

Zaccho Dance Theatre in association with YBCA presents

The Monkey and the Devil

A performance installation about racism

Created by Joanna Haigood and Charles Trapolin

Performed by Sean Grimm, Jodi Lomask, Raissa Simpson, and Matthew Wickett

Text by Kim Euell

Lighting Design by José Maria Francos

The Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

April 15–17, 2011

April 15 showing followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dani McClain featuring Jessamyn Sabbag and W. Kamau Bell, with Joanna Haigood and Charles Trapolin

April 16 and 17 showings include Kimi Mojica, post-performance discussion facilitator

Notes from the Director

This week marks the 150th anniversary of the onset of the Civil War, the war that divided the states over slavery. It seems fitting to examine one of slavery's most powerful tools, racism, and how it has made what appears to be an indelible stain on the social landscape of our country. To believe that we live in a post-racial society is a convenient delusion. It is rare, if not impossible, to find anyone in America who has not encountered racism or who has not had racist thoughts at some point in their lives. Institutional racism permeates almost every part of our society and is supported, in part, by a corporate media that strives to keep us entrenched in stereotypes and misinformation.

Racism is a socially constructed concept intended to establish superiority based on skin color and to secure economic, political, social, and psychological power. It was the basis by which whites in this country justified the subjugation and torture of millions of blacks brought here from Africa and the genocide of Native Americans. Racist attitudes and social policies have been promoted by pseudo-science like eugenics, and by extremist religious movements. Through institutionalization, they impact every part of our lives. Obviously, people of color have been and continue to be disproportionately victimized by racism, in ways that have had devastating effects on their communities.

Racial prejudice and hatred is a logical consequence of institutionalized racism. In some cases, racism has engendered such raging contempt among its victims that the perpetrators' feelings and behaviors have been faithfully mirrored. I mean to say that most of us participate, for different reasons and at different levels. We have been taught to hate our neighbors simply because of the color of their skin; we have even been taught to hate ourselves. Where is this hatred really going?

In 2008, during the early part of creating this work, I attended a memorial for James Byrd Jr. Ten years prior, Byrd, a black man, was dragged to his death behind a truck in Jasper, Texas—a *hate* crime perpetrated by three white supremacists. It was deeply chilling to hear the story told firsthand by his family, but perhaps even more chilling was the revelation that racism is still rampant and growing in this country, as evidenced by the onslaught of testimonies given at the memorial. These testimonies addressed everything from race discrimination at the workplace to lynching, and reached across all color, ethnic and religious lines; blacks and whites, Asians, Native Americans, Muslims, Latinos, Jews, all locked in mutual hate because they were different or "other."

Unfortunately we humans access our worse natures too easily. How convenient for those in power, who would see us waste our energies being divided for petty reasons and in order to keep us from improving our collective lot. We can remain hatefully divided or we can unite to transform our hatred into a bonded community. At some point, and hopefully soon, we have to choose. There is no scientific truth to race and yet we continue to be swayed by "studies" that imply the opposite. Race has become falsely equated with the idea of "species." The truth is that we are all made of the same stuff. Without a commitment to this fact racism will never be conquered.

—Joanna Haigood

A House Divided

The set I designed and built for *The Monkey and the Devil* was inspired by Abraham Lincoln's speech in which, paraphrasing the New Testament, he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." In working with Joanna we explored our families' Charleston, South Carolina histories—my forebears were slave owners; hers were slaves. These deep wounds are still present and still painful. The separation of people—across race or any other measurement that creates "us" and "them"—challenges the stability of us all. The set was meant to reflect these wounds. Two pieces of the same house are cut apart and thrown off balance by the division. I have used a lighter, refined interior and a dark rustic exterior to mimic some of the class distinctions that come from this distorted view.

—Charles Trapolin

Joanna Haigood co-founded Zaccho Dance Theatre thirty years ago. As the company's choreographer and artistic director, she creates work using natural, architectural and cultural environments as points of departure for movement exploration and narrative. Recent projects include a work for San Francisco's Market Street, *Sailing Away* (2010) commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission, *Departure and Arrival* (2007), performed in the International Terminal at SFO; a remounting of *Invisible Wings* (2007), a site-specific piece about the Underground Railroad; *Ghost Architecture* (2004) a reflection on the history of the redevelopment project at the Yerba Buena complex; *Picture Powderhorn*, commissioned by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2000), and *Picture Redbook* commissioned by Dancing in the Streets and created at local grain terminals, about the aspirations of two inner-city communities. Her work has also been commissioned by the National Black Arts Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Festival d'Avignon and Festival d'Arles in France, the Exploratorium Museum, and Alonzo King's Lines Contemporary Ballet. Haigood was honored in 2007 as a recipient of the United States Artists Fellowship; she has also received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Alpert Award in Dance. She is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Circus Center.

