

Dance Brigade

For Immediate Release

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Press photos available by request and at www.dancemission.com

Dance Mission Theater presents
the latest workshop production of a new play by Aaron Loeb

THE PROUD

January 7-9, 2012

Saturday at 8pm, Sunday at 6pm, Monday at 5pm

FREE!!

Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th Street, SF CA 94110

For more information: 415-826-4441, www.dancemission.com

(San Francisco, December 2011) **Dance Brigade's Dance Mission Theater** in collaboration with **Iraq Vets Against the War** present the latest workshop production of a new play by **Aaron Loeb** (*Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party*), *The Proud*. *The Proud* takes a difficult look at the new face of post-traumatic stress syndrome of American Iraq War veterans and the (mis)treatment of women in the military.

Directed by **Timothy Near** (Director Emeritus, San Jose Rep), *The Proud* opens as Army psychiatrist Captain Beatrice MacDonald or "B" (**Stacy Ross**, SF Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award winner) and chief nurse Sally Lee (**Lauren English**) meet the new soldier intake, Marine corporal Walter Barrett (**Lucas Near-Verbrugghe**, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*). Walter has been admitted to the psychiatric ward for attempted suicide - accused of aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, wrongful discharge of a firearm, communication of a threat, and two attempts of intentional self-injury. When he denies trying to kill himself, B tries to unravel what really happened that night and why Walter is so haunted by the death of Cheryl and Lupe, two team members who appeared to have killed themselves weeks earlier. Choreographed by **Krissy Keefer** (Artistic Director, Dance Brigade), **Dance Brigade** appears as a five person Greek Chorus, who, through dancing and Taiko drumming, help narrate the story.

Dance Brigade's Artistic Director / Choreographer, Krissy Keefer developed the concept for the work with local Bay Area playwright Aaron Loeb and nationally renowned Director Emeritus of San Jose Repertory, Timothy Near, along with the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of **Iraq Veterans Against the War**. IVAW is leading the movement of veterans and GIs who are working to bring the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Collaborators Loeb, Keefer, and Near, with the support of IVAW, gathered stories from Bay Area Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

and their families to help inform the script. They were compelled to create this work after recent statistics from the Veterans Administration (VA) were released that an average of 18 Iraq War veterans commit suicide each and every day of the year, and that more than 6,552 have taken their own lives since the war began, which means more service people have committed suicide than have died in combat. Rape within the US military has become so widespread that it is estimated that a female soldier in Iraq is more likely to be attacked by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire and that there is a culture of punishment for the women and men who report sex crimes and a simultaneous failure to prosecute the offenders.

KRISSY KEEFER / DANCE BRIGADE (Choreographer / Greek Chorus / Producer)

In 1984, **Krissy Keefer** and Nina Fichter, original members of Wallflower Order, founded **Dance Brigade** to create and perform dance-theater that addresses the complex problems of contemporary American women. The company's content driven choreographies are a high-energy blend of ballet, modern dance, jazz, song, text, sign language and explosive Taiko drumming. The company has created over 10 full-length concerts of contemporary dance theater including *Pandora's Box*, *Ballet of the Banshees*, *Cinderella*, *Queen of Sheba*, *Cave Women*, *Spell*, *The Revolutionary Nutcracker Sweetie* and *The Great Liberation Upon Hearing*.

Krissy Keefer has a long history of collaborating with a wide array of artists, companies and non-arts community groups. In the highly successful 2002 & 2008 productions of Women Against War at the Herbst Theater, she brought together prominent feminist activists, veteran feminist musicians, both established and emerging dance companies, and Grrrl Brigade. In 2006, Dance Brigade performed as the Greek chorus in San Jose Repertory Theatre's production Euripides's anti-war play, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, directed by Timothy Near. Keefer served as co-director and choreographer for this production. In 2008, she also worked with feminist scholars and students in the New College Women's Spirituality Masters' Program and with Quan Yin Healing Arts Center to create "The Valencia Street Project," honoring 30 years of local feminist history and institution building through original dance theater and public education events.

AARON LOEB (Playwright)

Aaron Loeb's work has been performed in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Ft. Worth, San Jose, and Connecticut. His full-length plays include *Brown*, *First Person Shooter*, *Blastosphere* (with Geetha Reddy), and *Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party*, which had its Off-Broadway premiere at in 2010. Among the honors Loeb has received are: two Bay Area Theater Critic Circle Awards for Best New Play (*First Person Shooter* in '07, *ALBGDP* in '08), Outstanding Play from the New York International Fringe Festival (*ALBGDP* '09), GLAAD Media Award Nominee (*ALBGDP* '09), and seven "Emerging Playwright Awards" from PlayGround. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, Inc and a Playwrights Foundation resident playwright.

TIMOTHY NEAR (Director)

Timothy Near served as Artistic Director of San Jose Rep for 21 years where she contributed significant leadership to the design and building of a new theatre facility and led the company to be among the most artistically adventurous resident theatres in the U.S. In 2009 she resumed her

career as a freelance director. She has directed at California Shakespeare Theatre, Center Rep, Berkeley Rep, Arizona Theatre Co., The Guthrie, Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, LA's Tiffany Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in DC, New York's Public Theatre, Union Square Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Intiman, ACT Theatre in Seattle and Portland Center Stage. Near is the recipient of the Obie Award for her performance in *Still Life* and the Woman of Achievement Award given by the SJ Mercury News/Women's Fund.

LUCAS NEAR-VERBRUGGHE (Walter)

Lucas Near-Verbrugghe was born and raised in San Francisco. Most recently he appeared in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* on Broadway. Other New York credits include *The Ritz* (Broadway), the NY premieres of *Oohrah!* by Bekah Brunstetter and *BOOM!* by Peter Nachtreib, *Macbeth* at the Public, and a three person version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Regional credits include the Pittsburgh Public Theater and Texas Shakespeare Festival. TV: "Law and Order," "Guiding Light." He can also be seen recent film, *My Idiot Brother*. Lucas has an MFA from NYU.

STACY ROSS (B)

Stacy Ross collaborated with both Dance Brigade and Timothy Near on *Iphigenia at Aulis* at San Jose Repertory Theatre. Other credits include *Book of Days* (Mountain View), *The Rivals* (ACT), *Major Barbara* (San Jose Rep, for which she won SF Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award), *Spring Storm* (Marin Theatre Company) and *Hamlet, Macbeth, Titus Andronicus*, and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (Cal Shakes). Stacy has also appeared with San Jose Stage Company, SF Playhouse, Best of PlayGround, and Berkeley Rep.

LAUREN ENGLISH (Sally)

Lauren English received her MFA from NYU. She has appeared at the SF Play House numerous times and won Bay Area Critics Circle for her role in *Cabaret*. She most recently appeared in Magic Theater's *Why We Have a Body*.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

What:

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A workshop production of a new play by Aaron Loeb
THE PROUD

When:

January 7-9, 2011
Saturday at 8pm, Sunday at 6pm, Monday at 5pm

Where:

Dance Mission Theater
3316 24th Sreet, SF CA 94110

Who:

Written by Aaron Loeb
Directed by Timothy Near
Choreographed by Krissy Keefer
Featuring Stacy Ross, Lucas Near-Verbrugghe and Lauren English, with dance/drumming by
Dance Brigade

Tickets:

FREE

Information:

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