



ArtSpot Productions &  
New Orleans African American Museum present

# RUMOURS *of* WAR

A performance in commemoration of  
Louisiana's 1811 Slave Revolt

7:30pm **Fridays - Sundays**  
**Oct 14-30, 2011**

1418 Governor Nicholls, **New Orleans**, LA 70116  
Tickets: \$20 general; \$15 students/ seniors/ artists



This project is generously supported by The Surdna Foundation, and by the Tulane University Department of Theatre and Dance. Presented in collaboration with The Louisiana Museum of African American History, Students at the Center, The Renaissance Project, McDonogh 35 Senior High School, Third Eye Theatre, and Dillard University Theater Department. Additional funding provided by a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, administered by the Arts Council of New Orleans, and by a grant from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

# RUMOURS of WAR

Directed by **Kathy Randels** and **Monique Moss**  
Original music by **Sean LaRocca** and **Kathy Randels**

Set Design **Jeff Becker\***  
Costume Design **Shawn Hall**  
Lighting Design **Davis Barron**

## Prologue

Gede Kenneth Bryan  
The Martyrs Kirk Bush, Jarrell Hamilton, Rebecca Mwase\*  
Josef Pons, Claire Williams

## War

Lindor Michael Quess? Moore  
The General Ray Vrazel<sup>\</sup>  
Michel Michael Quintana  
Charles Deslondes Martin Bradford  
The Guests Tricia Anderson, Carolyn Blessing,  
Andrea Freewater, Jeffery Gunshol,  
Amanda Hale, Barbara Hayley, Kaci  
McGuire, Erin Reho Pelias, Lisa Shattuck\*  
The Overseer Derek Roguski

## The White Woman of the West

Josephine (the General's wife) Kathy Randels\*

## Lullaby

Cecille Ausettua AmorAmenkum\*\*  
Bébé (her daughter) Monique Moss\*\*<sup>\</sup>

## The Musicians

Piano Sean LaRocca\*  
Trumpet Maurice Turner, Eric Lucero\*\*  
Violin Hisham Bravo, Mary Preto, Sam Craft  
Viola Marjorie Garnier, Jacqueline Sandor  
Cello Tatiana Piño, Monica McIntyre  
Bass Samuel A. Phillips, Joseph Haennie  
Drums Damas "FanFan" Louis, Brotha T\*\*  
Bakari Blackman  
Haitian Singer Mambo Marie Lourdes Simeon

## The Crew

Stage Manager Bonnie Gabel  
Assistant Stage Manager Mandisa Reed  
House Manager Alison Haracznak  
Light Operator Parker Denton  
Stage Hands Graham Hamaker, Peter Dupuis, Tai Nicholas  
Carpentry Louisa Sargent, Adam Tourek, Jedric Walker,  
Moose Jackson, Phil Cramer, Bruce France  
Costume Assistant Margaret Hull  
Piano Technician Marty Lastrapes

## The Museum

Executive Director Jonn Hankins Outreach Coordinator Ashanti Paulin  
Deputy Director Bridget Johnson Curator of Collections Ina Fandrich

**Ausettua AmorAmenkum** (Cecille) is a cultural researcher, presenter and educator, director of Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective, Professor Adjunct at Tulane University, Second Queen of the Yellow Pocahontas Indians, Education Coordinator of Orleans Parish Communication District, a vegan chef (Soul Sisters Catering), and Ye-Ye of Amina, mother of Nailah and daughter of Gertrude.

**Tricia Anderson** (French Chorus) is a sophomore at Tulane University studying linguistics and dance. She has been acting and dancing for the majority of her life and enjoys climbing things. She'd like to thank Monique and Kathy for this opportunity, and on that note *adieu*.

**Davis Barron** (Lighting Design) began designing lighting in 1973 with the Atlanta Ballet. He moved to New Orleans in 1979 and has worked extensively with the New Orleans Ballet Association, the New Orleans Opera, the Contemporary Arts Center and many others. Davis was on the Theatre Design faculty at NOCCA for 11 years. He is a head electrician with IATSE Stagehands Local 39.

**Bakari Blackman** (drums) hails from New Orleans and has studied and worked with former *Les Ballet National du Sénégal* director Abdoulaye "Papa" Camara, local teachers Zohar Israel and Kenyatta Simon, and local companies such as N'kafu and Free Spirit African Drum and Dance.

**Jeff Becker** (Set Designer) is a set designer who specializes in site specific performances with innovative transforming environments. He is the recipient of several awards and grants including an NEA/RAP Grant and three Big Easy Awards, and was selected as a participant in the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers. Jeff is an ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions.

**Carolyn Blessing** (French Chorus) is a student at Tulane University majoring in cultural anthropology. She's been dancing since age four, and has previously performed with the dance company DEMI (Dance Ensemble of Michigan), in student dance productions at Tulane, and in spoken word projects. She is excited and grateful to be part of the cast of *Rumours of War*.

