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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 cuba.caribe@yahoo.com or call 510.273.2484.

### workshops

SUNDAY APRIL 20, 2008 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Yismari Ramos Tellez:  
Women's Salsa/Popular styling dance workshop

SUNDAY APRIL 20, 2008 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Alfie Macias:  
Bateria/Bloco children's percussion workshop  
no instrument required

The cost of each workshop is \$15, Tickets are available at the door of the specific event. All events will be held at Dance Mission Theater - 3316 24th Street, San Francisco, CA.

spring begins TO MOVE



A mixed program of dance and music  
April 18 - 20, 2008 Dance Mission Theater

[www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org)

2008 CUBACARIBE FESTIVAL: week one  
spring begins TO MOVE

cubacaribe producers

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

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, choreographers and audience members for supporting the CubaCaribe Festival and making this program possible. To Dance Mission Theater and Dance Brigade for their invaluable expertise, and especially to the organizers; Stella Adelman, Kristina Ramsey, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Deborah Valoma and friends of CubaCaribe and all the volunteers for lending their support.

Funded in part by the Zellerbach Family Fund



Upcoming CUBACARIBE Events:

**BrasilCuba-SF Carnival Contingent May 25, 2008**

**Cuba Camp Hawaii December 11-16, 2008**

A four-day workshop featuring world-renowned instructors in Cuban dance, percussion, and song on Oahu's beautiful North Shore.

[www.CUBACARIBE.ORG](http://www.CUBACARIBE.ORG)

program A: Friday & Saturday

**Urban Jazz Dance Company**

**Las Que Son Son**

**Nsamina Kongo**

**Alayo Dance Company**

Intermission

**Tou Limen Youth Ensemble**

**Napoles Ballet Theatre**

**Aguas Da Bahia**

**Loco Bloco**

program B: Sunday Matinee

**Kenny Washington & Jeff Chambers Duet**

**Urban Jazz Dance Company**

**Las Que Son Son**

**Alayo Dance Company**

**Mind Over Matter**

**Alayo Dance Company**

**Loco Bloco**

program C: Sunday Evening

**Kenny Washington & Jeff Chambers Duet**

**Las Que Son Son**

**Nsamina Kongo**

**Alayo Dance Company**

Intermission

**Tou Limen Youth Ensemble**

**Napoles Ballet Theatre**

**Mind Over Matter**

**Loco Bloco**



**Aguas da Bahia**

Jornada (Journey)

Artistic direction & choreography: Tânia Santiago

Music: Berimbau Percussion

Composer: Gabrielle Roth and Gruem

Poetry: Genesis by Emilian Benevides & Rhythms and Becoming  
by Gloria Yamato

Mixed by: Carl Remde, Emiliano Benevides at Batmakumba Records

Dancers: Stephanie Bastos, Stephanie Castillo, Uti Cleveland,

Felice Gomez-Spenser, Tiana Jones-Bey, Mariella Morales, Rebecca Wolfe

Singer: Tânia Santiago

Costumes: Tânia Santiago, Ednalva Neves

**Alayo Dance Company**

Wrong Way

Artistic direction & choreography: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Dancers: Garibaldi Delisle Simono, Ramón Ramos Alayo

Music: by Alex Heffes

Costumes: Deborah Valoma

**Jeff Chambers & Kenny Washington Duet**

Scat Cats

Vocals: Kenny Washington

Bass: Jeff Chambers

**Las Que Son Son**

Guajiro Natural (son), Quién Será (son) & Santa Palabra (salsa)

Choreography: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Dancers: Stella Adelman, Adriene Harrison, Jasmine Holsten, Lena Koenig,

Kristina Ramsey, Camille Steneck, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Deborah Valoma

Soloist: Yismari Ramos Tellez & Ramón Ramos Alayo

Costumes: Adriene Harrison, Deborah Valoma

Music: Guajiro Natural & Quién Será by Polo Montañez, Santa Palabra by

NG La Banda

**Loco Bloco's Las Locas y Los Locos por Samba**

Soul To Sole

Gettin' Our Feet Wet—Bathin' in the Sol

Artistic direction: Heather Watkins, Regina Califa Calloway

Musical direction: Alfie Macias, Manolo Davila, Heather Watkins

Guests: Regina Califa Calloway, Janeen Johnson, Amara Tabor-Smith

Las Locas Dancers: Christina Allen, Regina Califa Calloway, Maliyah Coye,

Annie Janeen Johnson, Jupiter Jones, Nkeiruka Oruche, Claudia de la

Rosa, Amara Tabor-Smith, Aurita Urbina, Heather Watkins

Las Locas Drummers: Fabiola Alejandre, Regina Califa Calloway, Maliyah

Coye, Evelyn Davison, Kim Moon Howe, Janeen Johnson, Annie Jupiter

Jones, Kim Moore, Nkeiruka Oruche, Claudia de la Rosa, Aurita Urbina,

Heather Watkins

Los Locos por Samba: Jose Carrasco, Manolo Davila, Samad Guerra,

Ron Jackson, Aaron Lechuga, Alfie Macias, Tony Ramirez, Donald Saldaña

Musicians: Manolo Davila, Ron Jackson, Aaron Lechuga, Alfie Macias,

Antwan Stanberry

**Mind Over Matter**

From the jungle to the club

Artistic direction & choreography: Allan Frias

Dancers: Allan Frias, Tara Driscoll, Florence Dabokemp, Sarita Trujillo, Jeff

Bautiste, Chelsea Anderson, Katherine Brown, Mayu Yamamura, Clara Baldwin,

Jocquese Whitfield, James Brown

Music: medley

**Napoles Ballet Theatre**

Retazos (Pieces)

Artistic direction & choreography: Luis Napoles

Dancers: Marika Brussel, Annabelle Henry, Luis Napoles, Justin Stanley

Music: Intermittant & Bit Sector Shaft by Pentaphobe

**Nsamina Kongo (Light of the Congo)**

Makela ha Mbongi

Artistic direction & choreography: François Makaya Kayos, Vivien Bassouamina

Musicians: Constant Massengo, Armel Mampouya, Jean-Arme Mampouya

Dancers: François Makaya Kayos, Vivien Bassouamina, LaKiesha Golden,

Shauna Badger, Felicia Harris, Kharyshi Wiginton

**Tou Limen Youth Ensemble**

Being the Change

Artistic direction & choreography: Portsha Jefferson

Guest choreographer & soloist: Emerald Mitchell

Dancers: Lauren Anthony, Emerald Mitchell, Anina Olivier (Saint Mary's

College High School); Rose Aquilar-McGhee, Aerial Chavarin, Zharla Chavarin,

Christine Harris, Jasmine Harris, Nia Joyner, Kayla Perry, Liliana Torpey, Taylor

Washington (Redwood Heights Community Center)

Music: Babba Says Cool For Thought by Lupe Fiasco; Kissing You by Des'ree;

I Have a Dream by Common ft. Will.I.Am; New Power Generation by Prince;

