Viver Brasil: Celebrating Samba

SAT / FEB 8 / 11:00 AM

THE COMPANY
Linda Yudin and Luiz Badaró  
CO-FOUNDERS, CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
Vera Passos  
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER
Dr. Giavanni Washington  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Nancy de Souza e Silva aka Dona Cici  
CULTURAL CONSULTANT
Maria Lourdes Silvestre dos Santos aka Mainha da Bahia, Valclides Pinto aka Quidinha, and J. Cunha  
COSTUME DESIGNERS
Jahanna Blunt, Indira Leneman, Bianca Medina, Vera Passos, Ajah Muhammad  
DANCERS
Luiz Badaró, Clarice Cast, Drew Love, Avila Santo  
MUSICIANS
Kana Shimanuki, Natalia Spadini  
SINGERS

There will be no intermission.
PROGRAM

Celebrating Samba shares the rich Afro-Brazilian traditional and contemporary culture of Salvador, Bahia. Located in the northeastern coastal region of Brazil, Bahia, Viver Brasil shares this vibrant African legacy through the movements and rhythms of royal orixas, the riveting martial art/dance of Capoeira, the social dance of Samba de Roda and the Bloco afro spectacle of the Bahian Carnaval.

BIOS

VIVER BRASIL, founded in 1997 by Linda Yudin and Luiz Badaró honors Brazil’s African legacy through bold contemporary dance theater and increases awareness of the rich history of Afro-Brazilian dance and music through performances worldwide, arts education, community engagement, and an annual cultural immersion program to Salvador, Bahia, the company establishes a portal through which communities experience and share the beautiful, mythic and vibrant stories of Afro-Brazilian culture. Through rigorous research and continuous dialogue with living masters and virtuoso musicians and choreographers in Bahia and the US, Viver Brasil drives contemporary representations of Afro-Brazilian dance in the United States, addressing 21st-century African diasporic issues of art and humanity, race, social equity, and ancestry. Viver Brasil members hail from Los Angeles to other cities across the US, to international cities like Salvador, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Havana.

LINDA YUDIN (CO-FOUNDER & CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) named a mover and a shaker by the LA Times, earned her MA in Dance (Ethnology) from UCLA in 1988, and has devoted more than 30 years to researching, performing and teaching Afro-Brazilian dance. Her work is embodied in Viver Brasil’s 21st-century expression of Afro-Brazilian dance theater; signature cultural exchange program between Los Angeles and Salvador, Bahia; dedication to the training of company members by Bahian and American masters; and collaboration with Brazilian and American choreographers and mentorship of company members. Yudin danced with Viver Brasil during its formative years before shifting her focus to the fulfillment of the company’s artistic vision: creating and performing dance theater, sponsoring annual cultural exchange trips to Bahia, and producing robust arts education/community engagement programs. Yudin’s leadership is grounded in scholarship, rigorous research, as well as continuous, concentrated, and lively dialogue with living masters, choreographers and virtuoso musicians in Bahia and beyond, in order to address with artistic integrity 21st-century African diasporic issues of art and humanity, race, memory, and equality. Since 2003, Yudin has directed twelve premiere works to acclaimed reviews; guided national and international tours, mentored and developed company members, and created a living bridge between LA and Salvador, Bahia. In 2013, Yudin created the artistic vision for Viver Brasil’s Viva Navidad Street Party at Disney California Adventure Park, and in 2016 she co-directed Viver Brasil in a premiere of bloco afro-inspired work at the Hollywood Bowl with an expanded company of 38 members performing with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. In 2017, she directed Viver Brasil’s 20th-anniversary concert, Agô Ayó: Spirits Rising at the sold-out Ford Theatres. She serves on the board of trustees for Dance/USA.

LUIZ BADARÓ (CO-FOUNDER & CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) critically acclaimed master dancer, choreographer, percussionist, and educator, was born in Salvador, Bahia, and has been choreographing and performing for over thirty years in Brazil, Europe, Africa, Japan, and the United States. His influence is indispensable to Viver Brasil’s cultural integrity, technical and artistic vitality, and dance training. Badaró’s exalted choreography is inspired by both the traditional and contemporary worlds of Afro-Brazilian culture.

The Los Angeles Times called his choreography “intoxicating...irrepressible...Brazilian to the core.” Badaró choreographed Tribute to Muzenza performed at the Hollywood Bowl; Land of Magic to a sold out audience for Viver Brasil’s inaugural full length concert at the Ford Amphitheatre in 2003 and in 2007 he received an Irvine Creation to Performance grant and restaged his signature Navio Negreiro and created new work for the company’s 10th anniversary, Xirê/Celebrations at the Ford. Badaró studied Afro-Brazilian dance with Raimundo Bispo dos Santos (aka Mestre King), and Mercedes Batista; modern dance with Clyde Morgan; folkloric traditions with Emilia Biancardi; and capoeira with Mestre Bimba and Mestre Bandu. In 2009, he won a Lester Horton Dance Award for "Outstanding Achievement in Music for Dance" for Viver Brasil’s 2008 So Moved/In Motion. Along with co-founder Linda Yudin, Badaró received the prestigious “Excellence in Teaching” award from the board of directors of Dance Resource Center of Greater L.A./Lester Horton Dance Awards 2009.

VERA PASSOS (CHOREOGRAPHER) is Viver Brasil’s newly appointed Associate Artistic Director. She is considered one of Salvador, Bahia’s most elegant and eloquent dancers. She was a principal dancer for the acclaimed Balé Folclórico da Bahia touring throughout Brazil, Europe, Asia, the US and South America for ten years. Passos has taught the Silvestre technique around the world since 2002. In 2010, she was invited by Viver Brasil to train the company, to perform and to tour Vera’s profound and indigenous relationship with Afro-Brazilian movement and music richly infuses Viver Brasil’s artistic and cultural offerings. In her own words, Vera acknowledges the importance and impact that Bahian culture has in shaping the power and expression that she articulates and commands as an artist, “My culture is my inspiration, my feet speak with the earth and bring ancestral messages of joy, resistance and harmony.”

ABOUT THE ARTISTS