



Photo: Alfonso Gomez

# joyUS justUS

**A World-Premiere Performance  
by CONTRA-TIEMPO**

**A Visions and Voices Signature Event**

Thursday, September 13, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.  
Bovard Auditorium  
University of Southern California

## KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW

This is the world premiere of *joyUS justUS*, a new work by the L.A.-based dance-theatre company CONTRA-TIEMPO.

CONTRA-TIEMPO's founder and artistic director Ana Maria Alvarez—who wrote her master's thesis on Salsa as a way to express social resistance—developed *joyUS justUS* with company members Isis Avalos, Chris Cuenza, Jannet Galdamez, Samad Raheem Guerra, Bianca Medina, Diana Toledo, Shantel Ureña, and Jasmine Stanley in collaboration with a team of talented collaborators:

- Las Cafeteras is a band from East L.A. that combines spoken word and folk music, including son jarocho, Afro-Mexican, and zapateado traditions.
- d. Sabela grimes is a sound archivist and designer as well as a choreographer, writer, composer, and educator rooted in Afro-diasporic cultures and offering AfroFuturist vision. He teaches hip hop, dance history, and improvisation at USC.
- Charlese Antoinette is a costume designer and stylist who splits her time between L.A., New York, and New Orleans.
- Tuce Yasak designs for dance, theatre, and concerts, and loves doing site-specific performances and light installations.



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## CONTRA-TIEMPO

CONTRA-TIEMPO is a multilingual, L.A.-based dance-theatre company that combines physical virtuosity and political analysis. Bringing together salsa, Afro-Cuban, hip hop, and contemporary dance with theatre, text, and original music, CONTRA-TIEMPO embodies multiplicity and multidisciplinary. The company believes that our power comes from our relationships as human beings, and that art, engagement, and education are ways that we connect, build, and grow.

CONTRA-TIEMPO's vision: To create, through the transformative power of dance, communities where all people are awakened to a sense of themselves as artists and social change agents who move through the world with compassion and confidence.

CONTRA-TIEMPO's mission: To create physically intense and politically astute Urban Latin Dance Theatre work that moves audiences to reimagine what is possible, and to engage communities as active participants and witnesses of arts experiences tied to their humanity.

## JOYUS JUSTUS

### WHAT IT IS

*joyUS justUS* is a new evening-length work by CONTRA-TIEMPO that celebrates joy as the ultimate expression of resistance.

### HOW IT WAS MADE

To create the piece, CONTRA-TIEMPO engaged in conversations with South L.A. communities, gathering stories of joy and resistance; shared their own stories and then embodied those stories through choreography and performance. The piece is about reframing our relationship with nature and therefore with ourselves.

The dance-theatre company collaborated with each other and with a team of brilliant artists to create a truly participatory, interdisciplinary work.

### WHY THEY MADE IT

"Whenever humans have survived immense hardship and injustice, prevailing with their humanity intact, the presence of joy—or, the knowingness and celebration of our true beauty and power—has always been at the root. *joyUS justUS* reclaims the dominant deficit-based narrative of people of color in this country as being underprivileged, voiceless, powerless, and victimized, and flips it on its head by embodying stories of joy collected from communities of color in South Los Angeles. These stories will be personal truths about the power of hope, faith, and family, the strength of the villages that have raised our children, the wealth that lives in our collective histories of struggle and resistance ... Through the conversations with South L.A. communities, retelling their stories through movement on the concert stage, inviting audiences locally and nationally to actively participate in what they're experiencing on the stage, and continuing to engage broader audiences in the telling of their own truths, we will create spaces of joy and healing, allowing the collective 'us' to feel more connected, loved, powerful, and alive."

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- CONTRA-TIEMPO believes that "art and action are two sides of the same coin." Do you agree?
- What definition of *resistance* do you think CONTRA-TIEMPO was working with in creating *joyUS justUS*?
- How do you define joy?

## IF YOU LIKED TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT

- **CONTRA-TIEMPO**  
contra-tiempo.org
- **Las Cafeteras**  
lascafeteras.com
- **d. Sabela grimes**  
dsabelagrimes.com

## VOCABULARY CORNER: "RESISTANCE"

"Respect existence or expect resistance"  
—political slogan

In general conversation, "resistance" might have a negative connotation—something close to stubbornness or refusal.

Biologically, it can refer to the capacity of an organism or even a species to resist and survive harmful influences such as disease, infection, or toxic agents.

Politically, *resistance* often refers to an organization in a conquered or colonized country working underground to fight the occupying forces. It can also refer to organized efforts to challenge the status quo in an oppressed group's home country or society.

In the history of western political theory, the term can be traced to the violent removal of abusive or corrupt kings. *Resistance* was embraced by anarchists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to describe efforts toward radical social or political change. In the mid-twentieth century, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. advocated *nonviolent resistance* to oppressive social and political structures.

Today, the term *resistance* is used by people on the Right and the Left, to refer to radical activism; community organizing; individual acts as different as marching in permitted protests, criticizing the president on Twitter, and civil disobedience; and other forms of political speech and action.



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🕒 **Enclave LA**

enclave.la

🕒 **Community Coalition**

cocosouthla.org

🕒 **Upcoming Visions and Voices events**

**9/25:** Jose Antonio Vargas

**10/2:** Complexions Contemporary Ballet

**10/24:** *The City of Others: A Performance* by Sankofa Danzafró

**10/25:** Xiuhtezcatl Martínez: *At the Forefront of Climate Change*

For more information on these and other events, visit [visionsandvoices.usc.edu](http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu)

**DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES**

**ANDREW JUSTICE** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about tonight’s performance. These are online resources, which USC students, faculty, and staff can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).

**BOOKS & DISSERTATIONS**

- 🕒 Berg, Sierra. *Latin American Movement and Cultural Practices as a Method for Healing Trauma Symptoms*. MFA thesis, Mills College, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses
- 🕒 García, Cindy. “Staging the dance of coalition with versa-style and CONTRA-TIEMPO.” *In The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*, edited by Josh Kun. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017. E-book (EBSCOhost)
- 🕒 Gerry, Jennifer. *Dance as a Catalyst For Change: Creating Cracks in the Structure Through Dance-Based Activism*. MFA thesis, Mills College, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses

**ARTICLES**

- 🕒 Grimes, d. Sabela, and Amy O’Neal. “Street to stage: Four artists discuss the implications of bringing street dance to concert stages.” *Dance Magazine* 91/7 (2017). Gale Cengage Fine Arts & Music Collection
- 🕒 Jones, Jen. “Contra Culture.” *Dance Teacher* 33/9 (2011). ProQuest Performing Arts Periodicals Database
- 🕒 Lipfert, David. “Getting Down in LA ... On the Salsa Trail with Contra-Tiempo.” *Attitude: The Dancers’ Magazine* 20/4 (2007). ProQuest Performing Arts Periodicals Database
- 🕒 Sagolla, Lisa. “Dance/Movement: Dance from the Fringe.” *Back Stage East*, 2006. ProQuest Performing Arts Periodicals Database
- 🕒 Shaftoe, Miriam. “Las Cafeteras: The East LA band’s goal is to make revolution irresistible.” *Alternatives Journal* 43/2 (2017). ProQuest Alt Presswatch
- 🕒 Thompson, Candice. “Doubling Down on Equality: Two new initiatives feature women in the studio and on the stage.” *Dance Magazine* 92/5 (2018). Gale Cengage Fine Arts & Music Collection