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Photos High Resolution: [www.pushdance.org/ourphotos](http://www.pushdance.org/ourphotos)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PUSH DANCE COMPANY OPENS EIGHTH SEASON WITH EPISODIC DANCE  
INSPIRED BY ZORA NEALE HURSTON**

***UNLOCK* FEATURES SET DESIGNS BY BENITO STEEN AND  
MUSIC COMPOSED BY CELLIST UNWOMAN**

**PROGRAM TAKES PLACE JUNE 7-9 at ZACCHO SF**

**San Francisco, March 4, 2013**—Push Dance Company combines episodic dance, new music, dramatic set design and physical story-telling with the world premiere of choreographer/director Raissa Simpson's *UNLOCK* in three performances June 7-9, 2013 at Zaccho SF performance space in San Francisco. Simpson will use iconic author Zora Neale Hurston's work as a jumping off point to interweave her own experiences as an African-American and Filipina-American woman to investigate skin-color bias and mixed ancestry among African Americans. Simpson, who was featured in the February 2013 Black Choreographers' Festival in San Francisco, will collaborate with set designer Benito Steen and composer and cellist UNWOMAN to create a new, multi-tiered dance work that embodies influences of the human spirit. The performances will culminate a three-month residency and development period at Zaccho SF's newly-upgraded performance space located at 1777 Yosemite Avenue, Suite 330, in San Francisco. For more information, visit [www.pushdance.org](http://www.pushdance.org).

One of the most successful black women writers of the twentieth century, Zora Neale Hurston transports readers to a world where her characters live by a code of survival. Simpson's *UNLOCK* will bring these stories of self-discovery and love to the physical world while adding a 21st century twist from another strong African-American woman.

Tickets for the 2013 Push Dance Company performances of *UNLOCK* are priced \$25 general admission, \$20 advance, \$15 Senior/Student and may be purchased at <http://push.eventbrite.com> or visit [www.pushdance.org](http://www.pushdance.org) for more information.

**About Raissa Simpson and Push Dance Company**

Push Dance Company (Push) under the direction of Raissa Simpson, melds music and media, deftly weaving inter-generational and inter-community voices to create a potent force that advances the idiom of dance. Articulating details that run through the whole body, Push builds vibrant cross-cultural works to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges attributed to mixed heritage by using non-traditional dance forms. Edgy, sleek, and sexy, each moment generates a fresh perspective from intermingling diverse dancers in raw situations- aptly described as emotional and kinetic. Showcasing rarely seen, discussed or presented topics in public settings, Push provides an opportunity to examine issues that surround and affect us all.

Raissa Simpson, award-winning choreographer and performer, founded Push Dance Company in 2005. Simpson is the recipient of ChoreoProject's Audience Award, Margaret Jenkins Dance

Company's CHIME, the Regional Dance America Award, and multiple grants including CA\$H, The San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco Foundation, Kenneth Ranin Foundation, and The Zellerbach Family Foundation. Her company has toured extensively and has been featured in the Evolve Dance Festival, APAP, and the Black Choreographer's Festival as well as bi-coastal performances at the Washington Ensemble theater, ODC, and Joyce SoHo.

Simpson, who is African American and Filipina American, uses non-traditional dance forms to illuminate the complexities of mixed race heritage. After receiving her BFA from the conservatory of dance at State University of New York at Purchase, Simpson has had an extensive performance career in the San Francisco Bay Area dancing with Robert Moses' Kin and Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theatre, among others. Village Voice dance critic Deborah Jowitt notes, "Simpson dances big." Her daring approach to movement informs her innovative and multidisciplinary work with Push.

Seamlessly integrating multimedia with cutting-edge choreography, Simpson's pieces do not reside merely onstage—they are also site-specific installations in public spaces like museums and city centers. Her work is sweeping, vibrant, multi-layered, and socially relevant often involving multiple aspects such as video projection, live music, and aerial dance. Her extensive choreographic experience has led to work with Lucas Films and commercial music videos. Simpson is committed to diverse community partnerships and education; she has worked with Stanford University, 3rd St Youth Center and Clinic, and the San Francisco County Jail as a visiting artist. Her work is not restricted by conventional boundaries. She currently teaches her unique approach to movement in schools and dance studios across the United States.

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## **CALENDAR EDITOR PLEASE LIST:**

### **PUSH DANCE COMPANY OPENS EIGHTH SEASON WITH EPISODIC DANCE INSPIRED BY ZORA NEALE HURSTON**

**WHAT:** Push Dance Company presents new work, *UNLOCK*, inspired by Zora Neale Hurston, featuring set design by Benito Steen and music composed by cellist UNWOMAN

**WHEN:** Friday, June 7, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, June 8, at 8 p.m.; Sunday, June 9, at 8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Zaccho SF, 1777 Yosemite Ave., Suite 330, San Francisco, CA 94606

**TICKETS:** Tickets for the eighth season are priced \$25 general admission, \$20 advance, \$15 Senior\Student, and may be purchased at <http://push.eventbrite.com> or visit [www.pushdance.org](http://www.pushdance.org) for more information.