

MIRROR OF THE TIMES

"Truth Crushed to the Earth Will Rise Again"

13-16 SEPTEMBER 2012

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

FREE

SAILING AWAY

HUNDREDS FLEE DISCRIMINATION

San Francisco's Black Exodus



Karpeles/Sell

Steam Sidewheeler Commodore - In 1858, hundreds of African Americans migrated from the "free state" of California, where they faced discrimination, to British Columbia, Canada, for new life and opportunities.

Historic Figures come to life on Market Street

Sailing Away tells the story of seven prominent African Americans who lived and worked near Market Street during the mid-nineteenth century and of the events leading up to the mass exodus of many African Americans.

It is sometimes referred to as "San Francisco's Black Exodus of 1858," a little-known part of the City's history when hundreds of

African Americans fled racial discrimination for the safety of Canadian exile. Choreographer Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theatre is marking this iconic event with free public performances of her powerful work *Sailing Away*.

Performances will be given in three continuous cycles Thursday-Sunday, September 13-16 at 12noon, 1:30pm, and 3pm daily

starting at Market Street and Powell. This project was originally commissioned and presented by the San Francisco Arts Commission's Art on Market Street Program in 2010.

For more information about Zaccho Dance Theatre, *Sailing Away* performance and the *Mirror of Our Times* please go to the back page of this newspaper.

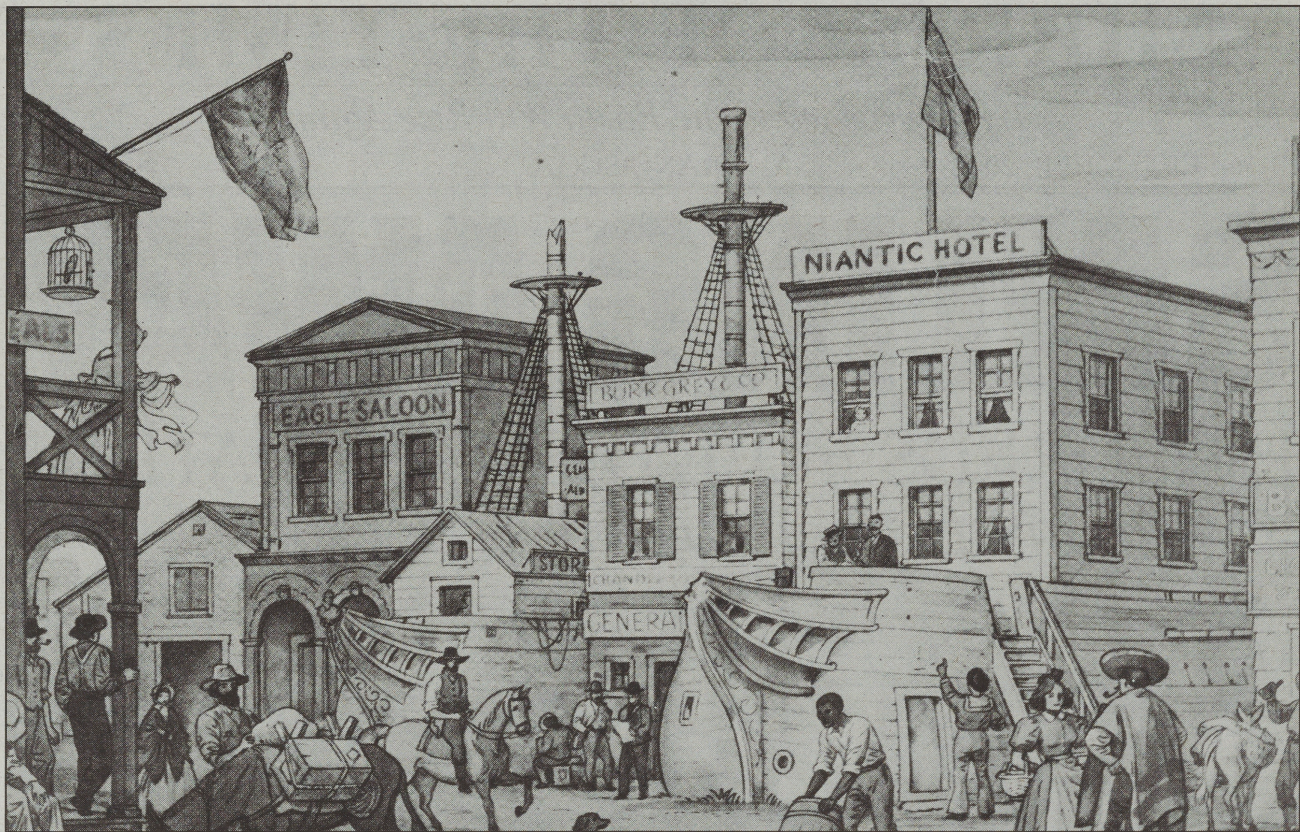
Shadow and Light:

An Autobiography with Reminiscences
by Miffin Wistar Gibbs

"Yet it is not without a degree of restless anticipation that one finds oneself and baggage finally domiciled on an ocean-going steamer. Curiosity and criticism, selfishness and graciousness each in turn assert themselves. Curiosity in espionage, criticism in ob-

servation, while selfishness and graciousness alternate. You find yourself in the midst of a miniature world, environed but isolated from activities of the greater, an epitome of human proclivities.

A possible peril, real, imaginary or remote; a common brotherhood tightens the chain of fellowship and gradually widens the exchange of amenities."



A Look Into the Past - The Niantic Ship was built in 1844; used until 1849 under Capt. Henry Cleveland. Hauled to Clay Street and converted into a hotel in spring of 1849, until the Superstructure burned on April 5, 1851.

