

Dance Brigade

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press photos available upon request and online at www.dancemission.com

Dance Brigade presents
SUMMER FEAST

A site-specific work of dance, taiko, stilt walking, music and political theater in the enchanted hills of Northern California

*Featuring Dance Brigade, Carpetbag Brigade, Alayo Dance Company, Grrrl Brigade, and from Columbia, Nemacatacoa Teatro, with music and poetry by Verbo*Bala and Hojarasca*

When: Saturday, August 24 * Show, 5pm; Gates, 2pm

Where: Dance Brigade's Dos Rios Retreat Center

Dos Rios Road, Dos Rios CA (between the towns of Covelo and Laytonville in Mendocino County)

Exact address and directions will be emailed once tickets are purchased

Tickets: \$25 general, \$15 youth * www.brownpapertickets.com or 1-800-838-3006

For more information: www.dancemission.com * 415-826-4441

*"In an age overrun with art as a cold, slick, commodity, the **Dance Brigade's** work remains the real thing." – Dance Magazine*

*"The true magic of (**Carpetbag's**) performance was not in the acrobatics or feats of strength and movement. It was in the beautiful building of tension and anticipation... 'Mesmerizing' is the word that come to mind, but that would be a crime of understatement." – Flagstaff Live*

(June 2013) Known widely throughout Northern California, **Dance Brigade** is presenting its first ever Summer Feast, an outdoor dance theater extravaganza in rural Dos Rios, California. With a wide array of artists, this site-specific performance will include dance, taiko, stilt walking, political theater, and music. Featuring over forty artists, including international groups, the audience will be taken on a two-hour magical journey through the wooded landscape along the Eel River. Taking advantage of the beauty that the land has to offer, these diverse performers will look to the environment for their inspiration and guide the audience through their enchanted world of art, beauty, and sometimes challenging politics.

San Francisco-based **Dance Brigade** is celebrated for its scrumptious dancing, explosive Taiko, and delicious fun. The company explores the intersection between art and social politics with fierce inventiveness and deft comic touch. **Carpetbag Brigade** (Bay Area) and **Nemcatocoa** (Colombia) are two physical theater companies that use acrobatic stilts, modern dance, Butoh and Contact Improvisation to tell their tales. This international collaboration will include music and spoken word by **Hojarasa Andina** (Colombia) and **Verbo•Bala** (Arizona, by way of Mexico). Hojarasca plays contemporary music on traditional Andean music and Verbo•Bala mixes spoken word with

electronic music. This synthesis of two distinct musical groups creates a sound that is completely new and unique. **Alayo Dance Company** (Bay Area) fuses Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric and popular Cuban dance, attracting a diverse audience that includes devotees of both the contemporary and folkloric arts. **Grrrl Brigade** is Dance Brigade's daughter dance company; featuring dancers age 15 through 18. With the creation of the Grrrl Brigade, the Dance Brigade has revived choreography and adapted material to reflect current events.

About the artists:

KRISSY KEEFER / DANCE BRIGADE

Dance Brigade is biting, intellectual, insightful wit, and provocative originality. This dynamic multi-racial troupe of women proves that socially relevant dance can be technically brilliant, as well as exuberant with down-home hilarious fun. This company dances at full throttle. Artistic Director, **Krissy Keefer** explores the intersection between art and social issues with fierce inventiveness and a deft comic touch. Her content driven choreographies are a high-energy blend of ballet, modern dance, jazz, song, text, sign language and explosive Taiko drumming. The company has created over 12 full-length concerts of contemporary dance theater including Pandora's Box, Ballet of the Banshees, Cinderella, Queen of Sheba, Cave Women, Spell, The Revolutionary Nutcracker Sweetie and The Great Liberation Upon Hearing. For these productions, they received numerous grants and awards. Dance Brigade resides at Dance Mission Theater in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. At Dance Mission they operate a 140-seat theater, run three dance studios, offer adult and youth classes, produce groundbreaking events, and direct Grrrl Brigade, Dance Brigade's youth company.

In 1984, Krissy Keefer and Nina Fichter, original members of Wallflower Order, founded Dance Brigade to create and perform dance-theater that addresses the complex problems of contemporary American women. Together they developed a new kind of modern dance-theater that was stylistically rooted in martial arts, athleticism, and social justice. As the Wallflower Order's members went their separate ways, Keefer and Fichter created the Dance Brigade to carry forward their activist vision. Their original works continued to explore social issues such as war, poverty, breast cancer, women's history, death and dying, and spirituality from a feminist perspective.