**Martin 'Bats' Bradford** (Charles Deslondes) is a graduate of Dillard University and co-founder of the entertainment blog site GumboMonster.com, a collective of local artists showcasing original movies, music, and editorials. Roles include the title character in *Macbeth*, 'Booth' in Suzan Lori Parks' *TopDog/UnderDog*, and 'Sporting Life' in Dorothy and DuBose Heyward's "Porgy." He thanks ArtSpot and the support of his family and friends for this opportunity to learn, perform and grow!

**Kenneth Bryan** (Gede) is a New Orleans native and the first graduate of Loyola University with a special double major BA in Communications and Dance. He began his studies in classical ballet at the age of 19 at Loyola University. He currently teaches dance at the New Orleans Public Library, Lighthouse For The Blind and elsewhere, and is pursuing a Masters in Liberal Arts at Tulane University.

**Kirk Bush** (Martyr Chorus) says thanks to the support of his mom (Mary Bush) as well as his engine, Shannon March. Past credits in theater and film include Tremé, New Orleans Shakespeare On The Road, *The Unacquainted: A Gospel Play*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

**Andrea Freewater** (French Chorus) has been a volunteer for ArtSpot for a decade. She is currently on the staff at Uptown Holistic Center.

**Bonnie Gabel** (Stage Manager) is a performance artist and theater maker from Richmond, Virginia. She is the artistic director of Night Light Collective (nightlightcollective.moonfruit.com); their interactive dance/diner theater event about Marilyn Monroe premieres November 13-20 at 509 Mandeville Street.

**Jeffrey Gunshol** (French Chorus) is a professor of theatre and dance at Tulane University Dept. of Theatre and Dance. His work may be seen in the city and in Above the Oaks in November.

**Amanda Hale** (French Chorus) is a recent graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University with a BA in Theatre, concentrating in Acting and Directing. Credits include: *The Women*, *Vagina Monologues*, and *Hasty Bauble*. Amanda would like to thank her family for their unwavering love and support.

**Shawn Hall** (Costume Designer) is a visual artist who sees her practice as an act of participation in the natural world. Her most recent exhibition was *How to Build a Forest*, a large-scale collaboration with PearlDamour that premiered in June of 2011 at the Kitchen in NYC and will be shown at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans during the spring of 2012.

**Jarrell Hamilton** (Martyr Chorus) is a New Orleans native, dancer, choreographer, activist, actress and singer. Founder of New Orleans Love for the Arts Project. Ms. Hamilton also partners with various organizations such as Uptown Music Theatre, KidSmart, and Silence is Violence.

**Barbara Hayley** (French Chorus) is a professor with the Newcomb Dance Program, Tulane Dept. of Theatre and Dance and founding director of New Orleans Dance (1987). Upcoming: *Above the Oaks*, 300 McWilliams Hall, Nov. 1-6; *Looking Through New Orleans History: A Performance Event at the Pitot House*, 1440 Moss St., Nov. 13; PearlDamour's *How to Build a Forest*.

**Tyrone "Brotha T" Henry**'s love for music was first inspired by his father, New Orleans drummer Wilmer James Henry (aka Octav Vitani Balogun). For more than a decade, T studied the music and folklore of West Africa under Abdoulaye "Papa" Camara. In recent years he has been researching and studying Afro-Cuban music and folklore. He is the founder of Nfungotah Inc. and Bissap Breeze LLC.

**Sean LaRocca** (Composer) has written and performed music for many ArtSpot shows, including *Flight*, *Chekhov's Wild Ride*, *The Maid of Orléans: A Joan of Arc Story*, and the upcoming *Miss Julie: Tongue-Tied and Kiss-Twisted*. Sean is ArtSpot's managing director.

**Damas "FanFan" Louis** is a master Haitian drummer who has traveled the country teaching the vast repertoire of Haiti's traditional music: there are at least 33 traditional rhythms, and each rhythm has over a hundred different variations depending on the choreography in the ceremony and the spirit being called. FanFan worked with the Katherine Dunham Company in the 1990's.

**Kaci McGuire** (French Chorus) grew up in the suburbs of New Orleans with a passion for dance and a thirst for knowledge, which led to working with children, delving into other cultures and expanding her mind through reading. Kaci currently studies Latin American Studies at Tulane University, with the intention of studying in Havana, Cuba next fall.

**Michael Quess? Moore** (Lindor) is a self-published poet and spoken word artist, rapper, actor and teacher. Past theatre credits include *Voices from the Back of the Class* with Junebug Productions. His debut book *Blind Visionz* and CD *A Scribe Called Quess?* are available at select locations around New Orleans and online, and just might be on the coffee table already by ya' aunty and dem house.

