THE SIXTH ANNUAL CUBACARIBE FESTIVAL OF DANCE & MUSIC weekend one: April 16, 17, and 18, 2010 Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

PERSERVERANCE of SPIRIT



"But it isn't a greater catastrophe, it isn't a greater disaster than we are a people"
-Brenda Marie Osbey,
poet laureate of Louisiana 2005-007

Port-Au-Prince, January 2010 – Haiti is hit by its largest earthquake in 200 years. The capital city of the first independent nation in Latin America and the first black republic in the world is virtually leveled.

New Orleans, August 2005 – Hurricane Katrina hits Louisiana and the levies break. Katrina is now referred to as both the deadliest hurricane and the largest 'natural' disaster in the history of the United States.

The Caribbean and its diaspora are constantly in flux. Moments of turbulence have plagued its communities throughout the past. Haiti, once referred to as the jewel of the Caribbean due to the large amount of sugar it exported, is now known by many as simply the poorest country in the New World. New Orleans, considered to be the gateway to the Caribbean, was once one of the largest trading ports with Havana until the imposition of the Cuban Embargo. After the storm, when residents of New Orleans were exiled to other regions around the nation, people began to fear that the saying "Only in New Orleans" would be no more. But the spirit of the city endures and slowly, people have returned. Now, the survivors of Port-au-Prince and other devastated Haitian cities and towns have begun to move into the slums of Cité-Soleil, to the countryside, even to the Dominican Republic and beyond, taking their spirit and their traditions with them. History will always record disasters such as these, but history has also shown us that the magnitude of the disaster has never been greater than the spirit of a people to survive, to rebuild, to recreate. In their lives and in their art we see how they record the struggle and the pain, as well as the triumph and the joy. Today we celebrate how history is recorded within the 'dancing body'. We pay tribute to the art created within the Caribbean diaspora that has made the dance community so rich - from New Orleans to Port-au-Prince, even here in San Francisco - and honor the perseverance and the spirit of the people who create it.

The Program

Ayelo yeku daba (When you fall down, get up.)
- old Ewe song from Ghana

ASE Dance Theater Collective (NYC)

Libation

Many people of African ancestry pour libations. Traditionally performed by an elder in the community, a libation is the pouring of liquid as a spiritual offering to honor one's ancestors. This piece is a prayer to our ancestors asking them to protect and guide our hearts as we journey towards our destinies.

Artistic Direction and Choreography: Adia Tamar

Whitaker

Musical Direction: Sekou Alaje

Dancers: Sekou Alaje, Joy Bell, Jovan Clay, Coco

Killingsworth, Mara Rivera, Micah 'Blacklight' Lee, Brian

Polite, Kelly Seph White, Adia Whitaker

Musicians: Sekou Alaje, Guy DeChalus

Video Projection: Khalil Anthony

Vocals: Kendall Johnson Smith

Costumes: Adia Tamar Whitaker, Nia Edwards

"This dance is a language. It's a means, a tool, to allow you to speak, to recount your suffering, to recount your pain, your joy, to recount the happiness of your heart. It is dance that does everything, everything, and is everything for me."

-Florencia "Fofo" Pierre

Afoutayi

O Chan Neg Nago

In Haiti, Ogou, sometimes known as Neg Nago or Gren Pwomene, is a *lwa*, or spirit, of warfare. He is the owner of the gun, the knife, the law, metal, and more. He is fire and iron. He builds up cities and brings about civilization through his power over technology and the forge. Often seen wielding his machete, he is fierce and terrible. Yell for Ogou. Dance for Ogou. Sing for Ogou. "O Chan Nago!"

Artistic Direction: Djenane Saint-Juste

Choreography: Djenane Saint-Juste, Florencia Pierre

Dancers: Djenane Saint-Juste

Vocals: Florencia Pierre

Musicians: Jeff Lastanoteguy Pierre, Zeke Nealy,

Gabriel Bata

ASE Dance Theater Collective (NYC)

Uncle Freddie

In the pantheon of Haitian Vodou, "Gede" names a family of raucous spirits who personify the ancestral dead and sexual regeneration. They are shameless tricksters, wise counselors, and benevolent healers that love and protect children. They wear sunglasses because the world above ground is too bright. The Gede family guards the crossroads between life and death. They are memorable characters that mock man's inhibitions around sexuality with the most crude and comical behavior. They also bless us with fertility. Today we begin and end the story with our dear Uncle Freddie. Uncle Freddie had many lives and many wives. He was as "stray dog" as they come. Today is his funeral.