Superstarr Pt. Zero by K-OS

**Urban Jazz Dance Company**

Poem: Now People, Know Your Root, He/She See Dark, Shhh, Reborn

Artistic direction & choreography: Antoine-Devinci Hunter

Dancers: Ceresia Allen, Loran Clay, Antoine-Devinci Hunter, Louis Jones,

Caryn Lucido, Kim Martin, DeMar Williams

Music: Abadalad by The Now People; Know Your Roots by Man De Come

(Remix); Moroccan Nights, unknown; Blue Rondo A La Turk by The Dave

Brubeck Quartet



## profiles

**Ramón Ramos Alayo**, is a Cuban-born and trained dancer, teacher, and choreographer—well known for his forceful performances and bold choreographic vision. At the age of eleven, Ramos was selected by the Cuban government to study dance in Santiago de Cuba and later earned a masters degree in contemporary and folkloric dance and dance education from Havana's National School of Art. He was the principal dancer with Danza del Caribe and Narciso Medina Contemporary Dance Company. Since leaving Cuba, he has performed with some of the most respected choreographers in the Bay Area, including Robert Henry Johnson, Kim Epifanio, and Sara Shelton Mann and was principal dancer with Joanna Haigood's Zacho Dance Theater and Robert Moses's Kin Dance Company. Ramos has choreographed and produced six full-length dance performances: *Anoranza de Una Epoca*, *Mis Sueños*, *Mis Ideas*, *A Piece of White Cloth*, *La Madre*, *After Rain*, and *Three Threes & Traces*. He has received grants from the San Francisco Arts Commission, CASH, Zellerbach, and LEF Foundations and was awarded the prestigious Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation's "Emerging Choreographer Award." In 2002 Ramos established the Alayo Dance Company, which has enjoyed broad critical acclaim and was featured in "Dance Across America," published in National Geographic Magazine. In 2003 Ramos co-founded and became artistic director of CubaCaribe. [www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org)

**Jeff Chambers**, one of the foremost bassists in the country, is known for his impeccable timing, dynamic rhythms, melodic sensibility, and improvisational dexterity. Chambers began his illustrious career in Milwaukee on the electric bass with renowned pianist and vibraphonist Buddy Montgomery. He has toured all over the United States, Canada, Central and South America, Europe, Russia, Australia, and Japan, playing at venues such as the Montreux Jazz Festival; Concord Jazz Festival; Monterey Jazz Festival; Fujitsu Jazz Festival, and the Newport Jazz Festival. Chambers has worked with many of the world's most prominent jazz musicians including Dizzy Gillespie, Bobby Hutcherson, Eddie Harris, Al Jarréau, Les McCann, Freddie Hubbard, Tommy Flanagan, Joe Henderson, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Joe Williams, Kenny Burrell, Nat Adderley, Milt Jackson, Larry Coryell, Abbey Lincoln, Freddie Cole, Jeffrey Osborne, Archie Shepp, Cedar Walton, Houston Person, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Ahmad Jamal, and Marlena Shaw. Chambers has taught bass, improvisation, and combo direction at The Brubeck Institute, SF State University, Jazz Camp West, The Jazz School, and Dominican University of California. [www.jeffchambersjazz.com](http://www.jeffchambersjazz.com)

**Allan Frias** has been a leading force of the Bay Area hip hop scene for the last eight years. Frias is known as a charismatic teacher, riveting performer, and talented choreographer. Frias founded, directs and choreographs for the Hip Hop ensemble, *Mind Over Matter*, which performs throughout the Bay Area and beyond. He also choreographs for Junior Jam youth performance program at the Golden State Warriors and has appeared on Fox TV's *So You Think You Can Dance*.

**Portsha Jefferson** was a principal dancer and singer with Group Petit La Croix for seven years under the leadership of Blanche Brown. She has performed Haitian dance with Bamboche, Reconnect Dance Ensemble, and Ase Dance Theatre Collective, as well as Afro-Cuban dance with Emese and Obakoso. In 2003, Jefferson researched Haitian dance and musical traditions in Gonaives at Lakou Badjo, where Nago (Yoruba) traditions are preserved, and at Tanp Souvenance Mistik, a Vodou community

that celebrates its Rada (ancient kingdom of Dahomey) heritage. She studied at École Nationale Des Arts, Vivian Gauthier's School of Dance with Cadet Jean Evans, and with Peniel Guerrier of Ballet Folklorique Tamboula D'Haiti. She has worked for The Young Performers Theater, The San Francisco Arts Education Project, Westlake School of the Arts, Opera Piccola, Danceversity, and Swivel Arts. Jefferson is an artist-in-residence in Oakland, Berkeley and SF public schools, and instructor at City Dance Studios and Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts. She is the founder and artistic director of Haitian folkloric dance ensemble Rara Tou Limen and Tou Limen Youth Ensemble. [www.myspace.com/raratoulimen](http://www.myspace.com/raratoulimen)

**Las Que Son Son** is all-woman dance ensemble that specializes in Cuban folkloric and popular dance genres. Las Que Son Son's mission—to study and perform dance in a collaborative and mutually supportive environment—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. Las Que Son Son dancers have been trained by many of the prominent Cuban, Haitian, and Brazilian dance instructors in the Bay Area, including Ramón Ramos Alayo, Susana Arenas Pedroso, Jose "Cheo" Rojas, and Yismari Ramos Tellez. Upcoming performances include the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival in June 2008.

**Loco Bloco** fills the streets and floods onto stages at festivals throughout the Bay Area, lifting everyone's spirits. Deeply rooted in Afro-Latino culture, Loco Bloco has developed a reputation for its authentic and cutting edge music, dance, and theater. Based in San Francisco's multicultural Mission District, Loco Bloco brings together renowned and rising artists to create works that represent a fusion of traditional and contemporary cultural forms. Las Locas, Loco Bloco's all-women bateria, is a tribute to the strength, power, and beauty of women and challenges traditional gender norms and roles that exist throughout art, music, and society. Los Locos por Samba, Loco Bloco's all-male dance group, is a counterpart to Las Locas, and performs exuberant dance free from gender stereotypes. [www.locobloco.org](http://www.locobloco.org)

**Luis Napoles** is a professional ballet dancer, choreographer, and distinguished teacher of ballet, Cuban modern, and Afro-Cuban folkloric dance. A native of Cuba, he is a master of both classical and contemporary ballet genres. Napoles has a long and celebrated career both in Cuba and the United States, performing as principal dancer with the Sacramento Ballet (1997-2004); Oakland Ballet; City Berkeley Ballet (1994-1995); Ballet Theatre of Havana (1991-1993); and the Contemporary Dance of Cuba (1983-1991). As founder and artistic director of Napoles Ballet Theatre (2007), his far-ranging vision and broad knowledge of dance is expressed in an eclectic choreographic style that employs surreal imagery, dramatic force, and an avant-garde synthesis of traditional Cuban, classical European, and modern dance movements. [www.sanfranciscoyouthballet.org/NBT.html](http://www.sanfranciscoyouthballet.org/NBT.html)

