

Date Lines: 2008 San Francisco International Arts Festival

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Festival jump start

The full program won't be announced until November, but several key cross-cultural collaborations have already been confirmed for the 2008 San Francisco International Arts Festival scheduled to open May 21.

Most of the pieces lined up by Executive Director **Andrew Wood** so far are international, multidisciplinary collaborations between local and foreign artists reflecting the '08 festival's somewhat clumsily stated theme - The Truth in Knowing Now: Threads in Time, Place, Culture. Wood says in a news release that it will include "a strong emphasis on projects that address major societal problems such as child soldiers, ethnic cleansing, mental illness, war and global capitalism."

The "child soldier" project is a **Theatre of Yugen** collaboration between its associate artist, leading experimental playwright **Erik Ehn**, and seminal modern Singapore director **Ong Keng Sen**. Titled "Dogsbody," the piece looks at war and child conscription through a reinterpretation of "The Iliad" using a blend of Western and Asian theater traditions.

"Yes, Yes to Moscow," co-commissioned by the festival and **Deutscher Theater Berlin**, is a collaborative riff on **Anton Chekhov's** "Three Sisters" by Bay Area playwright-director **Mark Jackson**, performance artist **Beth Wilmurt**, Berlin designer **Alexander Polzin**, choreographer **Sommer Ulrickson** and performance artist **Tilla Kratochwil**. "Mordake" is a multimedia operatic arts event being created by San Francisco composer **Erling Wold**, German computer artist **Frieder Weiss**, tenor-performance artist **John Duykers**, director **Melissa Weaver** and poet **Douglas Kearney**.

Among the major dance projects confirmed so far is "Thirty Seven Isolated Events," a series created by **CounterPULSE** and **Asian American Dance Performances** exploring the intersections between butoh, media-based performance and contemporary music with artists such as **Minako Seki** (of Nagasaki and Berlin) and

composers **Zam Johnson** (Berlin), **Susan Hawkins** (Australia) and others. Local choreographer **Kim Epifano** has teamed up with Chinese composer **Zhu Jian'er** on a piece called "Speaking Chinese." **Dandelion Dance Theater** is creating a work with Madrid's **Compagnie Y**. And **Axis Dance Company** will premiere a piece by choreographer **Joe Goode**. The festival is scheduled to close with a free open-air international concert in Yerba Buena Gardens featuring Afro-Cuban jazz great **Omar Sosa**. - Robert Hurwitt

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