Artistic Direction and Choreography: Adia Tamar

Whitaker

Musical Direction: Sekou Alaje

Recorded Music: Freddie's Dead (C. Mayfield)

Dancers: Sekou Alaje, Joy Bell, Jovan Clay, Coco

Killingsworth, Mara Rivera, Micah 'Blacklight' Lee, Brian

Polite, Kelly Seph White, Adia Whitaker

Musicians: Sekou Alaje, Guy DeChalus

Lead Vocals: Kendall Johnson Smith

Special Guest Vocals: Stephanie Bastos, Zakiya

Harris, Eyla Moore, Veleda Roehl, Sonia Whittle

Costumes: Adia Tamar Whitaker, Nia Edwards

Spoken Text: Gloria Yamato

Intermission

"The chant grew, the single line was enunciated in stronger pulsations, and other voices joined in the wild refrain, Danse Calinda, boudoum, boudoum! Danse Calinda, boudoum, boudoum! Bodies swayed, the hands kept time in soft pat-patting, and the feet in muffled accentuation."

> -excerpt from Voodoo in New Orleans, by Robert Tallant (1946)

Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective

The Spirit of New Orleans

Danse de Calinda, known throughout the Caribbean and as far as Trinidad, was being danced as early as the 1740s in Congo Square. The square, an open field on the far side of the French Quarter, was a gathering place for the residents of New Orleans. A place where enslaved Africans, free people of color, and Native Americans drummed, danced, sang, and traded on Sunday afternoons. Danse de Calinda was among the most famous of the many dances performed in Congo Square. The cultural expressions and social ties that developed in places like Congo Square gradually evolved into the Mardi Gras Indian traditions. By the 19th century, 'Black Indians' had begun parading during Carnival, possibly to show affinity with Native Americans, many of whom gave refuge to runaway slaves. These chants and dances are by the Yellow Pocahontas Mardi Gras Indian Tribe

Artistic Direction & Choreography for Danse de

Calinda: Ausettua AmorAmenkum and Kwame Ross

Choreography for Mardi Gras Indian Dances:

John Leon Destine

Musicians: David Montana, Kwame Ross

Dancers: Ausettua AmorAmenkum, Stephanie McKee,

David Montana, Nailah Smith, and Na'imah Zulu.

Costumes: David Montana, Ausettua AmorAmenkum,

Shirley MacLaughlin

Spoken Text: Ausettua AmorAmenkum

The Companies

ASE Dance Theatre Collective (NYC) is a neofolkloric performance ensemble that specializes in Dance Theater from the African Diaspora. Under the artistic direction of its founder, Adia Tamar Whitaker, a dancer, choreographer, and vocalist from San Francisco's Bay Area, this Brooklyn based dance theater collective is dedicated to preserving the past, present, and future of the African presence in the "New World". Since 2000, ASE has presented work that links modern dance, original vernacular movement and traditional dance theater from the African Diaspora to conceptual ideas in the human experience. The current repertoire features a variety of multi-media dance theater works choreographed by Adia Tamar Whitaker, new work by dancer/choreographer Mara Rivera, word sculptors/ freestyle movement artists Micah 'Blacklight' Lee and Brian Polite. ASE also performs

as a folkloric music ensemble and provides interactive educational performances for children K-12.

Adia Tamar Whitaker, graduated from San Francisco State University with a BA in Dance. Ms. Whitaker is a former member of Group Petit La Croix. She has performed Afro-Haitian and contemporary dance in the U.S. and abroad for 13 years. Adia completed the Professional Division U.S. Independent Studies Program at The Ailey School (2001), was a Ford Foundation Grant Recipient (2004), an Urban Bush Women Apprentice (2005) and a Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at FSU Creative Entry Point Choreographic Fellow (2006).

Afoutayi - Djenane Saint-Juste was born and raised in the traditional Haitian culture as her mother Florencia Pierre, a priestess of the Vodou religion was, and her mother before. Ms. Saint-Juste has an extensive background in Haitian dance and music, and is an accomplished choreographer, dancer, and vocalist specializing in the traditional folkloric dances of Haiti. A former student at Cuba's International Schools for Sports and Physical Education, she served for 15 years, as coartistic director, first dancer, and instructor at the Jaka Dance Institute in Pétionville, Haiti alongside her mother, Florencia Pierre. She has worked with many renowned Haitian artists, such as Azor, Boukman Eksperyans, Alan and Syto Cave, Paula Clermont Pean, and Fabienne Denis, to name a few. Most recently, Ms.

