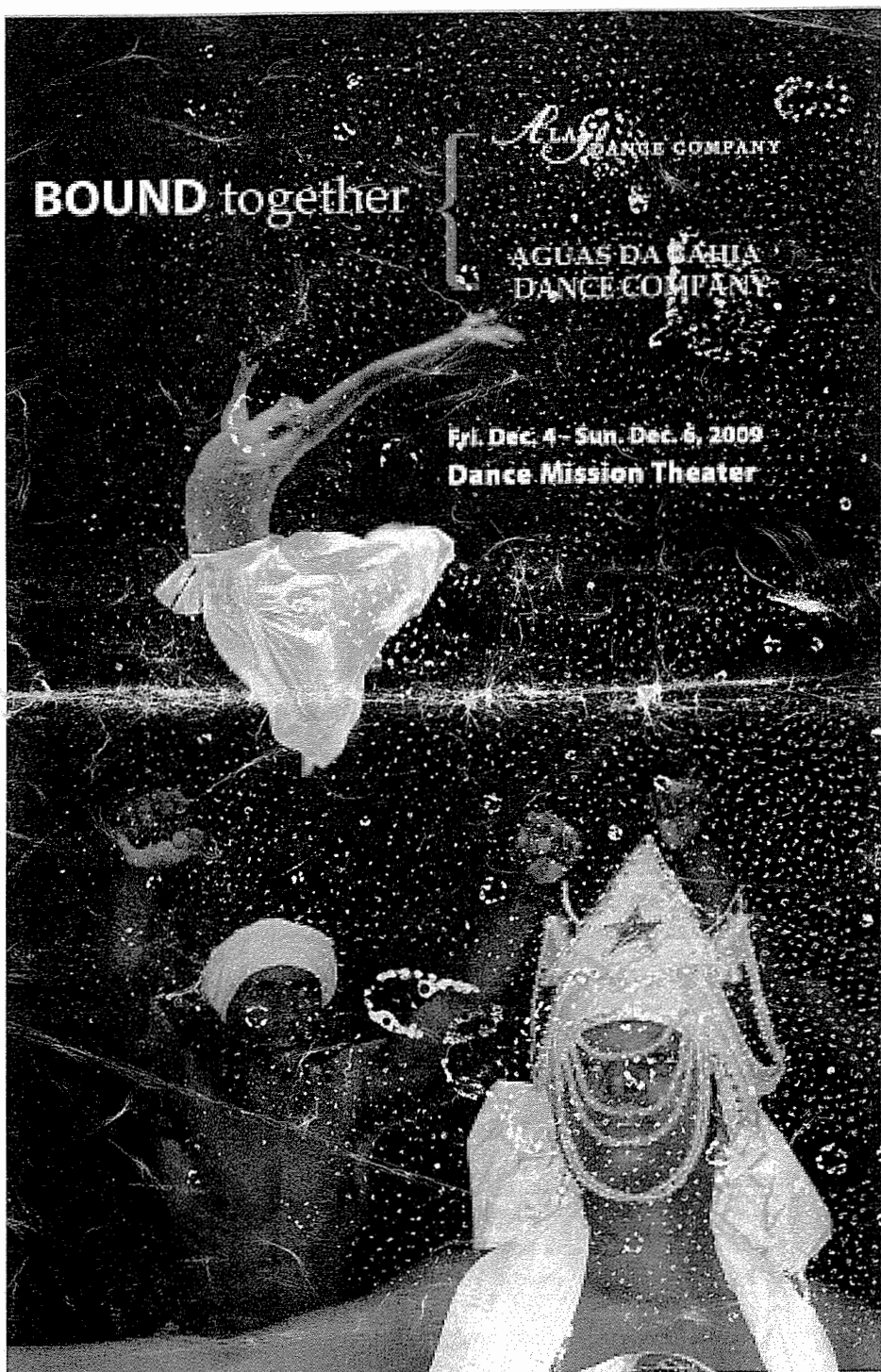


BOUND together

Alafé
DANCE COMPANY

AGUAS DA BAHIA
DANCE COMPANY

Fri. Dec. 4 - Sun. Dec. 6, 2009
Dance Mission Theater



BOUND together

I. Layers of Love ~ Ramón Ramos Alayo & Patricia West Sotelo

Choreography - Ramón Ramos Alayo **Music** - Joshua Bell, John Williams.

