

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Zaccho Dance Theatre presents *Between me and the other world***

**A free performance installation exploring W.E.B Dubois's seminal work The Souls of Black Folks**

**October 3-6, 2019 at Zaccho Studio in San Francisco**

San Francisco, March 2019. Choreographer, director and Bay Area performance innovator Joanna Haigood explores issues of race and identity in her performance installation, *Between me and the other world*, Thursday through Sunday, October 3-6, 2019 from 1 to 5 pm at Zaccho Studio, 1777 Yosemite Avenue, Studio 330, in San Francisco.

*Between me and the other world* is a dynamic exploration of scholar and civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois' seminal work The Souls of Black Folks. The performance installation has been created in collaboration with composer Anthony Brown, media artist David Szlasa and scenic designer Sean Riley, who together have created an immersive environment that evokes the identity duality or "double consciousness" described by DuBois. For more information, visit [www.zaccho.org](http://www.zaccho.org).

In the performance installation audiences are welcome to move around the space and view the performance from different vantage points. The performances will loop approximately every 30-minutes with performing artists alternating. David Szlasa's media design re-contextualizes Dubois' ideas with contemporary imagery sourced from current news and the live performance. Dr. Brown's music draws from Dubois' novel *The Souls of Black Folks* and Dubois' references to African American's deep roots in spirituals, and it traverses the sonic terrain from Spirituals to jazz to 21st century postmodern soundscapes. Sean Riley's set design is a series of moveable scrimmed panels that change the shape of the performing area and provide a dynamic surface for the projected imagery.

Beginning in 1995, Joanna Haigood began research for Zaccho's lauded performance project, *Invisible Wings*. The piece was inspired

by the history of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, MA, and its role in the Underground Railroad. She spent three years studying slave history and culture, which eventually became the basis for much of her work on race and African American history for the next two decade years.

During this research period, Haigood found her early inspiration for *Between me and the other world*. She visited the W.E.B. DuBois Archives at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, reading some of DuBois' most important essays on race and education in America.

A scholar, an educator, and a civil rights leader, W.E.B. DuBois was born in 1868 and died in 1963. He influenced his time in ways that are still being felt. His seminal book and social science treatise, The Souls of Black Folk (1903) built much of the foundation on which the mid-20th century civil rights movement would rise. This prescient work outlined the plight of blacks in America and eloquently challenged much of the day's conventional wisdom.

Here DuBois introduced the idea of double consciousness: "... the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, -- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

This is a truly compelling concept, and no less relevant to today's black community. *Between me and the other world* will create a poetic lens through which to examine these provocative ideas.

## **About the Artistic Collaborators**

### **Director\Choreographer Joanna Haigood**

Joanna Haigood is the Artistic Director of Zaccho Dance Theatre, located in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco. Since 1980, 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 leading arts presenters, museums and social justice organizations, among them Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Dancing in the Streets, Walker Arts Center, the Exploratorium Museum, Oliver Ranch Foundation, the National Black Arts Festival, Lines Contemporary Ballet, American Institute of Architects, Equal Justice Society, Festival d'Avignon and Festival d'Arles in France. Her work is also in the repertory of the renowned Joffrey Ballet of Chicago.

Ms. Haigood has had the privilege to receive fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the John Simon

Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the James M. Irvine Foundation. She also received the Cal Arts/Alpert Award in Dance, United States Fellowship Award, and the Doris Duke Artist Award.

Ms. Haigood has been a teaching artist in residence at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC) in France, the Laban Centre in England, the San Francisco Circus Center, Spelman College, Mills College, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University and was a Granada Teaching Fellow at the University of California at Davis. She has also enjoyed artist residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Montalvo Center and at the Exploratorium Museum.

## **Composer Anthony Brown**

Percussionist, composer, ethnomusicologist, educator and Smithsonian Associate Scholar Dr. Anthony Brown is a seminal figure in the contemporary California creative music scene, directing the Asian American Orchestra in addition to performing with some of the foremost musicians in jazz today. Since 1998, his Orchestra has received international critical acclaim for blending Asian musical instruments and sensibilities with the sonorities of the jazz orchestra. The Asian American Orchestra's recording of Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn's Far East Suite received a 2000 GRAMMY nomination for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Performance.