**Monique Moss** (Bébé) is a native of New Orleans and the artistic director of Third Eye Theatre. She holds a BA in French and an MA in Latin American Studies from Tulane University, where she is an adjunct professor in the Theatre and Dance Department. Awards include a Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Fellowship to Tokyo, a Fulbright-Hays Teacher Fellowship to South Africa, international dance and cultural exchanges in Haiti, and Big Easy Classical Arts awards in Dance.

**Rebecca Mwase** (Martyr Chorus) is thrilled to be a part of this commemorative performance. As an ensemble member with both ArtSpot Productions and Voices Organized in Creative Dissent (VOIC'D), Rebecca is committed to working at the intersection of art and social justice. She was seen most recently in ArtSpot's *Go Ye Therefore...*, which received a Big Easy Best Original Work Award, and the Free Southern Theatre Institute's *Voices From The Back of the Class*.

**Erin Reho Pelias** (French Chorus) has studied dance for over 25 years and is a native of southeast Texas. She met her husband, Michael, while he was evacuated for Katrina. She had a baby in 2008 and started a natural parenting boutique called ZukaBaby in 2009. Erin is excited to return to the stage in *Rumours of War*.

**Josef Pons** (Martyr Chorus) is a theater performance major at Dillard University. His mission is to take theater everywhere he goes. Josef plans to attend graduate school for an MFA in Theatre. He would like to thank the entire cast and crew, as well as his family, for all of their love and support.

**Michael Quintana** (Michel) was raised in Oxnard, California and moved to New Orleans in 2004. Ze received a BA in Dance from Tulane University, and tours internationally in *Darwin the Dinosaur: a Glow in the Dark Adventure*. For this year's Fringe Festival, Michael is choreographing Welcome to Desire for the Tally-ho Daredevils. Ze is thrilled to contribute hir energies to *Rumours of War*.

**Kathy Randels** (Josephine), ArtSpot's founding artistic director, has written, performed in, and directed numerous original solo and group works for professional, student, and incarcerated ensembles in Louisiana and beyond. She has received V-Day Leadership, OBIE, Ambie, Big Easy and Marquee Awards. She dedicates her performance to Jo Carson and to her daughter Emma.

**Mandisa Reed** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a sophomore Theatre Technology major at Dillard University, originally from Las Vegas, Nevada where she studied Theatre Performance at the Las Vegas Academy. Her theatre credits include: *Almost Maine*, *The Wiz*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Fences*. Mandisa aspires to be a traveling stage manager for theatre and film.

**Derek Roguski** (Overseer), hailing from the swamps of North Florida and a grateful New Orleans transplant, co-organizes a group called the New Teachers Roundtable (newteachersnola.org), which holds monthly story circles aimed at supporting the growth of new teachers and increasing their accountability to New Orleans public school students and their communities using an anti-racist analysis.

**Lisa Moraschi Shattuck** (French Chorus) is proud to be an ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions. She performed in Rumours ten years ago with her son Rio — who danced *in utero!* She sends thanks to her daughter Aja and husband Jeff, both amazing and supportive theater makers. Lisa is a Media Arts instructor at NOCCA.

**Maurice Turner** studied Microbiology at Howard University and Musical Performance at Alcorn State University and the University of Mississippi. He is the Chair of the Board of the Highlander Research and Education Center, and has been a member of Alternate ROOTS since 2001. He is one-half of the artistic ensemble M.U.G.A.B.E.E. (Men Under Guidance Acting Before Early Extinction).

**Ray Vrazel** (The General) is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Dillard University where he teaches an array of theatre performance courses. At Dillard, he has directed Euripides' *Medea*, *TopDog/Underdog*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Fences*, which received a Big Easy Best College Play nomination. In the community, Ray *directed We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* for the Cripple Creek Players.

\* ArtSpot Productions ensemble member

\*\* Returning from 2001 production

<sup>\</sup> Appears by special permission of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers in the U.S.

<sup>\</sup> In partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Dance Performance, Tulane University.

## Directors' Notes

More than 20 years ago, I first conceived of a three-part performance examining War: in society at large; between a mother and daughter (using the Biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac); and within the self. In 2001, as I was preparing to direct the trilogy for its premiere at the CAC, I learned of the 1811 Slave Revolt from my brother Jim, Leon Waters, Malcolm Suber and the African American History Alliance, who were working to expose the story to a wider public, and the piece began to coalesce around the Revolt. Now, Monique Moss and I have been given an opportunity to re-envision the piece together, and we have intentionally focused on commemorating those who died in the revolt and those who survived to tell the story. We have kept our 21st century bodies, experiences and lenses throughout our excavation, but we have tried to listen closely to the spirits that wanted this piece to be made, and to create a structure within which many people could participate. The performers, designers and helpers who have gathered to create this work have given tremendously of themselves, their spirits and their time, and on their behalf I thank you for coming to witness our work and for your interest in our history. We hope that by truly acknowledging our community's deep wounds, and by examining them from all sides, victim or perpetrator, we can begin to sculpt a healthier future together, grounded in 360-degree truth.