Costume Design - Ramón Ramos Alayo **Seamstress** - Anastacia Powers Cuellar

Lighting Designer - José María Francos **Lighting** - Harry Rubeck **Sound Operator**- Andy Keefer

II. A Piece of White Cloth ~ Alayo Dance Company

Choreography - Ramón Ramos Alayo

Live Music - Oro Irawo **Main Vocalists** – Carol Steele, Morgan Simon

Chorus - Morgan Simon, Allison Hammond, Pedro Aguiar, Michelle Martinez

Percussion - Jesse Weber, Matthew Lucas, Andrew Ryan

Additional Music - Soweto Community Hall, Amandla Group & Vusi, Mahlasela, Niki Reiser

Lighting Designer - José María Francos **Lighting** - Harry Rubeck **Costume design** - Deborah

Valoma **Seamstress** - María Velasquez **Sound operator** - Andy Keefer

Ramón Ramos Alayo's well-received choreography entitled *A Piece of White Cloth* weaves threads of modern, Afro-Cuban folkloric and African dance into a single, hybrid composition. This work traces—in reverse and without interruption—the continuity of Yoruba movement, memory and metaphor from its roots on the western coast of Africa, through Cuba, and into Bay Area contemporary dance.

In *A Piece of White Cloth*, Ramos examines the nuanced cultural meanings of white cloth in Yoruba and Cuban culture. Sometimes called “spirit cloth” in Yoruba, simple cotton cloth is associated with purity, conception, healing, rainfall, milk, tears, saliva, semen, and watery spirit world. The most humble of all cloths, it nonetheless holds great transformative powers, and as such, is used in rituals including initiation ceremonies, marriages, and funerals. The spiritual force of white cloth to “heal bodies, placate spirits and metaphorically transcend the world of humans” is exemplified by this story described by Mary Kinsley in the 1890s in Nigeria:

“An old blind slave was found in the bush and brought to the Mission (near Creek Town). . . . She was in a deplorable state. . . . but her whole mind was set upon one thing with a passion. . . . What she wanted was a bit, only a bit, of white cloth. The missionaries refused to give her the cloth as it was associated with indigenous religious practices. The old woman, however, kept on pleading and saying the spirit of her dead mistress kept coming to her asking and crying for white cloth, and white cloth she must get for her, and so at last, finding it was not to be got at the Mission station, she stole away one day, unobserved, and wandered off into the bush, from which she never reappeared.”

The African concepts of plain white cloth were transported across the Atlantic with Yoruba peoples brought to Cuba in slavery. Though cultural continuity was severely disrupted under the devastating conditions of slavery, the philosophies of the motherland were tenaciously persevered on the mother island of Cuba.

The worship of the Yoruba *orishas* flourished, veiled under a heavy mantle of Catholicism. Two deities in particular continue to manifest the meanings of the white cloth in Cuban culture:

Obatalá, (meaning "king of the white cloth") is father of the *orishas* and all humanity. He is the source of all that is pure, wise, peaceful, ethical, moral, and compassionate. Obatalá's color is white, and therefore, he favors white materials, including silver and white foods.

Oyá, (meaning "she tore") is the goddess of wind, storms, rain, fertility, destruction and sudden transformation. Oya is queen of the spirit world; she is goddess of funeral processions and cemeteries and intermediary to the ancestors. When she dances, Oya swings a horsetail.

For Ramos, white cloth—with its complex meanings and associations—is a metaphor for the cultural lineage that was torn and frayed, and yet not lost on the long journey from Africa to Cuba to the United States. Along the path of his ancestors and during his personal migration from Cuba to the Bay Area, he has dragged the white cloth wound around his body and has woven ancestral memories into his modern choreographic vision.

~ Deborah Valoma, Director of Fine Arts, California College of the Arts

~Intermission~

III. *Sagrada/Profana Bahia* ~ Aguas Da Bahia Dance Company

Tania dedicates this performance to Antonio Luis Alves de Souza who passed away recently in Salvador. Nicknamed "Neguinho do Samba," he made Olodum famous for its social work as well as its musical rhythms.

Tonight's premiere performance of *Sagrada/Profana Bahia* draws deeply from Bahian culture and folklore. It begins with the Lavagem do Bonfim, a yearly pilgrimage and festival to the church of the patron of Salvador, Tania's hometown, in an era when Africans were not permitted inside the Catholic Church and developed their own rituals outside, thus the contrast of Sacred/Profane. The piece opens with everyday street life, parties, and the procession to the church.

Tania created this piece to raise the perception of positive Brazilian culture and for Brazilians who live here to take pride in their heritage. There is Afro Contemporary dance rooted in African dance and the movement and spirit of Candomblé, including references to the orixas Yansa, Lemanjá, Ogun, Changó, and Oxumare. Watch closely and the dance references "Puxada de Rede", a dance celebrating the lifestyle of the fisherman. There are popular cultural expressions of Samba de Roda and capoeira. The piece closes out in the interior of Bahia. Xaxado is a dance of the bandits, rebels, and strong willed hardened women of the countryside

Alayo Dance Company

Ramón Ramos Alayo ~ Founder and Choreographer is a Cuban-born dancer, teacher, choreographer and the founder and artistic director of the Alayo Dance Company and CubaCaribe. Ramos was selected to study dance in Santiago de Cuba at age eleven. In 1990 he earned a masters degree in contemporary and folkloric dance and dance education from the Havana's National School of Art. He was the principal dancer with Danza del Caribe in Santiago and Narciso Medina Dance Company in Havana 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 and Robert Moses' Kin. He teaches Cuban popular dance, Afro-Cuban modern dance and children's movement at several local dance studios and schools.

