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**7th Annual CubaCaribe Festival**  
***La Tierra de Arará***  
**Celebrates the Dance & Music of the Afro-Caribbean**

**3 weeks of dance, music, master classes & special events**  
**May 13-15, Dance Mission Theater, SF**  
**May 20-22, Malonga Casquelourd Center, Oakland**  
**May 26-28, Laney College Theater, Oakland**

*Performances: Fridays-Saturdays @ 8pm; Sundays @ 7pm.*  
*Family matinee with discount pricing @3pm Sunday May 22*

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(San Francisco, March 16) **The Seventh Annual CubaCaribe Festival**, the acclaimed annual folkloric and contemporary dance and music extravaganza, returns for three exuberant weekends in May. Dance and music, master classes, lectures, films and special events explore the culture, religion, history, *folklorica* and politics of the Afro-Caribbean cultural Diaspora.

CubaCaribe, enthusiastically embraced by the Bay Area's large and diverse Cuban, Haitian, Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean community, is the only festival of its kind in Northern California devoted to the dance and music of the Afro-Caribbean. The first weekend's performances (May 13-15) take place at San Francisco's Dance Mission Theater. CubaCaribe then moves for the first time to the East Bay to perform at Oakland's Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Performing Arts (May 20-22) and Laney College Theater (May 26-28).

This year's theme, ***La Tierra de Arará***, The Land of the Arará, acknowledges the unique culture that traveled with slaves from the Dahomey region (now Benin) of West Africa to Cuba, Haiti and Brazil during the transatlantic slave trade. Arará traditions still thrive in Cuba, especially in Matanzas, but they are not widely practiced or known elsewhere. In choosing this year's theme, CubaCaribe artistic director Ramon Ramos Alayo set out to explore Arará music and movement, with a focus on the tenacity of the culture and the powerful ways in which dance, rhythm, and song have carried enduring stories across continents and generations.

## **Week 1 : LA TIERRA : DESCENDANTS OF THE DAHOMEY**

**May 13-15. Dance Mission Theatre, 24<sup>th</sup> & Mission, SF**

**Mixed program**

Friday May 13, 8 pm - Saturday May 14, 8pm - Sunday May 15, 7pm

**Colette Eloi and El Wah Movement**, an Oakland based Haitian group.

Colette has performed across the US, Spain, Cuba and the south of France as a dancer/choreographer with various groups including Petit Le Croix, Reconnect, Dimensions Dance Theatre, Nuba, Ropa y Raja Peruvian Dance and Beya's Brazilian Dance Company. She founded El Wah Movement in 2005, which means Movement of the Soul. Along with presenting traditional Haitian folkloric dance, the troupe presents fusion pieces using traditional African movements to create choreography that applies to modern life.

**Danys "La Mora" Pérez's Oyu Oro** performed in CubaCaribe 2008 and was asked by our audiences to return. Originally from Santiago de Cuba, La Mora is an internationally renowned master of Afro-Cuban folkloric dance who specializes in Cuban dance from *el Oriente* (the eastern part of Cuba), which has a heavy Haitian influence due to the large influx of Haitians during the Haitian Revolution. In 1994, she was granted the designation of *primera bailarina* and *primera profesora* by the National Dance Commission in Cuba, and has since taught in Italy, Spain, France, Canada, and the United States. La Mora currently teaches Afro Cuban dance classes at The Alvin Ailey Extension program and attends dance programs and workshops as a guest instructor and choreographer. She is founder and artistic director of Oyu Oro, the Afro-Cuban Experimental Dance Ensemble in New York City

## **Week 2 : EL AGUA : TRANSATLANTIC TONGUES**

**May 20-22. Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Performing Arts, 1428 Alice Street, Oakland.**

**Mixed program**

Friday May 20, 8pm- Saturday May 21, 8pm- Sunday May 22, 3pm

**Marc Bamuthi Joseph** (Haitian-American spoken word artist and lecturer) is artistic director of the HBO documentary "Brave New Voices" and an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists' Fellowship. His performance piece *red black and GREEN: a blues* engages the eco-equity movement in Black neighborhoods across America, premiering at Yerba Buena Center this fall. He also is co-writing a narrative score for the Chicago Jazz Ensemble with Amiri Baraka.

**Agua Da Bahia** (Afro-Brazilian) was founded in 1999 by Bahia native Tania Santiago, who is Artistic Director and Choreographer. Music Director is master candomble drummer Gamo Da Paz. Artistic and Musical direction is also provided by Emiliano Benevides. The company is known for revealing and preserving the deep roots of Afro Brazilian traditions in Brazil's northeastern states. The rich, multi-layered culture of displaced Africans, Indigenous peoples, and Europeans is celebrated through dance, song, and music.

**Grupo Experimental Nagó** with Artistic Direction by Temistocles Betancourt of eastern Cuba's *Ballet Folklorico de Oriente*. A native of Santiago de Cuba, Temi became a member of the renowned Ballet Folklorico de Oriente in 1978. For thirty years he danced professionally with the company, performing throughout Cuba, the Caribbean, Mexico, Spain, Italy, Russia, and Africa. Temi danced as primer bailarín from 1979 to 2000 and worked as choreographer and professor with the company until 2000, when he became assistant director.

