

full force feminism dance brigade

by grier cooper

What do you get when you combine ballet, modern, jazz, song, text, sign language and explosive Taiko drumming? Dance Brigade, San Francisco's multi-racial, LGBT dance-theater troupe, a high-energy, full-throttle feminine force known for creating socially relevant dance that tackles the complex issues of contemporary American women (with a deft comic touch). Recently called "politically savage, dramatically rambunctious, wonderfully tasteless and utterly brilliant," Dance Brigade "grew out of the women's movement of the '70s, which was highly charged with lesbian sensibilities and was also an art-driven community" says Artistic Director Krissy Keefer, who co-founded the company with Nina Fichter. "To our knowledge we are the first dance company to have specific lesbian content in our work," she says. "As well as showing intimacy and sexuality, we revel in our physical strength and political insightfulness and social justice platform. The entire company identifies as LGBT - this definitely informs the choreography and most other creative choices."

Dance Brigade has performed during Pride four times in the past, and involvement with the community remains at the forefront of their mission. "Pride is a thrilling experience and a lot of fun. It is also a good opportunity to get our work out there. But most of all it is an honor to connect and be a part of a worldwide community in support of LGBT human rights," says Keefer. "We are gaining more presence in the community, even through we have been around for 40 years."



image: pat mazzara