Zaccho Dance Theatre Presents

Sailing Away

Conceived and Directed by Joanna Haigood

In collaboration with performing artists Byb Chanel Bibene, Antoine Hunter, Robert Henry Johnson, Jetta Martin, Travis Santell Rowland, Raissa Simpson, Amara Tabor-Smith, Matthew Wickett, and Shakiri

Dramaturg: Kim Euell

Costumes: Callie Floor

Scenic Designer: Wayne Campbell

Prop Fabrication: Wayne Campbell and John Norton

Paintings: Dieter Tremp, Eric Karpeles and Michael Sell

Newspaper Designer: Sanaz Teymoori and Reginald James

Character biographies written by: Kim Euell

Production Stage Manager: Lizzy Spicuzza

Interns: Sara Kinsey, Jenny Jang

Crew: Andrea Schwartz, Miles Young, Matt Jones, Jenny Jang, Sara Kinsey

THANK YOU to the San Francisco Arts Commission, the California Historical Society, Bayview Opera House, Museum of the African Diaspora, African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Al Williams, San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society, ACT Props and Costume Shops, Frances N. Phillips, Guy Washington, Elizabeth Gessel, Judy Moran, Kate Patterson, Lance Anderson, Wendy Parkman, John Rogers, Dr. Shawn Ginwright, Mary Ratcliff, The San Francisco Bayview, Angela Tennison, Kathy Young, Reginald James, Zaccho's Board of Directors, Agatha Huddleston, Amanda *S, Amy Seiwert, Ann Marie Nemanich, Anna Wyatt, Anne Dalpino, Antigone Trimis, Anton Von Haag, Arienne Dar, Armida & Steve Newstedt, Barbara Ockel, Barbara Perzigan, Burr Heneman, Carol Denise Mitchell, Change Before Going Productions, Cheryl Ward, Claire Simeone, Deborah Santana, Deborah Ann Shea, Diana Sunshine, Diane Miller, Dominique Alfandre, Donna Graves, Ellen Berman, Erik Karpeles, Gail Fresia, Galen Leung, CPA, Gayle Okumura Sullivan, Harriet Moss, Imani Cooley, Jane Sullivan, Jeanne Finley Montgomery, Jenepher Stowell, Joan & Richard Okumura, John & Paula Foley, John Beem, John Eichhorst, Judith Shaw, Kamilah Taylor, Kathy Bustamante, Kenneth G. Hughes, Laura O'Heir, Laurence Plouvier, Leslie & Susan Polgar, Linda Mornell, Linda Oppelt-Perez, Lisa K Bell, Lizz Roman, Lois D. Martin, Louise Beem, Lynne Alison McInnes, Marie Chandoha, M.C. Russi, Meg Simonds, Mercy Sidbury, Mitzie G. Abe, Neshama Franklin, Papeete Arlene Allsman, Patricia Yenawine, Peter Richards, Pierre Herve, Preservation Properties, Randy Tuell, Roswell Messing III & Arlene Naschke, Sean Cullen, Second Wind Productions, Sharon Steuer, Sonya M Smith, Stephen Fitzstephens, Stockton Buck, Susan Berkowitz, Susan George, Teresa Beem, Thomas Leal, Tim Sheils, Toby Leavitt, Wendy Testu, Wendy Jones, Tristan Cunningham, Emily Wade Thompson, PORTICO Restaurant, and to the extraordinary artists for bringing these stories to life with grace and insight.

Special thanks to our funders of this project Walter and Elise Haas Fund, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Wells Fargo Foundation, Bayview Community Fund of the Tides Foundation, California Historical Society, Bayview Opera House, and the Museum of the African Diaspora.

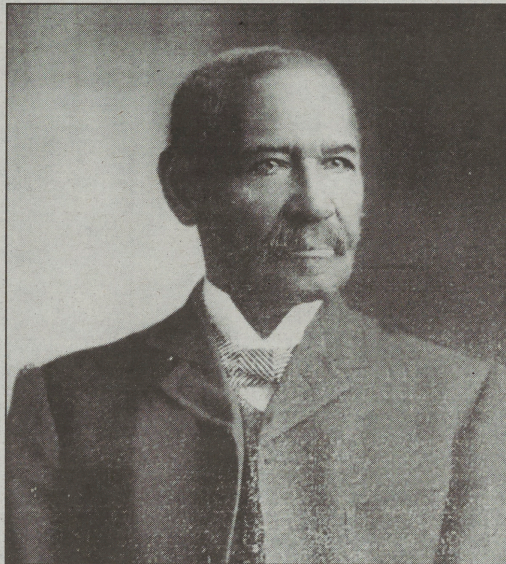
Performance materials are also on reserve at San Francisco's Main Library for an accessible experience of this visual performance for people who are blind or visually impaired

MIFFLIN GIBBS - SAN FRANCISCO PIONEER, BUSINESSMAN

Portrayed by Antoine Hunter

My name is Mifflin Wistar Gibbs and I was born in Philadelphia April 17, 1823. I had the good fortune to be born into an achievement-oriented family of free men and women. My father, a Methodist Minister, understood the importance of a good education and enrolled me early on. Unfortunately he passed away when I was only eight. I left the Free School where I was enrolled at in order to help support my invalid mother. I continued my studies as best I could at night. At age twelve I apprenticed as a carpenter, in accordance with my mother's wishes. Eventually I became a successful builder and contractor. My skills as a carpenter proved to be a great asset.

As a youth I visited a plantation in Maryland and saw firsthand the chattel system in operation. This experience inspired my activities in the fight against oppression. My affiliation with a group of well-educated Negro men led to my active involvement within Philadelphia's prominent Anti-Slavery Society and Underground Railroad. I was gratified when Frederick Douglas encouraged me join him on a lecture tour that ended in California around the time that gold was discovered there. I arrived in San Francisco with less than a dollar in my pocket but with complete confidence that I could use my skills to secure my livelihood. I soon found lodging at a hotel on Kearney Street that was run by a man of my own race. I then set out to



Mifflin Wistar Gibbs (1823-1915)

find gainful employment.

My first job in San Francisco was as a carpenter. In order to be hired I had to agree to work for wages that were less than those paid to the white carpenters. When my co-workers threatened to quit unless I was fired, the foreman told me that I could stay on if I could recruit enough workers willing to work at my pay level to replace the others. Despite my best efforts I was forced to give up my construction job. I did not allow this setback to deter me from my goals however. I began working as a bootblack in front

of the Union Hotel, knowing that this would only be temporary. During the boom times of the Gold Rush there were ample opportunities for entrepreneurial types like me. With the money I was able to save I went into the clothing business with Nathaniel Pointer. We called our shop The Philadelphia House. Next I partnered with Peter Lester, also of Philadelphia, in opening an imported boot and shoe firm. Our emporium featured the latest styles from London, Paris, New York and of course, Philadelphia.