**Nsamina Kongo** (Light of the Congo) is an ensemble of noted choreographers, dancers, and drummers including Vivien Bassouamina, François Makaya Kayos, and LaKiesha Golden. Originally from the Republic of the Congo-Brazzaville in Central Africa, Bassouamina and Makaya Kayos are masters of traditional Congolese dance and music. After touring Europe with professional dance companies from the Congo, they first performed in the United States in 2007 at the San Francisco International Arts Festival. LaKiesha Golden studied Congolese dance in Congo-Brazzaville and Paris, has ten years of professional experience, and currently teaches at Dance Mission. [www.youmustdanceblogspot.com](http://www.youmustdanceblogspot.com)



**Tânia Santiago** was born and raised in Salvador, Bahia, the heart of African influenced Brazil. She earned degrees in dance from the SESC Associação School of the Arts and Fundação do Estado da Bahia School of Dance in Salvador. While her specialty is folkloric and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance, Santiago has also studied jazz, ballet, West African, Afro-Cuban, and modern dance forms. Santiago worked with world renowned Bloco Afro, Olodum, performing and choreographing programs for television, concerts, and music festivals held all over the world, including Europe, Asia and North America. She also taught dance, choreographed, and directed seasonal performances for the Olodum Creative School for Youth in Salvador. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1997, Santiago has choreographed for many local groups including Loco Bloco, Axe Abada, Kuumba, and Quimbanda Grupo Carnavalesco. In 1999 she founded her own dance company, Aguas Da Bahia and in 2001 received the California Arts Council Artist in Residency grant to teach youth in the community. Santiago teaches regularly at SF public schools, Rhythm and Motion, and ODC Dance Commons. [www.aguasdabahia.com](http://www.aguasdabahia.com)

**Kenny Washington** is a jazz vocalist virtuoso, known for his playful approach, astonishing four-octave range, precise intonation, and rapid-fire scat. A native of New Orleans, Washington grew up singing gospel, and studied traditional and contemporary jazz, classical, rhythm and blues, and pop musical genres at Xavier University. He joined the honorary U.S. Navy Band in 1986 and toured nationally and internationally throughout Asia, Russia, and Australia. Washington appeared in Roy Nathanson's off-Broadway production *Fire* at Keaton's Bar and Grill, with Elvis Costello and Deborah Harry in both London and New York. He was also the featured vocalist for eight years at the San Francisco's world famous Mark Hopkins Intercontinental Hotel's Top Of The Mark. [www.kennywashingtonvocalist.com](http://www.kennywashingtonvocalist.com)

**Antoine-Devinci Hunter**, a native of Oakland, started his career as a jazz dancer, but his repertoire has expanded to include ballet, tap, African, Latin and hip hop dance. Hunter has performed with leading companies in the Bay Area, including Savage Jazz Dance Company, Nuba Dance Theater, The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Alayo Dance Company, and Robert Moses' Kin Dance Company. Hunter attended the California Institute of the Arts, and is studying toward a B.A. in dance through St. Mary's College of California's LEAP Program. He has taught at the East Bay Center of the Performing Arts, Youth In Arts, Dance-A-Vision Entertainment, Malonga Casquelaurd Center for the Arts, Ross Dance Company, ODC Dance Commons, Shawl Anderson Modern Dance Center, and is co-director and teacher of Iron Triangle Urban Ballet. In 2007, Hunter founded Urban Jazz Dance Company. [www.antoinehunter.com](http://www.antoinehunter.com)

#### **CubaCaribe Mission Statement**

CubaCaribe was founded in 2003 with the mission to preserve and promote the vibrant artistic heritage of Cuba, the Caribbean, and the wider African diaspora. Based on the principle that racial, ethnic, religious, gendered, economic, and age-based barriers are breached through the arts, CubaCaribe coordinates performances, workshops, and educational programs that bring Caribbean dance and music to San Francisco Bay Area audiences. Our projects include: CubaCaribe Festival of Dance and Music (2005-2008); Alayo Dance Company, resident dance company of CubaCaribe; Cuba Camp Bay Area (2004, 2005); Cuba Camp Hawaii (2006, 2008); and SF Carnaval Contingent (2006, 2008). Our programs foster informed perspectives on complex issues; attempt to dispel stereotypes; aid in the preservation of time-honored, sometimes rarely seen forms; establish greater respect for traditional arts often marginalized by the term "folk"; and support masters of traditional, contemporary, and hybrid genres.

#### program notes

You breathe; new shapes appear,  
And the music of a desire as widespread  
As spring begins to move  
Like a great wagon.  
Drive slowly. Some of us  
Walking alongside are lame.

Playing on the words of the thirteenth-century Persian poet Rumi, CubaCaribe presents *Spring Begins to Move*—a celebration of movement despite lameness, laughter despite dolor, vitality despite age, and survival despite oppression. The winter of cruelty stretches over bodies, chilling bones, freezing muscles, laming limbs, and dimming heartbeats. As the air warms, breath warms. Muscles relax, arteries expand, and the music of a desire as widespread as spring begins to move.

Art flourishes even in the most desperate of circumstances. All across the Americas, enslaved people fashioned art out of very little: they quilted with scraps of fabric, made instruments out of sugarcane or a plate and fork, sang songs, danced, and told stories. These artistic forms mirrored African aesthetics, conveyed African philosophical approaches, and passed on religious principles. The urge towards creativity—the desire for self-definition and the construction of a collective memory—is tenacious.

Cultural influence invariably flows in dual directions and new shapes appear. Even the virulent one-drop rule of North America and its formidable institutionalized barriers were unable to stop the cultural exchanges that seeped through. Cuisine, music, dance, and language in the United States are informed by African culture. Unknowingly, we utter words every day that can be traced back to African languages: okay, guy, and wow have etymological roots in Wolof, a language spoken widely in Senegal today.

Like Muslims turning towards Mecca, we in the Americas must orient ourselves. We must look back across the Middle Passage to acknowledge the cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic inheritance brought here on the backs of millions. Whatever our backgrounds, we owe a debt to the artists who have kept these traditions alive through unshakable resolve, talent, and hard work.

This program showcases African and African diaspora musical and dance genres rooted in the hybrid experience of the Americas. From the son of Cuba that blends Spanish and African musical forms, to jazz improvisation that has antecedents in West African percussion patterns, from Brazilian dance that marries Portuguese with African genres, to Afro-Cuban modern dance that synthesizes classical European with African movement—each aesthetic form is heavy with history, fueled by resistance, and charged with the thrill of survival.

Holloway, Joseph E. "What Africa Has Given America: African Continuities in the North American Diaspora." *Africanisms in American Culture*. Ed Joseph E. Holloway. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. 39-64.

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



## Friends of CubaCaribe

Ken Barnes, Isabel Barraza, Ralph Benson, Diane Bosquez, Susan Boxer, Susan Brisseden-Smith, Neil Brobeck, Paul Brobeck, Elaine & Rich Brown, 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, Scheryle Reuss, Juan Carlos Sarimiento, Estelle Schneider, Nikki Sims, Joseph Smooke, Brandon Teller, Katy Wilcox, Sydney & Rosa Williams.

