

| The Schaefer Center Presents |
2015-16 Season

CONTRA-TIEMPO

Urban Latin Dance Theater

FRIDAY APRIL 22, 2016 7PM

SCHAEFER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
BOONE, NC

Appalachian
STATE UNIVERSITY

CONTRA-TIEMPO Urban Latin Dance Theater

AGUA FURIOSA

Directed and Choreographed by: Ana Maria Alvarez
in collaboration with the company

Performed by: Isis Avalos, Christopher Cuenza, Jannet Galdamez,
Bianca Golden, Samad Guerra, Francisco Herrejon, Bianca Medina,
Diana Toledo and Electra Weston.

Poetry, Lyrics and Text: Pyeng Threadgill in collaboration
with d. Sabela Grimes and Ana Maria Alvarez

Music Composition and Sound Design: d. Sabela Grimes
in collaboration with Pyeng Threadgill

Lighting and Set Design: Masha Tsimring

Dramaturg: Michael John Garcés

Costume Design: Rosalida Medina

Company Manager: Nathan Shreeve

Technical Director: Tuce Yasak

Set and Props Associates: Madeleine Maloy and Alvaro Renteria

Full Company / Music: Mercan Dede

ACT 1: In The Beginning: Ella

ACT 2: We Are All Caliban: Caliban 1

ACT 3: The Enemy Is Me: Caliban 2

ACT 4: The Enemy Is All Around: Caliban 3

ACT 5: Water No Get Enemy: We are all Water Caliban 4



This performance is funded in part by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This project was supported by the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE

What if in the beginning the dance starts like...
and say you don't memorize it or write it down.
You don't even have to go to school for it...not to
know Ella.

What if in the beginning, middle and end was a beat
and a beat joined together creating/bearing song and
invoking form for us to dream/see one another
(from the closing song of **AGUA FURIOSA**)

The dance is and always has been a space of constructing and deconstructing power. I feel the depth of memory held in movements across the Americas – the USA, Caribbean, South America, Central America – movements rooted in the African Diaspora - this embodiment of who we are and have always been is something that no one can take away. Ever. On this I am clear. Shakespeare was also clear about the stage being this space, and in his plays, he made concrete decisions that reflected his times and perspective. How can a story, wild, complex, layered, brutal, euphoric and sometimes hilarious, be a space to dismantle and redistribute power? How can a telling of her-story, from a perspective that in his-story isn't given body or voice, be a place where we are reminded of what we already know?

This piece was born from my attempt as a mama to protect my own child. My son is the reason I make work and I move to create a world that he will inherit - one full of love, compassion and hopefully more justice. The winter of 2012 – February 26th to be exact – Black History month – in Florida, where all of my Cuban family resides, a young black man breathed his last breath at the hand of a Latino man – we all know the tragic story of Trayvon Martin and the many many stories that preceded and succeeded it, of young men and women of color and unjust and horrific loss. The cost of racism in our country has been life after life after life. As a mama all I could think of was of my own child, and of the mothers who buried their children. Soon after I began the process of creating *Agua Furiosa* and months later California entered into its worst drought in over 100 years. It's not an accident that we are inside an immense and unmanageable environmental crisis, with the most basic element of life (water) – while simultaneously our society is in upheaval. As all artists do, I used all of my questions, love, frustration and made a work, with an amazing collective of artists and collaborators, that was an attempt to understand this connection I deeply felt, but couldn't articulate through words.

Throughout the making of this piece – I kept coming back to arrogance as the root of our disconnect. Water, the great equalizer, is crucial for our survival yet can be deadly. We as human beings think we have the capacity to control

nature, as we think we can control or dominate one another, again arrogance is at the root of this idea. Human arrogance has us live in a world under the false construct of race, breaking down our human to human connection. Human arrogance has us believe that our blind consumption and waste will not have an impact for future generations, breaking down our human to mother earth connection. Human arrogance has us continue to build a country on denial, denial of a his-story based on enslaving and murdering Africans and Native peoples of this land – breaking down our connection to ourselves. There is an impact of this arrogance and we are feeling it. A line from *The Tempest* that you will hear tonight is, “the sea is hence – what cares these roarers for the name of king” – essentially we are ALL going down in this storm – and listening to Ella, acknowledging and acting based on our connection, knowing that she cares not if we are a king or a janitor, is our only hope.

CHOREOGRAPHIC LABS

The development of *Agua Furiosa* began with a series of site-specific participatory laboratories. These choreographic laboratories happened in connection with several distinct bodies of water in Los Angeles and occurred throughout the creation of the piece. Open to the public, these laboratories invited audience members/participants to witness work in progress, participate in the creation process and have an opportunity to share their own stories connected to the themes explored in the piece. The stories shared, both personal and local, and the contributions made by participants from all over the city, are an integral part of the final work.