In 1998, Dance Brigade began to operate Dance Mission at 24th and Mission Streets in San Francisco. At Dance Mission, they created an affordable 140-seat theater and rehearsal space for San Francisco dancers and artists. They expanded the Adult and Youth Dance Programs to include a full range of dance classes in Hip-Hop, Salsa, Bhangra, Brazilian, Bollywood, Afro-Haitian, modern, ballet and more. Some of the groundbreaking events Dance Brigade has presented and pioneered include the SkyDancers, Women on the Drum, Women Against War, and the Manifest!val for Social Change. Each year Dance Mission helps emerging artists launch their professional careers through the bi-annual Choreographers Showcase and the Down & Dirty Dance Series. In 2004, the Grrrl Brigade was formed as an intensive dance/leadership development program designed to provide high quality dance training, performance opportunities, and a sense of self-empowerment for San Francisco's girls ages 9 to 18. This program began with 10 girls and has now over 60 girls participating.

CARPETBAG BRIGADE

The Carpetbag Brigade's work is distinctive for its breadth and synthesis of disparate performance modalities, both inside of the US and as a cultural export to other countries. The company's work draws from acrobatic stilts, physical theater, modern dance, Butoh and Contact Improvisation.

During its formative years (1997-2003) based in the small town of Prescott, Arizona, The Carpetbag Brigade created eight major original shows and countless smaller pieces. Carpetbag productions exhibited a bold, experimental aesthetic, and were of all kinds: from street theater, to dance, to intimate indoor work, to site-specific outdoor shows, to mini-performances designed for festivals. The company also taught at a local high school and organized a free all-ages performance festival. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2003, The Carpetbag Brigade embarked on three annual four-month-long tours of both North and South America. In 2007 they were a company in residence at the Universal Forum of the Cultures in Monterrey, Mexico. In 2008 they performed three of their shows to critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Through 2009 and 2010 they returned to Mexico with their performance "The Vanishing Point" and in 2011 were sponsored by the US Embassy to tour their new production "Callings" to diverse street theater festivals in Colombia. During this time they also began an international collaboration with Nemcatacoa Teatro, which resulted in a return to Colombia in 2012 to participate in the Iberoamericano Festival. In 2012 they also returned to Monterrey, Mexico to collaborate in a performance with the local company "Pura Vibra" that was produced by the Festival Internacional de Santa Lucia. In 2013 they are hosting Nemcatacoa Teatro from Colombia for a tour of the United States with support from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Southern Exposure program.

By having a mission to present work in a diverse array of venues and environments The Carpetbag Brigade is an integrative cultural force that creates experiences for people of different cultural background to share common experiences in. In addition to performing, the company organizes workshops for international guest artists, conducts advanced skills workshops for performers, and through residencies, creates student performances with schools in diverse communities. By mixing the social mission of theater with high quality performance, The Carpetbag Brigade brings cutting edge, original work to audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and locales. By continuing to evolve the role of performance culture as an important aspect of global consciousness The Carpetbag Brigade is establishing itself as a unique cultural force in the United States and the world.

NEMCATACOA TEATRO

Nemcatacoa Teatro is based out of Colombia and was formed in 2000 as a way for youth to focus on the training, exploration and use of stilts as an instrument for the actor. Nemcatacoa investigates diverse technics of circus, dance and theater as part of their training. Since 2000 Nemcatacoa has created 11 spectacles, including parades, street theater plays, street interventions and circus performances.

In 2003 and 2004 the group participated in Cultura en Comun, performing "Color Games" and "Swan Song." Their active participation with the Colombian Network of Community Theater and other festivals has increased their presentations throughout the country. They have performed in Cuba, Ecuador and Mexico and presented their creations and develop pedagogical activities.

In 2009 the group visited Ecuador while touring with the R.I.T. (Theatrical Exchange Rout). At the end of that year the ensemble begin a sabbatical period and focussed on individual process in different areas of dance, theater, music, circus and community work. In 2010 director Nicolas Cifuentes studied with The Carpetbag Brigade Physical Theater in California and was invited to assist the direction of their performance, "Callings." In 2011 the group created "Landscape Re-Invention Society" and hosted the Carpetbag Brigade for an exchange laboratory. At the beginning of 2012 the XIII Iberoamerican Theater Festival of Bogota presented their new collaborative project between Carpetbag Brigade and NemcatocoaTeatro, "Dios de la Adrenalina".

VERBO•BALA

Verbo•bala explores border identity through nuanced storytelling and digital media, creating performance pieces composed of bilingual poetry, live video projection and sound design. Formed in Cuernavaca, Mexico in 2007, the group is currently based in Tucson, Arizona and considers the borderlands its home.