Born into a family of artists from New Orleans, **Charles H. Trapolin** is a visual and performance artist whose work is in the permanent collection of the Waitakaruru Sculpture Garden in Hamilton, New Zealand and the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. In 2007-08, he presented three solo shows at his studio/gallery space in San Francisco, Gilbert Street Gallery. He has also been in shows at the Oakland Museum, the San Jose Museum of Contemporary Art, SOMAR and other venues throughout the United States. In 2001, he was commissioned to create installations and a 300-foot mural for the Maze of Reflection at Burning Man. As a professional dancer in the 1980s, he was a member of the dance company, ODC/SF. Since 2002, he has been a partner in Teatro ZinZanni. He received an MFA with Honors from John F. Kennedy University in 2000. He currently splits his time between New Orleans and San Francisco.

Kim Euell is thrilled to be working with Zaccho Dance Theatre again, having previously collaborated on *Invisible Wings* as well as last year's *Sailing Away*. Kim is a playwright and dramaturg who has headed play development programs at Center Theater Group's Mark Taper Forum, Hartford Stage Company, and the San Jose Repertory Theatre. Euell is currently working as a dramaturg at the Sundance Institute's Theatre Lab at The Banff Center in Canada. Passionately committed to socially relevant theater, Kim writes plays that humorously interrogate identity politics and cultural assimilation. She has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Wesleyan University and the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. A graduate of Stanford University, she has an MFA from the University of Iowa where she was a Dean's Fellow.

Sean Grimm is a native of California. He has spent the last seven years working and training as a theatrical dancer. He has performed in stage productions, movies, and music videos in New York and San Francisco. He is exploring new areas of dance fusion by combining elements of contemporary, modern, swing, contact improv, and hip hop to form his own individual style.

Jodi Lomask, a 1996 cum laude graduate of the dance conservatory at SUNY Purchase, has performed with Project Bandaloop, Kneejerk, Erica Essner Performance Co-op, and Capacitor. She participated in CHIME, a mentorship program of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company with Joanna Haigood, before joining Zaccho Dance Theatre and serving as Assistant to the Director. Lomask has been commissioned to create original works for NASA, TED, the California Academy of Sciences, and the Salvadorean Olympic Gymnastics Team through Capacitor, a company she founded in 1997. As a director, she has collaborated with world-renowned research scientists to create original dance works that draw attention to critical environmental issues.

Raissa Simpson has had an extensive performance career in the Bay Area. She received a BFA from Purchase College/SUNY on a talent-based scholarship; subsequently attending the schools of Dance Theatre of Harlem, Paul Taylor School, among others. Raissa currently directs Push Dance Company, a mixed media group based in San Francisco. She has toured and performed as a company member with Robert Moses Kin (2002 to 2007) and Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theatre, since 2007.

Matthew Wickett, born and raised in Oakland, has been dancing for six years under the direction of Carla Service, Artistic Director of Dance-A-Vision Entertainment. With hip hop as his movement foundation, he has ventured into forms including jazz and modern. He has performed in Oakland's Art & Soul Festival, the Miss Oakland pageant, The Wiz (Belasco Theatre Company), and San Francisco's "Jewels on a Square." He has performed with Zaccho Dance Theatre in the company's most recent work, *Sailing Away*, and just performed in New York with PUSH Dance Company. Matthew absorbs his dance life fully and continues to reach ever-higher goals through movement.

Technical crew: José Maria Francos, Technical Director; Guy Brenner, sound; Shari Bethel, lighting; Casey Ohta, head carpenter

Production Crew: Sheena Johnson, production manager; Matt Jones with Jeff Dolan, Zach Fischer, Mike Lyons, and Marshall Trammell

Zaccho SF Board of Directors: Jane Sullivan, President; Arianne Dar, Treasurer; Sean Cullen; Joanna Haigood; Misha Hawk-Wyatt; Halima Marshall-Conley; Jennifer Ross

Zaccho Staff: Joanna Haigood, Artistic Director; French Clements, Managing Director; Jennifer Ross, Development Director; Ann Berman, Financial Officer; Lizzy Spicuzza, Youth Performing Arts Manager; Sheena Johnson, management intern

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Zaccho rents its 5000-square-foot studio for rehearsals, performances, and photography shoots. Call for details.

October 8th and 9th, Joanna Haigood premieres a work for Oliver Ranch in Geyserville. Limited tickets, reserve now!

Zaccho SF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible.