

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

## Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Collaboration with SoHarlem For Costume Creation and Preservation

Company: Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company  
Venue: Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company  
Location: New York, NY

► [Share](#) | [Print](#) | [Download](#)



Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, an Asian American woman-led dance company, has been performing and touring for over 25 years. Artistic Director Nai-Ni Chen has created more than 90 dances, and some of the most popular pieces such as Raindrop (2003) and The Way of Five - Fire have been performed over 100 times locally and around the world. Historically, professional costume designers, including Karen Young, Anna-Alisa Belous, Olu-Orondava, Jon Can Coskunes, and Angel Tsai, produced the company's costumes. Despite the quality of their work, the athleticism of the performances results in sweat-drenched costumes with increasing wear and tear. Costume repair and maintenance is a constant challenge for a busy dance company. The loss of New York City's garment industry and many professional seamstresses has also impacted the dance community. Costume makers are increasingly difficult to find for smaller dance companies with finite budgets.

This Fall, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company will begin a unique partnership with SoHarlem, a social enterprise connecting Harlem residents to cultural industries' opportunities that help them achieve economic self-sufficiency. During the COVID pandemic, SoHarlem CEO/Founder Janet Rodriguez introduced Nai-Ni Chen to designer Javier Valencia and they collaborated on maintaining urgently needed costumes for the company's upcoming performances. Nai-Ni Chen is creating new work as the pandemic recedes, and she hopes to bring SoHarlem-designed and produced costumes to NY and NJ area stages. For SoHarlem, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company collaboration presents a unique opportunity to further their connection with NYC's diverse, creative cultural community, and to fill the void left by the rapidly disappearing garment industry. Currently, there are more than 500 dance organizations in the DanceNYC database, with over 1,000 dance makers based in the NYC area, many of whom have regular costume repair, maintenance and creation needs. In the future, SoHarlem hopes to play a significant role in supporting the city's dance industry.

### About SoHarlem:

SoHarlem's mission is to create equitable opportunities in Harlem as a Cultural Industries Incubator dedicated to artists and workforce development. Since our founding in 2014, we have played a key role in the transformation of the once desolate and decaying Manhattanville Factory District. The range of programs offered at SoHarlem have nurtured neighborhood creative artisans through addressing community needs, cohesion and well-being. Many of these artisans have since established their own enterprises. Despite the devastating impact of COVID in our community, SoHarlem's 2021 training programs are projected to connect a minimum of 20 under/unemployed people with cultural industry opportunities. SoHarlem occupies a 5,000 square foot working plant in the Mink Building a 1920s building, located at Amsterdam Avenue and 127th Street. With high ceilings, abundant natural light, three eight-foot cutting tables, 14 sewing machines and other industrial equipment, it has proven to be an unparalleled resource for artists, trainees and the community.

### About Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company:

"Chen's phrases, part exoskeletal rigidity, part boneless grace, embodied an epic dignity." - Village Voice

Choreographer/Dancer, Nai-Ni Chen, is a unique artist whose work crosses cultural boundaries. Each of her dances reflect her personal vision as an immigrant and an American female artist with deep roots in the Asian culture. From this very personal perspective, she creates new works that reflect current issues with global influences. Many of her works have been developed in collaboration with renowned artists such as the Ahn Trio, Glen Velez, Joan La Barbara, Myung Hee Cho, Karen Young, and Bei Dao, among others. Bridging the grace of Asian elegance and American dynamism, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is a premier provider of innovative cultural experiences that reflect the inspiring hope and energy of the immigrant's journey. The company's ground-breaking works have focused on themes from ancient legends that reflect issues of the present time to purely abstract, contemporary dances influenced by the mix of cultures Nai-Ni Chen experiences in New

York. An Asian American company that celebrates cross-cultural experience, the Company's productions naturally bring forth issues of identity, authenticity, and equality. The Company has presented at some of the most prestigious concert halls such as New York's Joyce Theater and Lincoln Center, and the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center in Florida. The Company appears annually at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Queens College, the College of Staten Island and on Ellis Island. Internationally, the Company has presented at international festivals including Open Look Festival in Russia, the Silesian International Contemporary Dance Festival, the Konfrontations International Festival in Poland, the Chang Mu International Dance Festival in Korea, the Meet in Beijing International Arts Festival in China, and the Tamaulipas International Arts Festival in Mexico. The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company has received more than 20 awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and numerous Citations of Excellence and grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Advancing dance education, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is currently in residence at New Jersey City University pioneering a program with the University's A Harry Moore Laboratory School teaching dance to urban children with disabilities. For additional Company information, visit their website, [www.nainichen.org](http://www.nainichen.org); write to Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, P.O. Box 1121, Fort Lee, NJ 07024; or call (800) 650- 0246.

---

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company  
75 Broad St c, o Pentacle, NY 10004  
New York, NY, 10004  
6467654773  
<https://www.nainichen.org/>

Schedule  
October 27, 2021: 8:00pm

---

[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)