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San Francisco Dance Film Festival Announces Lineup for its 6th Fall Festival with October 5 Kick-Off Event & October 8-11 Official Selection

San Francisco, CA – San Francisco Dance Film Festival is pleased to announce the entire program for its 6th fall festival, featuring dance films from around the world, including a special kick-off event, opening and closing receptions, as well as discussions with local and international filmmakers, choreographers and special guests.

Artistic Director/Founder Greta Schoenberg says of this year's selections, "Through the accessible medium of film, we hope our programming will draw new audiences to dance. Our popular screendance shorts programs run a virtual tour of the latest in dance around the globe, while documentaries unravel the choreographic process and bring historical works back into relevance. Within a broad spectrum of genres we have the opportunity to introduce local dance fans to foreign artists who may not otherwise be seen in the Bay Area, as well as to independent local choreographers who may still fall under the general public's radar. We're thinking of our mission as twofold: Bringing dance to new audiences, and bringing new dance to dance audiences."

Below are select highlights from the entire selection including the kick-off event and the 2015 official festival program, a celebration of dance in myriad forms, both old and new. Complete information is available at www.sfdancefilmfest.org

FESTIVAL KICK-OFF EVENT

7 pm, Monday, October 5

Kanbar Hall Theater, JCCSF, 3200 California St
San Francisco, California

Mia - A Dancer's Journey

USA, 2013 (60 min.)

Directors: Maria Ramas & Kate Johnson / Narrator: Blythe Danner

SFDFFF launches its 6th festival with a special screening of the documentary film *Mia - A Dancer's Journey* at the Kanbar Hall Theater at the JCCSF. *Co-presented by San*

Francisco Ballet and the Museum of Performance + Design

Post-screening discussion/ Q&A with filmmakers moderated by Dan Geller.

Mia Slavenska was one of the most celebrated ballerinas of the 20th century, Croatia's greatest dancer, and a pioneer in American ballet. Caught in the maelstrom of 20th century political events, she was forced to leave her native Croatia at age twenty in order to continue to dance; at age twenty-one, she was being celebrated in Western Europe as the likely successor to Anna Pavlova; and, at age twenty-three, she was escaping the looming world war by emigrating to the United States with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. When Mia arrived in the late 1930s, she found an America where ballet—known as “fancy dancing” and “toe dancing”—was most often found as novelty acts in music reviews and movie halls. She was one of a small band of famous European émigré ballerinas who literally changed the face of American culture by introducing Americans across the country to ballet as an art form. Without Mia and her émigré colleagues, Balanchine's American revolution in ballet would never have made it past the borders of New York City. But at the end of her life, Mia was haunted by the fear of obscurity and spent her last years writing and rewriting her memoirs. When Mia died in 2002, they remained unpublished and she believed that she had been completely forgotten. Before she died, her daughter Maria promised that she would tell her mother's story. This film is the keeping of that promise. As Maria retraces her mother's life journey, she unearths the story of a maverick ballerina and a lost time in American dance.

Opening Night 2015: International Shorts I

Thursday, October 8 at 7:30 pm - Brava Theater Center

See the SF Dance Film Festival's top short films of 2015 opening night in an eclectic mix of screendance from around the world that will be showcased at the Brava Theater Center in San Francisco. The evening starts at 6:30 pm with a welcome reception for ticketholders and will be followed by a post-screening reception for filmmakers and festival passholders.

RARE BIRDS

Friday, October 9 at 7:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Following renowned Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman through his epic production of *A Swan Lake* (Norwegian National Ballet), *Rare Birds* tracks dance creation from ideas to hard reality. Dance fans and general audiences alike will appreciate this fascinating look into the craftsmanship, challenges and pleasures behind a large-scale production in a major institution. The house's army of artists and workers took on unique challenges, requiring new approaches to costume and sets and the installation of a 6000-liter lake onstage. Athletic dancers slide through water, creating a new dance form approaching such velocities that helmets were soon required to avoid concussion. With costumes by top designer Henrik Vibskov and new music by composer Mikael Karlsson, very little of the classic ballet remains. But the production became a sensation, selling out the entire run in one day and later nominated for the 2014 Prix Benois de la Danse.

International Shorts 2

Friday, October 9 at 9:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Co-presented by SF Cinematheque

More of the San Francisco Dance Film Festival's best screendance from around the world in this collection of shorts where dancers transcend space, time, and gravity through the magic of film.

2015 Dance Film Forum

Saturday, October 10 at 10:30 am – San Francisco Public Library, Koret Auditorium

The San Francisco Public Library hosts the 2015 Dance Film Forum as part of the San Francisco Dance Film Festival. Dance filmmakers from around the world will be present for a discussion about their films and their ideas for development in the field. Moderated by Ellen Bromberg, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Modern Dance and founding director of the first Graduate Certificate in Screendance at the University of Utah, and Lynette Kessler, founder of Dance Camera West in Los Angeles. FREE admission.

Renewal Through Dance

Saturday, October 10 at 2:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Four short films exploring the processes of renewal, reinvention and regrowth.

Parables of War

USA, 2014 (32 min.)