**Muriel Johnson** is an early childhood educator and storyteller, specializing in multi-cultural folk tales for children.

**Liberation Dance Theater**, directed by Jacinta Vlach, is a dance-theater collective rooted in ideologies of social change through artistic expression and community outreach. Jacinta Vlach began her dance training with Reginald Ray-Savage and furthered her studies at North Carolina School of the Arts and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Liberation Dance Theater draws upon movement from the Latin/African Diaspora, contemporary, and urban vernacular to reinvent rituals, eras, and social movements.

**Yagbe Awolowo Onilu** is a master drummer, singer, and teacher of African diaspora musical culture. First introduced at the age of eight to African drumming and percussion ensemble music in his birthplace of Cayes, Haiti, he has studied with world-renowned drummers and sacred religious personages, including Ladj Camara, Famudou Konate Faduba Oulare, CK Ladzekpo, Toumanie Diabate and Esteban "Chacha" Bacallao. He has studied throughout Africa and the Caribbean, conducting numerous research and residences in Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Cuba. Since moving to California in 1976, he has performed with Dimensions Dance Theatre, The African Music and Dance Ensemble, Fua Dia Congo, Ceedo Senegalese Dance Company, Balle Saba, Nuba Dance Theatre, Beatriz Ross Cultural Ensemble and Bantaba.

### **Week 3 : LA ORILLA : LOSS & ACCEPTANCE**

**May 26-28. Laney College Theater, 900 Fallon St, Oakland.**

#### **Alayo Dance Company World Premiere**

Thursday May 26, 8pm- Friday May 27, 8pm- Saturday May 28, 8pm

**Alayo Dance Company**, Cuba Caribe's resident dance company, unveils a new work, *Grief* (2011) exploring the physical, spiritual and material losses in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in relation to war, immigration, natural disaster, and economic downturn. The award-winning Cuban-born dancer/choreographer and Company Director Ramon Ramos Alayo considers what psychologist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross refers to as The Five Stages of Grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The resultant dance work, performed by **Alayo**, will be the culminating highlight of the Festival on the final weekend performed at Laney College Theatre. The company will also re-visit *La Madre*, which they premiered in 2005 as a tribute to Ramos' mother.

#### **Special Events:**

A series of lectures and classes allow audiences to examine more critically the themes viewed on stage, and to visit a cultural/spiritual world that is often hidden or exoticized. Classes and lectures will be given by master local artists Yagbe Onilu and Michael Spiro as well as by invited teachers Danys "La Mora" Pérez from New York, Kati Hernandez from Los Angeles, and Silfredo La O from San Diego. The full schedule of performances and events can be viewed at [www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org)

#### **Tickets**

\$20 online at [Brownpapertickets.com](http://Brownpapertickets.com)

\$24 at door & by phone, Box Office: 415-273-4633

\$12 children at all shows, age 12 and younger

Family Matinee May 22 at 3 pm, \$10 children 12 and under, \$17 adults

\$55, a three- ticket festival package - one per weekend

**Please call to arrange interviews. Hi res downloadable photos, a full schedule of events and artist biographies available at [www.cubacaribe.org/festival7.html](http://www.cubacaribe.org/festival7.html)**



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## **CALENDAR LISTING of PERFORMANCES**

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**WHAT: 7<sup>th</sup> Annual CubaCaribe Festival of Dance and Music: *La Tierra de Arará***, three weeks of dynamic performances and events by master artists from Cuba and the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, including the Bay Area.

**WHEN:** Fridays – Sundays, May 13-28 at various times (schedule at [www.cubacaribe.org](http://www.cubacaribe.org))

**WHERE:**

**Week 1: May 13 to 15**, Dance Mission Theater, 3316-24th Street, San Francisco).

**Week 2: May 20-22**, Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Performing Arts, 1428 Alice Street, Oakland

**Week 3: May 26-28**, Laney College Theater, 900 Fallon St., Oakland.

**TICKETS:** \$10-\$24, [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com) or at the door.

Box Office: 415-273-4633

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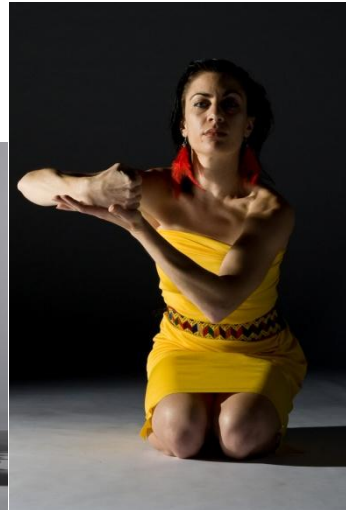


Photo Credits-L to R: Lauri Anderson, Djenane Saint Juste, & Jacinta Vlach, Photos by Ausin Forbord

Additional HiRes photos available at <http://www.cubacaribe.org/festival7.html> and [http://www.quinn-assoc.com/neqa\\_campaigns.php](http://www.quinn-assoc.com/neqa_campaigns.php)