

VIVER BRASIL

DANÇA • MÚSICA • CULTURA



ABOUT VIVER BRASIL.

A close-up photograph of a person's face and upper body. They are wearing a vibrant red sequined headdress and a matching red sequined garment. A large, dense cluster of yellow and orange feathers is draped over their shoulder and chest. Their skin is a warm, golden color. A gold bangle bracelet with red stones is visible on their right wrist. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

Founded in 1997 by Artistic Directors Linda Yudin and Luiz Badaró, Viver Brasil honors Brazil's African legacy through bold contemporary dance theatre that increases awareness of the rich history and culture from which Afro-Brazilian dance and music emerged. Through performance, education, community engagement and cultural exchange programs to Salvador, Bahia, Brazil the company establishes a portal through which communities can experience and share in the beautiful, mythic and vibrant stories of Afro-Brazilian culture. Viver Brasil is dedicated to rigorous research, and continuous dialogue between living masters of Bahian culture, choreographers, and virtuoso musicians. The creative voices of the company empowers Viver Brasil's dynamic artistry as it addresses 21st century African Diasporic issues of art, humanity, race, equity, memory, resistance and resilience.

*"Enlivening the world of ancient deities (orixás)
in intoxicating ways..."*

— Victoria Looseleaf for the Los Angeles Times

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Viver Brasil's creative vision is grounded in principles of cultural equity which propels the dynamic intercultural exchange. Since 2003, Viver Brasil produced twelve original works for the concert stage and has toured throughout the United States, South Africa, Mexico and Canada. Yabas/Queens toured throughout the West Coast and New Mexico; The Gift on the Water; Mo Ife: Love Stories, Xirê/Celebration; Feet on the Ground toured throughout the U.S.; and in 2015 Peace Transcends, culminated the inaugural Aratani World Series in Los Angeles, in collaboration with Ford on the Road Series. In 2016, Motumbaxé premiered at the Hollywood Bowl featuring an extended company of 28 dancers and 10 musicians with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, as part of "An Olympic Carnival featuring Sergio Mendes & 50 Years of Brasil '66." and created a site specific work, Revealed for the Music Center's Moves After Dark Series, receiving critical acclaim from the Los Angeles Times. For its 20th Anniversary in 2017 at the sold out Ford Amphitheatre, Viver Brasil commissioned Brazilian choreographers Marina Magalhães and Vera Passos. Viver Brasil has been performing in Disney California Adventure Park's "Disney's ¡Viva Navidad!" Street Party Parade since 2013.

TOURING VENUES

Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts • Miami, FL

The Strathmore Theater • Bethesda, MD

Queens Theatre • Flushing, NY

Nazareth College • Rochester, NY

John Anson Ford Theatre • Los Angeles, CA

Mendocino Festival • Mendocino, CA

Colorado State University • Ft Collins, CO

Diane Wortham Theatre • Asheville, NC

Zorn Arena • Eau Claire, WI

Herbst Theatre • San Francisco, CA

University of North Carolina • Wilmington, NC

American Theatre • Hampton, VA

Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts • Cerritos, CA

Northern Vermont University • Johnson, VT

Stephens Auditorium • Ames, IA

World Festival of Sacred Music • Los Angeles, CA

Arden Theater • St. Albert, Alberta, Canada

Keyano Theater • Ft. McMurray, Alberta, Canada

International Book Fair • Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

FOUNDERS & ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



LINDA YUDIN

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 contemporary expression of Afro-Brazilian dance theater; signature cultural exchange program between Los Angeles and Salvador, Bahia, Dancing at the Source; and collaboration with Brazilian choreographers and mentorship of VB members as emerging artistic contributors. Yudin has directed twelve premiere works, including sold out performances of VB's Bloco Afro Spectacle at the Hollywood Bowl. She has also guided national and international tours with Viver Brasil, and has developed a living artistic bridge between LA and Salvador, Bahia. In September 2017, the Consulate General of Brazil recognized Yudin for her dedication to the development of a robust Afro-Brazilian cultural presence in Los Angeles and beyond.



LUIZ BADARÓ

Critically acclaimed master dancer, choreographer, percussionist, and educator, was born in Salvador, Bahia. He 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 dancer 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." He currently teaches Afro-Brazilian dance in a number of arts education programs throughout Los Angeles County, has been teaching Afro-Brazilian dance in the community since 2000, and collaborates with Linda Yudin in the UCLA World Arts and Cultures/Dance Department.

