

# Viver Brasil

## Study Guide

“irrepressible...Brazilian to the core” Los Angeles Times

“...an intoxicating foray into the exotic...pyrotechnic physicality” – Los Angeles Times

“Viver Brasil adds passion to a vibrant swirl of rhythms.” – Los Angeles Times

### COMPANY BIOGRAPHY

**VIVER BRASIL**, founded in Los Angeles in 1997 by Artistic Director Linda Yudin and Co-Director/Choreographer/Musician Luiz Badaró, Viver Brasil is an award winning dance company firmly rooted in the traditional and contemporary forms and techniques of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The company specializes in bringing to life the beautiful and complex stories of the orixa, African sacred energies that are the engine of Afro-Brazilian culture in addition to explosive samba, carnival and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance. Viver Brasil is committed to cultivating Afro-Brazilian dance and music traditions while extending their boundaries through concert dance, community outreach, and educational programs. In addition to training in L.A. with internationally renowned choreographer Rosangela Silvestre in her signature technique combining Orixá dances, gestures and symbols with a contemporary movement vocabulary, many company members make annual trips to Brazil to refine the company's repertoire, and to absorb and reflect the spirit and expression of Afro-Brazilian culture in Northeastern Brazil. The combination training of the traditional with the contemporary has diversified the company's palette, allowing them to innovate new ways to present Brazilian dance to U.S. and international audiences.

In the winter of 2009, Viver Brasil performed at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Brazilian Carnival at the Hollywood Palladium with the Nation Beat Band, the Afro-Latino Festival at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, and will perform at the California African American Museum, Celebrate Dance at the Alex Theatre and create its 7<sup>th</sup> premiere at the Ford Amphitheatre which will then travel to the Redlands Bowl in Redlands, CA and onto Guadalajara, Mexico's Book Fair in December. In the fall of 2008, Viver Brasil performed in the World Festival of Sacred Music at the Museum of Latin America Art in Long Beach, 18<sup>th</sup> Street Arts Center in Santa Monica and the Honoring the Sea event and once again shared the stage with guest artist and Candomblé griot, dancer and singer, Dona Cici of Salvador, Bahia. Viver Brasil was commissioned by the UCLA Fowler Museum to create a piece and a community procession for *Mama Wati: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diaspora* exhibit in April 2008. Guest artist and Candomblé priestess, Maria de Lourdes dos Santos from Salvador, Bahia also performed with the company. VB was awarded an Irvine Foundation/Dance USA Dance: Creation to Performance program grant for 2007-08 and received an Inter/Arts grant from the L.A. County Arts Commission in 2004 to bring distinguished Brazilian artist Nancy Souza e Silva aka Dona Cici (Pierre Verger Foundation) to

collaborate with the company in L.A. Viver Brasil was selected for the Lester Horton Dance Award in 2000 for outstanding achievement in a company performance for non-western dance. They were nominated for: a Brazilian Press Award for best representation of Brazilian dance in the U.S., and Lester Horton awards for best achievement in music, dance, costume design, female and male performance and company performance 2003–2007. In 2008, the company won a Lester Horton for best achievement in music for dance and the co-directors won the excellence in teaching award. The company received the Lester Horton Dance Award for best achievement in world dance for their 2009 performance of Feet on the Ground/Aiyê. Viver Brasil has received major support from the New England Foundation for the Arts/National Dance Project touring program for their 2006-07 tour and in 2009, the NDP Production Grant for the creation of *Alaafia*. The company also receives support from Alliance for California Traditional Arts Mentoring Program, from the L.A. County Arts Commission since 2003, from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department since 2006, plus three Durfee Foundation grants and from the Flourish Foundation. Corporate sponsors include: Heineken USA, AeroMexico, Varig and TAM Brazilian Airlines and from the generosity of individual and business donors. Viver Brasil also receives sponsorship from the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations with support from the Consulate General of Brazil in Los Angeles to bring Bahian artists to Los Angeles.

Since its inception, Viver Brasil's list of credits has grown impressively to include: Guadalajara's International Book Fair (2009), consistently sold out concerts in a 10 city tour of New Mexico including the Lensic and National Hispanic Cultural Center (2007); University of Oregon; Lincoln Center, Fort Collins, CO; Egyptian Theater, Ogden, Utah; capacity crowds at the Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood (2003–2009), World Festival of Sacred Music (2005, 2008), the Hollywood Bowl's Summer Sounds (2005) and with the Basement Jaxx (2005); Walt Disney Concert Hall with Pink Martini (2004); the World Dance and Music Festival in Chico, CA (2004), Paradise Performing Arts Center, Paradise, CA (2004); the Brazil-Africa Connection Festival at Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, FL (2002); Riverside Community College's World Dance Festival (2002); Santa Monica Festival (2001); the L.A. Dance Invitational (2001); the California Choreographers Festival (2001), the Getty Center Family Festival (2000-2001), and the World Music Festival/Brazil Nights at the Hollywood Bowl (1999).