In 1851 I became one of the

founders of the Mirror of the Times, California's first Colored newspaper. From 1854-57, I was active in several committees opposing the growing discriminatory practices in California including a poll tax targeting Blacks. When I refused to pay the tax, goods from our store were seized and put up for bid on the auction block. Sympathetic friends circulated through the crowd urging those assembled not to bid on our stock. The crowd complied and the tax officials eventually returned our property. Following this incident I formed an activist group called The Franchise League that used the court system to fight these efforts and led the campaign that resulted in the repeal of the poll tax. Mary Ellen Pleasant provided substantial financial support for The League's efforts. But after we lost the Right of Testimony, I witnessed a grievous assault on my partner at our downtown establishment. Deprived of the right to testify on his behalf in court it was clear to me that the time had come to pull up stakes and depart from San Francisco, for people of color were no longer safe here. On April 20, 1858, along with my fellow Negro San Franciscans, I boarded the steamship Commodore and set sail for Victoria, British Columbia.

Early in 1858 gold was discovered on the Fraser River in Canada so our relocation came at a fortuitous time. While living in the Northwest I invested in real estate and established the region's

first mercantile house outside of the Hudson Bay Company. In addition to amassing considerable wealth, I studied the English Common Law and was eventually elected to two terms on the Common Council. In 1859 I returned to the States just long enough to marry Maria Alexander of Kentucky, an Oberlin graduate.

After the Civil War ended we returned to the States where I continued my legal studies and obtained my law degree from Oberlin College. We then established a permanent residence in Little Rock, Arkansas where I was admitted to the Bar. One year later I was appointed attorney of Pulaski County. In 1873 I was elected to the position of Municipal Judge in this city in which the large majority was not of my race. In fact, I became the first African American elected to this kind of office in the United States. In 1877 the President Hayes appointed me Register of the United States Land Office for the Little Rock District of Arkansas. I continued to serve various posts in the Interior Department through appointments made by presidents Arthur and Harrison. In 1897 I was appointed United States Consul for Madagascar where I served for four years before resigning. The man who replaced me became my son-in-law.

I also found the time somehow to record my life story. I chose the title Shadow and Light: An Autobiography.

George Washington Dennis - Colored advocate

Portrayed By Chanel Bibene

I was brought to California during the Gold Rush by a slave trader from Mobile, Alabama named Green Dennis.

He happened to be my father. In those days gambling was a popular way of passing the time during long voyages.

On the trip to San Francisco I was won and lost three times. Fortunately, once we arrived I was offered the opportunity to purchase my freedom.

Let's just say I was highly motivated. Working as a hotel porter I was able to save more

than enough money within three months. I paid Green Dennis \$1,000 for my freedom and sent \$950 to liberate my mother from bondage down South.

When my mother arrived in San Francisco I purchased a cooking concession for her at the El Dora do Hotel. During the Gold Rush days even a hard boiled egg sold for a dollar. Mother was able to take in over \$200 a day on average serving up home cooked meals to the gambling crowd. This new life agreed with mother and she lived to be 105.

Eventually I opened the Custom House Livery Stable, located at

Sansome and Washington Streets. I was able to secure a large contract with the British government to supply trained horses.

There was one unfortunate incident during this time. An Irish fellow working for me there poisoned ninety of the horses and I had him brought up on charges. This did not prevent me from fulfilling the contract.

In 1855 I married Margaret Anne Brown. That same year I became a member of the Executive Committee of the Colored Convention.

I was the one who secured legal assistance for the release of Archy Lee from the custody of his owner,

Charles Stovall. I also lobbied for testimony rights in San Francisco along with Mifflin Gibbs. Once it became clear that we would not prevail on this issue, my wife and I decided to join with the group that was leaving San Francisco to settle on Victoria Island.

After the Civil War, when conditions improved, I returned to San Francisco with my family. In 1867 I opened San Francisco's first fuel yard, the Cosmopolitan Coal & Wood Yard. Located at 340 Broadway near Montgomery, we sold fuel wholesale and retail. I also invested in real estate.

In partnership with Mifflin Gibbs, I purchased one property on

Montgomery between Jackson and Pacific that was sold six months later for almost double the price paid.

I built a beautiful home for my family at 2507 Bush Street. My son George studied at the Hastings College of Law in San Francisco.

Another one of my sons, Edward, became the first African American policeman in San Francisco.

My daughter Margaret was the first of her race to graduate from San Francisco High School. She did so with honors and was fluent in Spanish and Chinese. She later taught at a private school for Chinese students.

Some of our descendants are still living in this area today.



Mechanic Monument, after 1906 Earthquake.

San Francisco schoolgirl recalls discrimination

Portrayed by Raissa Simpson

I'm Sarah Lester and I am fifteen years of age. My father owns the shoe salon downtown on Clay Street, along with Mr. Gibbs.

I was happily enrolled in the only public high school in San Francisco when an anonymous letter to the San Francisco Herald newspaper changed my life.

The Herald often promoted pro-slavery ideas but I never thought they would attack a schoolgirl because of her racial heritage. The letter demanded that I

be expelled. Ordinarily modesty would prevent me from disclosing that I was the second highest achiever academically and first in art and music at the school; however I share these facts only to highlight the injustice of the situation.

For a while I was encouraged when my schoolmates rushed to my defense and my white neighbors petitioned for me to be able to complete my studies.

But as the public debate continued month after month my resilience

began to wane. The School Board ruled to expel me but the superintendent refused to enforce the vote. My classmates threatened to boycott classes if I was removed. This all became unbearably distracting.

The campaign of harassment continued until my parents removed me from school. Soon after, my parents decided that we would relocate to Canada. It was painful leaving my friends.

It is even more painful to recall this dispiriting episode.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the course of my research for this project I read *The Barbary Coast* by Herbert Asbury. The book was a perfect entree into America's "wild west" and to understanding San Francisco's role in defining it.

The history of the Barbary Coast properly begins with the Gold Rush in California in 1849. Thousands of people arrived by sea and across land in search of gold and other fortunes. By the early 1850's San Francisco was rippling with chaos and mayhem. The city was covered with tents and shanties. Murder, theft, gambling, prostitution, and arson were more common than not as gangs roamed the streets vying for power. The government's ability to maintain any order or structure was crippled by political corruption at every turn. As a result, the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance soon formed to take on the city's criminals. They carried out hangings outside their downtown offices in grand public displays aimed at discouraging any followers. This is the environment in which *Sailing Away* is set.