CHOREOGRAPHERS



VERA PASSOS

Is considered one of Salvador, Bahia's most elegant and eloquent contemporary Afro-Brazilian dancers. The Los Angeles Times called Passos, "exotic, strong but sylphlike." Passos was a principal dancer for the acclaimed Bale Folclórico da Bahia touring throughout Brazil, Europe, Asia, the US and South America for ten years and also performed with the Jorge Silva Dance Company. Passos began her dance training at the age of 14 at the State of Bahia's Escola de Dança subsequently training in the Silvestre Technique in 1992 with Rosangela Silvestre. Silvestre's protégé, Passos has taught the technique since 2002 in Salvador and throughout South America, Europe and the US. Vera performed with jazzman Steve Coleman throughout Europe in 2002 and 2003. Passos participated in the first annual Viver Brasil Institute in Los Angeles as a technical trainer and visiting artist. In 2015, she premiered her first full-length work for Viver Brasil, Peace Transcends, at the Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles. In 2016 she choreographed and performed in the company's Bloco Afro Spectacle for the Olympic Celebration at the Hollywood Bowl. Most recently she premiered Pra Onde O Samba Me Leva [Where the Samba Takes Me] to a sold out audience as part of Viver Brasil's 20th anniversary concert, Agô Ayo Spirits Rising.



SHELBY WILLIAMS-GONZALEZ

Joined Viver Brasil in 2004 and has danced with LA-based groups such as the Posthouse Dance Group and with Christine Suarez and Diana MacNeil. She has a Bachelor in Dance and Anthropology from UC Berkeley where she was also a member of the Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble, Patricia Reedy Dancers and Robert Moses' Kin. Accomplished and certified in Silvestre Dance Technique, Shelby is also an arts administrator and is employed as Development Director of artworxLA. As an artist, she draws from her diverse foundation in contemporary dance, martial arts, as well as traditional and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance. Shelby has choreographed 3 works for Viver Brasil, Para Xaxa (2013), Ajê (2014) and in 2016 she received critical acclaim by the Los Angeles Times for Revealed, which debuted at the Music Center's Moves After Dark Series.



MARINA MAGALHÃES

Based in Los Angeles, is an award-winning choreographer and seasoned dancer from Brazil. Magalhães' movement vocabulary is based in Afro-Latin and Contemporary dance infused with dance theatre that is grounded in subversive politics and deeply personal story-telling. Her work has been performed at REDCAT, CounterPulse, Maitisong Festival (Botswana), and The Wits Theatre (South Africa). She was awarded the LA Weekly Theatre Award for Best Choreography in 2013 for her original work in the pop musical phenomenon "Patty! The Revival." Other choreography credits include Watsky's YouTube sensation "Moral of the Story" (over 6 million views) and BuzzFeed's "What Does Music Look Like?" Marina joined Viver Brasil in 2016 and premiered Cor Da Pele on the Ford stage in 2017.

PROGRAMS

CELEBRATING SAMBA

Our signature family program takes audiences on a cultural journey with electrifying Afro Brazilian dance and music to venues where audiences experience joyful color, thrilling rhythms, and communal celebration. This performance is a narrated 45 minute show that includes the royal orixá dances, riveting capoeira, joyful samba and Bahian carnival with live music and an interactive dance workshop. Other arts education programs offered by Viver Brasil include residencies for K-12 in partnership with LA's Best and has served at least 10,000 students through a 20 weeks residency throughout the 36 LA's Best partner sites. Viver Brasil has also hosted residencies and masterclasses at schools and nonprofit organizations throughout Los Angeles.

SAMBA IN THE STREETS

Our free community engagement program is modeled on Salvador, Bahia's Bloco Afro parading organizations and teaches Afro-Brazilian dance, drumming, and song. Through support from Dance/USA and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, this program was refined by offering separate youth and adult classes in Leimert Park in partnership with KAOS Network. Since the inception of this program, Viver Brasil has served over 500 youth and adults from 51 unique LA County zip codes.



COMMUNITY CLASS

Our weekly class has met every Tuesday for almost 20 years at Dance Arts Academy and recently moved to Mondays at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center. Each year over 500 people experience Afro-Brazilian dance technique classes taught by founding artistic directors Yudin and Badaró as well as veteran company members. and special guest from Bahia through the Viver Brasil Institute.

VIVER BRASIL INSTITUTE

To date we have hosted at least 12 pioneering masters and contemporary virtuosos from Bahia who join Yudin and Badaró to provide scholarly Afro-Brazilian history, dance, music and culture workshops. This program began through the support of the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations to develop robust economic opportunities for these artist to share their practice with Bahia's sister city, Los Angeles.

DANCING AT THE SOURCE

Our 15 day cultural immersion to Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, began in 1997. This program has provided over 500 travelers with daily dance, music, and curated cultural tours as well as Afro-Brazilian culture classes taught by experienced faculty.



COR DA PELE

[SKIN COLOR]

A contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance piece exposes and interrogates the toxicity of anti-blackness in Latinx culture. Inspired by the poetry of Nayyirah Waheed, the work seeks to rewrite our relationship with black ancestry as Latinx people, while reclaiming our history as mixed-race people of color from Latin America and the United States. It is at once an offering to ancestors, a space for celebration and mourning; an act of resistance. In 2017, this work was debut showcasing the fruits of her 8-month choreography residency with Viver Brasil.

