Use this info sheet to prepare your students for the performance they are about to experience while you’re on the bus! We know your classroom time is at a premium, so we hope you’ll take advantage of the transit time to and from UCLA. If you have more time, or want to know more about the performers, our complete education packet offers more in-depth information and discussion suggestions.

**CONTRA-TIEMPO: What to Know Before the Show**

- CONTRA-TIEMPO fuses Salsa, Afro-Cuban, contemporary and urban dance styles with abstract dance theater to create performances that are engaging and politically astute. CONTRA-TIEMPO is committed to creating meaningful work that can be enjoyed by a broad range of audiences regardless of age, class or cultural background.

- This performance centers on the idea of resistance. Rather than being negative and adversarial, CONTRA-TIEMPO believes that resistance is the fundamental key for communication and empowerment between partners, in a community, and for a people.

- The company’s work addresses a wide range of issues, focusing on people and problems that are not often represented on the stage, such as poverty, discrimination, immigration, or class conflicts. The fusion of so many dance styles by a diverse group of dancers allows many perspectives to be represented.

- Though based here in Los Angeles, CONTRA-TIEMPO performs and teaches across the country and throughout Latin America.

- In addition to their performances, CONTRA-TIEMPO offers dance residency programs for youth, master classes for all ages, and community-based Salsa workshops.

"The kind of socially aware contemporary work that only a few dance artists such as Bill T. Jones reliably provide…in heart, mind and soul this is the real thing!"

- Los Angeles Times

**PRE-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION**

Have you ever seen a performance with multiple styles of dance combined or fused before?

What do you think “politically aware” means when describing dance? Have you seen political or social issues addressed in other art forms (theatre, music, painting, etc)?

Are you familiar with the following terms? What do you think they mean? Fusion ● Diversity ● Inclusive ● Resistance ● Community ● Political

Do you think CONTRA-TIEMPO’s work will explore issues or problems that matter to you or your community?

**POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION**

Did anything about the performance surprise you?

Was there an especially memorable moment of the performance for you? What was it? What made it memorable?

What examples of resistance did you see in the performance? Can you think of examples from your own life or your own community?

Do you have a new or different understanding of how dance can be used to explore social or political issues?
CONTRA-TIEMPO is a non-profit, Los Angeles-based dance company, founded and directed by Ana Maria Alvarez. CONTRA-TIEMPO is dedicated to transforming the world through dance. The company builds community, facilitates dialogue and moves youth to imagine what is possible in the world.

CONTRA-TIEMPO fuses Salsa, Afro-Cuban, contemporary urban and abstract dance theater, to create an invigorating blend of physically intense and politically astute performance work. Their unique Urban Latin Dance Theater brings to life voices that are not traditionally heard on the concert stage. While their performances are consistently electrifying, what sets the company apart most is its unique relationship to its own community. CONTRA-TIEMPO is, much like the community it reaches, a tapestry. Its company members—professional dancers and artists—are also immigrants, teachers, activists, organizers and movers of all types living and working in Los Angeles. Each company member lives, expresses, and struggles within the varied and complex political and personal landscapes that Ana Maria seeks to address in her work.

Resident composer, César Alvarez, who helped found the company in 2005, approaches the music for the group as if it were a new genre. CONTRA-TIEMPO's movement narrative calls for a complete rebuilding of "dance music" using a sonic vocabulary as far-reaching and diverse as the company members' backgrounds. César deconstructs salsa, combining Americana with hip-hop, poetry with clave, industrial and found sound with the powerful rhythmic traditions of the African Diaspora.

The company has several large-scale performance works, many shorter pieces, dance residency programs for youth, and master classes for all ages. CONTRA-TIEMPO’s work has been shared all over the United States and Latin America.

For teens and pre-teens, the company's programs address social, political and race issues through movement and through traditional cultural dance forms. For younger audiences the company focuses on using the body as a tool for communication and working together as a community. The company is dedicated to working with underserved populations of young people. CONTRA-TIEMPO creates dialogue and greater understanding across populations, in particular around issues of resistance and power. CONTRA-TIEMPO is committed to creating meaningful work that can be enjoyed by a broad range of audiences regardless of age, class or cultural background.

