

## From the Executive Director May 2009

The sixth annual San Francisco International Arts Festival is taking place amidst what can only be described as extraordinary times. Many people are being forced to confront some of their most fundamental assumptions about society and the world we live in. It is in these vacillating and uncertain that the arts are so important. Artists are the gateways to inspiration, the agent provocateurs of tantalizing ideas, and the shamans who can reveal truth and meaning through the intangible acts of movement, gesture, melody and word.

We have gathered some uniquely brilliant and creative artistic minds representing many cultural perspectives from around the world who, through their dedicated practice of art making and performance, can inspire people to re-evaluate how they see their lives and offer an alternative vision for a way forward. We cannot change the facts but through the prism of high quality performance we can change the way a person interprets them to visualize new possibilities and see the equation with fresh eyes.

In this spirit, join us for the only chance to see Germany's Sasha Waltz & Guests in the United States in 2009, spend an hour bathing in the inspired madness of the Akhe Group from Russia, share Guatemalan star Ranferi Aguilar's Mayan philosophies and ideas, be part of the first American audiences to witness the US debuts of India's rising sitar sensation, Ms. Smita Nagdev and the unique physical vocabulary of South Korea's Cho-In Theatre, and help us give Afghanistan's Exile Theatre of Kabul a hearty San Francisco cheer, as only the capital of the left coast can.

Celebrate with us Gamelan Sekar Jaya's 30th anniversary and reserve your spot for the ROVA Saxophone Quartet's international Rovate guests in an evening of musical and multi-media improvisation. Find out from Scott Wells and Michelle Tea, "What Men Want" and take in free site specific at our lunch time shows in Union Square, and learn about some of the Bay Area's most exciting new presenting organizations such as the Sangati Center, NexMap Productions, the Korean Cultural Center of San Francisco and Martin Productions who are among more than a dozen partners that have organized their programming to bring you this year's festival.

Whether you are a San Francisco native, or you gravitated here because this town offered something that you couldn't find elsewhere in the world, or you are a visitor experiencing the beauties and pet peculiarities of our beloved city for the first time—the San Francisco International Arts Festival is here for you. So pull up a chair, share our hearth and warm your spirits on the endless artistic possibilities of the human soul. If we can remain inspired the future is still in our hands. Welcome.

Andrew Wood  
Executive Director