

May 1, 2009
For Immediate Release

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San Francisco International Arts Festival Brings a World of Artistic Talent to the U.S. Stage

Sasha Waltz & Guests to Headline

PLUS The Return of the Akhe Group from Russia

Calendar Editors Please Note

Who: Multiple Artists

What: The Sixth Annual San Francisco International Arts Festival

Where: Multiple Venues

When: Wednesday May 20 – Sunday May 31, 2009

Tickets: \$12-\$25. Groups of 10, Full Time Students & Seniors \$16

Box Office for Advance Purchase: www.sfiarf.org and 1-800-838-3006

For more information: 415-399-9554

May 1, 2009, San Francisco. With their work visas secured and their airline tickets in hand, performing arts groups from ten countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America are heading to San Francisco for the Sixth Annual San Francisco International Arts Festival, which will run from **May 20-May 31**. The individual artists and ensembles will join a global celebration with 14 Bay Area based companies for the 11 day Festival that will take place at venues throughout the city.

As a result, San Francisco will be the only U.S. city this year to see performances by high caliber international companies **Sasha Waltz & Guests** (Germany), **the Akhe Group** (Russia) and **Ranferi Aguilar & Los Hacedores de Lluvia** (The Rain Makers, Guatemala). San Francisco will also host the US debuts of the remarkable **Cho-In**

Theatre (South Korea) and rising sitar star **Smita Nagdev** (India). Heading up the local companies are **Gamelan Sekar Jaya** who are celebrating their 30th anniversary and **ROVA Saxophone Quartet** who will convene their international **Rovate** guests, The Festival will also feature **Bond Street Theatre** from New York in collaboration with **Exile Theatre of Kabul** (Afghanistan), **Jess Curtis/Gravity, Scott Wells & Dancers, the Earplay Ensemble, Ana Nitmar** with marimba ensemble **Ixim Tinamit, Liss Fain & Dancers, NexMap Production** and the **Berkeley High School Jazz Orchestra**.

SFIAF is also pleased to be able to announce a new pilot program for younger artists to participate in the Festival. Titled **MASH**, it will take place at **Union Square** as part of the Festival's **Jewels in the Square** lunch time concert series co-presented with MJM Management. The first participants are **The Riley Dance Project, Shah and Blah Productions** and **Gretchen Garnett & Dancers**.

SFIAF Director, Andrew Wood said of SFIAF's continued progress, "We are extremely proud of the 2009 line-up and thank all of the local artists and co-presenters whose participation is making this year's festival possible. We also count ourselves fortunate that so many wonderful international artists will be performing exclusively in San Francisco this year. It is a tremendous feeling when May finally rolls around and the results of nearly three years of work come to fruition. What I find funniest is that there comes a point when it is actually harder to **not** present the Festival than it is to stage it. Once everyone has their plane tickets and a stamp in their passports there's really no stopping them."

SFIAF 2009 will kick off with the organization's traditional **Artist Welcome Reception**, which in 2009 will take place on **Wednesday May 20 at 6:00pm** in the **Green Room** of the **Veterans Building**. This will be followed by the opening performance at the **Herbst Theatre** by the **Earplay Ensemble**—SFIAF's longest running presenting partners having given concerts at all six festivals. The international program will include a new commissioned work by the ground breaking Greek composer, **Nicolas Tzortzis** who will travel from his home in Paris to attend the world premiere of the piece.

SFIAF 2009 will still feature artists from the Bay Area, New York City and the countries of **Afghanistan, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Russia, South Korea** and **Switzerland**.

SFIAF 2009 Presenting Partners

Asian Art Museum, Bond Street Theatre, Earplay, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Jess Curtis/Gravity, the Korean Cultural Center of San Francisco, Martin Productions, MJM Management, NexMap Productions, Rova:Arts, the Sangati Center and Scott Wells & Dancers.

Ticket Prices & SFIAF Series Discounts

Single tickets for most shows are **\$20 in advance** and **series discounts are available** for ticket purchases to multiple shows; students, senior and group prices (10 persons or more) are \$16. **Tickets are \$25 at the door**. For more information on ticket prices go to www.sfiaf.org/2009/tickets.php

Funders

SFIAF 2009 is funded in part by the following organizations (partial list): Alliance for California Traditional Artists, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Bernard Osher Foundation, Fort Mason Foundation, Goethe Institute, Mission Area Federal Credit Union, Multi-Arts Production Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, Potrero Nuevo Fund, San Francisco Arts Commission, South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports & Tourism, Trust for Mutual Understanding, Wells Fargo Foundation, WESTAF and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

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SFIAF Mission

SFIAF's mission is to promote the arts and San Francisco through production of an annual, multi-disciplinary festival that brings together the world community of artists and audiences. The festival:

- Works with multiple artists and arts organizations to commission and present innovative, collaborative performances and projects that push the boundaries of artistic excellence and genre that are focused on increasing human awareness, appreciation and understanding.
- Is a catalyst for the emergence of a cohesive, culturally and socially diverse artistic community in San Francisco that is actively engaged in addressing the civic, social, and cultural issues of our environment and time.
- Establishes San Francisco as a model for integration of the arts into the fabric of the community in a meaningful, productive and mutually beneficial fashion.

SFIAF's goals are

- To frame the work of Bay Area artists within an international context.
- To insure the City of San Francisco's future allure as a vibrant, creative artist community by informing and enriching the arts at home through encouraging an innovative international dialogue between Bay Area artists and their peers throughout the world.
- To collaborate with other San Francisco arts organizations to share our resources and stage the Festival in the most cost effective manner possible.
- To provide rich and meaningful learning experiences through a wide range of residency activities aimed at multiple sectors of the population.
- To promote the festival to a local, statewide, national and international audience.
- To raise the City's profile as an international culture destination.
- To demonstrate how the arts perform a vital role in stimulating and positively impacting the economy of San Francisco.

Curatorial Priorities

SFIAF seeks to achieve a balance between the following three criteria when considering projects for inclusion in the Festival.

- Projects in which Bay Area based artists are participating as a lead artist in an international collaboration.
- Projects in which Bay Area artists are performing as part of a shared bill or in repertory with artists from other countries.
- Projects that feature world-class artists from outside of the United States whose work has a consistent record of excellence.

SFIAF Background & Rationale

SFIAF was established in September 2002 for the specific purpose of launching in San Francisco an annual, multi-disciplinary, multi-venue arts festival of international scope and appeal. To date, five festivals have been successfully implemented.

Rather than building a festival that is the sole responsibility of a single producer, SFIAF is dedicated to working with an array of San Francisco arts organizations to develop a paradigm that utilizes the shared resources of multiple local presenters to reach mutually beneficial goals. In addition to direct responsibility for its own productions and programs, SFIAF provides coordination, administrative, fundraising and promotional support and overall leadership in presenting the festival. SFIAF's core values are based on principals of cultural and economic equity. In addition to working with larger institutions, SFIAF places a high priority on the participation of culturally diverse and smaller arts organizations that represent the City's broad demographics. Activating and supporting relationships between large and small organizations and individual artists is also a key component of SFIAF.