseur for Ballet Folkloric Cutumba, Director of Conjunto Folklorico Kazumbi, Professor of Salsa at Ateneo Cultural Antonio Bravo Correoso and Choreographer of the youth Carnaval group, Los Chicos Alegres de Veguita de Galos. Since coming to the US he has appeared in *Oyuro* and has choreographed and performed at numerous events and festivals. He has taught at Dance Mission, San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco Park and Recreation Department, YMCA and Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts.

**Company Name: Fredrika Keefer & Marco Palomino**

**Artistic Directors: Fredrika Keefer and Marco Palomino**

**Fredrika Keefer** was born and raised in The Mission District of San Francisco, CA. She is a Hip Hop, Ballet, Contemporary, and Traditional Japanese Taiko drumming performer and instructor. She is currently the Grrl Brigade Director and Studio Manager at Dance Mission Theater, pursuing her Masters in Dance at University of Arts In Philadelphia. She has been an ongoing member of the Dance Brigade and Alayo Dance Company.

**Marco Palomino** is a choreographer, dancer, and director based in Los Angeles, CA. Born in Cuba, he graduated from Escuela Nacional de Arte with a BFA from La Universidad de las Artes in Havana. Recently nominated for the Princess Grace Award in Choreography. Palomino has worked with Alayo Dance Company, Jacob Jonas The Company, Ballet Revolución, Rosario Cárdenas, Carlos Acosta's Acostadanza in collaboration with Birmingham Royal Ballet, and with revered choreographers Juliano Nuñez, Jacob Jonas, Pontus Lidberg, Micaela Taylor, Javier de Frutos, Norge Cedeño, Jorge Cesis, Osnel Delgado, Mike Tyus, Alexis Fernández (Maca), Goyo Montero, Rosanna Gamson and Carlos Acosta. Palomino has created commissions for dance companies, museums, film, immersive experiences and live theater and shared his work in 11 different countries.

**Company Name: Herencia Guantanamera**

**Artistic Director Yoel Mullen Robert**

Herencia Guantanamera's mission is to preserve, celebrate, and share the rich cultural heritage of Guantánamo, Cuba. Through our diverse range of events, educational programs, and artistic endeavors, we aim to honor the traditions, music, dance, and history of the region, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of Guantanamera culture for present and future generations.

**Company Name: Los Lupeños de San José**

**Artistic Director: Samuel Cortez Balderas**

Established in 1969, Los Lupeños de San José stands out as one of the pioneering Mexican folk dance companies in the United States. Our company is passionately dedicated to promoting Mexican culture and traditions through the beautiful art of dance.

**Company Name: Rueda Con Ritmo**  
**Artistic Directors: Sidney Weaverling & Ryan Mead**

Founded in San Francisco in 2007 by Sidney Weaverling and Ryan Mead, Rueda Con Ritmo is a community of dancers offering classes, events, and performances throughout the Bay Area and beyond. We strive to create a warm and inclusive atmosphere that welcomes dancers of all levels, from all backgrounds, and of all ages. In 2023, RCR performed as the opening act for separate concerts by Los Van Van and Havana D' Primera in SF, and in Cuba with the Conjunto Folclórico Nacional, Compañía All Stars, and the Fundadores de la Rueda de Casino.

**Company Name: Yamulee Project San Francisco**  
**Artistic Director: Natali Colom**

Yamulee Project San Francisco started in 2018 with a group of friends that wanted to learn more about NY style salsa. It has since grown to a team of approximately 30 dedicated dancers that love to work and train and grow. The growth that we have seen in the team is truly inspiring.

## **WEEK TWO (June 14-16, 2024) at ODC THEATER**

**Company Name: Alayo Dance**  
**Artistic Director: Ramon Ramos Alayo**

Alayo Dance Company was founded in 2001 by Ramon Ramos Alayo and is currently the resident company of CubaCaribe. As director and choreographer, Alayo's work is an innovative fusion of Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric and popular Cuban dance. Alayo eloquently articulates his aesthetic vision through a synthesis of these dance styles, citing from each traditions, movements, narratives and concepts indicative of Cuban culture. It is far more diverse than most of the modern dance circuit. In Cuba, at the National School of Arts, all dance students are taught modern and traditional styles of dance and music and the forms are not considered as disassociated as they are in the United States. Combining elements of both to produce Afro-Cuban contemporary dance allows the artist to tell a rich story from a broad palette of movement styles that is indicative of Cuban culture, but the combination of which is rarely seen in the Bay Area.

Alayo Dance Company was featured in "Dance Across America," and published in National Geographic Magazine (2006). The Company has performed throughout the San Francisco Bay Area at venues such as Theater Artaud, ODC Theater, Dance Mission Theater, Herbst Theater, Laney Theater, Sonoma Country Wine Theater, and La Peña Cultural Center, and has presented work in the Black Choreographer's Festival, The CubaCaribe Festival, and Intersection's Culture and Flow. Alayo was one of the first American companies to perform at the 2010 Festival del Caribe at Teatro Martí and partnered with Dance Brigade in July 2011 to perform in Havana's Teatro Mella in Cuba.

