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August 25, 2006

**Performance work explores the many facets of fatherhood.
“The Fatherhood Project” premieres at Santa Clara University.**

SANTA CLARA, Calif. – August 25, 2006 – Who are fathers really? SCU Assistant Professor in Dance David J. Popalisky sets out to tackle this intriguing question using a unique combination of dance, juggling, original music, and interview excerpts in his new performance-work entitled “The Fatherhood Project”. Premiering September 22, 2006 at 8 p.m. in the Louis B. Mayer Theatre, with an additional 8 p.m. performance on Saturday, September 23, “The Fatherhood Project” features Popalisky, guest dancers, master juggler Rock Lerum, original music by composer True Rosaschi, and a special performance by Popalisky’s innovative “Dads Don’t Dance” group.

““The Fatherhood Project” grew from reflections about the apparently disconnected aspects of my identity –a male dancer, who pursued a dance career in contemporary dance, and a father of two boys,” explains Popalisky. “I wondered if non-dancer dads might not enjoy some of the affirmative and liberating aspects of dance that I find so essential in my own life.”

These sentiments originally spurred Popalisky to create the “Dads Don’t Dance (or do they?)” workshop that investigated the line between dance as a fresh vehicle for better understanding fatherhood, and fatherhood framed as dance. This group of non-dancing dads that included a geologist, a physics professor, a computer engineer, a graphic artist, and a high school teacher (all of whom will be performing in “The Fatherhood Project”) met weekly over several summers to participate in movement exercises, reflect on the current conceptions and expectations of fatherhood, and share their insights with one another.

Based on the tremendous enthusiasm of the workshop participants, Popalisky was inspired to create an entire performance that explores the identity of fatherhood in greater complexity. Using extensive interviews with a diverse group of fathers, sons, and daughters, he examined the multiplicity and commonality of the father-child relationship –uncovering how dads *move* through this role and *dance* their dynamic interactions with children.

While the pop-culture portrayal of fatherhood has evolved from the 1950’s “Father Knows Best” image to Homer Simpson ineptitude, “The Fatherhood Project” captures the many hats dads wear, from coach, to caregiver, to remote-control tyrant. Layering eloquent dance vignettes with spoken text, the performance comments on various aspects of fatherhood such as the ubiquitous bald dad, a daughter witnessing her father’s tears, and the devastation of a lost father-child relationship.

Blending commentary with dynamic sonic adventures, Rosaschi’s versatile score wonderfully realizes hours of dialogue on fatherhood between him and Popalisky. The two also collaborated on the highly successful performance work “Barred from Life”, which was performed in Chicago,

Milwaukee, and throughout California. A Santa Rosa native, Rosaschi's scores have been presented in the United States and in Europe.

Also working in collaboration with Popalisky on "The Fatherhood Project" is master juggler Rock Lerum. A teacher of circus arts and drama, Lerum has performed with SoVoSo, Tandy Beal, Clowns Without Borders, and Teatro Pachuco, and his theatrical juggling expertise imbues the performance with a whimsical air.

"Juggling is a recurring metaphor," explains Popalisky. "What is normalcy? What is competency in this lifelong juggling act?" Popalisky concludes, "Ultimately, 'The Fatherhood Project' celebrates the idea that success may simply mean accepting dropping the ball as part of juggling the role of fatherhood."

David Popalisky received an MFA in Choreography from Mills College and an MA in Theatre Arts/Dance Emphasis from San Jose State University. Most recently, Popalisky conceived and choreographed "Barred from Life" in collaboration with the Northern California Innocence Project, using dance, video, interview excerpts, and original music to explore wrongful conviction. In the past three years his "Busted Bunker" appeared at San Francisco's Cowell Theatre, he presented "Enter Softly, Cross Quickly" in San Francisco and San Jose, and he was commissioned to create "Flames of Prayer" for the Western Ballet Company. He has performed both his own work and with various companies throughout the United States, Korea, Japan, and Belize. Popalisky has taught dance internationally and throughout the United States, and currently serves as the Director of the Dance Program for the Department of Theatre and Dance at Santa Clara University.

In conjunction with "The Fatherhood Project", a photography exhibit of fathers and their children featuring the work of SCU Art Professor Renee Billingslea and recent SCU graduate Jennifer Jigour will be on display in the Mayer lobby beginning one hour prior to performances and after the show. Talkbacks led by Popalisky will follow each performance. Admission to "The Fatherhood Project" is free, and tickets are available at the door beginning one hour prior to performances. For more information, contact the Center of Performing Arts box office at 408/554-4015. This project was funded in part by a Santa Clara University Presidential Research grant, a Paul Locatelli, S.J. Faculty grant, the Santa Clara University Center for Multicultural Learning, and the Santa Clara University Center of Performing Arts. On the web at www.scu.edu/cpa.

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