In 2002 founded the Alayo Dance Company. As director and choreographer, his work is an innovative fusion of Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric and popular Cuban dance. Ramos has choreographed and produced eight full-length dance performances: *Anoranza 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); *Blood + Sugar* (2008); and *Three Leaders, One Idea* (2009). Alayo was featured in National Geographic Magazine (2006). In 2003 Ramos co-founded and became artistic director of CubaCaribe, with the mission to preserve and promote the vibrant artistic and cultural traditions of the Caribbean and its diaspora..

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. Patricia has worked with Bay Area Repertory Dance, Capacitor, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin, Levy Dance, and with several independent choreographers in the Bay Area. She is also currently a member of Joe Goode's Performance Group. This is her seventh year with the Alayo Dance Company.

Antoine-DeVinci Hunter has performed with Nuba Dance Theater with Evelyn Thomas.. He is currently a faculty member of Savage Jazz Dance Company at the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts. This is his fifth season with the Alayo Dance Company.

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

Alain Amilcar Soto Aguilera began his dance education at the Escuela Vocacional de Arte in Santiago, Cuba, at age 11 and in 1994 was accepted into Havana's Escuela Nacional del Arte where he studied Ballet, Cuban popular, modern, and Folkloric dance. In 1998 he joined Ban Rarra and toured internationally with them. Since moving to California, Alain has danced with, Arenas Dance Company, Patakin, Raices Cubanas, San Francisco Carnival and Timba All Stars. This is his third season with the Alayo Dance Company.

Aja Randall graduated from Stephens College with a Bachelor of Arts in dance. In 2000 Randall moved to San Diego, danced for two years with Majelate Collective Dance Ensemble, and worked on projects with Sadie Weinberg. This is her fifth season with the Alayo Dance Company.

Fredrika Keefer began dancing in the womb. She is a graduate from San Francisco's School of the Arts Dance Department. She is a member of Dance Brigade and is a founding member of Grrrl Brigade. She dances with Allan Frias' renowned hip hop dance company Mind Over Matter and is also a teacher and choreographer in Dance Mission's youth program. This is her first season with the Alayo Dance Company.

Shelley Davis earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Spelman College in Atlanta, and a Master's in architecture from UC Berkeley, where she also studied modern dance with Sue Lie Jue. Formerly a gymnast, she has trained in modern, ballet, jazz, samba, and capoeira for the past 12 years. Davis has performed with Robert Henry Johnson, Art of Ballet, and studied Silvestre modern technique and capoeira in Brazil. Currently she is principal dancer with the Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble. This is her third season with Alayo Dance Company.

Tina Banchemo holds her BA in Dance from SUNY Buffalo and has performed with Kim Epifano, Sue Li Jui, Jose Navarette, Monique Jenkinson, Rapt Productions, and Dance Brigade. Tina has directed the Dance Mission Theater Youth Program, the Grrrl Brigade, Planned Parenthood's Teen Reality Theater Troupe WNY, Trolley Dances SF, Devious Inc. Movies and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. This is her third season with Alayo Dance Company.

Aguas Da Bahia Dance Company

Tania Santiago ~ Founder and Choreographer. Born and raised in Salvador, Bahia, Tânia Santiago grew up in the heart of African influenced Brazil. She has degrees in Dance from the *SESC Associação* School of the Arts and *Fundação do Estado da Bahia* School of Dance located in Salvador. While her specialty is folkloric and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance, Tânia has also studied Jazz, Ballet, West African, Afro Cuban and Modern dance. She spent 6 years working with Olodum, the world renowned **Bloco Afro**, where she choreographed and performed on television, at concerts in Europe, Asia and North America.

Tânia, in California since 1997, teaches regularly at Rhythm and Motion / ODC Dance. She teaches in many San Francisco public schools. In 2001 Tania received the California Arts Council *Artist in Residency* grant for 3 years to teach youth in the community. Tania's choreography has been performed by many local groups including, Loco Bloco, Axe Abada, Kuumba, Quimbanda Grupo Carnavalesco. She formed the dance company **Aguas Da Bahia** in 1999.