Despite these rather fierce conditions, people continued to migrate to the city in large numbers and San Francisco's population rose dramatically from 500 to 35,000 between 1847 and 1850. African Americans were among those searching for new opportunities in a place where they believed it was possible to thrive. Throughout the 1850's, San Francisco supported a considerable number of black-owned enterprises, including two joint stock companies, four boot and shoe

stores, four clothing stores, two furniture stores, sixteen barbershops, two bathhouses, newspapers, and literary societies. Although African Americans operated highly successful businesses, over the course of the decade, many would choose to flee San Francisco due to growing discrimination.

California was admitted into the Union as part of the Compromise of 1850. In exchange for passing The Fugitive Slave Act, abolitionist won California as a free state. Ironically, California passed its own Fugitive Slave Law in 1852, virtually making the threat of arrest and slavery a reality for all African Americans living in the state.

Governor Peter Hardeman Burnett, California's first governor (1849-51), pushed for the exclusion of free blacks from the entire state. He had already helped facilitate a black exclusion law in Oregon, on the books until 1926. In his address to the legislature he stated, "The position of the free Negro in this state is a peculiar one, he is not the equal of the white man, socially or politically, he can not testify in our courts, or exercise the right of suffrage, hence in our judgment it is not good policy, on our part, to encourage the immigrations, of any class of persons incapable of appreciating and enjoying, to the fullest extent our institutions."

Although black "exclusion" bills were introduced several times in the legislature, they never passed in California. However, extensive discriminatory legislation was passed in an attempt to



San Francisco during the Gold Rush

discourage black migration to the state. Legislation denying blacks entrance into public schools, denying the right to homestead, denying the right to vote (even though blacks were charged a poll tax) and prohibiting blacks from intermarry with whites became the law of the land. Most significant among the new legislation was the right of testimony act, which barred the testimony of blacks in court. Cases where blacks were robbed, beaten, raped or even killed had no recourse to justice.

By 1858, the social consequences of these discriminatory laws precipitated an African American exodus. In April of that year, the steamship *Commodore* carried the first of 800 black Californians to the British colony of Victoria on Vancouver Island. San Francisco lost some of its most prominent black figures. People like Mifflin Gibbs, Peter Lester and George Washington Dennis took sail and left California for the same reason they originally came—in search of a better life.

The Black Exodus Today

San Francisco is seeing record numbers of African Americans leaving the city. The most recent U.S. census states that San Francisco's African American population has declined from 60,000 in 2000 to 48,000 in 2010 and down from 79,000 in 1990.

Why? According to the 2009 San Francisco Mayor's Report on African American Out-Migration, "the median income of African Americans in San Francisco is nearly half that of whites. The African American unemployment rate far exceeds that of any other racial or ethnic group in San Francisco. The mortgage rejection rate for African Americans is far above any other group. African Americans are arrested at more than twice the rate of all other racial groups combined and black students have the highest dropout rate among first year high school students." By an one's calculations these are debilitating statistics. The reality that this report

implies is a reflection of the policies and laws that were established early in statehood and throughout the country since the beginning of slavery. It is a direct result of the institutional racism that has plagued this country for centuries. African Americans in San Francisco, like in many parts of the country, continue to struggle to find their "place." Most live in an environment where local governments and businesses habitually dismiss the challenges that deny their fair participation in education and in the economy. How we begin to reverse this trend relies on a rigorous dialogue in our communities and in government. The dialogue must lead to aggressive programs that target the issues at every level and the dismantling of discriminatory practices rampant in social behaviors, and particularly in our justice system. Otherwise, African Americans will continue to be uprooted in search of the place where they no longer feel threatened.

African Americans and their histories are disappearing from San Francisco. Most people would not recognize the names of Mifflin Gibbs or Archy Lee and yet they were national figures. With this piece, we hope to illuminate these obscured histories and initiate meaningful dialogue around the lives and work of these extraordinary Americans and their contribution to our city.

Joanna Haigood
Artistic Director
Zaccho Dance Theatre

Zaccho Dance Theatre Marks 32 years

Now marking its 32nd year, Zaccho Dance Theatre uses live performance to investigate place. It is one of a handful of American dance companies focused on site-specific dance.

Employing aerial suspension to expand dancers' spatial range, Artistic Director Joanna Haigood focuses on natural, architectural and cultural environments means for exploring the limits of movement and narrative.

Haigood's choreography develops in direct response to the physical, cultural, and historical information of a site; her dances extend naturally from their surroundings. Her work has been commissioned by leading arts presenters both nationally and internationally.

Zaccho's studio in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood offers free dance and aerial arts classes for 150 youth annually. As the only non-profit dance company in the area, Zaccho manages a large Studio that is utilized for rehearsal, performances, and educational activities for youth and adults.

School Assembly

10:30am Sept 11
Bayview Opera House
4705 Third St., SF CA 94124

A school assembly will be co-presented by Bayview Opera House. The artists from *Sailing Away* will perform excerpts, joined by a lively discussion, and a performance from Dr. Susheel Bibbs' one woman performance portraying 19th Century civil rights activist, Mary Ellen Pleasant.

Panel Discussion

5pm Sept 13
California Historical Society
678 Mission Street, SF, CA 94105

On opening day, Joanna Haigood will be joined by a panel of scholars, historians, and local community leaders. Panelists include: Sharen Hewitt, Jan Batiste Adkins, Dr. Susheel Bibbs, and Gregory Hodge. Co-presented by the California Historical Society and Museum of the African Diaspora/ MoAD.

Post-Panel Reception

6:30pm Sept 13
California Historical Society
678 Mission Street, SF, CA 94105

Meet the director, Joanna Haigood and fellow panelists after the panel discussion. Light refreshments will be served, hosted by Zaccho Dance Theatre's Board of Directors and the California Historical Society.

FIRST STATE CONVENTION

OF THE

COLORED CITIZENS

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

HELD AT SACRAMENTO NOV. 20TH, 21ST, AND 23D,
IN THE COLORED METHODIST CHURCH

SACRAMENTO:

DEMOCRATIC STATE JOURNAL PRINT

1855

MARY'S NOT JUST PLEASANT

Mary Ellen Pleasant (1812-1904) portrayed by Amara Tabor Smith



Mary Ellen Pleasant

My name is Mary Ellen Pleasant although I've used others during my heyday. I was born a slave in 1812 somewhere on the East Coast. When I was six I went to live with a Quaker family on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts. I was hoping to get an education there but that did not happen. Of course that never held me back. I moved to Philadelphia while I was a teenager.