Described as "going for a poetry written without letters" by Mexico's national newspaper La Reforma, Verbo•bala's innovative practice has taken their work from Cuernavacan speakeasies to international venues including the National Hispanic Cultural Center, the Phoenix Art Museum, New York University, and the Poesía.en.Voz.Altá Festival in Mexico City.

HOJARASCA Música Andina

From Carmen de Viboral, Colombia, **Hojarasca** is a musical group that focuses on the technical interpretation of Andean music, including pre-hispanic music as well as the great variety of South American folklore. The group has performed in several festivals, as well as in plazas, bars and theaters.

ALAYO DANCE COMPANY

Alayo Dance Company was founded in 2001 by Cuban-born, **Ramón Ramos Alayo**. Ramos Alayo articulates his creative vision through a synthesis of Afro-Cuban modern, folkloric and popular Cuban dance. Alayo is the resident dance company of CubaCaribe. Alayo has grown an audience far more diverse than most Bay Area modern dance circuits, attracting devotees of both contemporary and folkloric arts. Alayo is known for tackling difficult issues such as slavery, racism and cancer, and since its inception has produced 12 evening-length productions that have received both critical and popular acclaim. They have performed throughout the San Francisco Bay Area at venues such as Theater Artaud, ODC Theater, Dance Mission Theater, Herbst Theater, Laney Theater, Sonoma Country Wine Theater, and La Peña Cultural Center, and have presented work in the Black Choreographer's Festival, The CubaCaribe Festival, and Intersection's Culture and Flow. In 2010 Alayo was one of the first American companies to ever perform at the Annual Festival del Caribe at Teatro Martí.

Alayo also performed at Teatro Mella in Havana, Cuba in July 2011. Alayo was featured in the article "Dance Across America" in National Geographic Magazine in 2006, and received the prestigious Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation's "Emerging Choreographer's Award" (2005) to develop his piece, Blood + Sugar. Ramos was nominated for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award nominee for the ensemble performance of Los Guedes, performed at CubaCaribe Festival (2006).

Ramos Alayo was recognized as "Best Dance Dynamo" in the SF Bay Guardian's "Best of the Bay 2009" and was the recipient of a SF Bay Guardian 2010 Goldie Award, hailed by dance critic Rita Felciano as "the best Afro-Cuban dancer whose choreography stands well beyond traditional modes."

GRRRL BRIGADE

Grrrl Brigade is Dance Brigade's daughter dance company; featuring dancers age ten through seventeen. With the creation of the Grrrl Brigade, the Dance Brigade has revived choreography and adapted material to reflect current events to teach to the girls. In May 2010, the girls performed a version of "On the Edge of the World, a People's History of the U.S." Dance Brigade originally performed this production in 1992 to mark the quincentennial of Columbus' voyage to the New World. The revival was to honor the late Howard Zinn who past away early 2010. In 2011 the girls performed, "Stand Up! A show of resistance" that examined issues of child abuse and domestic violence. The GRRRL Brigade is an intensive dance/leadership development program designed to provide high quality dance training, performance opportunities, and a sense of self-empowerment. Our goal is to give the girls, their parents, and our audience the inspiration, magic, and hope only evocative dance theater can spark in creating a just and peaceful world.

The girls are instructed by some of the San Francisco Bay Area's leading dance and taiko artists. They take weekly classes in Modern-Jazz, Afro-Cuban Modern, Hip Hop and Taiko (Japanese drumming) from September to May and are encouraged to create their own choreography. The GRRRL Brigade performs around the Bay Area and Ukiah. Each year they present "The Revolutionary Nutcracker Sweetie: The Kidz Version", an alternative take on the holiday classic presented at Brava Theater; and a spring show at Dance Mission Theater written and choreographed by Dance Brigade staff and the girls, focusing on issues facing girls today and honoring great women past and present.

The GRRRL Brigade was founded in 2004 by Dance Brigade to extend its mission of building community through the arts by creating and teaching dance-theater that explores complex issues confronting contemporary Americans. The program originally for girls 13 - 18 years received such great support and encouragement from the families and our audiences that in 2006 we expanded to include girls 9 - 12 years old. Starting with 10 girls in 2004, we currently now have over 50 participants.

CALENDAR LISTING

Please note: Hi-res jpegs are available upon request and are online at dancemission.com

What: Summer Feast
A site-specific work of dance, taiko, stilt walking, music and political theater in the enchanted hills of Northern California

When: Saturday, August 24, 5pm
Show begins at 5:30, audience should arrive no later than 5pm; Gates open at 2pm

Where: Dance Brigade's Dos Rios Retreat Center, Dos Rios Road, Dos Rios (between the towns of Covelo and Laytonville in Mendocino County)
Exact address and directions will be emailed once tickets are purchased

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