— Kathy Randels

In fulfillment of the Master's of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Performance in the Theatre and Dance Department at Tulane University, *Rumours of War: Ceremonial Acts of Resistance* was envisioned to be developed as an interdisciplinary site-specific performance work based in part on the buried history of the 1811 Slave Revolt in Louisiana, commemorating the bicentennial of this act by enslaved Africans by examining understudied topics such as: the role of women and ritual in resistance particular to slave revolts in both Haiti and Louisiana; the impact of the Haitian Revolution on New Orleans and Louisiana; the role of congregational music, dance and song in slave resistance in colonial Haiti and New Orleans; the spiritual act of calling on ancestors for protection in the context of war; the body as a vehicle of cultural transmission; and the disparities and clashes in social class and in divergent cultural traditions. My intention as an artist and a researcher was to extrapolate and revive historical and cultural connections between Haiti and New Orleans through the lens of the resilience and survival of traditional music, song and dance forms that the two former French colonies share, and then to use my academic research to inform the creation of a new work that integrates traditional and contemporary dance, music, language, text, and image. Infinite blessings and thanks to all who tread the sacred grounds of our ancestors with the intention of remembrance.

— Monique Moss

## Text Credits

*(in order of first appearance)*

Martin Bradford, Ausetua AmorAmenkum, Michael Quess? Moore, Josef Pons, Claire Williams, Rebecca Mwase, Jarrell Hamilton, Kirk Bush, Monique Moss, Lucas Cox, Maurice Turner, Kathy Randels, Derek Roguski, Osip Mandelstam, Sun Tzu, Christopher Columbus, The Articles of Confederation of the United Colonies of New England, A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America (1643), George Washington, Martin Van Buren, John O'Sullivan, General George Patton, "Willie Lynch," Theodore Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Trumann, John F. Kennedy, George Bush, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Abraham Lincoln, Psalm 23 and Matthew 24:4-13.

## Acknowledgments

Every production our company has ever undertaken has relied heavily upon the support of our community, but this one easily takes the cake! First of all, we thank the artists and designers who have given tirelessly of their talents and energy. To the Surdna Foundation, whose financial support encouraged us to attempt this feat, and to the staff of the New Orleans African American Museum, who made their beautiful space available to us and went above and beyond the call of duty. Tulane University Department of Theatre and Dance, Newcomb Music Department, Dillard University Theater Department, Mondo Bizarro, Nunez Community College, Cripple Creek Theatre Company, Jackson Avenue Evangelical Congregation and St Charles Avenue Baptist Church provided essential equipment, support and resources. Additional funding was provided by a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, as administered by the Arts Council of New Orleans, and by a grant from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation. Our history lessons came from Leon Waters, Malcolm Suber, and Fari Nzinga and the Louisiana Museum of African American History, and from Ina Fandrich. Additional partners include Students at the Center, The Renaissance Project, McDonogh 35 Senior High School and Third Eye Theatre. Louisa Sargent, Alison Haraczak, Ashley Sparks and countless volunteers were essential to the success of this production. Ayo Scott did the beautiful graphic designs and brought the memory and spirit of his father John into the process. Ray Vrazel donated a piano. We would also like to acknowledge the artists who helped create the 2001 version of *Rumours of War*, and whose spirits and contributions are still very much present in the current piece: Lucas Cox—to whose memory this production is dedicated—J Hammons, Roscoe Reddix, and John Hammons; Mary Lou Bensabat, Rosemarie Doumitt, Patty Elliott, Ileana Lyons, Raphaelle O'Neil, Antonino Paone, Stella Peralta, Elliott Raisen, Renee Rednour, and Solange Silva; and Zohar Israel and John Grimsley. For more information about the 1811 Slave Revolt, pick up a copy of Albert Thrasher's "On to New Orleans!"

The mission of the **New Orleans African American Museum** is to preserve, interpret and promote the African American cultural heritage of New Orleans, with a particular emphasis on the Tremé community.

**ArtSpot Productions** is an ensemble of artists dedicated to creating meticulously live theater in New Orleans. Our productions are a sincere blend of disciplines developed through ensemble authorship, physically rigorous training, original music, interactive sculptural environments, and extended research and rehearsal. We practice social justice and shared power in our creative and organizational processes, and we strive to incite positive change in our community with visually stunning performances and empowering educational programs. Join our mailing list for news about our next show, *Miss Julie: Tongue-Tied & Kiss-Twisted*, coming in March 2012, and I Know This to be True, our new CD featuring original songs from 15 years of ArtSpot shows.

[www.ArtSpotProductions.org](http://www.ArtSpotProductions.org)