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Funded in part by the Zellerbach Family Fund

## Dance Workshops

### DANIS "La Mora" PERÉZ PRADES:

Afro-Cuban Haitian Folkloric dance workshop  
open to all levels w/ live drumming

FRIDAY APRIL 25, 2008 5:00 - 6:30 PM

SATURDAY APRIL 26, 2008 3:00 - 4:30 PM

The cost of each workshop is \$15, Tickets are available at the door of the specific event. All events will be held at Dance Mission Theater - 3316 24th Street, San Francisco, CA.

# HAÏTÌ!



**April 24 -26, 2008**  
**Dance Mission Theater**  
[www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org)



## 2008 CUBACARIBE FESTIVAL: week two

# HAITI!

### **CubaCaribe Producers**

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

**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, choreographers and audience members for supporting the CubaCaribe Festival and making this program possible. To Dance Mission Theater and Dance Brigade for their invaluable expertise, and especially to the organizers; Stella Adelman, Kristina Ramsey, Jamaica Itule Simmons, Deborah Valoma and friends of CubaCaribe and all the volunteers for lending their support.



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[www.CUBACARIBE.ORG](http://www.CUBACARIBE.ORG)

## **program**

**Boadiba: Under Burning White Sky**  
(Friday & Saturday night only)

### **Konpayi: Nanchon Nago**

Part 1—The Salute

Part 2—Yanvalou 8x8's

Part 3—Papa Ogou, Neg Mwe

**Artistic direction & choreography:** Michelle Martin

**Musical direction:** Skooter Fein

Special guest artist: Myrtha Muse-Winston

**Dancers:** Stella Adelman, Tania M. Bell, Medina Clermont,  
Gabriella Cole, Carol R. Hill

School of the Arts students: Charles Grant, Rodney Jackson,  
Devary White

**Musicians:** Skooter Fein, Karen Kirschling

**Singers:** Mariaynez Carrasco, Michelle Martin, Mudzima

**Introductory music:** Mayi A Gaye by Boukman Eskperians

..... **Intermission** .....

### **Oyu Oro: Cubaila**

**Artistic direction & choreography:** Danis "La Mora" Pérez Prades

**Musical direction:** Francisco Mora Catlett

**Dancers:** Nici Castro, Alexis Doster-Pennerman, Gisel Eboma,  
Momoko Hanyuda, Liethis Y. Hechavarría, Anese Jackson, Deadra  
Renee Nelson-Mason, Yoko Numata, Natalie Pardo, Nigel Toussaint

**Musicians:** Jean Marie Culatan, Rogelio Kindelán Nordet,  
Matt Lucas, Francisco Mora Catlett

**Singers:** Danis "La Mora" Pérez Prades, Meredith Wright

**Costume Design:** Danis "La Mora" Pérez Prades



## program notes

In 1791, an insurrection erupted among the nearly half a million enslaved Africans in the French colony of Saint-Dominique. Armed with machetes, picks, and axes, they destroyed one thousand sugarcane, cotton, and indigo plantations. An estimated one thousand whites lost their lives in this initial insurrection, and well over ten thousand slaves were killed. Many thousands more fled the plantations, sought refuge in the hills, and launched a guerilla war lasting over ten years against the colonizers and Napoléon Bonaparte's forces, which were dispatched in 1801 to bring Saint-Dominique back under French control.

Inspired military leadership, skillful tactics, a nothing-left-to-lose approach, and an epidemic of yellow fever raging through the French army led to military victory for the revolutionaries. Under the leadership of ex-slaves, an independent republic was established in 1804. The victors reclaimed the indigenous Arawak name—Haiti—for the new nation, proclaimed that Europeans would never again set foot on Haitian soil as masters or landowners, and declared the new republic an asylum for escaped slaves and all people of African and Native American descent.

According to author Paul Farmer, there is no other instance of an “enslaved people breaking its own chains and using military might to defeat a powerful colonial power.” To the surrounding countries dominated by pro-slavery forces and the colonial powers in Europe, the black controlled republic of Haiti embodied a nightmarish inversion of the natural social and economic order. It was, however, an equally potent source of inspiration, hope, and pride to Africans and descendents of Africans living in the American diaspora.

During and after the revolution, white colonizers fled Haiti in successive waves and flooded the southern ports of the United States and the eastern provinces of Cuba—the Oriente—bringing with them an expertise in sugarcane production and enslaved Africans. This influx precipitated a dramatic intensification of sugarcane production and an increase in the brutal importation of Africans to work the profitable plantations.

Over generations of intermingling, a multifaceted culture emerged. The Creole (Kreyòl) language and traditions of Haiti (a mixture of African and French cultural strains) were layered on the already hybrid culture of Cuba (a blend of African and Spanish roots). Specifically, performance arts in the eastern provinces of Cuba have been deeply influenced by Creole language, rhythms, dance, and song. Many traditional dance genres unique to the Oriente, such as Tumba Francesa and Gagá, have direct antecedents in Haiti.

Haiti! (Ayiti) honors the first black republic of the modern world and its cultural legacy in Cuba. This program juxtaposes Haitian and Cuban-Haitian traditions through twin compositions choreographed by noted authorities in each genre: Michelle Martin directing *Konpayi* (Haitian folkloric) and Danis “La Mora” Pérez Prades directing *Oyu Oro* (Cuban-Haitian folkloric).

Deborah Valoma  
CubaCaribe Board of Directors  
Associate Professor, California College of the Arts

<sup>1</sup> Farmer, Paul. *The Uses of Haiti*. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2006.



## profiles & notes

**Boadiba** is a well-known Haitian poet and translator living in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her work has appeared in *Beatitude*, *Poetry Flash*, *Quilt*, *Konch*, *Tribes*, *Gas*, and *Open Gate*, An Anthology of Haitian Creole Poetry, the first bilingual volume of Haitian Creole poetry published in English. Boadiba is reading poetry from her volume, *Under Burning White Sky*, published in 2005 by Ishmael Reed Publishing Company.

**Michelle Martin** is a master dancer, respected choreographer, and artistic director of *Konpayi*, a San Francisco based Haitian dance and music ensemble. Martin began her training in ballet and modern dance with the Office of Parks and Recreation Department in Oakland. A graduate of Skyline High School of Performing Arts, she was later employed as a specialist in dance and visual arts at the OPR Department. While majoring in dance and performing arts, Martin studied with Katherine Dunham and several masters of the original Dunham Dance Company in St. Louis. 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 within its cultural, historical, and religious contexts. In Haiti, she concentrated her studies in the north near Gonaïves at Souvenance, where traditions have been preserved closest to their Dahomean heritage. A specialist in Dunham technique and traditional Haitian dance, Martin has taught in several San Francisco Bay Area institutions, including Lines Contemporary Ballet, CitiCenter Dance Theater, Rhythm and Motion, Mills College, and currently teaches at Dance Mission. Martin has been an artist-in-residence with the San Francisco Unified School District since 1989 and is currently working with the School of the Arts in the Theatre Department. Martin has performed with West African Dance companies *Bantaba* and *Diamano Coura*, worked with Afro-Cuban ensembles *Emese (M.O.T.A.D.)* and *José Francisco Barroso's Obakoso*, toured Nigeria with *Wajumbe Cultural Ensemble*, and served as assistant artistic director, choreographer, principal dancer, and singer for the nationally acclaimed *Group Petit la Croix* under the leadership of *Blanche Brown*.