In 1833, at age nineteen, I married James Henry Smith of Boston. My husband had a prosperous contracting business in Philadelphia and we used some of his profits to assist fugitive slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad. When he died after only four years of marriage, he left me a sizable inheritance. I promised him that I would use some of this money to continue the abolitionist efforts we were both committed to.

I moved back to Nantucket and much later, at the age of thirty three I married John James Pleasants. (Eventually we dropped the s.) Like me, John was also an activist in the fight against slavery. Together we moved to San Francisco as part of a larger contingent of Abolitionists.

On the voyage I met Thomas Bell, a young Scottish merchant and broker who became a trusted business partner. Many years later he became vice president of the Bank of California.

In San Francisco my strategy for amassing the necessary power and influence for my activism required keeping a low profile. Passing as a white woman, I assumed a new

identity. As Ellen Smith I began working as a cook, housekeeper and manager of several boarding houses for wealthy gold rush entrepreneurs.

Having arrived in San Francisco with my own fortune, I assumed this role in order to protect myself and to engage in activism on behalf of other blacks. During the Gold Rush days it was not difficult to make money. I lent money at 10% interest and invested in real estate and the stock market. By 1855 I also owned several laundries and small businesses. My husband, John, worked as a cook on a ship.

Although California was a free state, slave owners often flouted the law. Blacks were further disenfranchised by laws requiring free blacks to pay poll taxes, denying us the right to vote or testify in court leaving us vulnerable to theft and assault.

In San Francisco I worked tirelessly to elevate the status of black San Franciscans and to oppose this growing wave of discrimination.

When Mifflin Gibbs formed the Franchise League to use the court system to fight these forms of discrimination, I was a covert supporter of their efforts. I utilized my dual identities to

great effect. As Ellen Smith I used my influence with wealthy whites to gain material support for my causes. As Mrs. Pleasant I went to rural areas to rescue slaves who were being illegally enslaved. I also went down to the docks with legal documents to prevent the extradition of slaves.

George Washington Dennis often assisted me in these interventions, as did others. I helped blacks establish businesses and pressed my wealthy friends to supply jobs. My ubiquitous efforts earned me the nickname "The Black City Hall." Despite my best efforts to maintain a low profile, I attracted a lot of negative attention from pro-slavery elements in the press.

Some of their tactics to harass me included spreading malicious gossip about me and referring to me as "Mammy Pleasant." I have never been anyone's Mammy!

When Mifflin along with many other leaders of our San Francisco community departed to Victoria, Canada in 1858 I decided to return to the East to aid John Brown in his quest to end slavery. I contributed substantial sums of money to his effort and was planning to disguise myself as a jockey and ride in advance of his uprising to spread the word to those in bondage. But John acted too hastily. We all know how that ended. I was very distraught because John was a good friend but I had to carry on. Although an incriminating letter was discovered on his person signed with my initials, they were misread. I sailed back to San Francisco undiscovered and went about my business.

In 1866 I was refused a ride on a San Francisco streetcar because

of my race. My husband and I decided to take on the North Beach and Mission Railroad Company. As a result of a two-year lawsuit I was awarded \$500. There was an appeal and the California Supreme Court reversed the decision and I was simply refunded my nickel fare. The money did not matter to me. What mattered was challenging discrimination wherever I encountered it.

The later years of my life were difficult at times. It seemed like I was constantly embroiled in some controversy or the other which kept me in and out of courtrooms and newspapers. In addition to my Victorian in the city I owned a ranch in Sonoma Valley, which provided some respite.

When my business partner, Thomas Bell died suddenly, I lost a great deal of my wealth due to legal complications resulting from the commingling of our assets. In 1903, I went to live with some friends on Filbert Street and shortly after I made my transition in January of 1904.

I was buried in 1904 at Tulocay Cemetery in Napa Valley with a headstone that reads Mary Ellen Pleasant - Mother of Civil Rights in California - Friend of John Brown. My house on Webster Street was torn down in 1964 to build a dental school.

There is however, a commemorative plaque at Octavia and Bush where my Victorian mansion stood.

I've heard that February 10 is Mary Ellen Pleasant Day in San Francisco. It's always nice to be remembered for ones accomplishments.

'ARCHY' FREE

Archy Lee (1840-1873) portrayed by Matthew Wickert

Folks call me Archy Lee. They tell me I was born in 1840 back in Mississippi. I was brought to California in 1857 by a young fellow name of Charles Stovall who claimed right of ownership over me. He opened a school here and hired me out for wages. During this time I met many black

folks who was free. Some even had their own shops and big fine houses. They told me that slavery was against the law in California and I should run from Stovall. I did not want to cause any trouble but when Stovall decided to go back down to Mississippi I knew I did not ever want to go back there again. Some folks helped me get away and I hid out at a hotel in Sacramento that was owned by a black fellow. But Stovall tracked

me down and had me arrested as a fugitive.

Fortunately some of these freemen and women were just as set on helping me get free of Stovall as he was on keeping me tied to him. They got me a lawyer. The judge said that Stovall could only keep me if he was just passing through California. My lawyer said that because he opened a school and hired me out, that showed he was living here. So I was able to go free.

That did not last long because

Stovall had already arranged for another trial at the Supreme Court. As soon as the first trial ended I was locked up again.

At the next trial, the judges were in favor of slavery, so they said I had to go with Stovall. This made all of the black folks and the white folks who were against slavery fighting mad.

So Stovall had to lay low. He tried to sneak me onto a ship late at night. But the free folk was ready for him.

They had spies all up and down the docks and when somebody saw that Stovall had me and was slipping away in a rowboat, they got the police. This time the police arrested Stovall for kidnapping me. Fancy that!

So then we had to have us another trial up at the Supreme Court in Sacramento. We had a different set of judges from last time. This group set me free. Mrs. Pleasants was kind enough to let me stay at her big, fancy house afterwards to make sure

Stovall didn't try any more of his shenanigans on his way out of town. A few days after the last trial ended they had a big party for me at the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

When some of the folks that had helped me told me they was heading north to Canada and they offered to pay my way, I did not have to think on it too long. I packed my things and got on board. A fellow named Rudolph Lapp wrote a book about me. Called it *Archy Lee - A California Fugitive Slave Case*. The folks back where I came from in Mississippi would not believe me if I told them my story. Now I got prof.

