OLD PASADENA HOSTS SAN GABRIEL VALLEY'S LARGEST CULTURAL DANCE & FOOD FESTIVAL AS PART OF PASADENA ART WEEKEND

For Immediate Release:

Pasadena, Calif., (September, 2011) – Old Pasadena hosts Southern California's largest free dance festival, the Old Pasadena Cultural Dance & Food Festival, Sunday, October 16 from 1pm to 6pm at De Lacey Ave. and 12pm to 5pm at the Lineage Performing Arts Center. The free, family friendly celebration of music and movement will feature over a dozen award-winning dance companies performing unique dances from around the world.

The all day jam-packed festival is the grand finale to the popular Pasadena Art Weekend, taking place each year in October. The celebration begins with a vibrant performance from Rio Brazil Samba showcasing their colorful Brazilian dance featured on such notable networks as MTV and KTLA. Other exciting performances include Indian Bollywood from acclaimed choreographer Achinta McDaniel of the Blue 13 Dance Company, traditional Chinese dance performed by the local Shining Star Dance Academy, Mexican Folklorico from the award-winning Ballet Folklorico Mixteco, and Hawaiian, Tahitian, and New Zealand dance performed by Le Polynesia. The Ensemble Barynya is returning again this year, performing their audience pleasing acrobatic Russian, Ukrainian and Gypsy dances. The Old Pasadena Cultural Dance & Food Festival concludes with a very special Japanese drum and dance show from the Taiko Center of Los Angeles.

The Old Pasadena Cultural Dance Festival is one of the few dance festivals in the world where the audience is encouraged to participate in the show. Following each performance at the main stage on De Lacey, the dancers will teach movements from that culture, so audience members can get moving too!

Attendees are also invited to visit the Lineage Performing Arts Center for free dance classes throughout the day. All-ages and levels are welcome to take part in learning African burn, traditional Argentine tango, tap and hip hop dances.

This year, the festival will feature an array of Old Pasadena restaurants serving unique cuisine from around the world including Tibetan, Japanese, Ukrainian, Mediterranean and Indian amongst others. Each ethnic eatery will offer complimentary tastings to audience members throughout the day with larger plates available for purchase.

<u>Complete Schedule at De Lacey Main Stage, 35 N. De Lacey Ave., 1:00pm-6:00pm</u>

1:00pm Rio Brazil Samba

Rio Brazil Samba brings the colorful regional Brazilian costume and dance to venues around the world. The acclaimed troupe has also performed on numerous TV networks including KTLA, MTV, and Telemundo.

1:40pm Ballet Folklorico Mixteco East Los Angeles

Founded in 1989, Ballet Folklorico Mixteco has established itself as one of the top traditional Mexican dance groups in the state. The group has won first and second place in the Ballet Folklorico de Amalia Hernandez Competition in 1999 and 2000. At the USA competition the dance troupe also took first place in numerous categories. In 1990 the Ballet Folklorico Mixteco was honored by the Los Angeles County First District Supervisor, Gloria Molina, and by Richard Alatorre, California State Assemblyman for the Los Angeles County.

2:20pm Blue 13 Dance Company

Since 1999, Blue 13 Dance Company has performed to sold out audiences all over the United States and abroad in its signature contemporary styles inspired by traditional Indian dance. The company has performed locally at such esteemed venues as the Ford Amphitheatre. Director Achinta McDaniel choreographs Bollywood, Bhangra, and classical Indian dances for the commercial, film and television industries. She and her dancers have been featured on MTV, NBC and more.

3:00pm Le Polynesia

For over 50 years, Le Polynesia has been an important and integral part of the Polynesian community in Southern California, and began in 1961 under the direction of Junius and Ilima Montgomery. Known for outstanding music, drumming and dance, Le Polynesia has graced some of the biggest stages with some of the most esteemed names in Polynesian entertainment. Le Polynesia has made a name for itself in the Polynesian dance competition circuit, winning numerous 1st places, and overall awards at some of the most prestigious dance competitions.

