



## The Festival of South African Dance



Monday, November 13, 11am & 1:30pm  
Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley

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# How to use this Engagement Guide

If you have photos or lesson plans to share, please let us know! Use #FestivalofSouthAfricanDance@cal

We invite you to challenge yourself and your students to think with the curiosity and passion of the arts. This engagement guide is organized around 4 key artistic practices (as identified by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards at <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>)

**Investigating:** Questioning, exploring and challenging.

**Imagining:** Opening the door to what's possible, and even to what seems impossible.

**Creating:** Making artistic choices with a work of art in mind.

**Connecting:** Reflecting on both process and product and making connections to other aspects of life and study.

You'll be able to link on specific subjects that you or your students may want more information about. The body of the Engagement Guide invites exploration before and after the performance, giving each student tools to make personal and meaningful connections during the show.

We've included a pre-performance engagement activity and a post-performance activity for artistic practice and reflection. By no means should you feel limited by these suggestions! Go, make art, learn more...and share your experiences where you can.

**Artistic Literacy:** Having the skills and knowledge you need to connect meaningfully with works of art—that's what we mean by artistic literacy. We think that means something different than knowing the names of all the different instruments musicians might play, or being able to reproduce the exact melodies you might hear during a show. To us at Cal Performances, it means you and your students will have a significant glimpse into the artistic process and will have a chance to try to solve the problems the artists aim to solve creatively. It means that the next time you see a performance, you'll be able to use these same insights to connect with a work of art through the artist's process and that this will deepen your experience as an audience member.

The artistically literate student audiences comes to understand that every artist draws from a core set of concepts skillfully chosen and applied in performance to create a work of art both unique to the artist, and connected to other works of art.

And along the way, we hope that students of all ages—and their teachers and adult mentors—will be inspired to experiment with artistic decision-making and creativity themselves.

**Enjoy the show!**

# Your ★ STARRING Role in the Theater



As an audience member, you are a STAR, too! You play an important role in the performance community. The artists need YOU in order to give you their best work.

## S.T.A.R. Audiences

**S = Support** the artists by being attentive and focusing on the performers.

**T = Tune in:** listen and watch for understanding (and for the Festival of South African Dance, watch for how the dancers use movements from their everyday life to tell a story about who they are, what they do, and how they feel.)

**A = Appreciate** the performers by clapping at the right time. For example, when a scene or dance ends, or when the stage lights fade to dark.

**R = Respect** the performers and other audience members. At a performance, you, the others in the audience and the artists are sharing this experience together and are part of a performance community. Think about ways you can best support the community's performance experience.

We know you will be a STAR today and will help you classmates shine too!

# About The Festival of South African Dance

## Festival of South African Dance featuring The Gumboots and Pantsula Dance Companies

Direct from Johannesburg, South Africa, two dynamic dance companies share the stage for a pulsating, rhythm-filled performance of urban street dance. Featuring 20 dancers with live musicians, the Gumboots and Pantsula Dance Companies use dance to respond to cultural and political issues in their communities by conveying real-life stories of hard work, human struggles, and longing for a better life.

Wearing Wellington boots, **Gumboots** dancers urgently pound the floor in a popular dance originally conceived by South African miners who used foot tapping to communicate underground when talking wasn't allowed.

**Pantsula** is rooted in urban street culture and uses the sounds of busy city life, house music, and technical dance moves akin to hip-hop and breakdancing to express social problems in hopes of spearheading change.

### Real Actions Pantsula Dance Company



Artistic Director: Sello Rueben Modiga.

Choreographer/Dancer: Sibusiso Mthembu

Dancers: Pule Ngcaba; David Mokale; Nkosana Mlauzi;  
Patrick Dhlamini

DJ/Sound Engineer: Vouks Nojokes

**Real Actions Pantsula** was established in 1992 by Sello Reuben Modiga. Modiga established the group after realizing the talent of young dancers in Orange Farm, a small town in South African outside of Johannesburg. They believe that a positive impact on their community, through their passion for dance, will revive the spirit of 'Ubuntu' – a word that in Zulu means "humanity." The group's

choreography, like many Pantsula dance companies in South African, consists of quick, syncopated stepping usually set to modern pop, electronic, techno, or deep house music. Historically, Pantsula dancing would evoke certain political overtones, speaking out against the Apartheid government, socio-economic injustice in South Africa, and even the AIDS epidemic. That freedom of expression dating back to the early 1980's has created an art form which is a proud expression of South African culture.