Saint-Juste performed in a music video for Haiti's well-known *mizik rasin* band, RAM.

Florencia "Fofo" Pierre is a famed actress, dancer and traditional healer. In her formative years, Ms. Pierre attended the Viviane Gauthier School of Traditional Arts, serving as lead dancer and eventually as dance instructor. In addition, Ms. Pierre also served as one of the principal dancers of the National Dance Theater Company of Haití from 1983 to 1989 and then served as professor of dance from 1989 to 1991. Well-traveled around the world from the Caribbean to Europe and the U.S. as a professional performer, singer, dancer and actress, Ms. Pierre is also the founding director of the Jaka Institute of Dance in Pétionville, Haití.

Jeff Lastanoteguy Pierre, son of Florencia and brother of Djenane, has been playing traditional Haitian percussion since the age of 3, and is a well-recognized drummer in the Haitian community. California, San Diego, Palomar College, Grossmont College, San Diego City College, Cal State San Marcos, and Humboldt State University and has traveled through out the United States teaching master workshops.

Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective is named for a Swahili word that means "remember," and Kumbuka remembers African and African-American folklore by keeping it alive in dance and song. The 15-member collective ranges in age from 9 to 55 and is directed by founding member Ausettua AmorAmenkum.

These dancers, musicians, jewelers, drum makers, and costume designers have studied their arts throughout the U.S. as well as in Senegal, Ghana, and Guinea.

Ausettua AmorAmenkum, a professor adjunct at Tulane University of New Orleans since 1993, studied with Kimati Dinizulu & The Kotoko Society in Ghana, with Frank Desire and the Asakivle Haitian Cultural Ensemble in Haiti, and with John Leon Destine in Senegal. Kumbuka has been regularly featured through Young Audiences of New Orleans, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and the New Orleans Dance Festival, as well as having been featured in several documentaries and movies including Angel Hart, Interview with the Vampire, Congo Square, and All on a Mardi Gras Day.

About Us

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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.

CubaCaribe is Ramón Ramos Alayo (Artistic Director), Stella Adelman, Cora Barnes, Adriene Harrison, and Jamaica Itule-Simmons.

Acknowledgments

CubaCaribe wishes to thank all of the dancers, musicians and artists for making this event possible. Your passion and dedication continue to inspire and move us all, in both senses of the word. Thank you to all the technicians, volunteers and donors for your continued support of the CubaCaribe Festival. Thank you to Medjool Restaurant and Hostel and to Bissap Baobab Restaurant for their generous donations. Special thanks to Krissy Keefer, Dance Brigade and Dance Mission Theater for their invaluable expertise and continued support.

This project has been made possible in part by support from the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, the San Francisco Arts Commission, CA\$H -Theater Bay Area, California Newsreel, Dance Brigade, and the Zellerbach Family Fund.

The Sixth Annual CubaCaribe Festival Of Dance & Music Weekend Three: April 30, May 1, May 2 Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

MIGRATIONS

ALAYO DANCE COMPANY



for more information visit www.cubacaribe.org

MIGRATIONS

Artistic Direction: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Choreography: Ramón Ramos Alayo in collaboration

with Alayo Dance Company

Alayo Dancers: Lauri Anderson, Tina Banchero, Shelly Davis, Fredrika Keefer, Antoine-De Vinci Hunter, Adra Randon, Alain Amilicar Soto Aguilera Special Guest Dancers: Allan Frias & Mind Over Matter, Tyler Knowlin, Michael Velez

Vocals: Valerie Trout

Musicians: Crystal Monee Hall, Val Serrant

Music: Sweet Honey in the Rock, Francisco Mora

Catlett, Nas, Gente de Zona

Sound Editor: Guy Brenner **Sound Operator:** Andy Keefer **Lighting Design:** Harry Rubeck

Set Design: Ramón Ramos Alayo

Graffiti Artist: Cuba

Spoken Word Text: Lauri Anderson, Aja Randall,

Michael Velez

Ramón Ramos Alayo is a dancer, teacher, choreographer and the founder and artistic director of Alayo Dance Company and of CubaCaribe. Selected by the Cuban government to study dance in Santiago de Cuba at age eleven, he went on to earn 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, 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. In 2002, he founded 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 seven full-length dance performances: Anorañza 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 Blood and Sugar (2008).

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).