"ARCHY."
TO THE FRIENDS
OF THE.....
CONSTITUTION AND LAWS.

THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE
 Colored People having expended a large amount, and incurred heavy obligations in prosecuting and defending the case in the Courts of Sacramento, Stockton and San Francisco, and believing the principles to be vindicated are those which should interest all lovers of right and justice, independent of complexion, respectfully solicit contributions for this object, which will be faithfully appropriated, if left with

m20-3t **E. J. JOHNSON, 184 Clay street.**



Clay St between Kearney and Montgomery



San Francisco Harborside. 1850

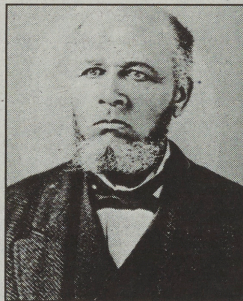
Woman on the Move

Woman on the Move (1988-)
Portrayed by Jetta Martin

I'm having a baby boy soon and I'm moving out of San Francisco. I grew up in Bayview Hunters Point. It's the only home I've ever known. On the news and in the papers people talk about the gangs and the crime but they don't tell the whole story. I think these problems exist because young people don't see a way out. They don't see the possibility of having a good job and a decent life. There's a sense of hopelessness that causes people to join gangs and to kill each other. I read this book *Black Youth Rising* about our situation. It talks about how we're trying to heal from living in a socially toxic society. But Bay View has other toxins as well. You don't hear about the fact that one third of all the toxic waste sites in the city of San Francisco are in Bayview. As a new mother I have to think about these things. I want my son to grow up healthy.

But there's lots of good people there doing good things for the community. I will miss it very much. If it wasn't for this baby I'd stay. A lot of people are moving, though, to Pittsburg, Antioch, Vallejo.

Maybe we'll all make a fresh start together. I'm going to try it out, for the baby's sake.



Peter Lester

S.F. discrimination 'unbearable'

Peter Lester (1814-1891?) portrayed by Travis Santell Rowland

I am Peter Lester, co-owner of the Lester and Gibbs Boot and Shoe Emporium at 636 Clay Street. I was born in Philadelphia in 1814. I moved to San Francisco in 1850 with my wife Nancy and our five children. I was a highly skilled bootmaker when I met Mifflin Gibbs, in San Francisco during The Gold Rush days. We became partners in a firm that imported

fine boots and shoes from Europe and the East Coast and opened the emporium for both wholesale and retail sales that allowed us to profit handsomely. Despite my financial success I was disturbed by the conditions that blacks were forced to endure in this supposedly Free State. Whenever I encountered brethren who were living in bondage or abused domestic workers I did all I could to educate them about their rights. But once we lost the Right of

Testimony in 1851, our lives in San Francisco became unbearable due to those who were unscrupulous in their willingness to exploit our vulnerability regarding the Justice system. The following incident exemplifies our dilemma.

Two of our European-American customers who were good friends came to our store to inspect our display of newly arrived stock. One tried on a pair of boots, and asked to have them put aside while he made his final decision. The pair departed together. A short while later the friend returned alone and asked to try on several pairs of boots before asking to try those that his friend had selected. He insisted on taking those despite my strenuous objections. He promised that he would take full responsibility and clear my partner and me of any blame. Because they were good customers and we knew them to be good friends, we acquiesced. Soon after, the two returned and the first demanded "his" boots.

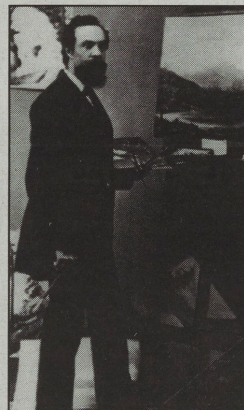
While the friend stood mute I was verbally and physically assaulted with a heavy cane and under the threat of being shot. My partner was forced to impotently witness this outrage knowing that without the Right of Testimony, the law provided us no redress.

Unfortunately this incident was only one of several that finally convinced us to join the exodus to Victoria Island.

California's first colored artist

Grafton Tyler Brown (1841-1918) portrayed by Robert Henry Johnson

Grafton Tyler Brown here. I am known as a visual artist, specifically a landscape painter. I am considered California's first professional African American artist but I may be the Bay Area's first professional artist period. I was born a free man in 1841, in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. I learned the craft of lithography in Philadelphia but came to California in 1861 seeking better opportunities. Initially I worked as a draftsman and lithographer for C.C. Kuchel at 174 Clay Street in San Francisco. I created stock certificates and other commercial documents. In 1867 I purchased the business renaming it G.T. Brown and Company. I resided in Oakland at 654 14th Street.



Grafton Tyler Brown

More than anything I loved painting visuals of California towns, the Comstock in Nevada and scenery of the Pacific Northwest. Initially I focused on

painting settlements in the Bay Area as well as Gold Rush towns. But during my travels through the Northwest I noted with concern the loss of open lands and began using my work to focus attention on this issue. In 1882 I moved to Victoria, British Columbia and opened a studio there. Four years later I moved my family and studio to Portland, Oregon. In 1892 I relocated to St. Paul, Minnesota where I worked as a draftsman for the U.S. Army Engineer's office.

Although my story ended in 1918, my legacy of paintings, prints and maps is currently archived in Victoria, San Francisco and Tacoma Washington.

My paintings have received major exhibitions in Los Angeles, Tacoma as well as at the nearby Oakland Museum.

Joanna Haigood

Since 1980, Joanna Haigood has been the Artistic Director of Zaccho Dance Theatre, located in Bayview Hunters Point/ San Francisco.

Most of her creative work focuses on making dances that use natural, architectural and cultural environments as a point of departure for movement exploration and narrative. It involves in-depth research into the history and the character of sites and typically integrates aerial flight and suspension.

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, Equal Justice Society, Oliver Ranch Foundation, Lines Contemporary Ballet, Boston Dance Umbrella, Axis Dance Company, Festival d'Avignon and Festival d'Arles in France. Her work is also in the repertoire 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. Locally, she has received a Bay Guardian Local Discovery (GOLDIE) Award and three Isadora Duncan Dance Awards.

