

scapegoat garden

Scapegoat Garden is a collaborative dance theater based in Hartford, Connecticut, driven to create daring, interdisciplinary performance that goes in through the nose, eyes, skin, ears and mouth to stir those who witness or participate.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Charter Oak Cultural Center presents:

Prazer em conhecê-lo: Espaço Infinito (Pleased to meet you: Infinite Space)

Bringing the world to Hartford – the innovative *Scapegoat Garden* collaborates with acclaimed Cape Verdean choreographer, Mano Preto in September performances

Friday & Saturday, September 4-5, 2009

8:00 pm

Charter Oak Cultural Center
21 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Tickets: \$20, \$5 students
\$10 seniors, Charter Oak & Let*s Go members



Prazer em conhecê-lo: Espaço Infinito (Pleased to meet you: infinite space) will serve as the culmination of a collaboration between choreographers Mano Preto (Artistic Director of Cape Verde's internationally acclaimed *Raiz di Polon*) and Deborah Goffe (Artistic Director of Scapegoat Garden, Hartford's most innovative dance company). On September 4-5, 2009, the two will perform the product of their yearlong creative partnership. *Prazer em conhecê-lo: Espaço Infinito* will inhabit a physical, visual, and aural environment where Cape Verde's lyricism meets the drive of contemporary dance. Over the course of the last year, each has extended invitations to the other – sharing country, culture, and creative process. Now, together they perform a duet inspired by the warmth and anxiety of those "hospitality rituals". Audiences are invited to share in this hospitality, and experience contemporary dance as an expression of the African Diaspora.

Last September, Goffe traveled to Cape Verde to engage in a month long choreographic exchange with Mano Preto and his contemporary dance company, *Raiz di Polon*. This initial stage, funded through an Artist Teacher's Fellowship from the Surdna Foundation, included rehearsals, creative research and works-in-progress showings of the developing work. This week, Mano Preto traveled to Connecticut where they are bringing their choreographic process to completion and preparing for performance. This final stage is funded, in part, by contributions from the Roberts Foundation, the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and the Hartford Court of Common Council.

While modern/contemporary dance has its roots in America and Europe, artists like Cape Verde's Mano Preto, are successfully using the genre as a vehicle for creative expression within their own cultural contexts. Mano Preto's choreographic work integrates Cape Verde's traditional dance and music forms, history of slavery and colonization, and its struggle for independence, with the free expression, inventive approach to movement, and theatricality characteristic of contemporary dance. In this way, Mano and his dancers examine, give voice to, and reinvent their cultural heritage.

Founded in 2002 by Hartford-native Deborah Goffe, the Scapegoat Garden creates works that seek to engage all the senses, giving equal attention to technique, form, process, and a sincere expression of the human experience. Goffe identified Hartford as an ideal home for the company following the years she spent living in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Eager to contribute to Greater Hartford's small but vibrant dance community, the company has performed through the Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts. Goffe's dedication to Hartford dance is enriched by the ability to form and maintain connections with the regional, national, international dance communities. *Prazer em conhecê-lo: Espaço Infinito (Pleased to meet you: infinite space)* is the embodiment of that need fulfilled.

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about the Artists

Deborah Goffe (Artistic Director) is a performer, choreographer, dance educator and video artist. She is Founder and Artistic Director of *Scapegoat Garden*, a collaborative dance theater based in Hartford, Connecticut, driven to create daring interdisciplinary dance performance that goes in through the nose, eyes skin, ears and mouth to stir those who witness and participate. Since earning her BFA in modern dance from the University of the Arts and an MFA in dance performance and choreography from California Institute of the Arts, *Scapegoat Garden* has served as the vehicle and creative community through which she cultivates artistic innovation, exploring dance and its intersection with other media. She has created video works and sound designs for *Scapegoat Garden*, the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble (with whom she performed for many years), the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and the Surdna Foundation. She has received Artist's Fellowship Grants from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, from the Greater Hartford Arts Council for her choreographic work. Deborah has taught dance and related courses in a number of institutions, including Belmont High School in Los Angeles, CalArts, CREC's Center for Creative Youth, Hartford Conservatory, University of Hartford/Hartt School/Community Division, Trinity College, and *CulturArte* - a youth arts summer residency program in Cape Verde, Africa. She is currently on the faculty of CREC's Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts.

Scapegoat Garden was founded in 2002, and established as a non-profit 501(c)(3) arts organization in 2004. Under the direction and vision of Hartford-native Deborah Goffe, the company chooses themes that are as much universal as they are personal. Layered with multi-sensory stimulation and attention to detail, Scapegoat Garden invites its audiences to participate in a heightened theatrical experience. Drawing on the group's diverse passions and training, which have included contemporary dance, yoga, martial arts, ballet, video production, theater, song and music composition, Scapegoat Garden collaborates in the creation of daring interdisciplinary performance works. These works walk the line between technique, form, process and a genuine expression of our human experience. Scapegoat Garden's repertory has been selected for performance in festivals and venues throughout the region including: the Bushnell's *Belding Theater*, Trinity College's *Austin Arts Center*, the *Carol Autorino Center* at Saint Joseph College, Hartford's *Charter Oak Cultural Center*, the *International Festival of Arts and Ideas* in New Haven, Wesleyan University's *Center for the Arts*, *Truro Center for the Arts* in Provincetown, *White Mountain Dance Festival* at Springfield College and New York City's *Raw Material Performance Series*, *Artist's of Tomorrow Festival*, *DUMBO Dance Festival* and *92nd Street Y*.

Dancer and choreographer **Mano Preto** (José Emanuel Brandão) co-founded Raiz di Polon Contemporary Dance Company in 1991 in the city of the Praia, Cape Verde. In 1994, Raiz di Polon encountered contemporary European dance for the first time when the company participated in the performance project *Dançar Cabo Verde*, directed by Clara Andermatt and Paulo Ribeiro of Prémio Acarte. This project was followed by, *Dançar o que é Nosso* a few years later. In 1997, Raiz di Polon, created its first contemporary dance work, *Até ao Fim*, which premiered in Cape Verde and later in Portugal. Lessons from these early projects continue to form the foundation for Raiz di Polon and form the basis for the training of new dancers, the development of new choreographic works, and are applied to the traditional Cape Verdean dance forms to expand their impact for modern audiences.

Under Mano Preto's direction, Raiz di Polon has received many awards, including an Investiture of Cultural Merit from the Government of the Republic of Cape Verde as well as a Medal of Recognition from the town council of Praia. The company's work is also featured in the 2007 documentary film *Movement (R)evolution Africa*, by Joan Frosch and Alla Kovgan. Raiz di Polon's choreographic works have been presented in Cape Verde, Portugal, Germany, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Holland, Romania, Croatia, Denmark, Wales, Belgium, Senegal, Brazil, Cuba, Switzerland, Mali, United States the America, United Kingdom, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, the Canary Islands, Mauritius, Comoros, Rwanda, Burundi, Eritrea, Kenya, and Niger. Raiz di Polon is, along with artists like Cesária Évora, an important cultural ambassador, transmitting Cape Verde's cultural heritage throughout the world through its dance, song, language, literature and theater.