**Michelle Martin & Konpayi** is dedicated to the preservation of traditional Haitian dance, music, and culture through performance and education. *Konpayi* is composed of artists and performers from diverse backgrounds and performance experiences—from high school and studio class students to distinguished artists in the community. *Skooter Fein*, the musical director of *Konpayi*, is a mainstay in Martin's classes and contributes his extensive musical expertise and leadership to this ensemble.

**Nanchon Nago:** The two most known rites in Haiti are *Rada (Dahomey)* and *Petwo (Kongo)*. *Nago* are the rhythms that have origins with the *Anago* peoples of ancient Yorubaland from West Africa. The deity that represents these rhythms is *Papa Ogou*. He has been said to be the patron saint of Haiti, his colors are red and blue, the predominant colors in the Haitian flag. He has

several manifestations including the military general, the blacksmith, and the strength and bravery of *Ogou Ginen*, brought in the hearts and souls of the Yoruban slaves.

**Danis "La Mora" Pérez Prades** is an internationally known master of Afro-Cuban folkloric dance. Originally from Santiago de Cuba, her special expertise as dancer, teacher, dance ethnologist, and choreographer is in the unique styles of eastern Cuba, with its particularly rich cultural heritage. She is a specialist in *Gagá*, *Vodú*, *Tajona*, Haitian *Bembé*, *Tumba Francesa*, as well as the popular dances *Rumba*, *Comparsa (Conga)*, *Chancretas (Cutarras)*, Haitian *Merengue*, and *Son Montuno*, *Son Urbano*, and *Casino*. Pérez began dancing at the age of seven. She joined the amateur group *Afro-Cuban Movements* at ten, paving the way for her membership in the *Afro-Haitian folklore ensemble, Guillermon Moncada*. At the age of thirteen, she began performing with the celebrated national folkloric ballet *Cutumba*. Pérez remained under contract with *Cutumba* while at the *Centro de Superación Arts School*, where she studied Afro-Cuban folkloric dance with international performers *O'Farrell*, *Johann García*, *Silvina Fabar*, *Lázaro Ros*, *Juan B. Castillo*, and *Ernesto Arminan* and modern with *Eduardo Rivero Walker* and first dancers *Aristides* and *Mariano*. In 1994 she was elevated to *Primera Bailarina* and *Primera Profesora* by the *National Dance Commission* in Cuba, an organization whose roster includes such great exponents of Cuban dance as *Manolo Micler*, principal choreographer for *Folklórico Nacional de Cuba* and *Cristy Domínguez*, *Primera Bailarina* and choreographer of the *Ballet of National Cuban Television*. Since 1995, Pérez has taught internationally in Italy, Spain, France, Canada and the United States. Pérez currently lives in New York City, where she is the artistic director and choreographer of *Oyu Oro*.

**Oyu Oro**, The Afro-Cuban Folklore Experimental Dance Ensemble, is committed to the preservation of Afro-Cuban culture through dance, song, and music. The group's repertoire pays tribute to African cultural lineages derived from the Yoruba, Congo, Carabaim, Arará, and Dahomean cultures of West Africa, and to the profound Haitian influences that have deeply influenced the traditions of eastern Cuba. *Francisco Mora Catlett*, the noted percussionist, composer, and educator, is the musical director of *Oyu Oro*.

**Cubaila** is a compilation of traditional dance and musical manifestations inherited from African ancestry in Cuba, with hints at contemporary arrangements. This repertoire of short performances—including *Tumba Francesa*, *Carabali*, *Bembé*, *Yambalu*, *Vodú*, and *Gagá*—displays a panoramic view of the Cuban cultural landscape, with its various cultural crosscurrents painted like harmonious brushstrokes on canvas. Each segment vividly reveals a fragment of history, ritual, and tradition—and illustrates the idiosyncrasies of Cuban art. The African-Hispanic-French-Haitian multicultural roots existing in the eastern provinces of Cuba are reflected in the layered structure of this choreography; the intention of the artistic director is to reflect the inevitable transculturalization of Afro-Cuban traditions that has occurred through the generations. *Oyu Oro* presents *Cubaila* as source of inspiration for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds who seek a greater development of "art amongst people."



## thank you

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

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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 cubacaribe@yahoo.com or call 510.273.2484.

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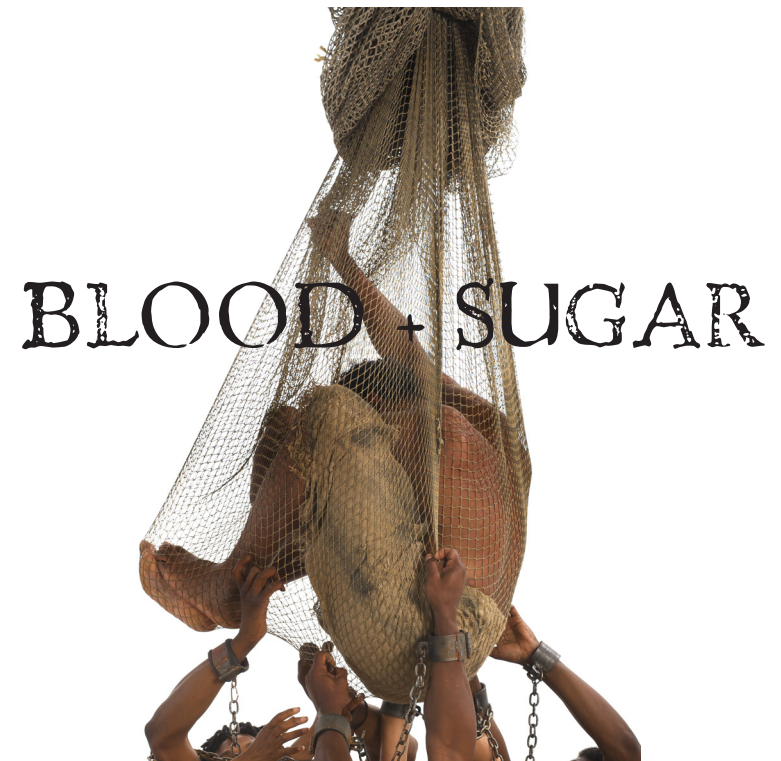
### Upcoming CUBACARIBE Events:

**BrasilCuba-SF Carnaval Contingent** May 25, 2008

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A four-day workshop featuring world-renowned instructors in Cuban dance, percussion, and song on Oahu's beautiful North Shore.

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*Alayo* DANCE COMPANY  
May 1 - 4, 2008 Dance Mission Theater



2008 CUBACARIBE FESTIVAL: week three

## BLOOD + SUGAR

CubaCaribe presents the 2008 season of Alayo Dance Company with the debut of Ramón Ramos Alayo's latest work, Blood + Sugar.