Choreography by Marina Magalhães in collaboration with the dancers.



PRA ONDE O SAMBA ME LEVA

[WHERE SAMBA MAY TAKE ME]

Pra Onde O Samba Me Leva [Where Samba May Take Me] pays homage to the great sambadeira, Joselita Moreira da Cruz Silva, affectionately known as Zelita, whose life was dedicated to the preservation and continuity of samba from the Reconcavo (interior) region of Bahia. Bahian choreographer Vera Passos explores the steps and rhythms of the samba chula style with the intensity in which the late Zelita lived her life—with joy, playfulness and a deep corporeal connection to her African ancestry.

Choreography by Vera Passos



MOTUMBAXÉ

Motumbaxé celebrates the resistance and resilience brought to the Bahian Carnaval by the Blocos Afro also known an Afro-Brazilian parading groups in 1970s, who used the street as its stage for protest to affirm blackness, social justice and equity through the thunderous beats of bloco afro dance and the rhythms of samba reggae and samba afro.

Choreography Vera Passos



REVEALED

In this timely mythical narrative, the three all-powerful wives of Xangô step beyond the archetype: Oia-lansã, warrior goddess of the winds and ancestral world who is able to sever the lifeline; Oxum, queen of the sweet waters, protector of children, beauty and the essence of self-love; and Oba, robust hunter goddess of the earth, symbol of renewal and independence. The powerful women remove their crowns and test their powers as mothers and activists responding to the issue of senseless dying of black and brown youth. What of a goddess's fragility? Where does her strength live? And what of the divine queens, Nanã, who cares for the fallen spirits, and Iemanja, the ever present mother nurturer? The vitality of ancient wisdom is revealed in this story of strength, truth, courage and humanity.

Choreography by Shelby Williams-Gonzalez



OTHER REPERTOIRE

AVANINHA

The celebratory Avaninha calls upon the sacred energies of the orixá through rhythm, song and gesture. Viver Brasil continues to revisit this repertoire as the ideas embodied by Obaluaiyê (orixá of health and sickness) feel more timely than ever. The piece delves into what it means to re-ground, come together, and heal in our present reality.

Choreography by Rosangela Silvestre. Restaged by Vera Passos

ORIXÁS

As the many waters receded, the elements descended the Great Chain of Life, forged by the orixa of iron, Ogum, so that the Earth could rise to meet the cosmos. Thus the Orixás came to populate and guide the world. Viver Brasil offers the version of this ancient tale as retold to us by the inimitable Dona Cici.

Original Choreography by Rosangela Silvestre. Restaged by Vera Passos

PARA XA XA

Inspired by the beauty and simplicity of the social dances Xaxado and Forro of Northeastern Brazil, currently the rage in dance halls and clubs. Viver Brasil adds a grand dose of humor and speed, celebrating the zany personalities dancing the night away!

Choreography by Shelby Williams-Gonzalez

MOTHERS AND SONS

Nanã (goddess of the marshes) the ‘primordial’ mother gives birth late in life to her twins Omolu (god of health and sickness) and Oxumarê (god of transformation). Omolu, twisted and covered in smallpox is pitied, yet rejected by Nanã and is given to Iemanjá, mother of all Orixá and protector of the Ocean waters. Oxumarê, in the form of a serpent and a rainbow, runs away from home to become the cosmic connection between the celestial world and the earthly world.

Choreography by Rosangela Silvestre

PRESS

"The company brought dance to communities that rarely see live performance and they went away invigorated and asking for more."

*- Jane Forde, Manager,
National Dance Project*

"Ancestral spirits come whirling, rippling, and pulsating to life in the works of Viver Brasil."

- Dance Magazine

"From the first exhilarating sound of the atabaque drums, a surge of electricity sweeps through the audience, unites us with the irrepressibly energetic troupe of dancers, drummers and singers and keeps us in an elevated, almost combustible state until well past the last sound fades away."

- LA Weekly

"Intoxicating style... [their] precision rivals a well-oiled ballet corps."

- Los Angeles Times

"The company's performance was the highlight of our season. One of the most exciting we have had in recent years."

*- Evan Hyatt, Associate Director,
Fort Collins Lincoln Center*

"Nothing could shake the regal and rhythmic confidence of Viver Brasil."

- Los Angeles Times

Photographs by Genna Cui, Jorge Vismara, Gia Trovela, Ivan Kashinsky, Kia Labeija, Larry Li, Marguerite de Bourgoing, and Susan Goines.



CONTACT

Pricing is available for one time and week long programming or performances. To request video links and inquire about scheduling please contact us.

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