## Gumboots Dance Company

Dancers: Thanduxolo Mhlongo; Thulani Meyiwa; Katlego Makgopela; Mlingwa Mayo; Owen

Mabuza Bassist/Vocalist: Mtshantsha Sabata

Drummer: Philani Maphumulo

Vocalists: Nkosinathi Malinga; Sizwe Nkosi; Thabang Maremela

Djembe/Lead Vocalist: Siyabonga Hlatswayo

Director: Thapelo Motluong

***Stimela: The Gumboot Musical***, written and directed by critically acclaimed South African playwright Thapelo Gordon Motluong, tells a tale of rural African men who come by train from all walks of life in search of a better life in the “City of Gold,” Johannesburg. Life proves to be more challenging than they expected, and they endure difficult working conditions in the gold mines so they can send money back home. In a series of flashbacks, we learn about each man’s story through the eyes of Zakhele Ndlovu, a young Zulu man who leaves behind his mother and the love of his life, Buhle Zwane.

The story includes the history of Gumboot dancing, also known as “Isicathulo,” conceived by South African workers in the 1880’s who were forcibly transported by European settlers to mine for gold. The gold mines were often flooded, so the miners were given gumboots to protect their feet. Forbidden to speak to one another while they worked, they would communicate instead by jangling their ankle chains and making rhythms with their feet or bodies. Gumboot dancing uses the same types of movements and methods as a strong symbol of South African history and culture.

# Artistic Concept: Dance and Identity in Defiance of Oppression

Throughout history, in South Africa and in fact every country around the world, dance and music are part of resisting unjust laws and societies that try to keep all people from sharing equal rights and freedom. Dance allows both individuals and groups of people to make themselves strong, to show they are still independent in their own bodies, and to celebrate the positive aspects of being alive, even in the face of terrible oppression and racism. It's a way of asserting identity—"I am still here. I am part of a community, a group that is strong, creative, and passionate. I still have a voice even if my speaking voice has been shut down." It demonstrates resistance, makes a statement like: "You can take away everything from us, but you can't stop us from dancing and celebrating who we are."



Dance and music are also very healing. They connect us to people who are like us and they invite people who are not like us to celebrate our shared humanity. When dance and music are connected to our history that helps heal us too, reminding us that we are connected to our ancestors and all the people who have gone before us. Dance can also connect us to the rest of the world, when we allow influences from everywhere or anywhere to help us find our rhythm. Both Gumboot dance and Pantsula celebrate history, connection, resistance, and strength.

This photo above is a resistance Freedom March from South Africa, but it could just as easily be from the United States. Our country had a similar resistance to laws people felt were unfair and racist. The Civil Rights Movement (officially from 1954-1968, though civil rights protests are still happening today) was a time of many protests, and important leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, the "Little Rock Nine," James Meredith, Malcolm X, Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, and Stokely Carmichael.

Music played an important role in The Civil Rights Movement here, so important that Rutha Mae Harris, one of the original Civil Rights Freedom Singers, says, "Without songs of the movement, personally I believe there wouldn't have been a movement." She goes on: "We needed those songs to help us not to be fearful.... And you needed a calming agent, and that's what those songs were for us." Later, in the 1980s, many hip hop artists saw the power of their songs and dances to create a new form of social expression and personal identity as well. Dance and music have a long history of asserting identity even when societies try to shut them down.



# Engagement Activities

## ARTISTIC CONCEPT: WORDS & RHYTHMS

### Engagement Activity #1 (Pre-performance)

#### For 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up: Examining *Sof'Town* poem

Historical background: Sophiatown (So-fye-ah-town)

The importance of this town, and its history in the development of a South African cultural identity.

(See "South Africa" page 15 for background.)

#### For grades K-4/5: Exploring *Music of Africa* poem

Cultural Background: African Music

Africa's various countries, cultures and people are united by its songs and music. (See map of African continent on page 17 for images.)

