

2017 WAVE RISING SERIES

Artists Bio

Program B: Sat, July 8, 9PM & Sun, July 9, 4PM



PROGRAM B: VADCO/Valerie Alpert Dance Company | Mei Yamanaka | Caitlin Cullen Dance | Kaoru Ikeda/MoustacheCat Dance

VADCO/Valerie Alpert Dance Company (Until Home)

Valerie Alpert Dance Company produces high-quality works that engage communities, both local and global, in the relevance of contemporary dance, providing audiences of all ages with dances that challenge the imagination. VADCO continually advances dance through innovative collaboration with artists of all disciplines, including composers and animators. VADCO has touched thousands of people with powerful dance works. Ms. Alpert explains: *"Until Home"* was inspired by my fascination with "walking palms" (*Socratea exorrhiza*), rainforest trees with unique root systems that allow these trees to move toward sunlight, based upon changing climate. I was struck by the parallels of trees virtually walking in order to survive, and the current plight of Syrian refugees. Population displacements have occurred throughout history, and yet I marvel at man's perseverance to migrate long distances to find a safe home. The determination to survive is the basis of this work.

Mei Yamanaka (now now)

Mei Yamanaka, a dancer and choreographer originally from Tokyo, relocated to New York in 2008. Since that time, she has worked with Tiffany Mills Company, Jennifer Archibald, Mark Dendy. She also has worked with Dai Jian, Katy Pyle, Mana Kawamura, Palissimo, Oui Danse, Malcolm Low, Jenni Hong, Emily Berry and White Wave Young Soon Kim Dance Company among others. Ms. Yamanaka's choreography has been featured, among many others, at Fresh Tracks, Movement Research at Judson Church, Performance Mix Festival, New Steps, Dumbo Dance Festival, COLLABOFEST, and GAP Presents | Shared Space.

Misuzu Hara, also from Japan, began her training in classical ballet at age 3, and in modern jazz dance as a teen. She continued her studies at Showa Academy of Music College in Japan, where she majored in classical ballet. Upon graduation, Ms. Hara taught ballet and dance technique in high schools, while at the same time, performed across Japan. After relocating to New York in 2009, Misuzu has been working with Jennifer Archibald, OUI Danse, Jenni Hong Dance, and the Mark Morris Dance Group, WHITE WAVE Young Soon Kim Dance, Nathan Trice, Oliver Steele, and Max Stone.

Caitlin Cullen Dance (Fantasy)

Prior to Caitlin Cullen Dance official debut in January 2017, Caitlin's independent work had been presented at the Harlem Repertoire Theatre, Triskelion Arts, The Tank NYC, 92nd St. Y, University of Oklahoma, Cherokee Mountainside Theater, the American Dance Festival, Rose Wagner Theatre, and the Boise District Coffee House.

Ms. Cullen constructs movement with rich physicality, creating a sense of well-being by delving deeply into

life's simple beauties. Her pieces hone in on a sensitivity to every-day interactions, keeping the performers keenly responsive to space with lushness and abandon. Though our stories, the artists enlist the audience's collaboration in finding open discussion of meaningful ideals. In this new work, the dancers scrutinize their most intimate memories and probe how we each interact with our surroundings.

Kaoru Ikeda/MoustacheCat Dance (Freedom isn't Free)

Kaoru Ikeda founded MoustacheCat Dance in 2015 to reach beyond people's differences, and to cross borders in the fight against bigotry. Ms. Ikeda, dancer, choreographer, and artistic director at MoustacheCat Dance and "Dancing Activist," developed "Freedom isn't Free" to address prejudice beginning with Japanese-American internment during World War II, then delving into current bias against people of different ethnicities and religions. Kaoru graduated from Nihon University College of Arts (Japan), BA in Dance, and NYU Tisch School of the Arts with an MFA in Dance. She has performed, choreographed, and taught a broad range of dance from classic ballet to Butoh to modern dance. Her work has taken her to the U.S, Japan, South Korea, and Mexico, where she was artist-in-residence in 2012, then toured in 2016. Her international experiences have taught her that dance can cross any border and break through cultural barriers to speak to all people, no matter how different our superficialities.

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