(West Coast Premiere) Director: Nina Gilden Seavey

Co-presented by AXIS Dance Company,

Using MacArthur “Genius” Award-winning choreographer Liz Lerman's theatrical performance piece *Healing Wars* as a point of departure, *Parables* witnesses the journey of three men who are, in one way or another, all casualties of war: Bill Pullman, the actor; Keith Thompson, the dancer; and Josh Bleill, the former Marine. Transcending performance, *Parables* explores the intricate nexus that exists between art and artist, between representation and personal narrative, and between historical truth and contemporary experience. Ultimately, what is laid bare is the struggle of the wounded and of their healers that expresses itself both in art and in life itself.

Renewal

USA / Israel, 2014 (40 min.) (Bay Area Premiere)

Director: Stacey Menchel Kussell

Co-presented by Culture Office of the Consulate General of Israel, SF Jewish Film Festival

Renewal profiles an internationally renowned group of dancers – the Vertigo Dance Company – in their pioneering Eco-Arts village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The film features captivating scenes of the Vertigo company in performance and rehearsals, and in their ecological pursuits including gray-water recycling and permaculture. The process of becoming more sustainable forces these dancers to reconsider their art, their values, and their place in the world.

Art and Science Collide

Saturday, October 10 at 4:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Co-presented by California Academy of Sciences

Post-screening discussion/Q&A with Ryan Wyatt, Director of Morrison Planetarium; Dr. Donald Goldsmith, scientist/writer and Keri Kerkal former professional ballet dancer, bio-mechanical engineer and founder of Raw Science TV.

Particle physics and robotics intertwine with dance and opera in this program where practitioners of highly refined disciplines search for common ground. The program will feature the two films, *Symmetry* which will be preceded by *Symmetry Unraveled*, a fascinating making-of documentary. The filmmakers of both films and guest panelists will discuss the provocative intersection of dance and science immediately after the screening.

My Mother Loved Dance (Ma Mère Adorait La Danse)

Saturday, October 10 at 7:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Co-presented by Alliance Francaise and the Consulate General of France in San Francisco

My Mother Loved Dance is a portrait of Brigitte Lefèvre, who was the director of the Paris Opera Ballet for more than 20 years. During her last year in office, filmmaker Thierry Teston followed her, from Paris to Tokyo, behind the scenes of a lifetime, and those of one of the world's finest and oldest companies. As she floats among luminary choreographers and breathtaking dancers, Lefèvre manages her demanding role like a motherly sylph. We witness delicate interactions never seen by the public which illustrate with unusual frankness and clarity how the world (and not just the dance world) really runs. This beautifully crafted documentary treats the subject with an intimacy and elegance that will be fascinating to anyone who aspires to lead a company of any kind.

International Shorts 3

Saturday, October 10 at 9:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Storytelling: Five short narratives of love, loss, oppression and exuberance told through dance.

Let's Get The Rhythm: The Life and Times of Mary Mack

Sunday, October 11 at 2:00 pm – Brava Theater Center

Co-presented by Children's Community Music Center, World Arts West, SF Doc Fest

Let's Get the Rhythm is a 53-minute video documentary chronicling girls' hand-clapping games on inner-city playgrounds and around the world, from every continent and many islands in between. Three eight-year-olds from diverse cultural backgrounds in the greater New York area charm viewers with their personal insights as they learn, share, and eventually outgrow the tradition.

While drawing attention to the social importance of girls' games, the documentary showcases archival footage from far-flung locations, even ancient

Egyptian reliefs, and includes footage by Alan Lomax and Laura Boulton. Folklorist Bess Lomax Hawes and ethnomusicologist Kyra Gaunt accentuate the beauty of the beat with choice observations on the empowering force of this genre on the lives of women.

Preceded by the short film *Tap, Tap, Tap*.

Feelings Are Facts: The Life of Yvonne Rainer

Sunday, October 11 at 4:30 pm – Brava Theater Center

Co-presented by Bay Area Video Coalition, Hope Mohr Dance

At the age of 25, Yvonne Rainer took her first dance class; at the age of 28, she changed dance forever. Directed by local filmmaker Jack Walsh, *Feelings Are Facts: The Life of Yvonne Rainer* tells the story of postmodern dance maverick Yvonne Rainer. As a choreographer and filmmaker, Rainer has pushed the boundaries of America's avant-garde for five decades. Over the course of her career, she revolutionized modern dance, was a performance art innovator, and radically changed experimental filmmaking – all during a time when the art world largely ignored women. Now 80, Rainer continues to make provocative works that push the boundaries of dance.

Preceded by the short film *Territoire*.

Closing Night Celebration of Co-Laboratory and Local Shorts

Sunday, October 11 at 7:00pm – Brava Theater Center

The 2015 Co-Laboratory films, a unique collaboration between two teams of local choreographers and filmmakers, will premiere the two short dance films, completed just days before, on the closing night of the festival. Iconoclastic choreographer Sara Shelton Mann paired with San Francisco Film Society's Film House resident Elena Greenlee will present their creation featuring dancer Jesse Hewitt. And music video director Mark Kohr's collaboration with ballet choreographer Christopher Stowell will involve dancers Rupert Tookey and Danielle Rowe in their exploration of a narrative work through dance.

Local shorts will also be screened as part of the traditional closing night celebration for local choreographers, dancers, filmmakers and audiences.