THE TEMPEST

The Tempest, is considered to be one of William Shakespeare’s greatest works. Written while Europe was colonizing the Americas, *The Tempest* is thought of as Shakespeare’s in-depth discussion into the morality of colonialism and has attracted feminist criticism due to the lack of female voices in the play. Alvarez was inspired to create *Agua Furiosa* as a counter narrative to *The Tempest* – taking on many of the themes of the original play, including magic, the soul and justice – but from a clear female and contemporary perspective. The work calls on two distinct characters of the play. Caliban, a disfigured slave; his name is connected to the word Cannibal, which is derived from “Carib,” the term then used for natives in the West Indies. In *The Tempest*, Caliban is very much in touch with the natural world, but demonized and not considered fully human. SYCORAX, the mother of Caliban, one of the less prominent women mentioned in *The Tempest*, is only described by the men of the play and never given body or voice. Woven throughout these descriptions of her is a suspicion of woman as evil, malicious and untrustworthy. In *Agua Furiosa* Sycorax is embodied by Electra Weston and is called “Ella.” She is based on Oya (Afro-Cuban diety) and is an embodiment of maternal ancestry.

Our story is danced and sung from the perspective of Ella and her children, four distinct Calibans. Although “Ella” (Sycorax) does not have a prominent physical or vocal role in *The Tempest*, she is a main protagonist, the cantante principal, the clave, of *Agua Furiosa*. She is both goddess and human, I/we, all encompassing and reminding us of our fluid connection – human to human, human to nature.

OYA, YANSA

Oya, in the Afro-Cuban pantheon, is the deity of the wind, the air, lighting, fertility and magic. Beyond destruction, Oya is the spirit of change, transition, and chaos. She is associated with the marketplace, the gates of cemeteries, which reveal Oya in her aspect as facilitator of transition and transformation. She is a queen and a warrior orisha. In Yoruba, Oya literally means “She Tore.” She is also called “the one who wears pants to go to war.”

For a more complete resource guide for the making of this work, including links to organizations working on environmental and racial justice, and ideas on how to become more involved, please visit www.contra-tiempo.org

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

It takes a massive amount of work to mount a production like *Agua Furiosa* and we would like to take the space to thank those who have helped to make this premiere possible. To our extraordinary funding partners: The New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project (NEFA/NDP), Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC), Center for Creative Innovation (CCI) and Engaging Dance Audiences (administered by Dance/USA and made possible with generous funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.) Without the generous support of these leading organizations, the creation of *Agua Furiosa* would not have been possible. Thank you to our organizational funders: LA County Arts Commission, LA City Department of Cultural Affairs, California Community Foundation, California Arts Council, Capital Group and Herb Alpert Foundation. We would also like to express a special thanks to Kristy Edmunds, Meryl Friedman, Ben Johnson, Angelia Leung, Lionel Popkin and the entire UCLA Center for the Art of Performance and UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures staff, faculty and administration. Thank you for your unflinching support in the process of creating this work and your commitment to supporting local artists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank other individuals and organizations whose contributions to the creation of *Agua Furiosa* and the support of our artists

have allowed us to be here today. Jacqueline Barrios, Gayle Fekete, Rebecca Renard-Wilson, Tiffany Judkins, Madeline Rosenstein, Alvaro Renteria, Mary Fleming, Sally and Joe Alvarez, Ilsa Lowe, Jonathan and Sidney Alvarez-Lowe, Dawn Comer, Tanya Finks, Nick Hussong, Justin Moon, Noel Beltran, Ian Huggins, Lee O'Reilly, Jasmine Burgos, Julia Murphy, Jessica Brewer, Diana Argueta, Michi Maruyama, The Hanson-Press Family, Carla Anne Thomas, Anthony Rey Perez, Daniel Penilla, Sarah Culberson, Teresa Delgado, Monique Wilson, Maisha Morris, Jeremiah Buren, Tyrone Domingo, Richie Marquez, Kati Hernandez, Marina Magalhaes, Renea Williams, Deborah Brokus, Sophie Myrtil McCourty (Lotus Arts Management), Elvi Bas, Michael Carter, The Staff of Pentacle and The incredible artists of CONTRA-TIEMPO Futuro. Special thanks to Sandra Parra, Leanna Bremond, Jocelyn Reyes and the UCLA WAC faculty concert cast who worked with Ana Maria on the creation of Caliban 3. Special thanks to all the participants and partners of our choreographic labs, for your stories, thoughts and movements, you will forever be a part of this work: Policylink, The Wooden Floor, City of Santa Monica, Annenberg Beach House, Cornerstone Theater, Foshay Learning Center, CSU Summer Arts in Monterey, Grand Park Los Angeles, Music Center, Carolyn McKnight and The East Los Angeles Performing Arts Academy. And thank YOU for being here, showing up and sharing in this experience with us. It takes a village!

