

*Dance Brigade*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press photos available upon request and online at [www.dancemission.com](http://www.dancemission.com)

Please contact for interviews and music/video

Dance Brigade presents

## **Women on the Move**

*A benefit concert for Grrrl Brigade featuring performances by legendary singers Holly Near and Gina Breedlove, as well as Dance Brigade and Grrrl Brigade*

**WHEN: Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 8pm**

*Lobby opens at 7pm for silent auction and raffle*

**WHERE: Brava Theater Center**

2781 24<sup>th</sup> Street (at York), SF CA 94110

**TICKETS: \$30 / \$25 / \$22 (\$15 - children under 10)**

[www.brava.org](http://www.brava.org)

**INFORMATION:** [www.dancemission.com](http://www.dancemission.com) \* 415-826-4441

(February 2014) **Holly Near** and **Gina Breedlove** join creative forces to support the growth and future of our youth through art and social change.

Respected around the world for her music and activism, Holly Near's joy and passion inspire people to join in her celebration of the human spirit. A warrior for the open heart, Gina Breedlove's signature Folksoul sound defies and redefines genre through a coalescence of rhythm and blues with storytelling cadences of folk and gospel that deeply empowers audiences. Musicians **Shelley Doty**, **Adrienne Torf** and **Jan Martinelli** are also appearing.

Together with **Dance Brigade** and **Grrrl Brigade** they present Women on the Move, a benefit for Dance Brigade's youth company Grrrl Brigade, which includes a silent auction and raffle. Join us as we celebrate the vitality of women and youth in the arts!

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

#### **HOLLY NEAR**

**Holly Near** is a singer - about that there is no doubt - and yet her remarkable career steered her course to become one of the most articulate and responsive social change artists of our time. Often cited as a founder of the Women's Music movement, Holly was one of the first women to create an independent record company, paving the way for outspoken women in the music world and working for peace and multicultural consciousness. The legacy of work she has created, unsurpassed in its depth, breadth and scope, stretches far beyond the mainstream music business. At the center of social change movements for the last forty years, Holly Near has inspired generations of artists and

world citizens to commit their hearts and talents to peace and justice. Building on 40 creative years and 30 recordings, Holly Near is respected around the world for her music and activism. Her joy and passion inspire people to join in her celebration of the human spirit. Equally compelling at her shows or through your speakers, her music fully engages listeners in the world around them.

### **GINA BREEDLOVE**

**Gina Breedlove** began her career at age 15 singing backup for Phyllis Hyman, toured as a featured vocalist with Harry Belafonte, and has since worked with such artists as Omar, Ani DiFranco, Sekou Sundiata, Craig Harris, Toshi Reagon, and Lizz Wright. She also originated the role of Sarabi in *The Lion King* on Broadway. The website *Blues and Soul* called her album *Open Heart* “a celebration of womanhood” and “a courageous stand.” Gina is a creative force, tender and vulnerable, dynamic and full of power. Folksoul is what Gina Breedlove calls her signature sound. Think of classic rhythm and blues spiced with a big dash of folk and gospel.

### **DANCE BRIGADE**

**Dance Brigade** is celebrated for its biting, intellectual, insightful wit, and provocative originality. The dynamic multi-racial troupe of women proves that socially relevant dance can be technically brilliant, as well as exuberant with down-home hilarious fun. 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.

Dance Brigade recently toured to NYC and Havana in 2011 and to Cairo and Beirut in 2012. In 2011 Dance Brigade celebrated 35-years of female-driven art with a show called "From the Wallflower Order To Dance Brigade" and presented a weekend of free performance and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Dance Brigade just closed a four-week sold out run of Hemorrhage: An Ablution of Hope and Despair. Dance Brigade also operates the Artist Retreat Center in Dos Rios, Mendocino County where they produce performances and workshops and provide space for artist residencies.

### **GRRRL BRIGADE**

The **GRRRL Brigade** (Best All Around Grrrl Power, SFBG 2012) is 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. The 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 presented in the summer season. The GRRRL Brigade performs around the Bay Area each year, including "The Revolutionary Nutcracker Sweetie: The Kidz Version," an alternative take on the holiday classic, and "Peace On Earth and Justice For All," a new winter show presented at Brava Theater. In the Spring they perform an original show at Dance Mission Theater, written and choreographed by Dance Brigade staff in collaboration on the students that focuses on issues facing girls today, as well as honoring great women past and present.

The GRRRL Brigade was founded in 2004 by the Dance Brigade to expand on Dance Brigade's mission to build community through the arts by creating and teaching dance-theater that explores the complex issues that confront contemporary Americans.

## **CALENDAR LISTING**

Please note: Hi-res jpegs are available upon request and are online at [dancemission.com](http://dancemission.com)

### **What:**

*Women on the Move*

A benefit concert for Grrrl Brigade featuring Holly Near, Gina Breedlove, Dance Brigade and Grrrl Brigade

### **When:**

March 28<sup>th</sup> at 8pm

*Lobby opens at 7pm for silent auction and raffle*

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Brava Theater Center

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### **Tickets:**

\$15-\$30

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