

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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In CELEBRATION of Halloween and Day of the Dead

**DANCE MISSION THEATER** presents **DANCE BRIGADE'S** highly celebrated dance/drama

***The Great Liberation Upon Hearing***

a journey through the Bardo via the Tibetan Book of the Dead

October 28-30: Friday & Saturday at 7:30pm; Sunday at 6pm

*Sunday, October 30 is a benefit for Tara Mandala Retreat Center and features guest artist Jennifer Berezan and a 4pm silent auction.*

Dance Mission Theater: 3316 24<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Tickets: \$23-\$30 Fri-Sat; \$15-\$50 Sun

Box Office: [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com) or 1-800-838-3006

Information: [www.dancemission.com](http://www.dancemission.com) or 415-826-4441

Conceived, Written, and Directed by: Krissy Keefer

Additional Choreographic Contributions: Sarah Shelton Mann in collaboration with the performers

Video and Set Design: Matthew De Gumbia

Music: Flor Van Herreweghe

Film: Ellen Bruno

“This amazing take on the Tibetan Book of the Dead is a stunning theatrical venture.”

[ballet.co.uk](http://ballet.co.uk), 2009

“The dancing is profuse, varied, and expert.” Allan Ulrich

“Choreographer Krissy Keefer is a rabble-rouser...at the helm of issue-oriented performance for the past two decades.” San Francisco Weekly, 2009

**(September 2016)** In celebration of Halloween and Day of the Dead, San Francisco's cutting-edge **Dance Brigade** returns with its highly acclaimed *The Great Liberation Upon Hearing*, a multi-media dance/drama that explores death and dying based on the Bardo Experience as depicted in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Artistic Director **Krissy Keefer** follows the journey as laid out in the book *Bardo Thodol*, which is read to the dead while they are in the state between death and reincarnation. By providing a verbal guide to the deceased, this tradition shows how to use the moment of death to attain liberation and help the departed with reincarnation into the next life. The unique work, which combines contemporary dance, theater, Taiko drumming, and video, will be presented at **Dance Mission Theater October 28-30** at a time when the veil between the worlds of life and death is especially thin.

Krissy Keefer in collaboration with Sarah Shelton Mann and the dancers created original choreography that is fueled with intense style and structure. The stage set and video are by longtime Dance Brigade collaborator Matthew De Gumbia. He and esteemed lighting designer Harry Rubeck have created a translucent visual component depicting luminous images that transform the scenes from a fiery hell to a pure celestial land. Original music is by Flor Van Herreweghe, songs are by Elaine Buckholtz, and Taiko composition is by Bruce "Mui" Ghent.

Premiered in 2009 in San Francisco and later presented at DTW in NYC, Laney College in Oakland, Mendocino College in Ukiah, and at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the work won critical acclaim, and was summed up by the writer for Culture Vulture, who raved: "Krissy Keefer created a multi-media ecstatic revel. The dancers are exuberant and remarkable, taking many roles, performing with high energy and acrobatic skill."

The Tibetan Book of the Dead, whose actual title is *The Great Liberation upon Hearing in the Intermediate State or Bardo Thodol*, is traditionally believed to be the work of the legendary Padma Sambhava in the 8th century A.D., considered to be one of the first persons to bring Buddhism to Tibet. The book acts as a guide for the dead during the state that intervenes death and the next rebirth. It is a guide that is read aloud to the dead while they are in the state between death and reincarnation in order for them to recognize the nature of their mind and attain liberation from the cycle of rebirth. The *Bardo Thodol* teaches that once awareness is freed from the body, it creates its own reality, as one would experience in a dream. This dream occurs in various phases (bardos) in ways both wonderful and terrifying. Overwhelming peaceful and wrathful visions and deities appear. Since the deceased's awareness is in confusion from no longer being connected to the physical body, it needs help and guidance in order that enlightenment and liberation occur. The *Bardo Thodol* teaches how we can attain Nirvana by recognizing the heavenly realms.

Company director Krissy Keefer has indeed has personal experience with the *Bardo Thodol*. "I had the good fortune and responsibility," she noted, "to read the Great Liberation to two of my closest friends after they passed away within a year of each other. Reading the book every day to them was very helpful for my own recovery around their passing. I hoped that it helped them. In this time when death is around every corner both on the personal level and on the grand scale of major eco systems collapsing, I find this material critical to my own mental health."

The performance on Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> will benefit the Tara Mandala Retreat Center and will feature singer/songwriter extraordinaire Jennifer Berezan. A silent auction will also be held that day starting at 4pm with great items and food.

#### **ABOUT DANCE BRIGADE**

Founded in 1984 by Nina Fichter and Krissy Keefer, Dance Brigade's mission is to engage diverse communities and artists in the exploration of contemporary social issues by creating, producing, and teaching feminist and multicultural dance/theatre. To implement their mission, Dance Brigade operates the 135-seat Dance Mission Theater, supports a six-member women's dance company, produces a series of annual events showcasing established and emerging Bay Area choreographers, and conducts an instructional dance program for both adults and youth.

#### **ABOUT TARA MANDALA**

Tara Mandala is an international Vajrayana Buddhist community with its home base at 7,500 feet above sea level in the mountains of Pagosa Springs, Colorado. It is guided by Lama Tsultrim Allione, author of *Women of Wisdom* and *Feeding Your Demons*. Lama Tsultrim has studied Tibetan Buddhism under traditional teachers for more than 45 years. Today, opportunities for quiet contemplation are rare, and places dedicated to long-term retreat are even more scarce. Meditation has a profound effect on the individual and its benefits emanate into the rest of the world.

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS**

**WHAT:** *The Great Liberation Upon Hearing*

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**WHEN:** **October 28-30: Friday & Saturday at 7:30pm; Sunday at 6pm**

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**WHERE:** **Dance Mission Theater**, 3316 24<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 (across from the 24<sup>th</sup> Street BART Station)

**TICKETS:** **\$23-\$30** Fri-Sat; **\$15-\$50** Sun

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