In 1998 she formed the dance company **Aguas Da Bahia** which has performed at the Mexican Heritage, ODC, Herbst,USF Presentation, Brava, and Palace of Fine Arts Theatres as well as at the Cow Palace, Stanford University, and on the S.F. and Oakland Carnival stages. In 2003 Aguas Da Bahia produced its own season with 6 shows in 4 cities. The critically acclaimed show AGUAS, was performed at USF Presentation and Brava.

Anita Akhavan, discovered the rhythms and movement of Guinea, West Africa in 1995. and spent the next several years diving into the rich tradition, story and intention of the music and dance of Guinea, Senegal and the Congo. Anita has studied with Master Instructors Youssouf Koumbassa, Moustapha Bangoura and Mamady Keita. Anita became a member of Aguas Da Bahia in 2008, She travels frequently to Brazil to study with Master Teacher Rosangela Silvestre.

Stephanie Bastos, a first generation Brazilian- American, has performed for more than ten years as a solo artist and with many companies throughout the United States, Germany and Brazil. She holds a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in Dance and began her training and performance career at the age of five with the Miami Ballet in Florida, and later, with the Ballet Municipal of Rio De Janeiro in Brazil. Currently, Stephanie teaches Dance for youth with the Oakland Unified School District Arts Programs while performing with Aguas Da Bahia and many other local dance companies.

Olivia Eng finds her greatest passions in dancing, making music, yoga, photography, traveling and refreshing her perspective. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine, focusing on Dance and Sociology. She is grateful to those who have inspired her along the way, Victor Moreno, Donald McKayle, Toru Shimizaki.. As a newcomer to the Bay Area, Olivia is currently working with the Dance Monks and Paco Gomes and Dancers.

Felice Gomez-Spencer has studied Brazilian dance and capoeira for many years. She studied with world-renowned capoeira masters Mestre Acordeon, Mestre Urubu Malandro, and in Sao Paolo with Mestre Suassuna. Upon her return to the Bay Area, she began performing with Tania Santiago's company Aguas Da Bahia. She has performed with Paco Gomes and Dancers and Capacitor Performance throughout the Bay Area and the country. Felice currently teaches at the Berkeley YMCA.

Taliva Martin grew up in Southern California where she began dancing at the age of four. While attending the University of California, Irvine, she trained with Donald McKayle and performed his work as a member of the Etudes Ensemble. She has performed on stage at Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival and the Los Angeles Opera production of La Traviata. Her television work includes ensemble of Annie-The Movie under the direction of Rob Marshall. She was drawn to Afro-Brazilian dance through Tania's class where she found not only a place to express herself through movement, but a sense of community and of family. She is performing with Aguas for the second year.

Mariella Morales attended the School of the Arts in San Francisco where she studied Dunham Technique and African Haitian dance. Mariella received her B.A. in Dance in 2007 and is currently working on her M.S. in Kinesiology at San Francisco State University. She Mariella is Assistant Artistic Director of Alafia Dance Ensemble and dances in Afoutayi Dance Company. . Mariella would like to acknowledge her mentor Valerie Watson as the most influential woman in her life.

Vanessa Sanchez began dancing competitively at age 5 taking state and national titles. In college, she discovered the dance of the African Diaspora, studying Katherine Dunham Technique, Afro-Haitian, and Afro-Brazilian. She currently works in Special Education and teaches dance. Vanessa also dances with Afoutayi Dance and Music Ensemble.

Isaura Oliveira (Guest Performer) is an Actress, Dancer, Choreographer and Cultural Researcher and Educator. Ms. Oliveira was born in Salvador, Bahia. In Brazil, she performed as actress, singer and dancer in several theater, musical, TV and movie productions. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Companhia de Danca Negra da Bahia In the SF Bay Area, while continuing her teaching and performance, she created the First Festival Brasileiro of the Bay Area and Teatro Brasileiro de Danca Visit www.isaurabrasil.com

Ana Laidley (Guest Performer) is a dancer from Rio de Janeiro and danced with the Mangueira Samba School.

Capoeiristas ~ Makley "Abacaxi" Sousa, Elias Daniel Gonzalez

Gamo da Paz ~ Musical Director. Singer, Musician, Percussionist, and Master of Afro-Brazilian Rhythms and Folk Music, Gamo Da Paz was born in Salvador, Bahia and raised in the lineage of the Candomblé tradition of the Ketu nation. As a Master Drummer from the house of Gantois, Gamo plays ceremonial and healing rhythms in renowned religious houses in Brazil and internationally. www.gamodapaz.com

Live Music by

Percussion - **Josh Harris**

Vocalists - **Tanashua Harris Santiago, Nikki Gonzalez**

Musician and Capoeirista - **Tosh Harris Santiago**

Musician - **Claudio Sorriso**

Lighting design- **Paco Gomez,**

Prop and set design-**Charlie Snyder, Lucy Harris and Yuyi Morales,**

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