3:40pm Ensemble Barynya

The Russian music, dance and song ensemble Barynya, established in1991 in New York City, is a world renowned group that enjoys exalting stature as the premier Russian folk ensemble outside of Russia. Barynya presents Russian, Cossack, Ukrainian, Jewish and Russian-Gypsy traditional dancing.

4:20pm Shining Star Dance Academy

Shining Star Dance Academy is under an umbrella of the El Monte Education, which is a nonprofit organization since 1993. El Monte Education Center provides after school programs including Chinese language and culture classes on Saturdays. Cultural awareness is taught through educational activities**.** The Shining Star Dance Academy offers a variety of performance arts classes such as, Chinese Classic and Folk dance.

5:00pm Taiko Center of Los Angeles

The Taiko Center of Los Angeles was founded by Reverend Shuichi Thomas Kurai in 1996. TCLA has over 100 performers in two ensembles including “Satori Daiko” (drums of enlightenment) and “Shinzen Daiko” (compassionate heart). These two ensembles perform throughout Southern California, the U.S. and Japan at such venues as Ford Amphitheatre, Japanese American Cultural and Community Center and the Skirball Museum.

Class and Performance Schedule at Lineage Performing Arts Center, 89 South Fair Oaks Ave. 12:00pm-4:00pm

12:00pm Beginning Tap with Melinda Sullivan

Melinda Sullivan is an actress, musician and award winning dancer. She recently appeared as one of the top finalists on Fox's "So You Think You Can Dance". Melinda held a recurring role as the mysterious Zoe Finn on CBS's "As the World Turns" and toured as an original cast member of the onstage of the Disney's High School Musical and High School Musical Two. Melinda is a recipient of the coveted Los Angeles Music Center "Spotlight Award" in the non-classical dance category for her solo tap dance performances at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

1:00pm Intermediate/Advanced Tap with Melinda Sullivan

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2:00pm Hip Hop with Angie Vaughn
Explore intense rhythm through upbeat movement to enhance fitness, coordination and timing with acclaimed hip hop dancer Angie Vaughn.

2:30pm Argentine Tango with Jennifer Small and Brett Griswold

Brett Griswold and Jennifer Small of Southern California Tango Argentino have been dancing and teaching Argentine Tango for 6 years. They have trained in depth in Buenos Aires and the U.S. with top maestros of the world and placed 2nd in Stage Tango at the USA Tango Championships in 2010 New York City.

3:15pm Tango Performance by Jennifer Small and Brett Griswold

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3:30pm African Burn with Frit and Frat Fuller

Graduates of California Institute of Arts, acclaimed dancers Frit and Frat Fuller have performed around the world with such notable acts as Janet Jackson and Ice-T, and provided the stage choreography for the play Shreek. Frit and Frat will lead a special class of African Burn!

4:15pm African Hop Fusion with Frit and Frat Fuller

Graduates of California Institute of Arts, acclaimed dancers Frit and Frat Fuller have performed around the world with such notable acts as Janet Jackson and Ice-T, and provided the stage choreography for the play Shreek. Frit and Frat will lead a special class of African Hop Fusion!

General Public: All performances are free and open to the public, for more information visit www.oldpasadena.org/dancefestival

Media: Please contact Kershona Mayo at 626.356.9725 or Kershona@oldpasadena.org for further information, interviews and photographs.

The Old Pasadena Cultural Dance Festival is the grand finale to Pasadena ArtWeekend, a three-day event that also includes ArtNight, ArtWalk, Art of Food, and ArtRhythm. Pasadena ArtWeekend is a joint venture with the city of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division and Arts & Culture Commission, Pasadena Convention Center & Visitors Bureau, Playhouse District Association, Old Pasadena Management District, South Lake Business Association, Paseo Colorado and Pasadena CultureNet. For a detailed event listing, visit www.pasadenaartweekend.com.

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