About Artistic Director Ana Maria Alvarez

Ana Maria Alvarez is a Cuban-American choreographer, raised in the South, known for her daring, multidimensional and boundary blurring choreography. Alvarez received a BA in Dance and Politics from Oberlin College and received her MFA in Choreography from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. Her thesis work, which explored the abstraction of "Latin Dance", specifically Salsa, as a way to express social resistance within the US immigration battle, eventually became the impetus for founding CONTRA-TIEMPO in 2005. In 2013 Alvarez was invited to choreograph the first of seven plays about Hunger with Cornerstone Theater and Homeboy Industries. Alvarez is regularly invited to speak about and teach her work in venues all over the country and world. In 2012 Alvarez was invited by the LA Department of Cultural Affairs and America Dance Abroad, to represent Los Angeles contemporary dance and CONTRA-TIEMPO at Internationale Tanzmesse in Dusseldorf, Germany. Several months later, she was invited back to Dusseldorf to participate in a new choreographers lab called IPAY Kindling/Fresh Tracks, where she began work on *Agua Furiosa*. She is currently an artist in residence at UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance and was recently commissioned by HeritageWorks to create two original new works for artists in Detroit.


About CONTRA-TIEMPO Urban Latin Dance Theater

CONTRA-TIEMPO is a bold, multilingual Los Angeles-based dance company creating physically intense and politically astute performance work that moves audiences to imagine what is possible. They create a new physical, visual and sonic vocabulary that collages Salsa, Afro-Cuban, hip-hop, and contemporary dance with theater, text, and original music to bring dynamic multi-modal experiences to the concert stage. While their performances are consistently electrifying, what sets the company apart most is their unique relationship to their own community. CONTRA-TIEMPO takes an uncompromisingly radical approach to the ways in which artists function within communities and create their work. They intentionally engage diverse audiences, cultivate dancer leaders, and center stories not traditionally heard on the concert stage, using their engagement process to inform and continuously re-fuel their creative process, and vice-versa.

Much like the communities they reach, CONTRA-TIEMPO is itself a tapestry. The company members are professional dancers, artists, immigrants, educators, activists, organizers, and movers of all types, living and working across Los Angeles and across the country. Each company member lives, expresses, and struggles within the varied and infinitely complex political and personal landscapes that Artistic Director, Ana Maria Alvarez seeks to address through the company's work.

The Company's work has been seen across the world, touring North America, Central America and South America, as well as being represented abroad in Europe and Asia. In 2014, CONTRA-TIEMPO was selected to tour Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador, representing American dance abroad as part of the DanceMotion USA, a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State, produced by BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

Artistic Director: Ana Maria Alvarez
Executive Director: Rebecca Renard-Wilson
Development Manager: Julia Murphy
Company Manager: Nathan Shreeve



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This performance is part of a collaborative project with the South Arts Dance Touring Initiative, involving residency activities by Koresh Dance Company from April 15-17. Residency activities and performances are funded in part by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This project was supported by the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

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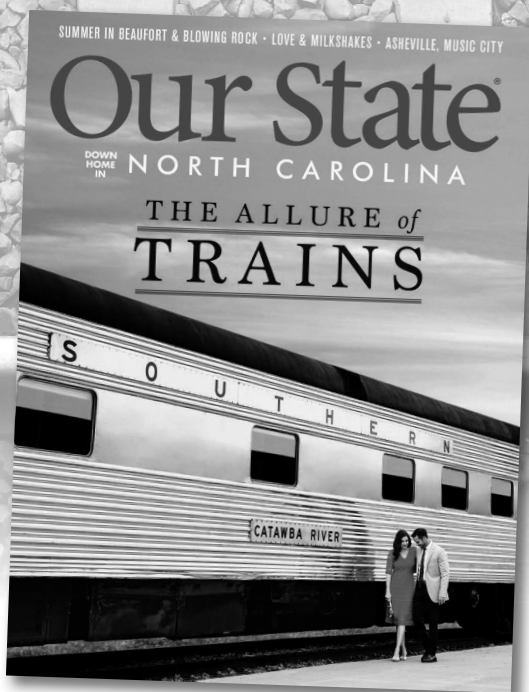


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