Ms. Haigood has taught at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC) in France, the Laban Centre in England, Spelman College, Mills College, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University and was a Granada Teaching Fellow the University of California at Davis. She has enjoyed artist residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Montalvo Center and at the Exploratorium Museum. She currently teaches at the San Francisco Clown Conservatory, where she has the pleasure of working with some of the finest circus artists, and is also a director for wondrous Sweet Can Circus.

Upcoming Events

October 6, 2012

Paseo, commissioned by Dancing in the Streets and Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education South Bronx, New York

October 14, 2012

Oliver Ranch Tour, Geyserville, CA

May 2013

Youth Performing Arts Annual Production

Summer 2013

Dying while Black and Brown
Mendel Plaza SF

October 2013

Between me and the other world
ODC Theater, SF

Spring 2014

Al Pozzo di Sogno
Oliver Ranch, Geyserville, CA



Native Sons Monument

Dramaturg Kim Euell

Kim Euell is thrilled to be working with Joanna Haigood & Zaccho Dance Theater on another ground breaking historically inspired work. She previously collaborated on *Invisible Wings* and *The Monkey & The Devil*. Kim's award-winning play *The Diva Daughters DuPre*, has been produced at theaters around the country and is published in the anthology *Best Black Plays*. Her very first play, *Endangered Species*, was produced at San Francisco's Lorraine Hansberry Theater, with Ms. Haigood choreographing. Kim recently edited (with Robert Alexander) the first play anthology devoted to Hip Hop theater, *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy*, featuring work by several Bay Area writers. Kim has headed play development programs at several theaters including The Mark Taper Forum and San Jose Rep and has worked with the Sundance Theater Lab.

Costume Designer

Callie Floor

Callie Floor, Costume Designer, most recently designed costumes for Aurora's productions of *Trouble in Mind* and *Speech and Debate*. Other recent projects include *Traviata* for West Bay Opera.

She has designed for many Bay Area theaters including A.C.T., Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival and The San Francisco Mime Troupe.

She is currently designing 9 Circles for Marin Theatre Co. and *Wild Kate* for A.C.T.'s MFA Program. Callie is the resident designer for the California Revels and currently holds the position of Costume Rentals Supervisor for A.C.T. She has a BFA from the University of Utah and a Higher Diploma in Theatre Design from the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London.

Travis Santell Rowland as Peter Lester

Travis Santell Rowland, interdisciplinary performing artist, holds BA degrees in both Drama (Popular Theatre) and Dance (Performance & Choreography) from SFSU. The breadth of his performance experience spans the mediums of hip hop/ contemporary/ modern dance, physical/dance/children's theatre, drag (as Queen), film, opera, and site-specific art. He has performed in The Ten P.M.

Dream for Della Davidson's *Sideshow Physical Theatre*, *Hold Me Closer*, *Tiny Dionysus* for trixie carr, *Certitude* and *Joy* for Erling Wold's *Fabrications*, and *Talkback for Crowded Fire Theater*. Travis was both performer and collaborating choreographer in Taylor Mac's *The Lily's Revenge* for Magic Theatre, *The Tempest* for California Shakespeare Theatre, *The Witch of Endor* for Urban Opera, and in the *Fame Whore* music video for the Tim Carr Project. Presently, he enjoys performing as a collaborating choreographer with The Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project, Joanna Haigood's *Zaccho Dance Theatre*, the *House of Glitter*, and *DevEnd*.

Antoine Hunter as Miffin Gibbs

Antoine-DeVinci Hunter is an African American Deaf and Hard of Hearing Choreographer, Producer, Dancer, Dance instructor, Actor, Model, and Advocate. He is from Oakland, California and began dancing with Dawn James at Skyline High School. He has studied West African Dance with Master C.K. and Betty Ladzkepo, and studied at the Paul Taylor Summer Intensives in 2003 and 2004. He has performed with *Savage Jazz Dance Company* with Artistic Director Reginald Ray Savage since 2001 as dance artist/performer/ jazz instructor; also with *Nuba Dance Theater*, many lead roles with The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Ramon Ramos Alayo's *Alayo Dance Company* Robert Moses' *Kin Dance Company*. Mr. Hunter has attended the California Institute of the Arts and is Founder/Director of *Urban Jazz Dance Company*. Mr. Hunter proves that even those with a hearing disability or any kind of disability can reach for their dreams.

Robert Henry Johnson as Grafton Tyler Brown

Robert Henry Johnson a San Francisco native, is a member of the first graduating class of the San Francisco School of the Arts, and studied ballet on full scholarship at the San Francisco Ballet. He has danced with Oakland Ballet, ODC/San Francisco, appeared on television and film including a Levi's jean commercial and an appearance with award winning recording artists *En Vogue* on the *Soul Train Music Awards Ceremony*. In 1993, he founded the *Robert Henry Johnson Dance Company* and has choreographed for various companies such as *Bayersches Staatsballet* (Munich,

Germany), *Ballet British Columbia* (Vancouver, British Columbia), and *Oakland Ballet*. He is the Artistic Director of *60 Million Plus Theater*, a company that provides staged reading opportunities for playwrights who use experimental forms. Robert Henry Johnson has danced for *Zaccho Dance Theatre* since 1998, first appearing as *Master Juba* in *Invisible Wings*.

Raissa Simpson as Sara Lester

Raissa Simpson is the Founder and Artistic Director of *Push Dance Company* a San Francisco touring company. She currently also serves as Assistant to the Director of *Zaccho Dance Theatre*. Simpson has had an extensive performance career in the San Francisco Bay Area. After receiving her BFA from the conservatory of dance at SUNY Purchase, danced and toured with Robert Moses' *Kin* and Joanna Haigood's *Zaccho Dance Theatre*, among others. *Village Voice* dance critic Deborah Jowitz notes, "Simpson dances big."

Matthew Wickett as Archy Lee

Matthew Wickett born and raised in Oakland, CA has been dancing for eight years under the direction of Carla Service, Artistic Director of *Dance-A-Vision Entertainment*. With *Hip Hop* as his foundation of dance, he has ventured into other creative movements such as *Jazz and Modern*. Through his dance experience he has performed in numerous shows and yearly venues such as; *Oakland's Art & Soul Festival*, *Miss Oakland's Beauty Pageant*, *The Wiz* (Belasco Theatre Company), and *San Francisco's "Jewels on a Square"*. He has worked with Joanna Haigood's *Zaccho Dance Theatre* in the previous installation "Sailing Away" and her *Yerba Buena* installation "The Monkey and The Devil". He has been dancing for *Push Dance Company* who has performed in New York and at the *Museum of African Diaspora* for their 2011-2012 season thus far. Matthew absorbs the dance life fully and continues to reach even higher goals through dance.

