

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES



**Victor Toman** is an actor, dancer, musician, and teacher. After completing his B.A. in Theater Arts from the University of Oregon, Victor continued his education outside of academia traveling nationally and internationally, eventually landing on both feet in San Francisco. Victor joined the Tony Award winning San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1994 where he has been a principal actor and musician over the past ten years. He is also the company's primary choreographer and the director of its Youth Theater

Project. Through his work with the Mime Troupe and as an independent instructor, Victor has taught workshops from Berkeley to Berlin and currently is an artist in residence at San Francisco's School of the Arts.



**ShadowLight Productions**

Founded in 1972, ShadowLight Productions brings the stories of the world to light through cross-cultural storytelling and the magic of Shadow Theater. Original, interdisciplinary performances combine the power and mystery of shadows, the scale of film, and the immediacy of live performance. The shadow plays are rooted in Chinese, Tibetan, Indonesian, Filipino, European, and Latin American performing arts traditions, and are created by a collaborating ensemble of writers, choreographers, composers, designers, actors, dancers, musicians, and puppeteers.

Artistic Director Larry Reed pioneered contemporary shadow theater by integrating traditional shadow theater techniques (which he studied and performed for two decades) with American theater and film styles. Reed is one of few Americans to be trained in wayang kulit, Balinese shadow puppetry. Also a documentary filmmaker, Reed's film *ShadowMaster* is an intimate portrait of a family of Balinese performers; it has aired on PBS and the Discovery Channel. ShadowLight performs nationally and internationally, and offers free and low priced public performances and workshops. They regularly collaborate with other groups to develop audiences across cultural and disciplinary boundaries, including the shadow work created for *People Like Me 2005*.



**Djialy Kunda Kouyate** - "The Twins," **Assane and Ousseynou Kouyate**, come from a long line of *Griots, or Jalis (djialy)*, historians, genealogists, storytellers, and keepers of cultural traditions from the Mendeng people of Mali. While the Kouyate twins were born in the country of Mali, they grew up in Senegal, so their style of music and dance exhibits cultural elements of **Wolof** dance and music as well.

Assane and Ousseynou performed with the National Ballet of Senegal and other Africa-based companies until moving to the United States in 1997. Since then, they developed their own company, *Ballet Jali Diabate*, which has had members in Hawaii and California, and frequent guest performers from Africa. They recently renamed their group Djialy Kunda Kouyate, and now perform as a large musical ensemble doing concerts, as well dance performances and educational programs. The Twins appeared in *People Like Me 2001: Dancing at the Crossroads*, and in *People Like Me 2005: It's all Relative!* In these performances, the twins carry on their family tradition of praise singing, storytelling, and Malian and

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Senegalese dance. The dances are accompanied by a musical ensemble which includes the African harp/lute known as the *kora*, a wooden xylophone with resonators known as the *balafon*, and a single-headed large vase drum, the *djembe*, played by hand.



**I Madé Moja** is a prominent Balinese painter, dancer, mask maker, and theater artist who lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the visual arts, his primary background is in traditional Balinese ink and watercolor painting. His work has been shown internationally and is featured in numerous books on Balinese art and culture. Recent painting exhibitions have blended classical Balinese themes with contemporary sights and settings. Since relocating to the United States, Moja has expanded his artistic repertoire to include puppetry, theater and dance. Moja performs with both **ShadowLight Productions** and **Gamelan Sekar Jaya** in *People Like Me 2005*.



**Gamelan Sekar Jaya** is a forty-five-member ensemble of internationally acclaimed musicians and dancers, based in El Cerrito, which has made the performing arts of Bali its specialty. Gamelan Sekar Jaya is seen in Indonesia not only as a flowering of Balinese arts in a culturally distant land, but also as a laboratory for the creation of new artistic ideas.

Founded in 1979, the group has presented more than three hundred concerts throughout California and on tours around the United States as well as to Canada, Mexico, and Bali itself. The group's success arises not only from its devotion to traditional repertoire but from its innovative work. During the group's most recent tour to Bali (June-July 2000), it was selected to receive a Dharma Kusuma award -- Bali's highest award for artistic achievement, never before given to foreign performers. To find out more about Gamelan Sekar Jaya's activities, please call (510) 237-6849 or visit [www.gsj.org](http://www.gsj.org).



**Kyoungil Ong** is a professional dancer, choreographer, and the Director of Ong Dance Company. Kyoungil grew up with dance, having trained in Korean, ballet, and modern dance since the age of four. She attended the prestigious Seoul Arts High School in Korea, graduating with top honors from the dance department. Kyoungil continued her dance education at Sungkyun Kwan University, where she graduated with a B.A. in Dance (1995) and earned an M.A. in Physical Education (2001). As a student, Kyoungil won the gold medal at the 25th Annual Dong-A Dance Concourse. As an instructor, Kyoungil taught at the Seoul High School for the Arts, Seon Hwa School of the Arts, and Sejong University.

Kyoungil was a lead dancer in the National Dance Company of Korea for the past several years, has won numerous dance competitions and toured in over 30 countries in the Americas, Asia and Europe. She has choreographed over 40 works and is well known in Korea and abroad, for her choreography in both traditional Korean dance forms and in her unique fusion of traditional Korean and modern movement.

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES



**Lowiczanie Polish Folk Dance Ensemble** is an enthusiastic group of dancers, singers and musicians whose goal and passion is to present traditional music, song and dance from Poland. Formed in 1975, Lowiczanie is one of six founding members of the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas (PFDAA), and presents over two-dozen annual performances and workshops. Lowiczanie's artistic vision is to present the traditional arts from the historic Polish territories in as authentic and entertaining a manner as possible, with great attention to accurate detail.

The Artistic Director is Mary Kay Stuvland, the Resident Choreographer is Piotr Lacki, the Choral Director is Agnieszka Hajdukiewicz, and the Music Director is Susan Worland. The Ensemble includes a men's chorus, a folk *Kapela*, and a children's dance group. The group performs throughout the Western United States from museum venues to ethnic festivals, including the *San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival*, and has appeared at Polish folk festivals throughout the US and in Poland.



**Marcelo Solís** is an experienced dancer, choreographer and teacher. He has performed and taught throughout Argentina, Europe and the United States since 1994. He interprets tango, waltz, and milonga (a fast-paced Argentine tango) in his own unique style. Marcelo's versatility is exemplified in his ability to execute his skills in both formal performance venues and in social dance settings.

**Romina Hahn** started her tango training in Buenos Aires about ten years ago with great maestros such as Mora Godoy, Horacio Godoy, Sergio Nataro, Alejandra Arrué, Lucas Galera, and Paula Rubin. Since she moved to the U.S. two years ago, she studied with Marcelo Solis until becoming his partner.

Together, Marcelo and Romina offer a distinctive style balancing fun patterns with strong techniques. Their friendly nature, love for tango and clear method of teaching make them highly sought after as one of the Bay Area's favorite tango teaching duo. Marcelo Solis and Romina Hahn were selected to perform at the *26th San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival* and they mount several productions of their own each year.