#### Overview

Divide the poem among students, explore its words, message and rhythms, and enhance with body percussion, call and response and other artistic choices.

**Time needed: 30 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

#### Supplies and Prep

- For 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders: copies of *Sof'Town* poem (on page 10.)
- For grades K-4, copies of *Music of Africa* poem (on page 11.)
- Writing implements and paper

#### Instructions

#### Step 1 Read and understand the whole poem, *Old Sof'town* by Alfa Moolla (or *Music of Africa* by Wayne Visser for younger students.)

- Distribute copies of the poem, and read it aloud as students follow your voice.
- As a class (either in one voice, or with individual students reading various sections) read the poem out loud out loud again.
- Discuss the poem.
  - What images, thoughts, emotions does the poem bring up for you?
  - What rhythms do you hear in the poem?
  - Which lines lend themselves to call and response?
  - What gestures might accompany lines or words from the poem?





**Step 2 Assign stanzas to small groups.**

- a. In small groups of four or five, each group gets a stanza from the poem.
- b. Together, read through the poem again out loud.
- c. Decide how your group wants to perform it. Taking turns with lines? One leader reading and the group responding? Reading certain sections all together?

**Step 3 Assign a leader—do call and response.**

- a. Discuss together: what are the lines or words that lend themselves to call and response?
- b. Decide on the call and response (it doesn't have to be words from the poem, you might add your own words.)
- c. Choose who will be the call leader(s), and who will respond. Think about the energy, tempo, volume and rhythm of your call and response.
- d. Read the poem again, adding your call and response.

**Step 4 Find a rhythm, body percussion and gesture to perform your stanza.**

- a. Discuss together: What are the rhythms underneath/behind the lines of the poem? Read the poem through again until you find these rhythms.
- b. Now experiment with trying different body percussion and vocal rhythms. What rhythms help accent lines/words in the poem? If you have two or more rhythms accompanying the poem, experiment with how they can complement or work off each other well?
- c. Settle on your group's body percussion and/or vocal rhythms.
- d. Read out the poem accompanied by these rhythms.
- e. Back in the larger group, each small group shares their stanza with rhythms and call and response.

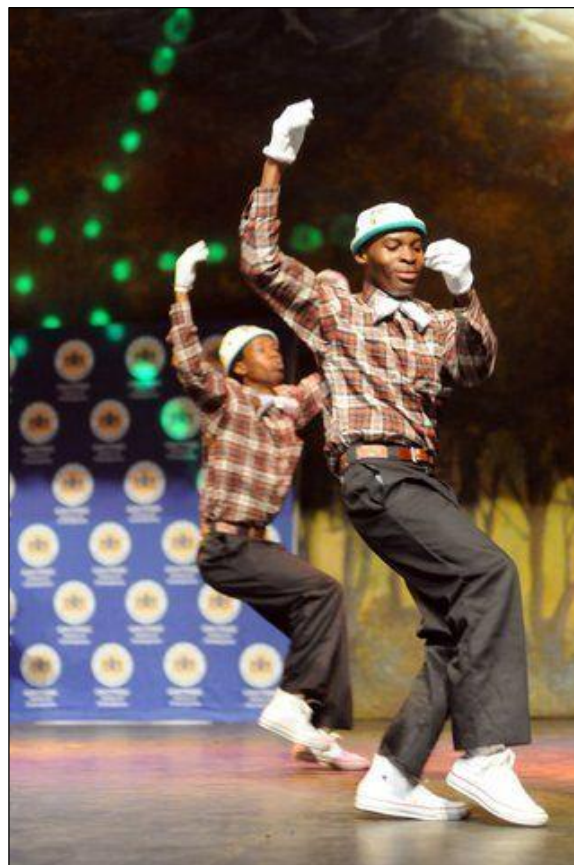
**Step 5 Add gestural movement (if time and desired)**

- a. Discuss together: What gestures might you make to accompany certain lines or words?
- b. Experiment with making the gestures big and sweeping, small and precise.
- c. Explore making the gesture a whole body movement, or using the upper half or lower half of your body.
- d. Move around the space doing your movement(s). Will you use lots of space, or just a little?
- e. Will your movements match your rhythms or accent them? Are they quick or slow?
- f. Try doing the movements with different energies. What energy works best with your movement?
- g. Experiment with movement transitions between your gestural movements.
- h. Decide how you want to bring your movements into the performance of your stanza. Do you want one or two to read, do the rhythms and call and response while the

- others dance? Do you want the group to perform the poem first, and perform the movement after?
- i. Groups perform stanzas with movements for each other.