### artistic director

Ramón Ramos Alayo

*Alayo*  
DANCE COMPANY

Ramón Ramos Alayo, Shelley Davis, Adriene Harrison, Garibaldi Delisle Simono, Antoine Devinci Hunter, Aja Randall, Tânia Santiago, Laura Serghiou, Patricia West Sotelo, Alain Soto Aguilera.

### music

Bass: Jeff Chambers

Drums: Colin Douglas & Rogelio "Ñoño" Kindelán Nordet

Cello: Alex Kelly

Vocals: Elouise Burrell

Storytelling: Muriel Johnson

**lighting design & operation** Elizabeth Mendana & Harry Rubeck

**sound operator** Andy Keefer

**costumes** Ramón Ramos Alayo & Maria Velasquez

**visual art design** Joey Williams

**visual art operators** Angie Dewitt, Dakota Alston

**rigging** Daniel Gutierrez & Alfe Macias

**graphic design** Jamaica Itule Simmons

troupes. He has performed with Joan Jeanrenaud, the Dresher Ensemble, the CKW Trio, the Cooke Quintet, the Lizz Roman Dance Company, the Wichita Symphony, the Eugene Symphony, the Oregon Mozart Players, Hundredth Monkey, the Knotty Ensemble, the New Pickle Family Circus, Circo Zero, El Radio Fantastique, the 7th Ave String Quartet, Pamela Z, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Co., and the Berkeley Repertory Theater. His book *The Seven Points* is an innovative method for mapping the cello fingerboard. Kelly is the orchestra director at Urban School of San Francisco, teaches electronic music at the College of Marin, and maintains a private teaching studio. [www.alexkelly.com](http://www.alexkelly.com)

**Rogelio "Ñoño" Kindelán Nordet**, a native of Guantánamo, the eastern most province of Cuba, is a master of Cuban percussion instruments, as well as an accomplished dancer and vocalist in Cuban and Haitian forms. Kindelán comes from a family of folkloric musicians and dancers of Haitian descent. He studied at the University of Santiago de Cuba, where he majored in folkloric studies and later earned his master's degree at the Centro Nacional de Superación de la Enseñanza Artística (CNSEA). He was director of the Folkloric Studies Department and professor of folkloric percussion at CNSEA, Pablo Milanés Foundation, and La Escuela Nacional De Artes. He has performed with Proyecto Folkórico, Banara, Ballet de Belgium, and Conjunto Folklorico Cutumba de Santiago. Since he immigrated to the United States in 1997, he has taught at the California Academy of Arts and Sciences, Alhambra Academy, Santa Clara University, Sacramento City College, Alice Arts Center, Mission Cultural Center, and Humboldt State University.



variety of idioms, including bebop, funk, latin, blues, reggae and fusion. In any genre, Jeff Chambers is an improvisational master. Chambers began his career in Milwaukee on the electric bass with the renowned pianist and vibraphonist Buddy Montgomery. Since, Chambers has toured all over the United States, Canada, Central and South America, Europe, Russia, Australia and Japan. He has played at venues such as the Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland); Concord Jazz Festival (CA); Monterey Jazz Festival (CA); Fujitsu Jazz Festival (Japan); the Newport Jazz Festival (RI); and for Black Entertainment Television Network at the St. Lucia and Anguilla Jazz Festivals. Chambers has performed and recorded with many of the most celebrated jazz musicians of the twentieth-century including Dizzy Gillespie, Les McCann, Eddie Harris, Benny Carter, Tommy Flanagan, Joe Henderson, Dakota Staton, McCoy Tyner, Joe Williams, Kenny Burrell, James Moody, Nat Adderley, Milt Jackson, John Hendricks, Larry Coryell, Hank Crawford, Abbey Lincoln, Ernestine Anderson, Don Cherry, Clifford Jordan, Laurindo Almeida, Roy McCurdy, Richie Cole, Slide Hampton, Mel Lewis, Archie Shepp, Cedar Walton, Pharoah Sanders, Russell Malone, Red Holloway, Wallace Roney, Houston Person, Bobby Hutcherson, Freddie Cole, Freddie Hubbard, Jeffrey Osborne, Al Jarreau, Marlena Shaw, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Ahmad Jamal, and many others. Chambers has taught bass, improvisation, and combo direction at various institutions including The Brubeck Institute, University of the Pacific (Stockton, CA); San Francisco State University (San Francisco, CA); Jazz Camp West (Oakland, CA); The Jazz School (Berkeley, CA); and Berkeley High School (Berkeley, CA).  
www.jeffchambersjazz.com

**Colin Douglas** studied at the Manhattan School of Music. After arriving in the San Francisco Bay Area, Douglas began playing Cuban timba and salsa with Quimbombo and Cubanacan, two of San Francisco's most popular dance orchestras. He has played at many of the top SF clubs including the Elbo Room and Club Cocomo, and at venues such as the San Jose Jazz Festival. Douglas is known for his knowledge of Cuban and Haitian-Cuban rhythms and plays alongside master Cuban performers such as singer Fito Reinoso and percussionists Jesús Diaz, Orestes Vilato, and Carlos Caro. Douglas was musical director of Olorun, the Afro-Cuban folkloric troupe directed by Susana Arenas Pedroso and co-founded the experimental group, Parallel 23 (P23), an all-original quartet that plays intricate compositions using timba and Afro-Caribbean folkloric beats, experimental jazz harmonies, funky Latin grooves, electronic textures, improvisation, and soulful melodic hooks.

**Alex Kelly** earned three bachelor's degrees, two master's degrees in music, and completed a doctorate in cello performance with a secondary area in composition from the University of Oregon. Kelly is a classical musician, but also performs in jazz, rock, and avant-garde music genres. Alex frequently performs with electric or amplified acoustic cello, keyboards, and guitars, enhanced with effects pedals, loop pedals, and laptops. Kelly has performed for a variety of ensembles throughout the United States and Canada, has premiered over 150 solo and chamber works, and has composed for numerous chamber ensembles, dance companies, and circus

# BLOOD + SUGAR

program

Artistic Direction Ramón Ramos Alayo

## GRACE NOTES

In the first chapter of Blood + Sugar, entitled Grace Notes, two masters of improvisation—jazz bassist Jeff Chambers and Afro-Cuban modern dancer Ramos Alayo—collaborate for the first time to intertwine bass with body.

Choreography & dance Ramón Ramos Alayo

Music Jeff Chambers

## *Intermission*

## BLOOD + SUGAR

It traces the charged history of slavery—from the shores of West Africa, through the Middle Passage, and finally to Cuba—where the intensification of sugar cultivation in the early nineteenth-century precipitated a mass importation of enslaved Africans.