The company is committed to increasing awareness of the rich history of Afro-Brazilian dance and music through performances and residencies in elementary and high schools, on college and university campuses and on the concert stage nationally and internationally.

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTORS**

**LINDA YUDIN**  
**Artistic Director,**  
**Co-Founder, Viver Brasil**

**Linda Yudin**, Founding Artistic Director, earned her MA in Dance (Ethnology) from UCLA in 1988, has devoted more than two decades to researching, performing and teaching Afro-Brazilian dance, embodied in Viver Brasil's innovative stage presentations. Yudin has lectured, taught, published, and performed Brazilian dance at colleges, universities, elementary, middle and high schools, academic conferences, and communities throughout the U.S., Brazil and South Africa. She is recipient of a 2012 Cultural Exchange International (CEI) fellowship from the city of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Along with Viver Brasil's co-founder Luiz Badaró, Yudin received the prestigious "excellence in teaching" award from the board of directors of Dance Resource Center of Greater L.A./Lester Horton Dance Awards 2009. Ms. Yudin is an adjunct faculty member at Santa Monica College since 1999 and proudly guest teaches Afro-Brazilian dance at the Pierre Verger Foundation Cultural Center in Salvador,

Bahia. She is equally proud to have as her principal Afro-Brazilian dance teachers, Raimundo B. dos Santos, a.k.a. Mestre King, VB co-founder Luiz Badaró, Rosangela Silvestre, Gilmar Sampaio, Joselita Moreira da Cruz Silva, Amelia Conrado, Nancy de Souza e Silva aka Dona Cici and Augusto Omolu.

She is the chair of the Los Angeles-Salvador sister city program. Ms. Yudin was also a consultant for WNET public television series, "Dancing", in the "New World, New Forms" segment. She was a keynote speaker at the University of Cape Town, South Africa's first international dance conference. Ms. Yudin appeared in Janet Jackson's ESCAPADE music video. The Los Angeles Times included Yudin among the "shakers and movers" in the Los Angeles dance community.

**LUIZ BADARÓ**  
**Co-Artistic Director,**  
**Co-Founder, Viver Brasil**

**Luiz Badaró**, critically acclaimed master dancer, choreographer, percussionist, and educator, was born in Salvador, Bahia, and 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 ... irrepensible ... Brazilian to the core." Badaró studied Afro-Brazilian dance with Raimundo Bispo dos Santos, AKA Mestre King, and Mercedes Batista; modern dance with Clyde Morgan; folkloric traditions with Emilia Biancardi; and Capoeira with the Mestre Bimba and Mestre Bandu. In 2009, he won a Lester Horton Dance Award for 'Outstanding Achievement in Music for Dance' for Viver Brasil's 2008 *So Moved/In Motion*. Along with co-founder Linda Yudin, Badaró received the prestigious "excellence in teaching" award from the board of directors of Dance Resource Center of Greater L.A./Lester Horton Dance Awards 2009.

## **Brazil's Geographic and Historical Facts:**

**Brazil** is the fifth largest population in the world. Located in Eastern South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean. Viver Brasil Dance Company's performance is based upon Afro-Brazilian dance and music traditions from the northeastern state of Bahia. Salvador is the capital city of Bahia.

**Brazil** has the fifth largest population in the world, approximately 148 million people.

**Brazil** is the largest country in South America.

**Brazil** is the only Latin American country that speaks Portuguese. Very often one hears people say that the language is very musical. It sounds very different than continental Portuguese, as it has been softened by the African and Indian influence.

**Brazilian** culture is a blend of many different cultures including indigenous people who have lived there for centuries, people of Portuguese descent, and people of African descent who brought as slaves primarily from West Africa to build Brazil.

**Brazil** is called the Lung of the World because of the Amazon area, where the world's largest rainforest is located.

**Brazil's** most well known sport is soccer and capoeira is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most well known martial art/dance/sport.

**Brazil's** industries include: production of ethanol as an alternative fuel source, textiles, shoes, petrochemicals, cement, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, other machinery and equipment.

**Brazil's** agricultural products are coffee, soybeans, wheat, rice, corn, sugar cane, cocoa, citrus; beef

## **The Performance**

### **(Contains narration explaining each component of the show)**

Brazilian culture is filled with dance and music. The people of Northeastern Brazil, from the state of Bahia keep alive the symbols of their traditional and contemporary culture. VBDC's performance demonstrates dance and music as from our show, *FEET ON THE GROUND*.

Brazil's African ancestors, the Yoruba, Fon and Angolan peoples, developed a belief system that held nature as their high power. They understood the necessity to respect and honor the relationship between nature and human beings and honored that important relationship by performing their stories.

**The performance begins with dances of the Orixá.** Orixá are elements of nature symbolically performed through rhythms, dances, songs, mythology and colorful costumes.

**Orixá** dances: Elements of nature expressed through movement, song, and Yoruba mythology

\*\*\***Ogum:** element of iron, warrior, Ogum's color is blue. Ogum's dance shows the actions of cutting as he opens the pathways. Ceremonial greeting: Ogun ye! Welcome Ogum!