### **Step 6 Reflection.**

- a. Reflection: How do your group find your rhythms? How did you decide which gestures to use?
- b. If you were going to teach somebody this poem, what would you say about it?
- c. What connections do you make between the poem and what you might experience at the Festival of South African Dance performance?



## **Old Sof'town\***

1.

*In old Sof'town,  
the jazz struck chords,*

*the jazz lived, it exploded,  
out of the cramped homes,  
rolling along the streets,  
of old Kofifi,*

*in tune to countless blazing heartbeats.*

*In old Sof'town,  
Bra' Hugh breathed music, Sis' Dolly too,  
and Bra' Wally penned poems that still ring  
true.*

*In old Sof'town,  
Father Trevor preached  
equality and justice,  
for all, black and white and brown,*

*and all shades, every hue,  
even as oppression battered the people,  
black & blue.*

*In old Sof'town,  
the fires of resistance raged,  
'we will not move' was the refrain,*

*even as the fascists tore down Sof'town,  
with volleys of leaden rain.*

*In old Sof'town,  
the people were herded,  
like cattle,  
sent to Meadowlands,  
far away and cold and bleak,  
as the seeds of resistance,  
sprouted and flourished,  
for the coming battle.*

*In old Sof'town,  
the bulldozers razed homes,  
splitting the flesh of a community apart,  
only to raise a monument of shame,  
and 'Triomf' was its ghastly name.*

2.

*In Jozi today,  
we remember those days,  
and those nights of pain,  
that stung our souls.  
like bleak winter rain.*

*Yes, we remember old Sof'town,  
as we struggle onward,  
to reclaim our deepest heritage,  
and build anew,  
a country of all hues and shades,  
of black and of white and of brown.*

*And yes, we will always remember,*

*and yes, we will never forget,*

*the price that was paid,  
by the valiant sons and daughters,  
of old Sof'town,*

*those vibrant African shades and hues,*

*of black,  
of white,  
of brown.*

*- Afzal Moolla ©*

*\* Sophiatown was also called 'Sof'town' and  
'Kofifi'*

## **Music of Africa**

Music is the heartbeat of Africa  
And as we drum  
So we are drummed  
By the pulse of Africa

We celebrate  
As we stamp our feet  
We celebrate  
As we join the beat  
The beat for Africa

Music is the harmony of Africa  
And as we sing  
So we are sung  
By the melody of Africa

We celebrate  
As we sing our song  
We celebrate  
As we hum along  
We hum for Africa

Music is the glue of Africa  
And as we bind  
So we are bound  
By the unity of Africa

We celebrate  
As we join our hands  
We celebrate  
As we link our lands  
We link for Africa

Music is the movement of Africa  
And as we move  
So we are moved  
By the life of Africa

We celebrate  
As we band for Africa  
We celebrate  
As we stand for Africa  
We stand for Africa

*Wayne Visser © 2017*



## *Before the performance...*

Show your students video clips from The Festival of South African Dance:

Gumboot dance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I61C2h4BFik>

Pantsula dance: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_7YSRgFxdI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_7YSRgFxdI)

**Remind your students to listen and look for:**

- Call and response
- Every day movement and actions
- Body percussion
- Leading and following

**Monday November 13, 2017 11:00am & 1:30pm**  
**The Festival of South African Dance in Zellerbach Hall**



## ARTISTIC CONCEPT: HEIGHTENING EVERYDAY MOVEMENT INTO DANCE

### Engagement #2 (Post-performance)

#### Overview

Just as Gumboot and Pantsula choreography borrows from gestures of everyday life, students are asked to share actions from their daily lives that may be intensified into dance movements.

**Time needed: 15-20 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

#### Instructions

#### EVERY DAY MOVEMENT FROM YOUR OWN LIFE: Exploration

##### Guiding Questions

How do we make ourselves conscious of what our bodies are doing every day without thinking about it?