Ramón Ramos Alayo has choreographed more than thirteen evening length works for his company, which fuse modern, Cuban folkloric, and popular dance - a fusion that is intrinsic to Cuban culture but rarely seen in the Bay Area - and that center around social themes such as

health and racism from an Afro-Cuban perspective. Hailed by dance critic Rita Felciano as "the best Afro-Cuban dancer whose choreography stands well beyond traditional modes," Other recent highlights include recognition as "Best Dance Dynamo" in the SF Bay Guardian's "Best of the Bay" (2009), receiving the SF Bay Guardian 2010 Goldie Award and his work 'Goodbye' was named one of five 'Best Premieres of the Year,' published in Dance Europe (2016).

**Company Name:** ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco Performance Company  
**Artistic Director:** Marcia Treidler "Mestra Cigarra"

The ACSF Performance Company has been promoting Afro-Brazilian culture since 1992 through athletic and spirited performances. Their shows are a unique blend of skill, artistic beauty, and tradition designed to uplift and inspire audiences. The ensemble, led by internationally renowned Capoeira artist Márcia Treidler, has performed at over 1,000 venues, including schools, cultural events, and outdoor festivals throughout Northern California. The company comprises 15 talented artists, each bringing their own unique skills to the stage.

Marcia Treidler, the founder of ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco, is one of the top seven Capoeiristas among 60,000 ABADÁ members worldwide. She is also the first female student of Mestre Camisa to be awarded the rank of "Mestra". She began practicing Capoeira in 1982 under the renowned Mestre Camisa and moved to the United States in 1991 to spread the art outside of Brazil. In 1997, she was granted permanent residency in the US as an "Alien with Extraordinary Abilities" due to her artistic contributions to the country. Treidler is a trailblazer in many ways: she is the first female Mestra, a choreographer, the director of an internationally recognized organization, a leader in ABADA, and a bridge-builder. Her achievements have paved the way for women in Capoeira, and her success and commitment to publicly embracing her identity as a gay woman have amplified gender equity in Capoeira worldwide. Her work highlights the historic significance of Capoeira while advancing cultural knowledge.

### **SPECIAL EVENT (June 12, 2024) at MOAD**

**Company Name:** La Mixta Criolla  
**Artistic Director:** Héctor Lugo

La Mixta Criolla is a dynamic Bay Area ensemble with deep roots in the creole musical cultures of Puerto Rico and the wider Caribbean. Blending instruments and styles from diverse Afro-Latin traditions this hard swinging sextet has captivated dancers and music lovers everywhere with soulful performances of singular strength and beauty. Their repertoire of originals and funky renditions of classic tunes features a variety of Afro-Caribbean grooves from plena, bomba, aguinaldo and seis, to cumbia, merengue, son, rumba and bolero. La Mixta was founded by percussionist, singer and songwriter Héctor Lugo and features an all-star cast with Román "Ito" Carillo on bongó, pandero and barril, Ayla Dávila on bass, Javier Navarrette on congas and cajón, Camilo Landau on electric cuatro, Pedro Pastrana on acoustic cuatro and güícharo, and dancer and singer Shefali Shah. For this presentation La Mixta will perform "a puro cuero" to highlight the traditional percussion and voices sound of plena and bomba, Puerto Rico's foremost Afro-Caribbean music and dance genres.

Héctor Lugo is a percussionist, singer, songwriter, and educator. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, he grew up immersed in the creole music and culture of the Island. He moved to the Bay Area in 1989 to pursue graduate studies in sociology and Latin American history, and soon thereafter began to formally study Afro-Caribbean percussion with masters from Cuba, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Héctor has recorded with a wide range of artists and performed in venues across the United States and internationally with the likes of Louie Romero and Grupo Mazacote, Bobby Céspedes and Conjunto Céspedes, the late great Luis Daniel “Chichito” Cepeda’s Los Cepeda Ensemble, Modesto Cepeda and Cimientito de Puerto Rico, Jackeline Rago and the Venezuelan Music Project, Larry Vuckovich’s Jazz-Latin Quartet, the John Santos Sextet, salsa legend Pete “El Conde” Rodríguez, Román Carrillo’s “Herencia de los Carrillo” project, and son jarocho masters Gilberto Gutiérrez, Patricio Hidalgo, and Liche and Rubí Oseguera. He is the founder, director and principal songwriter of La Mixta Criolla. His compositions and arrangements have been featured in the acclaimed compilation “Salsa de la Bahía,” vol. 2 (Patois Records, 2015), in the documentary film “Dolores” about the life and work of the great labor organizer and feminist leader Dolores Huertas, in La Mixta Criolla’s album AfroTaíno (Round Whirled Records, 2011), and in theatrical productions in San Francisco, New York and Seoul, Korea. Héctor is one of the pioneers of the bomba movement in California. In 2000 he founded and has since co-directed The Bay Area Bomba y Plena Workshop, and is a founding member of bomba ensembles Cacike y Kongo and Aguacero. Héctor is also a committed and experienced educator who has collaborated in the design and implementation of music and arts integration programs with SFJAZZ, the San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Youth Chorus, Oakland Public Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Community Music Center, and the San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland Unified School Districts. He has guest lectured on the sociology and history of Puerto Rican music at Stanford University, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, San Francisco State University, Mills College and Humboldt State University. His research examines the evolution of Puerto Rican musical forms within the context of the Caribbean’s social and political history, looking at traditional musical practices as tools for exploring the themes of migration, protest and resistance, collective identity and memory, and class and race formation. Presently, Héctor works as Teaching-Artist for SFJAZZ Education, is a member of the faculty of Living Jazz and leads the ALMA (Afro-Latin Music Alliance) collective. He is also a Little League baseball coach and a passionate cook specializing in Puerto Rican creole cuisine.

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