Monday, July 27, 2020

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company The Bridge: A Virtual Dance Institute of boundary-breaking dance classes and experiences

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

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

New York - In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is keeping its dancers in shape by conducting regular Company Classes and rehearsals online from Nai-Ni and Company dancer's living rooms using Zoom while inviting intermediate/advanced level dancers around the world to join the class at no cost. These classes have received overwhelmingly positive reception with more than 300 registrants. The Company took 3 weeks off in July. On July 20th, Nai-Ni Chen re-launched the classes and renamed the program: The Bridge. The new title signifies the Company's focus on supporting artists of color whose practices are embedded in the community and are focused on advancing the art of dance. The mission is, through cyberspace, to provide the physical experience in the boundary-breaking dances from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People of Color) Community. Interested dancers can join the class by registering on Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's website: http://nainichen.org/company-class.

As a virtual dance institute, The Bridge will invite world renowned as well as up and coming dancers and choreographer to come to guest teach the Company class. Advanced/Intermediate level professional or pre-professional dancers who are looking to explore beyond their own boundaries and looking for new dance experiences are encouraged to participate. The core program is based on Nai-Ni Chen's Kinetic Spiral, which is a cross-cultural dance program that integrates the Chinese martial arts philosophy in TaiChi with contemporary dance practices she studied in America. Guest artists will cover a wide range of folk and classical dance styles. Dancers are encouraged to take the class daily.

The Bridge

Classes are as follows:

Week of 7/27/2020

Monday Greta Campo (Kinetic Spiral)
Tuesday Melissa Roxey (Ballet)
Wednesday Nai-Ni Chen (Kinetic Spiral)
Thursday Karen Love (West African)
Friday Rei Akazawa-Smith (Modern - Taylor)

Greta Campo is the Associate Artistic Director of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, She began her dance training in her native Milan at the Carcano Theater, where she was first introduced to Martha Graham's work. She performed with the Martha Graham Dance Company in their 2012 New York Season and later on their international tour. Greta is a recipient of the 2016 Rising Star Award from the Fini Dance Festival.

Melissa Roxey began her studies with The Royal Academy of Dance at five years of age. Before beginning her professional career at age 17, she trained at The School of American Ballet, North Carolina School of the Arts, The Joffrey Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and with renowned teacher Maggie Black. Melissa danced with American Repertory Ballet as a soloist, then as a principal with Dayton Ballet Company. She has danced the roles of Sugar Plum Fairy in The Nutcracker and Odile in Swan Lake. Melissa has worked with such prominent choreographers as Septime Webre, Marjorie Mussman, Dermot Burke, Bill Craty, Suki Schorer, Christian Holder, Patricia McBride, and Mark Diamond. She has also served on the faculty of many ballet schools around the country. Melissa is co-founder and former dance director of

Wheels in Motion, which was part of the Arts Access Program of Matheny Medical and Educational Center, Peapack. In addition, for more than 16 years she has worked with Artists in Residence, bringing the art of dance to area schools. Her extensive experience makes her an effective instructor in the Wheels and Bodies in Motion program. She is currently directing Roxy Ballet with her husband Mark.

Karen Love earned her MFA from New York University Tisch School of the Arts and her B.F.A. from Montclair State University. Love received her Yoga Certification (300hour) and Pilates Mat Certification in 2007. Ms. Love is a former faculty member in the Junior Division at The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, former Visiting Artist in Residence at Kent State University and a former adjunct professor at Montclair State University. In 2006, Love created Wofabe African Dance & Drum Festival, the only African dance and drum festival in the state of New Jersey. Love is a Co-Chair for the NJPAC Dance Advisory Committee, a proud board member of DanceNJ, and a member of NDEO. September 2020, Love will begin her Nineteenth year as a dance educator in the Hillside Public School District.

Rei Akazawa-Smith was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, where she began her ballet training in the technique of Royal Academy of Dance under the direction of Yuko Kojima. She graduated cum laude with a B.F.A. in Dance from Marymount Manhattan College, receiving the Gold Key for Excellence in 2009. While a student there, she assisted in teaching and demonstrating Graham Technique Master Classes for Miki Orihara and Alessandra Prosperi. She has danced with H.T. Chen and Dancers, Douglas Dunn and Dancers, and played the role of Eliza in The King and I at Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia. She participated in The Taylor School Summer Intensive in 2012 and was asked to join Taylor 2 immediately afterward. Since joining the company, she has also appeared with Paul Taylor Dance Company.

About Nai-Ni Chen

Hailed as a Spiritual Choreographer by Dance Magazine and recipient of multiple choreographic fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Nai-Ni Chen has been creating dances professionally for over thirty years in the United States. She has built a diverse repertory of over 80 original works and toured to major venues in the US and international contemporary dance festivals in 12 countries. She will be teaching her signature technique KINETIC SPIRAL which is a blend of the dynamic, ever-evolving spirit of contemporary dance and the grace and splendor of the Chinese artistic traditions.

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

A blossom of color, energy and motion, "like endlessly proliferating forces of cosmic energy," says the New York Times.

About the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

Bringing the dynamic freedom of American modern dance together with the elegant splendor of Asian art, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is one of the most visible Asian American dance companies in America. Ms. Chen's unique choreography transports audiences beyond cultural boundaries to the common ground between tradition and innovation, discipline and freedom, and form and spirit.

Since its inception in 1988, the company has earned a broad base of public support and has toured extensively to major performing arts centers throughout more than thirty states. Presented by some of the most prestigious concert halls in the United States, from the Joyce Theater in New York to the Ordway Center in Minnesota and the Cerritos Center in California, the Company has mounted more than twenty national tours and nine tours abroad. Ms. Chen's work has been presented by such acclaimed international festivals as the Silesian International Contemporary Dance Festival and the Konfrontations International Dance Festival, both in Poland, the Chang Mu International Arts Festival in Korea and the Meet in Beijing International Arts Festival. The Company was also honored by a distinctive grant award from both the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities and the Department of State to represent the United States in a seven-city tour arranged by the Tamaulipas International Arts Festival in Mexico. Also, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company has the unique honor of having received more than fifteen awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and numerous Citations of Excellence and grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

In addition to its extensive season of touring and performing, the company has developed Arts in Education residency programs in school districts to bring culture and arts into educational settings. It's colorful and engaging in-school assembly program "The Art of Chinese Dance" has been presented in hundreds of schools in NJ, NY, CT and PA, reaching hundreds of thousands of youth. The Company is currently in-residence at New Jersey City University and assisting

NJCU in the development of a new BFA in Dance.

For additional Company information, visit www.nainichen.org; write to Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, P.O. Box 1121, Fort Lee, NJ 07024; or call (800) 650-0246.

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