How can we share what those everyday movements look like with our friends in the classroom?

How can thinking about our everyday movements help us be creative in dance and movement?



#### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Individual Reflection. Small group sharing. Gestures. Actions.

#### Overview

**Time needed: 20-30 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

Students will create lists of everyday movements they do when preparing for different parts of their daily routine. Later, in groups, they will explore ways to transform these movements into dance.

#### Supplies and Prep

- Paper and writing implements for each student.
- Space for small groups of 3-5 students to share what they write.
- Space and time for small groups to stand and silently demonstrate to one another in their group the movements of their daily life.

#### Instructions

##### Step 1 Everyday Movements from the Performance

- a. Reflect together. Looking back on Gumboot and Pantsula performances, what are some of the movements you saw the dancers do that came from their everyday lives or the lives of people in their family?
- b. Get in a circle. Anyone who remembers the movements they observed demonstrates that movement and the whole group repeats.

## Step 2 What Are Your Everyday Actions?

- Quietly on their own, ask every student to make a list. For very young students, facilitate a group brainstorm and write at least 6-8 ideas for each prompt on a board for all to see and choose from.
- Make a list of 2-3 actions/movements you do every day to get ready for school.
- List 2-3 actions/movements you do almost every day while at school.
- List 2-3 actions/movements you do on your way home from school or afterschool.
- List 2-3 actions/movements when you are just all out playing for fun (dancing, team sports, etc.)

## Step 3 Transforming Everyday Actions into Dance Movements

- Choose a couple of these actions/movements, one for your time at school (or getting ready or leaving school), one for your time playing.
- Find a partner and show them your movement.
- Give each other ideas and suggestions to try.
- Some ways to experiment with your movements:
  - What would the movement look like bigger and using your whole body?
  - What if you tried the movements at high energy, at medium energy?
  - What if you did the movements quickly, slowly? Sharply or smoothly?
  - What if you used lots of space or little space?
  - What kind of rhythms (or patterns) might your movement have?
  - How might you join both your and your partners' movements together?
  - What kind of music would you choose to have for your "everyday dance"?
- Get back in the circle. Go around and show your movements and the whole group repeats.
- Reflect together. What did you notice? What was it like transforming your everyday movement into a dance movement?



You might consider seeking curricular connections in physical science, math or literature. If you design a lesson that you'd like to share, please let us know! We'd like to include it on our blog or in future workshops for teachers...

# South Africa and Resistance

## What role did Sophiatown play in the development of a new South African culture?



Sophiatown was originally a farm outside Johannesburg, named after the owner's wife, Sophia. Later, the area became a whites only area. When a sewage dump was built next to the area, white people did not want to live there anymore, and they moved. Later, African people and other people of color were given permission to settle there by the owner. Around 1920, many Black people came to Johannesburg in search of jobs, but they were not allowed to live in the inner part of the big city. With nowhere else to go, they ended up living in overcrowded conditions in Sophiatown, one place where Black people were allowed to live.

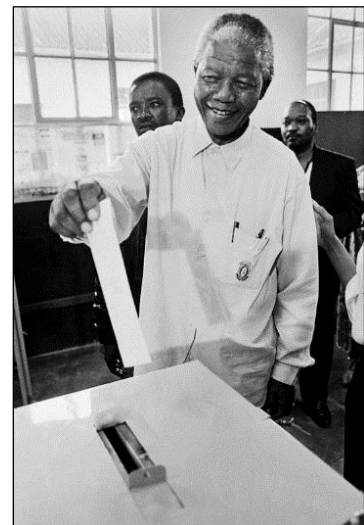
At the same time that life there was crowded and often poor, Sophiatown was full of music, dance, movies and

radio shows that celebrated art forms from America and Europe, like jazz, swing dance and movies, and the rich traditions of African dance and music. A unique local form of music grew here —the incredibly popular Tsaba-tsaba, which combined African melody with swing and jazz. Although the official law was that White and Black and Brown could not mix, in Sophiatown music, dance and other arts mixed together and influenced one another. By its very existence, it defied laws that tried to separate Europeans and Americans from Africans. Sophiatown was also growing as more people moved there.

