

WALT DISNEY HALL PERFORMANCE PUTS LOW-INCOME YOUTH CENTER STAGE

LOS ANGELES, California (October 2, 2013) – The Wooden Floor, one of the nation’s most cutting-edge arts-for-youth organizations, will present three contemporary dance works January 17-18, 2014 at the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater (REDCAT) at Walt Disney Hall, a venue notable for presenting established and influential artists from around the world.

The Wooden Floor uniquely partners ground-breaking choreographers with low-income youth from Southern California to produce work that is original, inventive, and idiosyncratic. It’s performances break down ethnic, gender, and age stereotypes about who can inspire, create, perform, and appreciate art. “We have seen that through collaboration with thoughtful and provocative choreographers, these young people become the most fascinating performers. They bring the stark tenderness of youth with the wisdom of lives lived with premature challenges,” said Melanie Ríos Glaser, Artistic Director and Co-CEO of The Wooden Floor.

Unlike any collaboration of its kind, The Wooden Floor’s performances transcend dance on the stage to a movement within our community, resulting in a powerful experience for both the audience and the dancers alike. Performance opportunities along with dance education are the core transformational elements through which youth change the way they think about themselves and aspire beyond the grip of the poverty cycle. Audiences of The Wooden Floor are profoundly moved by the level of art performed and the journey these dancers have made from The Wooden Floor to Walt Disney Hall. This will be the third time The Wooden Floor has showcased its pioneering work at REDCAT, Southern California’s leading theatre in new and innovative arts.

“REDCAT is a huge personal challenge. It’s way different than all the performances I’ve done before with The Wooden Floor. It’s the big leagues, and it makes me dance that much harder,” said 16-year-old Roland Acosta, a student of The Wooden Floor since 2005. The Wooden Floor’s young artists bring their life experiences, perspectives, and pride to the art they create. In turn, they bring new creative energy, knowledge, and skills back to their families, schools, and communities. The students emerge from their decade-long tenures with the organization with the tools and experience – in problem-solving, collaboration and creative thinking – to become leaders in society. **It is highly anticipated that in the fall of 2014, The Wooden Floor will celebrate the 10th consecutive year in which 100 percent of graduates from the organization will have graduated high school on-time and enrolled in college**, exceeding the national average for their peers threefold. Most are the first in their family to enter higher education.

Event Information

The Wooden Floor at REDCAT

January 17-18, 2014, at 8:30pm

Tickets are available at www.REDCAT.org

\$20 General Admission and \$10 for students

ABOUT THE DANCES

Too

By Choreographer Susan Rethorst [[link to her website](#)]

Grounded in 23 individual solos, *Too* uses radical juxtaposition of both movement and sound. Ranging from spooky to saucy, but never earnest, the movement is pulled from the everyday and speaks of the beauty in the mundane, right here, right now. In creating the solos for each dancer involved in *Too*, Rehearsal Assistant Karinne Keithley Syers and I looked for where we could ‘meet’ each participant, to find their strengths, humor, and power. These are scattered through the piece, framed by groupings that range from contained and eerie to near chaos. I never begin making work from a specific intention. I take images to the dancers and respond to what arises to enter into a dialogue with the piece as it takes on life. *Too* became ‘about’ its dancers, their energy and the contexts I could create for it and out of it. I invited the arbitrary, the ridiculous, the exaggerated, the uncool.

Time-lapse Alphabet

By Choreographer Ivy Baldwin [[link to www.ivybaldwindance.org](http://www.ivybaldwindance.org)]

Collaborating closely with my cast, I choreographed a new dance that is sculptural and exuberant, regal and lonely, chaotic and contemplative. Ornate hand and arm dances, inspired by Renaissance architecture, exist in the same world as underwater slow-motion mirroring, galloping herds, thrashing couples, and slumping wanderers. Utilizing this multi-talented cast, Minneapolis-based sound designer Justin Jones creates an original score that includes recordings of the cast playing various instruments, singing, and creating sound effects with their voices and bodies.

True or False: I was born in the Netherlands

By Choreographer Melanie Ríos Glaser [link to http://www.thewoodenfloor.org/artistic_director/]

The intent of *True or False: I was born in the Netherlands* was to capture snippets of the youth as I saw and heard them when they were “being themselves” at The Wooden Floor. I was interested in getting to know them again and learning what it was like to walk in their shoes. We sang, we made noises, we danced, but mostly we talked. Through this process we created material that was later deconstructed and re-assembled to show some of the nuance of their lives, teasing out how pop culture has influenced their walk, their talk, and their song. The art we make at The Wooden Floor usually involves an intense process of discovery and risk, often unveiling difficult themes. From those themes social commentary emerged on the stereotypes that affect minority youth. The True or False statements in the piece crystallized the intent of the work; they challenge possible assumptions, they reveal information while protecting the speakers, and they can deliver messages that will hopefully engage the viewer in having to access an internal dialogue in regards to the issues raised. My job will be done if we chip away at some of those stereotypes and replace them with what is true about the young people in this work: they are audacious, they are funny, and they are full of promise.

About the Choreographers

Ivy Baldwin is based in New York City and the founder of Ivy Baldwin Dance. Ivy has received commissions from New York Live Arts, The Chocolate Factory, Dance Theater Workshop, Dixon Place, and Dance New Amsterdam. Her work has also been presented by Lincoln Center Out of Doors, New Museum, Movement Research, Symphony Space, and La MaMa E.T.C. and has toured internationally including: Tanz im August (Germany) and Dans Contemporan Festival (Romania). Ivy has been recognized with various awards including: Jerome Foundation, Tell Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Trust for Mutual Understanding, and fellowships from the Bogliasco Foundation (Italy), ArtistNe(s)t (Romania), Sugar Salon (NYC), and the Bessie Schönberg Fellowship at The Yard. Ivy is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and NYU Tisch School of the Arts MFA program.

Susan Rethorst has steadily created dances in New York City since 1975. Since 1995, Susan has been dividing her time between NYC and Europe, where she has developed post-graduate courses for Dansens Hus in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Firkin Crane in Cork, Ireland. She has, in collaboration with three others, inaugurated a Masters in Choreography for the Amsterdam School of the Arts. Susan’s work has been presented both nationally and internationally and she has been the recipient of many grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Creative Artist’s Public Service Program, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, and a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Susan was among the first to receive a BESSIE Award for Outstanding Achievement in 1985 and in 2010, was the recipient of the prestigious Alpert Award.

Melanie Ríos Glaser currently serves as the Artistic Director and Co- CEO of The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana, California. Born and raised in Guatemala, she received her BFA from the Juilliard School, was named a Kennedy Center Fellow, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Paris. She has been involved with experimental dance, improvisation, and performance for twenty years, and her work has been widely presented internationally. She enjoys curating and volunteering expertise on issues related to nonprofit organizations.

ABOUT THE WOODEN FLOOR

At The Wooden Floor, we use dance as a vehicle for transformation in the students we serve because there is so much learning involved. Creativity and expression are catalysts for positive change through the process of inventive art-making. When these young artists are applauded by an audience, they know that they are seen, that they matter. Our long-term artistic immersion is integrated with mentoring, comprehensive academic support, college readiness, and family support services to provide a solid platform for advancement and success. Since 2005, 100 percent of The Wooden Floor’s young artists have graduated from high school on-time and pursued higher education. This is about three-times the national average for their socioeconomic peers. **Find out more online at www.TheWoodenFloor.org**