Choreography Ramón Ramos Alayo

Music Colin Douglas, Alex Kelly,  
Rogelio “Ñoño” Kindelán Nordet

Vocals Elouise Burrell

Storytelling Muriel Johnson

Dancers Ramón Ramos Alayo, Shelley Davis, Adriene Harrison,  
Garibaldi Delisle Simono, Antoine Devinci Hunter, Aja Randall,  
Tânia Santiago, Laura Serghiou, Patricia West Sotelo,  
Alain Soto Aguilera

## program notes

### Epilogue: Grace Notes

In Grace Notes two masters of improvisation—each a descendant of enslaved Africans, each a master of his own cultural genre—are brought together in a rare collaboration. Renowned jazz bassist Jeff Chambers and acclaimed Afro-Cuban modern dancer Ramón Ramos Alayo work together for the first time to intertwine bass with body.

In the Americas, African traditions spread in different directions. In Cuba, African language, religion, music, and rhythms retained a direct link to their antecedents across the ocean; in the United States, cultural strains survived, but flowed underground feeding American forms.

Though Ramos and Chambers draw from diverse cultural streams, their aesthetic languages share common African compositional principles—asymmetry, polyrhythmic layering, and improvisational breaks. A cultural current—that diverged hundreds of years ago during the forced migration across the Middle Passage—converges again in Grace Notes.

With impeccable skill, Chambers works the bass as a rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic instrument, lightly tracing the evolution of African rhythms to the Cuban clavé, and finally to American gospel, blues, and swing. His multi-faceted musicality lays a foundation for Ramos's expressive physicality and stellar improvisational abilities. Together, they bridge the artistic, historic, and spatial fracture between African lineages in Cuba and the United States.

Ramos and Chambers strike a path towards each other, taking unanticipated twists and turns and sudden bolts down the compositional pathway—first one leading the way, then the other. Both are masters of the unanticipated, where silence and the pause are as potent—or more potent—than the graceful gesture or the captivating note.

### Blood + Sugar

In Blood + Sugar, choreographer Ramos Alayo fuses Afro-Cuban modern and folkloric dance with percussion, cello, vocals, and spoken word to narrate a hard-hitting, yet lyrical story of betrayal, cruelty, suffering, resistance, and triumph. Blood + Sugar traces the charged history of slavery—from the shores of West Africa, through the Middle Passage, and finally to Cuba—where the intensification of sugar cultivation in the early nineteenth-century precipitated a mass importation of enslaved Africans.

Alayo Dance Company and Joe Goode Performance Group. This is her sixth year dancing with the Alayo Dance Company.

### STORYTELLER

**Muriel Johnson** is an early childhood educator and professional storyteller. Johnson was born and raised on the East Coast, where her mother and grandmother introduced her to the beauty of language and richness of African-American culture. As an adult, she traveled to the South Pacific and lived in Central America, where she gained an even greater understanding and appreciation for the oral tradition as a method of recording history and as a common bond between all people. Johnson has performed throughout the Bay Area at many public libraries, storytelling festivals, elementary schools, and at the Oakland Zoo, UC Berkeley's Cal Day, and Habitot Children's Discovery Museum. She was featured on the television show Bay Area Backroads. In addition, Johnson conducts educational workshops on storytelling and literacy at local preschools, Bananas Childcare Resource Center, CA Arts College, and San Francisco State University.

### MUSICIANS

**Elouise Burrell** is an accomplished vocalist, percussionist, recording artist, dancer, actress, and event producer. Originally from Palestine, Texas, Burrell performed for over ten years on the Texas music circuit Texas and toured Western Europe and the USSR with the Texas Music Review. Currently, Burrell performs regularly with the acclaimed Cultural Heritage Choir. She also co-founded the popular world music ensembles, Ojala, a six-woman Afro-Cuban percussion and vocal ensemble, and Amandla Poets, a ten-piece South African reggae band. Burrell has performed solo at venues such as the Boom Boom Room in San Francisco; Liberty Lunch, one of the country's premiere world music venues in Austin; Antoine's, the legendary Austin blues club; and at the International Music Festival in Houston. In addition, Burrell has performed with the Amandla Poets at various jazz, reggae, and world music festivals throughout the US and Canada, including Reggae in the Park (SF), Bimbo's 365 Club (SF), San Francisco Jazz & Wine Festival (CA); AfrikaDay Festival (Calgary), Austin Music Hall (TX), Clarksville Jazz and Arts Festival (TX); Sierra Nevada World Music Festival (CA), and Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts (CA). Burrell has performed and/or recorded with the Neville Brothers, Etta James, McCoy Tyner, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Hugh Masekela, Lucky Dube, Eddy Palmieri, John Handy, Eric Bibb, Santana, Taj Mahal, Al Green, Sonny Okosun, The Looters, John Handy, The Meditations, Buddy Miles, O.J. Ekemode, Kotoja, ZuluSpear, Third World, and Stevie Ray Vaughn. She also co-produced three solo billboard charted singles, and two full CDs—Makube Njalo and Khawulexa—by Amandla Poets on her label Scintilla Records.

**Jeff Chambers** is a jazz bassist, internationally known for his impeccable timing, dynamic rhythms and improvisational dexterity. Chambers' facility to play both acoustic and electric bass allows him to express himself fluidly in a



While her specialty is folkloric and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance, Santiago has also studied jazz, ballet, West African, Afro-Cuban, and modern dance forms. Santiago worked with world renowned Bloco Afro, Olodum, performing and choreographing programs for television, concerts, and music festivals held all over the world, including Europe, Asia and North America. She also taught dance, choreographed, and directed seasonal performances for the Olodum Creative School for Youth in Salvador. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1997, Santiago has choreographed for many local groups including Loco Bloco, Axe Abada, Kuumba, and Quimbanda Grupo Carnavalesco. In 1999 she founded her own dance company, Aguas Da Bahia and in 2001 received the California Arts Council Artist in Residency grant to teach youth in the community. Santiago teaches regularly at SF public schools, Rhythm and Motion, and ODC Dance Commons. [www.aguasdabahia.com](http://www.aguasdabahia.com)

**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 Master of Arts in art education with a specialization in dance from Stanford University. Serghiou has been dancing with Alayo Dance Company since 2004.

**Alain Soto Aguilera** was born in Santiago de Cuba. Soto began his dance education at the age of eleven at Escuela Vocacional de Arte in Santiago de Cuba. In 1994 he was accepted into Havana's National School of Art where he studied ballet, Cuban popular, modern, and specialized in Afro-Cuban folkloric dance. At the Escuela Instructores de Arte he mastered Cuban cabaret style. In 1998 he became one of the principal dancers in Ban Rarra, one of the most prestigious folkloric dance companies in Cuba. The company specializes in Afro-Cuban Haitian traditional dance forms originating in the eastern part of the country. During his artistic career, Soto also performed in a variety of theatrical plays on the National television of Cuba, modeled clothing for Brutus, a Japanese magazine, and starred in The History of Lady Salsa, a music and dance production, which toured throughout Europe, England, and Scotland. In 2001, Soto toured in the United States with Ban Rarra, performing in universities and theaters throughout the country. Since moving to California, Soto has danced with Alayo Dance Company, Arenas Dance Company, Patakin, Raices Cubanas, San Francisco Carnival, and the Timba All Stars. Recently he performed at the opening ceremony of Bay Area National Dance Week. He has taught Cuban Popular dance at Mission Cultural Center, Mission Blue Theater, YMCA Embarcadero, and currently teaches Afro-Cuban folkloric dance at Dance Mission Theater.