Musical rhythm: Vassi[vah-see]

\*\*\***Oxum:** element of water. Colors are yellow and gold. Oxum's dance shows smoothness and sensuality. Her movements represent the undulating nature of water. Ceremonial greeting: Ora ye ye ô:/hail to the queen and mother.

Musical rhythm: Ijexa[ijasha]

\*\*\***Oya Yansan:** Oya Yansan is the element of air, the wind. Colors are earth red to bright Her dance demonstrates the movement of the wind and the relationship she has with past ancestors. Ceremonial greeting: Epa Hei

Musical rhythm: Ilu or Adaro[ah-dah-row]

**Oxossi:** Oxossi is the element of the hunt and the earth. Colors are green and light blue. His dance shows the actions of a hunter with a bow and arrow. Ceremonial greeting: Okê Oro: Honor the hunter

Musical rhythm: Agueré [ah-ge-rey]

**Xango:** Xango is the element of fire. Protects the thunder and lightning, big mountains and rocks. Colors are red and white. His dance shows how royal he is and that he carries himself as the champion warrior. Ceremonial greeting: Ka O Kabesiley[Kah-oh Kah be see-ley] May we see your majesty!

Musical rhythm: Ilu

### **Brazilian percussion instruments demonstration**

**Atabaques:** conga drum from a family of drums—rum-father drum (calls the orixa choreography; rumpi-mother and lei- child (both keep the timing for the orixa dances)

**Agogô:** double bell; accent drum

**Surdo:** bass drum; heartbeat of a samba band

**Repinique:** lead drum, tenor-like sound

**Timbau:** cone-shaped hand drum often used for parades; from the atabaque or conga family; light weight

**Pandeiro:** tambourine; produces sound effects, can be used as a solo instrument

**Berimbau:** musical bow is an ancient, single stringed instrument made from a curved wooden staff. Usually, a half gourd or other resonator is attached to the bow to amplify the sound and the string is struck with a small stick or bow. Additional sounds come from the use of a basket shaker and small stone to change and enhance the bow sound

**Maculelê:** Afro-Brazilian stick fighting dance said to have been practiced in the sugar cane fields. Sticks are called *grimas*. A dance that requires practice and skill and develops rhythm. Each dancer holds a pair of 14-20” sticks and the rhythm is danced in beats of four. Maculelê is accompanied by specific songs and drum rhythms called: conga, corrido or ijexa.

\*\*\*\***Capoeira:** A Brazilian martial art that is a reflection of the cultural and social integration of the diverse peoples—African, Portuguese and Indigenous, comprising modern-day Brazil. As a result of over 300 hundred years of slavery in Brazil, generations of enslaved Africans taken the Portuguese colonists from various cultures in Africa shared cultural customs, dances, rituals and fighting techniques. Capoeira was born in Brazil as an expression of resistance and as a method of spiritual and emotional empowerment. Through music and dance, slaves were able to conceal its combative purpose, while simultaneously illustrating the strength and beauty of cultural sharing. This traditional art form built on a foundation of resistance and resilience combines dance, percussion, song, ritual, fighting techniques and acrobatics. The capoeira game is a dialogue between players. Players must pay attention to rules and give answers back to the master and listen to the berimbau, the main instrument played in capoeira. In capoeira, one never says, "let's fight", one says, "let's play."

Its traditional form is called, Capoeira Angola. In this form, partners interact by crouching very low to the ground. Acrobatic movements were later added to the form that is now called, Capoeira Regional.

**Samba demonstration:** Samba is the most popular and versatile dance and music of Brazil. Two forms of samba performed

a. **Samba de Roda**[Circle samba]: Brazilian social and folkloric dance, traditionally danced in a circle. In performance, Viver Brasil opens the circle in a theatrical form to present the various ways in which samba can be danced.

b. \*\*\*\***Samba reggae:** contemporary carnival samba called samba reggae.

A contemporary style of dance and music created in Bahia's Carnival in the 1970s by Blocos Afro[Afro-Brazilian parading groups] The dance and music both blend ritual, folkloric and homegrown Bahian movements, sounds with a reggae beat and the choreographer's creativity. The streets of Salvador, Bahia blocos afro dancing and playing these joyful sounds and movements which honor Brazil's rich Afro-Brazilian history.

### **Question and Answer Session**

At the end of performances, students are encouraged to ask questions about the performance in a question and answer format. Recommended questions can be a part of your (the teacher) preparation for the performance.

Encouraged questions:

Favorite dances and why?

How is choreography created?

How are the musical compositions created?

Construction of costumes and accompanying designs and colors?

Why the company members perform barefoot?

How did the company members learn to play music and dance?

Allows the company to talk about its multi-ethnic make-up and that the company is comprised of Brazilian and non-Brazilians.

How much time we practice and prepare as a professional dance and music company?

How do the capoeiristas learn to do the various unique moves performed?