By the 1950s, the government had an official policy called Apartheid from 1948-1994, which made it illegal for Black people and people of color to live around or close to white people. They passed a law in 1954 that was intended to remove all the people of color out of Sophiatown and shut it down.

In 1955, the South African Prime Minister (the country's president) sent two thousand policemen armed with guns and rifles to destroy Sophiatown and removed 60,000 residents from there. However, many people refused to leave Sophiatown, protesting and using weapons to fight for their right to stay in their homes. In the end, the government forced thousands of people from Sophiatown to Meadowlands in Soweto. People's homes and other properties were destroyed.

After the removal of people from Sophiatown, Nelson Mandela (in photo below, voting for the first time in 40 years after Sophiatown was destroyed) made a speech, specifically naming the incident to encourage people to rise against unfair and brutal Apartheid system. Residents of Sophiatown lost everything they owned, but the protestors turned to boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience. In 1956,





the African National Congress, a political party that demanded equal rights for Black Africans and other people of color in South Africa, issued what it called the Freedom Charter asserting that South Africa belongs to all those who lived in it, Black, Brown, and White, and it called for universal suffrage (voting rights) and the individual freedoms found in the United State's Bill of Rights.

## Resources

South African History Online <http://www.sahistory.org.za/>

Apartheid Education Sites

[http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil\\_rights/apartheid.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_rights/apartheid.php)

<http://kids.britannica.com/students/article/apartheid/272908>

<http://kids.britannica.com/students/article/South-Africa/277148>

Gumboot Dance History

<https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/south-africa-fast-facts/arts-facts/afrofusion-dance-in-south-africa>

<http://www.dreamstoreality.co.za/the-history-of-gumboot-dancing/>

Pantsula Dance History

<https://ourpastimes.com/the-history-of-pantsula-dance-12214858.html>

<https://magazine.astonmartin.com/travel/photo-story-pantsula-dance-johannesburg-chris-saunders>

Books

*Nelson Mandela: The Authorized Comic Book* – July 18, 2009, by The Nelson Mandela Foundation (Author), Umlando Wezithombe (Illustrator)  
Based on Nelson Mandela's book, *Long Road to Freedom*  
(Middle School Level)

*Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* – September 1, 2009  
by Chris van Wyk (Editor), Paddy Bouma (Illustrator)  
(Elementary School Level)

*South Africa: Enchantment of the World* – March, 2006  
by Ettagale Blauer (Author), Jason Laure (Author)



## MAPS





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And thanks to our many individual donors for their generous and continued support!

For information on supporting our Artistic Literacy (Education & Community) Programs, contact Sarah Sobey. Phone: 510.643.7053 / Email: [ssobey@calperformances.org](mailto:ssobey@calperformances.org).

## About Cal Performances and the Cal Performances Classroom

The mission of Cal Performances is to produce and present performances of the highest artistic quality, enhanced by programs that explore compelling intersections of education and the performing arts. Cal Performances celebrates over 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

### What is a Cal Performances Classroom?

*Your classroom, of course!*

The arts are an endlessly replenishable resource for a lifelong love affair with thinking, learning and feeling across disciplines and cultures. They connect fluidly with curriculum throughout the school years, and – perhaps with more endurance – they connect us to ideas and reflection on human experience that can't be easily expressed any other way.

Each season at Cal Performance, you will find a menu of compelling performances and classroom opportunities for any age. You can create your Cal Performances classroom through any or all of our artistic literacy programs for grades K-12.

Cal Performances holds artistic literacy on a par with language and numerical literacy. Those who are artistically literate hold the keys to a lifelong engagement with the arts, able to unlock and make personal connections to any work of art, regardless of level of familiarity with the work and the artists.

Artistic literacy skills are developed in the Cal Performances classroom as students and teachers are engaged in the artist's process. These skills are embedded in everything we do, from pre-performance talks to community conversations to teacher workshops and artist visits to the classroom.

Cal Performances Department of Artistic Literacy Staff:

Rica Anderson, Manager of Student Engagement

David McCauley, Master Dance Teaching Artist

Marilyn Stanley, Administrative Coordinator

Laura Abrams, Manager of Campus and Public Programs

Sabrina Klein, Director of Artistic Literacy