**Patricia West Sotelo** is an Oakland based dancer, choreographer, and elementary school teacher. She has received a Bachelor of Arts in English, dance, and education at University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Arts in education at San Jose State University. West has worked with the Bay Area Repertory Dance, Capacitor, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin Dance Company, Levy Dance, and several independent choreographers. She is currently a member of both

Ramos's approach is disturbingly raw: he purposefully choreographed the work with his dancers restrained in shackles, chains, ropes, nets, and stockades. These are more than historical props: through much of this full-length production the dancers' movements, usually free with abandon, are constricted and awkward—signaling not just a lack of physical grace, but the loss of a state of grace.

The sound of chains reverberates, reminding the dancers and audience that we walk everyday in history. The performers' presence is visceral evidence: their ancestors—twenty million mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers—were ripped from their homes and scattered throughout the Americas. Drawing from the broad range of Cuban, Brazilian, and American cultural sources represented on stage, Ramos thoughtfully crafts a collective memory of suffering.

Dancers embody the Afro-Cuban orishas Oshosi, the forest hunter carrying bow and arrow, and Oshún, the goddess of love and sweet waters named after a river in Nigeria. A Brazilian song reminds us that the singer grew up in Salvador da Bahia, where the historic district Pelourinho—translated as whipping post—was the center of northern Brazil's extensive slave trade. And the song Strange Fruit, originally recorded by Billy Holiday in 1939 and hauntingly sung as dancers sway, reminds us that this work could just as easily have been called Blood + Cotton.

Southern trees bear strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Within these cultural contexts, the sweetness of the cello seems out of place at first, until one realizes that it is the voice of sorrow, inescapable and poignant. Blood + Sugar is an intensely personal work—almost too painful to watch—like peering through an undraped window into a bedroom where a four hundred yearlong nightmare lingers. Nonetheless, the piece is a testament to personal transcendence, the tenacity of a people, and the continuity of culture. It is an epic tale of loss, but the phrase “I have” is spoken quietly and defiantly at the end.

Deborah Valoma  
CubaCaribe Board of Directors  
Associate Professor, California College of the Arts

## profiles

**Alayo Dance Company** was founded in 2002 by Ramón Ramos Alayo, with the mission to fuse Afro-Cuban modern, traditional folkloric, and popular Cuban dance styles into in a contemporary hybrid genre. As artistic director and choreographer of the company, Ramos eloquently articulates his aesthetic vision through a synthesis of these dance styles, citing from each tradition specific movements, narratives, and concepts indicative of Cuban culture. Alayo Dance Company is the resident company of CubaCaribe and has enjoyed broad critical and popular acclaim for its innovative and bold choreographic vision. It was featured in “Dance Across America,” published in National Geographic, 2006.

### DANCERS

**Ramón Ramos Alayo**, a Cuban-born dancer, teacher, choreographer, is well known for his forceful performances and bold choreographic vision. Ramos is an electric performer, well versed in both Afro-Cuban modern and folkloric genres. Ramos is fearless in both his dance and choreographic style—undaunted in his effort to bring haunting, emotive, and truthful performances to the stage. At the age of eleven, Ramos was selected by the Cuban government to study dance in Santiago de Cuba and later earned a master’s degree in contemporary and folkloric dance and dance education from Havana’s National School of Art. He was the principal dancer with Compañía Teatro de la Danza del Caribe in Santiago de Cuba and Narciso Medina Contemporary Dance Company in Havana, where he was ranked one of the top modern dancers and toured throughout Cuba, Europe, Canada, Belize and the U.S. Since leaving Cuba 1997, he has performed with some of the most respected choreographers in the Bay Area, including Robert Henry Johnson, Kim Epifano, Sara Shelton Mann, Joanna Haigood, and Robert Moses. Ramón Ramos Alayo has directed and produced seven full-length performances including *Anoraña de Una Epoca* (1999), *Mis Sueños, Mis Ideas* (2003, 2004); *A Piece of White Cloth* (2004, 2005); *La Madre* (2005); *After Rain* (2006); *Three Threes & Traces* (2007); and his latest full-length choreography, *Blood + Sugar* (2008). Ramón Ramos Alayo has received grants including: CASH (2005); Zellerbach Family Foundation (2005, 2006, 2007); LEF Foundation (2005); and San Francisco Arts Commission (2008). Ramos was also awarded the prestigious Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation’s “Emerging Choreographer Award” (2005). Ramos was an Isadora Duncan Dance Award nominee for the ensemble performance of *Los Guedes*, performed at CubaCaribe Festival (2006). In 2003 Ramos co-founded and became artistic director of CubaCaribe and all of its projects including the CubaCaribe Festival of Dance and Music. [www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org)

**Shelley Davis** earned a Bachelor of Arts in fine arts from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and a Master’s degree in architecture from University of California at Berkeley, where she also studied modern dance with Sue Lie Jue. Formerly a gymnast, she has trained extensively in modern, ballet, jazz, samba, and capoeira for the past twelve years. Davis has performed with Robert Henry Johnson, Art of Ballet, and has traveled to Brazil to train in Silvestre modern technique and

capoeira. Currently she is principal dancer with the Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble, with whom she has performed for nine seasons. This is her first season with Alayo Dance Company. Davis is a practicing architect, focusing on affordable housing and teaches at SFCC in San Francisco.

**Garibaldi Delisle Simono** is a Cuban professional dancer, teacher, and choreographer. Delisle was raised in Santiago de Cuba and trained at the School of Performing Arts, the National School of Arts in Havana, and the Provisional School of Arts for teachers and choreographers. Garibaldi is also a skilled percussionist, specialist in the batá drums—a set of three double-headed, hourglass-shaped drums.

**Adriene Harrison** has been performing since age ten when she danced as a member of the Puerto Rican dance troupe, Ballet Folklorico Latino throughout Honolulu. Since moving to San Francisco in 1994, she has studied flamenco, afro-Haitian, afro-Cuban, and Cuban popular dance. Harrison has studied with Yaelisa, La Tania, José Galvan, Michelle Martin, Blanche Brown, Susana Arenas Pedroso, Ramón Ramos Alayo, José Francisco Barroso, and Silfredo La O, and Juan De Dios in Havana, Cuba. She was a member of the Haitian performance group Group Petit La Croix, the Cuban dance ensemble Arenas Dance Company, and is currently a member of the San Francisco based, all-woman dance group Las Que Son Son.

**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.

**Aja Randall** is originally from St. Louis, Missouri. In 1999, Randall graduated from Stephens College with a Bachelor of Arts in dance with a minor in education. In 2000 Randall moved to San Diego, danced for two years with Majelate Collective Dance Ensemble, and worked on projects with Sadie Weinberg. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2004, she began dancing with Alayo Dance Company.

**Tânia Santiago** was born and raised in Salvador, Bahia, the heart of African influenced Brazil. She earned degrees in dance from the SESC Associação School of the Arts and Fundação do Estado da Bahia School of Dance in Salvador.