

For Immediate Release

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Dance Brigade presents

Voluspa: A Ghost Dance for 2012

A two-night ritual dance performance that pays tribute to past and present struggles and works towards renewal. Featuring work by Dance Brigade, Grrrl Brigade, NAKA Dance Theater, Danza Xitlalli, John Jota Leños and others. Each evening ends with a healing circle led by Vicki Noble and Carolyn Brandy.

December 19-20, 2012; Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30pm

Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th Street, San Francisco CA 94110
415-826-4441; www.dancemission.com

Tickets are \$12-\$20 sliding scale and are available at www.brownpapertickets.com



Dance Brigade / Debbie Smith

(San Francisco, CA – November 2012) **Dance Brigade**, Krissy Keefer's witty and provocative dance company, is pleased to announce ***Voluspa: A Ghost Dance for 2012***, a ritual dance performance that explores/marks the 2012 end of the world/regeneration prophesy found in many cultures and articulated perhaps most explicitly and famously by the Mayan calendar. Whether it be the Mayan, the Hopi, the Norse, the Book of Revelation, Wovoka, or contemporary climate scientists, many cultures have the destruction/regeneration story rooted deeply in their mythology. Though prophesy and truth-telling a diverse group of artists will come together over the course of two evenings to acknowledge and pay tribute to past and present struggles and work towards renewal, bringing our current tumultuous times starkly into focus. Dance Brigade will host the two-night ritual performance at Dance Mission Theater in San Francisco (December 19-20), with the final evening lasting until 12:30am so that together artists and audience members can mark December 21st, 2012, the winter solstice and end of the Mayan calendar.

Krissy Keefer curated the mixed program, conceived as a woven tapestry of soothsaying through dance and music, to bring attention to current social issues. Highlights include: pre-Columbian dances by **Danza Xitlalli** and **Popoka'tepetl**; **Debby Kajiyama** and **Jose Navarrete's** ironic and satirical **NAKA**

Dance Theater, who will take the audience outside the theater and to the BART plaza to display the effects of climate change - and the plight of the polar bear; dances from **John Jota Leños**' hybrid Day of the Dead opera, *Imperial Silence*, whose chilling - and hysterical - message of anti-imperialism is told through live Mexican Folkloric dance and video animation; spoken word and house dance by **Nicole Klaymoon** that addresses the historical atrocity of violence against women and Pachamama; and the **Grrrl Brigade**, who will present a contemporary Native American Ghost Dance to the rock classic anthem by the same name. Each evening will end with a healing circle led by **Vicki Noble** and **Carolyn Brandy**. (Please see end of release for each evening's full line-up.)

Dance Brigade will also premiere a new work entitled *Voluspa*, which is based on the Norse prophesy of the Volva. This is the first and best-known poem of the Poetic Edda and tells the story of how Oddin, the chief of the gods, speaks to a Volva (a female magician/wise woman) who tells him of the creation of the earth as well as its inevitable destruction and rebirth. Krissy Keefer weaves text and modern dance together in her signature style of dance-theater to share this story.

Krissy Keefer was inspired to curate this event after learning about the Ghost Dance. The Ghost Dance has been incorporated into many Native American belief systems and is a ceremony for the regeneration of the Earth and subsequently the restoration of Earth's caretakers to their former life of bliss. Often called the *round dance* or *prophet dance*, it is performed in 'the round' and frequently includes intermission of trance, exhortations and prophesying. The movement began with a dream by a man named Wovoka and reached its peak the late 19th century when the devastation of the buffalo and massacre of Native Americans was most rampant. Says Keefer, "*The artist as truth-teller, the dancer as recaller of ancestors who will then help guide us, is seen repeatedly. We are inspired by the way dance has been used to summon strength and manifest change in times of hardship throughout history.*"

Dance Brigade has a long history of creating broad, multicultural performances with success and integrity. Most notable are *The Revolutionary Nutcracker Sweetie*, which featured over 500 artists in its ten year history, *The Manifestival for Social Change*, which showcased over 40 artists from a variety of traditions, *Good Bye Columbus*, that marked the 500 year anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the Americas, and the first-ever CubaCaribe Festival.

PROGRAM ONE – December 19th @ 7:30pm

Featuring works by Dance Brigade, Grrrl Brigade, Dances from *Imperial Silence: A Dead Opera in Four Acts*, NAKA Dance Theater, Popoka'tepetl, Nicole Klaymoon, MamaCoatl, Vicki Noble / Carolyn Brandy Transformational Healing Circle

PROGRAM TWO – December 20th @ 7:30pm

Featuring work by Dance Brigade, Grrrl Brigade, Xitalli, NAKA Dance Theater, Sarah Bush Dance Project, Nicole Klaymoon, Anne Bluethenthal and Dancers, Arenas Dance Company, Vicki Noble / Carolyn Brandy Transformational Healing Circle (Please note that on Thursday the healing circle will go until 12:30 a.m., so that together we can mark December 21st 2012, the winter solstice and end of the Mayan calendar.)