WHAT IS DANCE THEATER?

CONTRA TIEMPO’s work isn’t only dance set to music. It includes aspects of theatricality that enhance the choreography. Their performances include spoken word — both live and recorded — like poetry, historical text, and personal narratives from company members, along with projected images and video.

DANCE DISCUSSION TOPICS

What does it mean to say that “movement has meaning”?
Can dance tell a story or present an idea? Can it make you feel a certain way? Why or Why not?

ACTIVITY

Movement Conversation

In pairs, students improvise a conversation in dance. One dancer begins by creating a short movement, freezing when the movement is complete. The other dancer responds with his/her own movement reply. This continues back and forth, with movements growing more complex. Remind students to wait for their partner to freeze completely before responding.

More advanced students can explore using different amounts of space between partners. Try near, far, above, below, around, etc., or experiment using interconnected movements.
The Program

The program will include excerpts from the following works, as well as a discussion led by Ana Maria Alvarez and members of the company.

“AGAINST THE TIMES” continues to be the company’s signature work, where the term Urban Latin Dance Theater was originally created! Salsa is a dance form that is rooted in Cuban and Puerto Rican cultural tradition. It is laden with social and political contradictions; a dance of resistance. Salsa is an improvisational form that is created and recreated with every new combination of people that dance it; a dance of change. Born from the fusion of African and Spanish musical influences, it was originally created as a cultural voice and form of expression for working class people; a dance of the times. Salsa has always been a patriarchal dance form, in that men are leaders and women are followers. In more recent times, the over the top, disempowering representations of women have gotten more extreme, especially in styles that have been popularized by ballroom dancing and Hollywood films. The company flips the script on who leads who. Together they move resistance from being adversarial to being the fundamental key for communication and empowerment between partners and for a people.

"I Dream America" is a 40-minute movement opera, which primarily seeks to engage the tensions, commonalities, strains and histories between the Black and Latino communities. Traversing the political landscape of immigration and Hurricane Katrina, "I Dream America" will investigate compassion and peace and paint a disarming and thought-provoking critique of contemporary life and injustice.

"FULL.STILL.HUNGRY" is the company's newest work exploring the politics of food and consumption in our culture. Artistic director Ana Maria Alvarez says ““Food is not just the material I put in my body to sustain life — but a web of relationships, histories, choices, decisions that all impact the world around us.” These complexities are brought to life through the company's unique fusion of Salsa, Afro-Cuban and contemporary dance theater. With an original sound score composed by Cesar Alvarez, poetry, stunning visuals and delicious movement, FULL.STILL.HUNGRY serves up a blend of physical intensity with invigorating contemplation.
PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT TO UCLA

- Please bring the attached Directions for Bus Drivers with you in case your driver does not have proper directions.

- Design for Sharing volunteers will meet your bus and direct you to the theater; please be ready to leave the bus when directed to do so.

- Count your students and teachers before you arrive; the ushers will need to know how many people you have before they can seat you.

- Adequate adult supervision is important to the success of these events. Chaperones may need to supervise students in restrooms and be alert when students are entering or leaving the auditorium. Adults are expected to sit with students and help maintain appropriate standards of behavior.

- The hall is opened for seating one-half hour before the performance is scheduled to begin. We make every effort to begin on time, but occasionally the opening is delayed five to ten minutes due to late arrivals from other schools or technical problems.

- Restrooms are located to your left as you enter the theater. Have your students use the restrooms before the performance begins.

- **Flash photography is not allowed in the theater,** as it can be dangerous for the performers - the flash may temporarily blind them causing an accident. Use of any flash camera, laser pointer or recording device whatsoever may be cause for ejection from the hall.

- Remind your students that chewing gum, loud talking and running are inappropriate in the theater, even before and after the actual performance.

- Please do not allow students to bring lunches or snacks to their seats. Lunches can be stored in the lobby during the performance.

- Please remain seated when the performance is over. Schools will be dismissed a few at a time.

- Self-guided tour information and campus maps are available in the lobby. We hope you’ll make the most of your visit to UCLA and explore the campus. If you don’t have time to cover it all, take a stroll through the sculpture garden or pop into Powell Library’s historic rotunda.