

THE BREACH BIOS

RHODESSA JONES (Performer/writer) is Co-Artistic Director of the San Francisco acclaimed performance company *Cultural Odyssey*. She is an actress, teacher, singer, and writer. Ms. Jones is also the Founder and Director of the award winning *Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women*, which is a performance workshop that is designed to achieve personal and social transformation with incarcerated women. In October 2009 Rhodessa continued her ongoing residency at *Naturena Women's Prison* in Johannesburg conducting workshops and directing full-length theater productions with female inmates hosted by the *Urban Voices Festival* and the *Johannesburg Correctional Services*. In September 2009 Ms. Jones traveled to Moscow, Russia as a part of the *U.S. Department of State Speaker's Program* where she conducted residency activities, lectured, and performed her award winning show, *Big Butt Girls, Hard - Headed Women* at Praktika Theater in Downtown Moscow. During January & February 2009 she performed her latest performance piece, *The Love Project*, at La Mama Theater in New York City, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center in Tampa, Florida, 7 Stages Theater in Atlanta and many other locations including residency activities and performances in the Caribbean countries of Trinidad & Tobago and St. Lucia. Ms. Jones is currently collaborating with the *Women's HIV Program* at San Francisco Medical Center conducting workshops and residency activities that will lead to a world premier performance in 2010. In December of 2007 Rhodessa received a *United States Artist (USA) Fellowship* to support her work. Ms. Jones was honored with an *Honorary Doctorate* from California College of the Arts in 2004. Her published works include; *Rhodessa Jones: Theater for a New Millennium; Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance in the Twentieth Century*; Theater Communications Group, 1999; *Deep In The Night*, in *Journal of Medical Humanities*; Volume 19, Numbers 2/3, Summer 1998; *Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women*, in *Colored Contradictions* 1996.

IDRIS ACKAMOOR (Performer/Director) is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, actor, tap dancer, and director. He is the Founder of the San Francisco performance company *Cultural Odyssey*. Idris' primary instrument is the alto saxophone. An accomplished tap dancer, Idris' signature performance is his uncanny ability to combine tap dancing with playing his saxophone simultaneously. Idris returned from his third trip to South Africa in October 2009 continuing an ongoing residency at *Naturena Women's Prison* in Johannesburg conducting workshops and co-directing full-length theater productions with female inmates hosted by the *Urban Voices Festival* and the *Johannesburg Correctional Services*. In September 2009 Mr. Ackamoor traveled to Moscow, Russia as a part of the *U.S. Department of State Speaker's Program* where he conducted residency activities, lectures, and performances. During January & February 2009 he performed his latest performance piece, *The Love Project*, at La Mama Theater in New York City, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center in Tampa, Florida, 7 Stages Theater in Atlanta and many other locations including residency activities and performances in the Caribbean countries of Trinidad & Tobago and St. Lucia. Idris has received many awards for his work with Cultural Odyssey. Several of the many that he is particularly proud of include a *GOLDIE Lifetime Achievement Award* presented by the San Francisco Bay Guardian and a *Meet The Composer and American Composers Forum* grant. A musical milestone was achieved for Idris in 2007 when a 2 CD retrospective entitled, *Music of Idris Ackamoor 1971-2004* was released on EM Records of Japan. In 2004 Idris released his

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third CD entitled, *Homage to Cuba*. In 1999 Idris released his second jazz CD entitled, *Centurian* and in 1998 he recorded and released his first CD entitled *Portrait*. During 2009 three albums by *The Pyramids* were re-released on vinyl by Ikef Records that will be followed by a CD box set in 2010.

JOANNA HAIGOOD (Performer/Choreographer) relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area from New York in 1979 and co-founded ZACCHO Dance Theatre. Her creative work focuses on making dances that use natural, architectural and cultural environments as a point of departure for movement exploration and narrative. Haigood's works involve in-depth research into the history and the character of sites and typically integrates aerial flight and suspension as a way of expanding the dancers' spatial and dynamic range. Her work has been commissioned by Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Dancing in the Streets, Walker Arts Center, the Exploratorium Museum, the National Black Arts Festival, Lines Contemporary Ballet, Black Choreographers Moving Festival, Boston Dance Umbrella, Axis Dance Company, Festival d'Avignon and Festival d'Arles in France. Her work is also in the repertory of the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago. Ms. Haigood has been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the James M. Irvine Foundation. She also received the Cal Arts/Alpert Award in Dance in 1999 and United States Fellowship Award in 2007. She has received a Bay Guardian Local Discovery (GOLDIE) Award and three Isadora Duncan Dance Awards. Ms. Haigood has taught at the National des Arts du Cirque in France, the Laban Centre in England, Spelman College, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University and the University of California at Davis. She currently teaches at the San Francisco Clown Conservatory. She has enjoyed artist residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Montalvo Center and the Exploratorium Museum.

STEPHANIE JOHNSON (Lighting Designer / Scenographer) is a California based lighting designer who has worked in New York, Europe and India. In the Bay Area, she has designed for Dimensions Dance Theater, Anne Bluethenthal & Dancers, and Afro Solo among many other groups. She has happily collaborated with Cultural Odyssey for over twenty years. As a visual artist, she has been the recipient of grants and commissions from The National Endowment for the Arts, New Langton Arts and Money for Women Fund, the Richmond Art Center, City of Oakland: Public Arts Division, and The Arts Festival of Atlanta. Locally, her work has been exhibited at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, The DeYoung Museum, Berkeley Art Center, The Museum of The African Diaspora, and The Sargent Johnson Gallery. Ms. Johnson is the chair of the Visual and Public Art Department at California State University, Monterey Bay, and a Civic Arts Commissioner for the City of Berkeley. She is currently a doctoral candidate in public policy at The Union Institute & University.

PAM PENISTON (Set Design) –

RENE WALKER (Costume Assistance) has worked extensively as a costume designer with some of San Francisco's theater favorites: Magic Theater, Brava! and Word for Word. Her most recent credits include The Best of Playground 10, Traveling Jewish

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Theater's Family Alchemy and Chabot College's Merchant of Venice. She has collaborated with Cultural Odyssey for over twenty years. It is a great pleasure for her to continue working with the talented artists on Cultural Odyssey's production, The Love Project.