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: Dance Brigade presents *Voluspa: A Ghost Dance for 2012*; a mixed program that features work by Dance Brigade, Grrrl Brigade, NAKA Dance Theater, John Jota Leños, Danza Xitlalli, Arenas Dance Company and others.

WHEN: December 19-20, 2012; Wednesday and Thursday @ 7:30pm
(Please note that on Thursday, December 20th the evening will finish with a healing circle that will go until 12:30am so that together we can mark December 21st, the winter solstice and the end of the Mayan calendar).

WHERE: Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th St, San Francisco, CA 94110

TICKETS: \$12-\$20 sliding scale available at www.brownpapertickets.com

INFORMATION: www.dancemission.com; 415-826-4441



NAKA Dance Theater / Kim Anno

SELECTED ARTISTS BIOS

KRISSY KEEFER / DANCE BRIGADE

Dance Brigade is sumptuous dancing, 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 10 full-length concerts of contemporary dance theater including Pandora's Box, Ballet of the Banshees, Cinderella, Queen of Sheeba, 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 in the heart of the Mission District in San Francisco at Dance Mission Theater, where they operate a 140-seat theater, dance studios, adult and youth classes, Grrrl Brigade and produce groundbreaking events.

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. Artistic Director Krissy Keefer co-founded the Wallflower Order in 1975 as the nation's first feminist dance company. Wallflower toured the nation for almost a decade, and staged many original pieces before large, enthusiastic, and predominantly feminist audiences. 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.

Krissy Keefer has a long history of collaborating with a wide array of artists, companies and non-arts community groups. In the highly successful 2002 & 2008 productions of Women Against War at the Herbst Theater, she brought together prominent feminist activists, veteran feminist musicians, both established and emerging dance companies, and Grrrl Brigade. In 2006, Dance Brigade performed as the Greek chorus in San Jose Repertory Theatre's production Euripides's anti-war play, Iphigenia at Aulis, directed by Timothy Near. Keefer served as co-director and choreographer for this production. In 2008, she also worked with feminist scholars and students in the New College Women's Spirituality

Masters' Program and with Quan Yin Healing Arts Center to create "The Valencia Street Project," honoring 30 years of local feminist history and institution building through original dance theater and public education events. Keefer's latest work on death and dying was a fiery interpretation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead called *The Great Liberation Upon Hearing*. The performances were enthusiastically received by sold out audiences at both Dance Mission in February 2009, at Laney College in Oakland in November 2009, Dance Theater Workshop in New York in July 2011 and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco in November 2011 as part of Dance Brigade's 35th Anniversary Season. Dance Brigade was recently a guest artist in the Spring Festival, performing in Cairo, Egypt and Beirut, Lebanon in May 2012.

GRRRL BRIGADE

Grrrl Brigade is Dance Brigade's daughter dance company; featuring dancers age ten through seventeen. and was recently awarded "Best All-Around Grrrl Power" by the SF Bay Guardian. 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. Other celebrated works include Stand Up! A Show of Resistance! (2011) and Gaia Grrrls (2012).

JOHN JOTA LEANOS (IMPERIAL SILENCE, Director)

John Jota Leños is a social art practitioner who utilizes all and any media to engage in diverse cultural arenas. His practice includes a range of new media, public art, installation and performance focusing on the convergence of memory, social space and decolonization. His work has been shown at the Sundance 06 Film Festival, the 2002 Whitney Biennial in New York, the SF Museum of Modern Art, Musuem of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and MIT. Leños is a Creative Capital Foundation Grantee and a Guggenheim Fellow and a United States Artist Fellow and has been an artist in residence at UCSB, Carnegie Mellon, and the Headlands Center for the arts. He currently teaches at UCSC.

Imperial Silence: A Dead Opera in Four Acts looks at the cultural toboos around death, silence and dissent that fuses dark, humored animation with Mexican folkloric dance, Mariachi music, hip hop, bossa nova and blues.

NAKA DANCE THEATER / JOSE NAVARRETE

Jose Navarrete is a native of Mexico City. He studied theater at the National Actors Association's Institute Soler and dance at the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico. He also has a B.A. in Anthropology from UC Berkeley. José's choreographic work has been presented by the Bay Area Dance Series, the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival, Summerfest, Theater Artaud, ODC Theater, Counterpulse and Dance Mission Theater, and has received numerous grants, awards and residencies. Navarrete has also performed with Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theater, June Watanabe In Company, Pearl Ubungen Dancers and Musicians, Shakiri/Rootworkers, and Sara Shelton Mann/Contraband. Navarrete currently teaches dance at Berkeley High School and directs Navarrete x Kajiyama (NAKA) Dance Theater with co-conspirator Debby Kajiyama.