Lauri Anderson grew up dancing and drumming in Santa Rosa, California, where she trained and performed under former Jabbawockeez legend Gary Kendall. She was a member of Interweave Dance Theatre in Boulder, Colorado, and taught at the Boulder Jazz Dance Workshop. While working towards her B.A. and M.A. at Stanford University she choreographed for and co-directed dv8 (a hip hop company), and Urban styles (a jazz company), and also worked briefly with New York-based movement engineer Elizabeth Streb. This is Anderson's first season with Alayo Dance Company.

Tina Banchero holds her BA in Dance from SUNY at Buffalo. Banchero has performed with Kim Epifano, Sue Li Jui, Jose Navarette, Monique Jenkinson, Rapt Productions, and most extensively with Krissy Keefer's Dance Brigade. Tina has directed, taught and choreographed for the Dance Mission Theater Youth Program and The Grrrl Brigade. She has also choreographed for Trolley Dances SF, Brava Theater for Women and the Arts, Devious Inc Movies, the Porazone Music Project and for the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Tina taught for five years with the Alvin Ailey Summer Camps in Oakland and New York City. This is her fourth season with Alayo Dance Company.

Shelley Davis has a B.A. in Fine Arts from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and a M.A. in Architecture from

UC Berkeley, where she began studying modern dance with Sue Lie Jue. Davis is a former gymnast and has studied modern, ballet, samba, and capoeira in the Bay Area for the past twelve years. Travels to Brazil and Cuba have further cultivated her movement training. She enjoyed nine seasons with the Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble and is currently in her third season with Alayo Dance Company. She recently began Intrepid Works which is a continued exploration to create movement unique to her various styles of dance training and social interests while using her art and architectural design background to integrate art installation and set design into the work.

Allan Frias, a leading force of the Bay Area hip-hop scene, is known as a charismatic teacher, riveting performer, and talented choreographer. In 1993 Frias founded Mind Over Matter (M.O.M.). Since then the company has gained critical and popular acclaim for its clean execution and soulful style. Merging styles from ghetto, to sultry, to sophisticated, M.O.M. reflects its cultural roots in the life and art of the Mission District of San Francisco, particularly the Latin and Afro-centric vibes felt on the streets. M.O.M. has performed in benefits, showcases, and clubs throughout California, most notably as honorees at Battlefest, San Jose (2005); Bust A Groove, San Diego (2006); and the 8th Annual Hip-Hop Dance Fest, San Francisco (2006). Frias also choreographs for Junior Jam youth performance program at the Golden State Warriors and appeared on Fox TV's So You Think You Can Dance.

Crystal Monee Hall grew up singing in the church choir and performing in school chorus, show choir, and winning starring roles in musical theater. While at the University of Virginia she directed the gospel choir, where she first started playing the piano and writing music. She has since performed with Disney Entertainment and with both the National Tour and Broadway productions of Rent, where she turned her eye to full-time scoring and songwriting. Her work has been presented at Rivers of Honey, The Laurie Beechman Theatre's "After Party," The Triad Theatre's "Just a Piano" series hosted by Lee Summers, The LGBT Community Center's Poets and Playwrights Series, and other venues, including Joe's Pub, Yoshi's San Francisco, and the Napa Valley Opera House. Last spring, NYC choreographer Camille A. Brown & Dancers debuted a new piece set to Hall's original blues music at The Joyce SoHo, entitled "One Second Past the Future". Currently, Hall is touring with Concord recording artist Spencer Day as a featured vocalist, and recording her debut album to be released in 2010.

Antoine-DeVinci Hunter began acting and dancing during his high school years, performing in such shows as The Wiz with Belazio Theater, Oliver with SF Musical Theater, Odd land, and Black Nativity with Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. He has performed with Nuba Dance Theater with Evelyn Thomas and has also studied at the Paul Taylor Summer Intensive in New York with Susan McGuire. He is currently a faculty member of East Bay Center of the Performing Arts under Jordan Simmon and co-directs Urban Ballet with Rebecca Hawley. Antoine has studied with Reginald Ray-Savage, Zafra

Miriam, and C.K. and Betty Ladzekpo. In addition to dancing with Alayo Dance Company, he is also a member of Savage Jazz Dance Company and The Ross Dance Company.

Fredrika Keefer grew up dancing in the heart of San Fransisco's Mission District. She is a graduate of San Francisco School of the Arts and has trained in ballet, jazz, modern, and hip hop for 14 years, and taiko drumming for 10 years. She teaches hip hop, modern, and taiko for Dance Mission's youth program. She currently dances with Dance Brigade, Alayo Dance Company, and Mind Over Matter.

Tyler Knowlin has been tap dancing since age five.
Originally from Connecticut, he attended the Academy of the Arts in Hartford and has performed in New York City with such legends as Gregory Hines, Savion Glover, Jimmy Slide, Diane Walker, Brenda Buffalino, Jason Sammuels-Smith, and many more. He was featured in YM Magazine for an issue about up and coming tap dancers. He has performed in numerous commercials, as well as a few independent films.

Aja Randall began her training at performing arts middle and high schools in her home town of St. Louis, Missouri, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Dance from Stephens College. In 2000, Randall relocated to San Diego and danced with Mojalet Collective Dance Ensemble for two years, while also working on projects with other local dance artists including Sadie Weinberg. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2004, she worked with several up and coming choreographers

before becoming a member of Alayo Dance Company. This is her sixth season with the company.

Alain Amilicar Soto Aguilera was born in Santiago de Cuba and began his dance education there at the Escuela Vocacional de Arte at age eleven. In 1994 he was accepted into Havana's Escuela Nacional del Arte where he studied Ballet, Cuban popular, modern, and he specialized in Folkloric dance. In 1998, Soto became one of the principal dancers of Ban Rarra, the prestigious folkloric dance company. In 2001, he came to the United States on tour with Ban Rarra where they performed in various universities and theaters throughout the country, including ODC Theater. Since moving to California, he has danced with Arenas Dance Company, Patakin, Raices Cubanas, San Francisco Carnival and Timba All Stars. Recently he performed at the opening ceremony of Bay Area National Dance Week. This is his third season with Alayo Dance Company.

Valerie Troutt ia a singer-songwriter with a unique approach to jazz and original compositions. Fusing gospel, soul, world, folk, and electronica, she is one of a few young modern singers creating stylistic change in the Vocal Jazz Tradition. Her accomplishments include a performance for the Jazz at Lincoln Center 1999-2000 Season Kick-off Party, wherein she accompanied the Marcus Strickland Quartet. She is currently a member of Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, The Reclaim Music All-Star Band and a resident artist at the Red Poppy Art House of San Francisco.

Oscar Trujillo is a Cuban-American performer, choreographer and teacher. Trujillo is currently codirector of GROUP and Cubana Cero Productions. He has previously 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 season with Alayo Dance Company.

Michael Velez began dancing as a student and apprentice for Gina Angelique's Eveoke Dance and Sledgehammer Theater, where he studied experimental movement, improv, and performance art. Before graduating from the Coronado School for the Arts in San Diego, he performed with the San Diego Junior Theater's repertory ensemble productions. He has worked with Charles O. Anderson's dance theatre X and danced four seasons with Koresh Dance Company. He has danced for recognized choreographers Robert Battle, Zane Booker, Brian Sanders, Donald Byrd, and Itzik Galili of the Netherlands Dance theater and Galili Dance. In addition, Velez's choreography was featured in the 2008 National Ice Dance Competition televised by CNN. He currently performs with Robert Moses' Kin and is a faculty member of Lines Ballet's BFA program.

Patricia West Sotelo is an Oakland based dancer, choreographer, and teacher. She received a B.A. in English, Dance, and Education at U.C. Berkeley and an M.A. in Education at San Jose State University. In addition to Alayo Dance Company, she has worked with Bay Area Repertory Dance, Capacitor, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin, Levy Dance, and

Joe Goode's Performance Group. She continues to work with several independent choreographers in the Bay Area and is honored to be spending her seventh year with Alayo Dance Company.

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Acknowledgments

Ramón Ramos Alayo wishes to thank all of the dancers, musicians, and artists for making this event possible. Special thanks to the dancers of Alayo Dance Company for their dedication and contribution. Thanks to my 'sister', Tania Santiago; to Oscar Trujillo, Patricia West Sotelo, Marco Senghor, Michael Nolan, Jamaica Itule-Simmons, Francisco Mora Catlett, Cora Barnes, Adriene Harrison, Stella Adelman, and everyone who in one way or another aided in the creation of this piece. Special thanks to Krissy Keefer, Dance Brigade, and Dance Mission Theater for their invaluable expertise and continued support.

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6th Annual CubaCaribe Festival of Dance and Music

PERFORMANCES CLECTURES MASTER CLASSES FILM SCREENINGS

FEATURING ~~

Adia Whitaker & Ase Dance Theater Collective

Alafia Dance Ensemble

Alayo Dance Company

Las Que Son Son

Los Lupeños de San José

Ned Sublette

Paco Gomes and Dancers

Silfredo La O

Yismari Ramos Tellez

and more...



