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For Immediate Release

STEPOLOGY presents

The 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange

Tap all-stars from Broadway, film, and the concert stage convene on one stage for one night only!

Curated by John Kloss (performer and Festival Director)

Starring Channing Cook-Holmes, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, Deborah Mitchell,

Sam Weber, The Unique Derique

Musical accompaniment: Marcus Shelby, Sista Kee

Vocal Percussion/beatbox: Inifinitie (aka Carlos Aguirre)

Saturday, August 18 at 8pm, The Herbst Theatre

Complete calendar information on the last page of this release

(San Francisco, CA - July 6, 2007) **Put on your dancing shoes and head to The Herbst Theatre to experience one of the most anticipated cultural events of the summer season! The 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange** presents a brand new program that showcases the elegant and universal appeal of tap dancing along with new voices and contemporary trends in tap.

In the words of Festival Director, **John Kloss**, the Bay Area Rhythm Exchange demonstrates *“what a captivating concert experience the American art form of tap dance can offer. From the classic song and dance stylings of Deborah Mitchell, to the elegance and technical wizardry of Sam Weber, to the expressionistic attack characteristic of contemporary rhythm tap artists like Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, audience members will be treated to a unique, dazzling array of tap talent that invokes an appreciation of tap’s history while inspiring an excitement for tap’s present and future.”*

Kloss expanded his vision for the Festival to bring in new elements; this year, **Carlos Aguirre** (a.k.a. “Inifinitie”) of the group *Felonius* will accompany the artists with beatboxing/vocal percussion, and **The Unique Derique** will perform Hambone body percussion. Bay Area musical fixtures **Marcus Shelby**, and the jazz pianist **Sista Kee** round out the lineup that is guaranteed to get your toes tapping and the audience cheering for more!

The 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange burst onto the summer stages in 2004. Since its inaugural year, this annual festival has twice been named the year’s **“TOP 10 DANCE PERFORMANCES”** in the San

Francisco Chronicle (2005 and 2006). Featured guest artist, **Sam Weber**, was nominated for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award (IZZIE) for Outstanding Individual Performance (2004). Audiences and critics agree that the Bay Area Rhythm Exchange is an exciting and astonishing forum to see virtuosi artists from around the country on one stage at the same time.

Again the words of John Kloss, "*the athleticism, expressiveness, and multisensory nature of tap dancing have a universal appeal...the Bay Area Rhythm Exchange reflects on the universal language of rhythm as a unifying force, and [audiences] will continue to rediscover how engaging, entertaining, and awe-inspiring dance can be.*"

The 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange is a program component of STEPOLOGY's 2007 Bay Area Tap Festival, which also features a panel discussion and weeklong workshop with Festival artists. The workshops are hosted by San Francisco Dance Center. This project has been made possible, in part, by a grant from the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, in partnership with the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation. This festival is also made possible in part by the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, and the support of generous individuals.

The San Francisco Bay Guardian is pleased to be the 2007 Media Sponsor for the Bay Area Rhythm Exchange.

Background information about the tap all-stars of the 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange

Channing Cook-Holmes (Music Director/Drums) studied with L.A. based dancer/choreographer Alfred Desio, performed in the Barcelona, Spain Festival, received a Brody Grant to study with the renowned Fayard Nicholas, and was awarded the 2002 Princess Grace Award for artistic excellence. Highlights of Channing's performance career include *Riverdance* (international tour and Broadway); film credits include *Bojangles* with Gregory Hines for Showtime and Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*. Channing has served as assistant musical director for the show *Imagine Tap!*, and has performed in the touring production of *India Jazz Suites* with Isadora Duncan Award winners Jason Samuels-Smith and Chitresh Das.

John Kloss (Festival Director) is the founder of Stepology and the producer/curator of the Bay Area Rhythm Exchange. An accomplished and versatile performer, John has appeared in the short film *Tap Heat*, as an ensemble member and soloist with *Jazz Tap Ensemble* and *Especially Tap Chicago*, as a founding member of the tap duo *The Swift Brothers*, and in festival productions such as the St. Louis Tap Festival, the Chicago Human Rhythm Project, and the Maui Tap Experience. John has also been a featured performer at San Francisco's *Bay Area Dance Awards*. He has performed in concert ensemble choreography of Gregory Hines and Jimmy Slyde, in film choreography by Danny Daniels and Jason Samuels-Smith, and in numerous events with Mark Mendonca. John has also appeared in festival and other events honoring such luminaries as the Nicholas Brothers, Four Step Brothers Maceo Anderson and Prince Spencer, Peg Leg Bates, Arthur Duncan, and Michael Jackson.

Deborah Mitchell proudly celebrates 13 years as Founder and Artistic Director of *New Jersey Tap Dance Ensemble*, one of the most prominent touring tap dance companies in the state of New Jersey. This St. Louis, MO native is known throughout the New York area as a distinguished tap professional. She is the protégé of Leslie “Bubba” Gaines of the Copasetics and student of many tap masters including Broadway Choreographer Henry LeTang. Her many credits include *The Cotton Club* Motion Picture, Broadway and Paris Productions of *Black and Blue*, PBS *Great Performances*, 5 international tours with the legendary Cab Calloway, and a partnership with Philadelphia native Germaine Goodson as *The Rhythm Queens*. Ms. Mitchell has received many honors, including recognition of National Tap Dance Day 2006, at which Savion Glover presented Ms. Mitchell with an award for giving tirelessly to the spirit and legacy of tap dancing. Later this month, she will receive The Hooper Award from the American Tap Dance Foundation (July 2007).

Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards made her debut on Broadway at the age of 12, in the musical revue *Black and Blue* with greats such as Gregory Hines, Jimmy Slyde, Buster Brown and Savion Glover. Mrs. Sumbry-Edwards’ Broadway credits also include the Tony Award Winning *Bring In Da’Noise, Bring In Da’Funk*. Dormeshia has toured nationally with *Wild Woman Blues* and appeared with *Jazz Tap Ensemble* having just celebrated the 25th anniversary in performance at the Joyce Theatre in New York City. Film credits include “TAP” with Gregory Hines, Spike Lee’s movie *Bamboozled* (2000), having also lent her talent as Assistant Choreographer, and *The Rodgers and Hart Story: Thou Swell, Thou Witty* (1999). Sumbry-Edwards’ choreography has been featured in the off-Broadway show *TAAP: The Art & Appreciation of Percussion* for the all-female tap quartet *R.I.F.F.* (Rhythm In Female Feet) and was also utilized in Michael Jackson’s music video *Rock Your World*.

Sam Weber has gained an international reputation as a performing artist and is in demand throughout the world as a performer, master teacher, and choreographer. His versatility has led him to performances in musical theater and television, where he has worked with such stars as Burt Lancaster, Bob Hope, Andy Williams, Raquel Welch, Pat Boone, and Sara Vaughn. Sam has also appeared with such tap luminaries as Charles “Honi” Coles, Jimmy Slyde, Steve Condos, Gregory Hines, Savion Glover, and the Nicholas Brothers. A protégé of tap master Stan Kahn in San Francisco, Sam has studied in New York at the Julliard School and performed with the Joffrey II, the San Francisco Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Peninsula Ballet Theatre, and *Smuin Ballets/SF*. He can be seen often on the *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood* television show. Mr. Weber is one of the few tap dancers in the world currently performing Morton Gould’s *Tap Dance Concerto* and was the first tap dancer to receive a Bessie, presented in recognition of outstanding creative achievement.

Marcus Shelby (Bass) has been playing the acoustic bass for 23 years. In this time, he has built a diverse and accomplished biography. Shelby was bandleader of Columbia Records and GRP Impulse! Recording Artists *Black/Note* and is currently the Artistic Director and leader of *The Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra*, *The Marcus Shelby Septet* and the *Marcus Shelby Trio*. Recent honors include the *City Flight Magazine* 2005 award as one of the “Top Ten Most Influential African Americans in the Bay Area.”

Sista Kee (Piano) lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she spreads the Word of God through song. Also known as Kito Gamble, this multi-talented young lady is a pianist, rapper,

composer, producer and a singer. Her father, the late Jim Gamble, and her mother, legendary vocalist Faye Carol, provided a rich musical environment for the young musician to develop her craft. Although she began to make guest appearances to standing room only crowds when she was 10 years young, her music career officially began at the age of 16 - a pianist & composer gaining international recognition in primarily the blues & jazz genres. While performing with Faye Carol and leading her own group, she has also shared the stage with seasoned veterans Albert King, Pharaoh Sanders, Billy Higgins and Bobby Hutcherson, as well as young phenomenal musicians, Brandford Marsalis and Roy Hargrove.

Infinitie, a.k.a. Carlos Aguirre (Beatbox/Vocal Percussion) has been performing both as an actor and hip hop artist in San Francisco for over 10 years. He is part of the musical group *Felonious* and has performed with such artists as *Black Eyed Peas*, Eryka Badu, Mary J. Blige, *The Roots*, Rahzel and George Clinton to name a few. He also works throughout the bay area as a teacher and youth mentor. Carlos plans on bringing beatbox as an art form to the forefront and is dedicated to preserving the voice of the youth through Hip Hop culture.

The Unique Derique has introduced his unique blend of physical comedy and Hambone body music on stages and television shows around the world, with tours in Asia, Europe, the Americas and South Africa. He has performed with countless entertainers, including Bobby McFerrin, Lou Rawls and the late Sammy Davis Jr. Derique also shares his passion for performance with children, and has been featured on the Disney Channel and has hosted the Emmy Award-winning children's television show *Short Stories and Tall Tale* for KQED. Currently, Derique is the Circus Arts program director at Oakland's Children's Fairyland and teaches circus arts at Bay Area schools.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

WHAT: 2007 Bay Area Rhythm Exchange

Performances by Channing Cook-Holmes, John Kloss, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, Deborah Mitchell, Sam Weber, Marcus Shelby, Sista Kee, The Unique Derique, Carlos Aguirre (Infinitie)

WHEN: Saturday, August 18 at 8:00pm

WHERE: The Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco)

TICKETS: \$16-22. Student/senior/group/early purchase discounts available.

BOX OFFICE: (415) 392-4400 or cityboxoffice.com

Interviews with John Kloss or the festival guests can be arranged by contacting NEQA/PR.

- Karen Hall, Press Representative (415) 621-3186 x112 khall@quinn-assoc.com
- Brechin Flournoy, Public Relations Director (415) 621-3186 x104 bflournoy@quinn-assoc.com

High-res jpegs are also available upon request or by going to the news page of STEPOLOGY's website: <http://www.stepology.com/news.html>.

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