NICOLE KLAYMOON

Nicole Klaymoon, Artistic Director-Founder of **EMBODIMENT PROJECT**, received a B.A. in

dance from UCLA. Her one-woman show, "The Sixth Vowel," directed by Kamilah Forbes and choreographed by Rennie Harris, was performed at various venues and events across the country and Europe including the Hip-Hop Theater Festival in New York and DC, Miami Project Hip-Hop, Illadelph Legends of Hip-Hop Festival in Philadelphia and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Klaymoon is currently is on faculty in the dance department at Marin Academy, and hosted the REBIRTH, a street dance event sponsored by Ford Foundation and La Peña Cultural Center. EMBODIMENT PROJECT (EP) performed their first original work, "Bloodline," at the Left Coast Leaning Festival at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Dance Mission Theater collaborating with renown vocalist, Valerie Truitt. Other celebrated evening-length shows include Of Her Rib (2011) and House of Matter (2012). The Embodiment Project strives to distill emotion from art by incorporating street dance, spoken-word, theater, and song to express personal and poignant narrative. As part of a new generation of artists that work in urban dance forms, Klaymoon not only pays tribute to the forgotten struggles of pioneering African-American street dancers but also promotes a visionary perspective on tradition.

ARENAS DANCE COMPANY

Arenas Dance Company is a Cuban folkloric and popular dance company directed by Cuban-born **Susana Arenas Pedroso**. Arenas Dance Company has performed throughout the United States and local performances have included the SF Ethnic Dance Festival (2006, 2007), CubaCaribe (2005, 2006, 2012) and various colleges such as Chico State and Stanford. Susana began her artistry in dance at age 12 when she took the opportunity to study at the Casa de Cultura in Matanzas, Cuba and began dancing professionally with Terra Virgen in 1991. In 1994 she joined the world renowned Riaces Profundas as a soloist. After settling in the Bay Area, she merged her two former companies (Olorun and Sandunga Cubana) into Arenas Dance Company (2004), a company with a commitment to sharing Cuban culture in an accessible form to a wide audience.

DANZA XITLALLI

Danza Xitlalli is San Francisco's oldest Aztec dance group and is currently under the direction of **Macuil Xochitl**.

ANNE BLUETHENTHAL / ANNE BLUETHENAL AND DANCERS (ABD PRODUCTIONS)

Anne Bluethenthal, M.F.A. is founder and Artistic Director of **ABD Productions**. Winner of the SF Bay Guardian's 1996 Goldie Award for Dance, she has been choreographing, performing, and teaching in the Bay Area since she arrived in 1982. She created and directed the full length dances Fish Can Sing ('90), Connections ('92), Excavations of the Spirit ('94), and The Heart is a Live Thing ('03) and has collaborated extensively with Bay Area theater, dance, and music artists. She co-founded the SF Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival and recently created the Dancing the Mystery series. Anne has been teaching her unique approach to dance technique for over 20 years, is on the faculties of New College of California's Creative Inquiry and Women's Spirituality programs and the Academy of Art University of SF's Acting program. Certified by both the North American and London Societies for Teachers of the Alexander Technique, Bluethenthal maintains a private practice in the Alexander Technique.

MAMACOATL

MamaCoatl is a barrio songstress, poet, performance activist, and spiritual healer who comes from the Yaqui people of the Sonora desert. Based in the Mission district, her work explores sound, ritual and cultural activism as power sources for public health. MamaCoatl received an M.A. in Women

Spirituality from New College of California and MFA in Creative Inquiry. In 2006 MamaCoatl brought International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls to San Francisco after performances in Mexico and Peru. The event has become an annual celebration of healing and nonviolence including sixteen days of action, “artivism,” healing and education in the Mission district’s community.

CAROLYN BRANDY

Carolyn Brandy has been drumming for over 40 years. She has been instrumental in bringing women to the spirit and healing of the Drum. Carolyn is the Artistic Director of Women Drummers International and co-creator of the Born to Drum Women’s Drum Camp. She was the founder of the Bay Area’s favorite marching band, Sistah Boom in 1981. In 1976, Carolyn co-founded the popular band, Alive! That toured the nation for almost ten years and has four recordings to its credit. She has worked in the Bay Area for many years as a composer, performer, teacher and cultural worker. She is an expert in the folkloric drumming styles found throughout the island of Cuba and is a practitioner of the Yoruba-based religion, Regla de Ocha.

VICKI NOBLE

Vicki Noble is a feminist shamanic healer, author, scholar and wisdom teacher. In the 1970s she created, graduated with honors from, and subsequently taught in, the first women's interdisciplinary studies program at Colorado College. Noble worked for many years with archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, and has lectured and taught at the graduate level, both in the United States and abroad, on female shamanism and the healing arts. She has written several books, developed a ritual healing process, and led tours of women on pilgrimage to sacred Goddess sites around the world, including to Peru, Ireland, England, Bali, Malta, Greece, Turkey, Egypt and the Aegean Islands. She currently teaches at the California Institute of Integral Studies.



Imperial Silence / Gordon Huang