His work in the early 1980's with the pioneering San Francisco-based jazz quartet, United Front, sparked an interest in blending non-Western compositional approaches and instruments with traditional jazz idioms and improvisation that he is still exploring today.

Brown grew up in California, Japan and Germany, writing Bach fugues in high school while penning his first blues compositions. His father was a thirty-five year career Army Sergeant Major of African/Choctaw heritage from South Carolina, and his mother is a native of Tokyo, Japan. While living in Japan as a preteen, Brown developed an interest in visual arts, and then began emulating his brother Michael, an electric guitarist and bassist who later toured with Bo Diddley. After returning stateside to Los Angeles in 1966, Brown switched to drums and began playing in Jimi Hendrix/Sly Stone-influenced bands with then-bassist/vocalist James Newton. They experimented with jazz in high school before Brown moved to Frankfurt, Germany in 1970, where he studied music theory and flute while playing in R&B/progressive rock dance bands.

Anthony Brown earned Bachelor degrees in music and psychology at the University of Oregon, and then lived in Athens, Greece and Heidelberg, Germany as an Army officer from 1976-80. Captain Brown performed and toured with visiting artists (flutist) James Newton, John Carter, David Murray, and with the ensembles Muntu (Billy Bang, William Parker, Jemeel Moondoc), and Cultural Odyssey (Rasul Siddik, Idris Ackamoor, Jesse Sharps, Rashied Al Akbar, Joe

McKinley). Brown returned to San Francisco in 1980 and pursued a professional musical career with United Front, making his recording debut in 1981.

### **Media Artist David Szlasa**

David Szlasa is a media artist working across disciplines of dance, theater, and installation as a director, designer, and producer. He works in performance and video art, designing projects for theater, dance, and installation. Thematically consistent is a desire to interweave simultaneous threads of information into a single narrative--starting with an idea --and re-telling the story of that idea from multiple perspectives.

Szlasa is interested how media and technology restructure patterns of social interdependence; the integration of technology into live performance (a super-slow, analog environment) as a place to reconsider information pumped into our brains thru television and the world wide web.

Works created and directed by Szlasa have been presented by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Z Space, Fools Fury, Counter Pulse, Oakland Art Gallery, The Thatcher Art Gallery at USF, and others. As a designer, he has collaborated on more than 50 projects presented nationally and internationally with with Sara Shelton Mann, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Bill Shannon, Rennie Harris, Synaesthetic Theatre, Deb Margolin, Hope Mohr, Leyya Tawil, and others.

As a producer, designer and teacher, Szlasa has worked on staff with Dance Theater Workshop, The Culture Project, Playwrights Horizons Theater School, and the Z Space.

### **Set Designer Sean Riley**

Sean Riley (known as "Riley" to his friends) is a master rigger, engineering enthusiast and set designer with an expertise in suspension and load transfer involving large masses and difficult access. Creating functional and architecturally sound installations, he has risen to the height of his field. He is the founder and principal rigging designer for Gravity Design Inc., a company based in San

Francisco, Calif., that provides innovative rigging and force management solutions for a wide variety of clients all over the world — from circus acts to industrial installations.

Riley is always hands-on (welding, constructing, wiring), and though he is no stranger to high-risk responsibility, he has a flawless safety record. His passion for mechanics is matched only by his passion for extreme adventure. He loves to pull on a diving wetsuit, arc up a blowtorch or dangle from a height that would have most people going weak in the knees — just for fun. He drives heavy machinery, jumps off bridges, rock climbs and is a back-country solo survivalist.

Riley studied theatre arts at University of California Santa Cruz and has taught college-level theatrical design.

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A FREE PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION EXPLORING W.E.B.  
DUBOIS' SEMINAL WORK THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLKS

**WHAT:** Zaccho Dance Theatre's performance installation *Between Me and the Other World*

**WHO:** Zaccho Dance Theatre, choreographer/director Joanna Haigood, composer Anthony Brown, media artist David Szlasa, and scenic designer Sean Riley

**WHEN:** Thursday-Sunday, October 3-6, 2019 1-5 pm

**WHERE:** ZACCHO Studio, 1777 Yosemite Ave., Studio 330, San Francisco, CA 94124

**ADMISSION AND INFORMATION:** Free admission, for information, visit [www.zaccho.org](http://www.zaccho.org)

