

CELEBRATED CHOREOGRAPHER JOHN HEGINBOTHAM TO CO-CREATE DANCE WITH LOW-INCOME YOUTH

Santa Ana, Calif. (December 1, 2014) – “The mind of John Heginbotham is a magical place,” according to the New Yorker Magazine. As Heginbotham takes up several residencies at **The Wooden Floor**, a free arts-based youth development organization for 375 low-income youth, dancers will experience this first-hand and create magic of their own. This residency continues the organization’s award-winning tradition of partnering its low-income youth with leading contemporary dance choreographers from around the nation to co-create progressive new dance works at its **32nd Annual Concert, May 28-30, 2015**, at the **Irvine Barclay Theatre**.

Long known for being an acclaimed member of the Mark Morris Dance Group from 1998-2012, Heginbotham also founded his own dance company, Dance Heginbotham in 2011. At about the same time, he was hand-picked by Mikhail Baryshnikov for a residency at the Baryshnikov Arts Center. In a New York Times article, Heginbotham spoke of the experience, “I remember watching ‘Dance in America.’ So now that’s the person who is the reason that I have all of these opportunities? How is that possible? It is surreal and beautiful, and I appreciate it so much.” Heginbotham has thus far completed two residencies at the space, and capped off a string of prestigious commissions, including choreography in 2013 for Isaac Mizrahi’s *Peter & the Wolf* for the Guggenheim Museum’s Works & Process series, which will be reprised this December, just prior to Heginbotham’s first residency at The Wooden Floor. In June of 2014, he was awarded the prestigious Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award in recognition of his unique choreographic vision and promise.

This is Heginbotham’s third commission to co-create works with the dancers of The Wooden Floor. The organization’s approach to art-making, which is becoming increasingly known across the country, encourages its youth to think differently about themselves and inspires the audience to challenge assumptions about who can create great art. Heginbotham spoke about his work with The Wooden Floor in a 2011 interview with KUSC, “The key is that we just try to do the best dance that we can. We approach it like “let’s make a great dance and perform it really well” and then there are a lot of flowers that blossom from that, that actually have nothing to do with the dance itself.” The Wooden Floor’s Artistic Director and Co-CEO, Melanie Ríos Glaser explains that the Annual Concert process is often cited by Alumni of The Wooden Floor as among their most profound experiences. “The result is powerful and has the ability to encourage our youth to think differently about themselves, to push through obstacles and emerge as strong and confident leaders. Co-creating dance works with the nation’s leading choreographers year-after-year, sometimes for up to a decade, shows them their value and the power of their voice. They in turn take those positive feelings and become change agents within their community,” she says. Ríos Glaser, a Fulbright Scholar and Kennedy Center Fellow, and Faye Driscoll, a Bessie Award Winner and Guggenheim Fellow, round out the trio of choreographers creating works with the dancers of The Wooden Floor for the 32nd Annual Concert.

John Heginbotham graduated from The Juilliard School in 1993 with a BFA in Dance, and was awarded the Martha Hill Prize for Sustained Achievement in Dance. He has taught throughout the US and abroad and currently teaches at Princeton University and Dartmouth College. He is a founding teacher of Dance for PD®, an ongoing collaboration between the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Brooklyn Parkinson Group.

Event Details

Name: The Wooden Floor’s 32nd Annual Concert

When: May 28-30, 2015 – Performances 8pm nightly, with a 2:30pm matinee performance on May 30

Where: Irvine Barclay Theatre - 4242 Campus Drive in Irvine

Tickets: \$20 General Seating; \$50 Benefit Seating – Available starting April 1 at 949.854.4646 and www.TheWoodenFloor.org

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 seniors have graduated from high school on-time and immediately enrolled in higher education.** This is about three-times the national average for their socioeconomic peers. **Find out more online at www.TheWoodenFloor.org**