Byb Chanel Bibene as George Washington Dennis

Byb Chanel Bibene is a choreographer and performer working in theater and contemporary dance. His own technical and aesthetic sensibility is rooted in the culture and dances of his country, the Republic of Congo. He has toured and performed internationally with companies originating from Africa, Europe and the USA. In 2006, Bibene co-founded *Li-Sangha* dance company, whose work *Mona Mambu* received two laurels and the 3rd Place award in Paris, at *Les Rencontres chorégraphiques de l'Afrique et de l'Océan indien*, and likewise won the *Radio France Internationale Dance Prize 2006*. Bibene co-directs the festival *Rue Dance*, which brings contemporary dance into the streets of *Brazzaville*, Republic of Congo. Bibene relocated to San Francisco in 2009

where he continues developing choreography with his *Kiandanda Dance Theater*. Bibene has had the opportunity to work with choreographers such as *Paco Decina*, *Reggie Wilson*, *Amara Tabor Smith*, *Robert Henry Johnson*, *Paco Gomes* and *Joanna Haigood*.

Amara Tabor-Smith as Mary Ellen Pleasant

San Francisco native **Amara Tabor-Smith** (Mary Ellen Pleasant), an Oakland resident, has worked with choreographers such as Ed Mock, Ronald K. Brown, Anne Bluethenthal, Jacinta Vlach, Adia Tamar Whitaker and Pearl Ubungen. Amara is the former Associate artistic director and dancer with *The Urban Bush Women Dance Co.* in NYC. She has also performed in the works of artists such as Aya de Leon, Herbert Siquenza, Anna Deveare Smith and Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Amara is the artistic director of *Deep Waters Dance Theater* (DWDT) and is co-director of *Headmistress*, an ongoing collaborative project with dancer/performer *Sherwood Chen*. Amara was an artist in residence at the *Headlands Center for the Arts* this past August. She is delighted to be working with *Zaccho Dance Theater* again!

Shakiri as Newsie

Goldie and Izzie Award winner Shakiri has been a performer, choreographer and arts educator in the San Francisco Bay Area for over thirty years, and a member of *Zaccho Dance Theatre Company* since 1988.

Jetta Martin as Woman on the Move

After graduating cum laude from Harvard University, Jetta performed professionally with *Ronn Guidi's Oakland Ballet*, the *Mark Froehlinger Dance Project*, *Push Dance Company*, *Liberation Dance Theater*, *David Herrera Performance Company*, and the *Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble*, among others. Performance credits include *Joyce Soho*, *ODC*, *Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival*, and the *Egyptian Modern Dance Festival* in Cairo. Her choreography has been featured on both coasts and has been commissioned by the *Black Choreographer's Festival*, *Dance Mission Theater*, *Museum of the African Diaspora*, and *Stapleton School of Ballet*. Jetta is currently on faculty at *Brisbane Dance Workshop*, *East Bay Center for the Performing Arts*, and *The Ballet Studio*. She is the administrator for *Western Sky Studio* in Berkeley and a writer and editor for *Conscious Dancer* magazine. Jetta is honored to be joining the cast of *Sailing Away*.



Fill-out survey using phone scanner for a chance to win a FREE Zaccho T-shirt.



Anthony Lindsay

What is the Mirror?

The Mirror of the Times was founded in 1857 by Mifflin W. Gibbs and James Townsend, two African American business men. The weekly publication appealed to California's small African American community.

It gained national attention as the first Black newspaper West of the Mississippi. The newspaper fought against discriminatory laws in the "free state" of California. Blacks were subject to the "Fugitive Slave Law" and were unable to defend themselves in court, making it difficult to prove one's freedom.

The mission: "Our sole objective is, to present our grievances to the people at large in our own way, and through columns of our own press; show them the disabilities we labor under; ask them, in respectful terms to remove them, and we have every reason to believe they will be stricken from the statute-books."

People from all over the country attended the Colored Convention in 1857 due to publicity from The Mirror. After the owners migrated to Canada, another newspaper, the Pacific Appeal emerged.

"Truth crushed to the Earth will rise again," was the newspaper's tagline.

Zaccho Staff

Artistic Director: Joanna Haigood, Finance Officer: Ann Berman, Development Director: Jennifer Ross, Operations Manager:

Sheena Johnson, Assistant to the Director: Raissa Simpson, YPAP Manager: Lizzy Spieuzza, Studio Manager: Danielle Langlois, Teaching Artists: Danielle Langlois, Joanna Haigood, Jo Kreiter and Shakiri

Board of Directors

Jane Sullivan, President, Sean Cullen, Joanna Haigood, Misha Hawk-Wyatt, Halima Marshall-Conley, Jennifer Ross

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Our Funders

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Thank you!

Fall / Winter Class Schedule 2012

Come Take Class With Us! Zaccho Dance Theatre is offering three wonderful classes for youth and adults to get you in the air and dancing. Register Today by calling 415-822-6744! Class space is limited and on a first come - first serve basis. All classes take place at 5,000 sq ft studio in San Francisco on 1777 Yosemite Ave #330.

Aerial Dance For Youth 8 - 11 with Sandia Langlois
 Beginning-Intermediate
 Thursdays 3:30 - 5:00
 September 20th - December 20th (No Class November 22nd)
 Twelve Class Series \$216
 Aerial Dance incorporates strength, flexibility, and coordination with personal orientation in space. Our small class size allows each student to have personal attention and individual training, while still building teamwork within a dynamic group setting. Scholarship opportunities may apply.

Joanna Haigood Teaches Composition, Performance and Poetics for Aerial Artists
 Intermediate-Advanced
 Mondays 1pm - 3pm
 October 15th - November 19th
 Six Week Series \$150
 This class will help you identify your own aesthetic priorities; how to shape time, space, and imagery with aerial objects. Transform your technical strengths into a personal artistic expression. Participants are invited to bring their existing work or to build a new work during the course of this six week workshop.

