

## The Wooden Floor's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Concert Continues to Change the Lives of Under-served Youth with Growing Roster of Award-Winning Artists

Santa Ana, Calif. (March 4, 2014) – **The Wooden Floor**, an arts-based youth development organization, will continue its 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 **31<sup>st</sup> Annual Concert, May 29-31, 2014**, at the **Irvine Barclay Theatre**. This approach to art-making, for which The Wooden Floor 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 and the impact of that on our community.

The adventuresome performances, a mainstay of Orange County's contemporary dance calendar, will feature reprisals of **John Heginbotham's** uplifting *Promenade* and **Melanie Ríos Glaser's** energetic *Billowing Bubbles/REMIX*, in addition to two world premieres of commissioned work by respected New York choreographers **Yanira Castro** and **Jeanine Durning**. Other artistic collaborators include **James F. Ingalls**, prolific lighting designer from **New York's Metropolitan Opera**, and costume designer **Jennifer Vaughan**, known for her work in past Olympic Games.

"We value creation over imitation," notes The Wooden Floor's **Executive Director and Co-CEO Dawn S. Reese**. "The properties of our dance aesthetic center upon innovation, creativity, teamwork, self-sufficiency, and courage. These same properties directly relate to developing the education and life skills that help each student have the confidence to move their lives forward." Exposure to these high-caliber artists, in addition to The Wooden Floor's year-round dance education, academic, college preparatory, and family service programs, will result in **the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that 100% of its seniors graduate high school on time and enroll in higher education**.

"We encourage everyone to leave their expectations at the door and come out to experience the power of these performances. They are not only breaking down stereotypes of who can contribute to the genre of contemporary dance, but they also allow you to see firsthand the striking empowerment in our students as they strive toward breaking the cycle of poverty," adds **Melanie Ríos Glaser, Artistic Director and Co-CEO** of The Wooden Floor.

### About the Choreographers

**Yanira Castro** is a Puerto-Rican born and Brooklyn-based director/choreographer that collaborates with a core group of performers and designers on individual projects under the name **a canary torsi**. She and her collaborators work in a multiplicity of spaces: from warehouses, restrooms, and gardens, to the stage, embedding dances within visual and audio installations where the audience's presence dramatically impacts the work. Her work has been presented in New York and has toured nationally and internationally. Castro and her team for *Dark Horse/Black Forest* won a 2009 NY Dance & Performance (aka Bessie) Award for the performance of that project at The Gershwin Hotel, and their latest work has been nominated for Outstanding Production in 2013.

**Jeanine Durning** is a dance artist working broadly in the fields of choreography and performance. A native New Yorker, Durning has been based in Brooklyn for the past 15 years. She began performing her solo works in 1998. Since 2002, she has created 15 original works, commissioned by companies, independent performers and Universities, in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Texas, Washington, DC, Maryland, California, The Netherlands, and the UK. In 2006, Durning was the recipient of The NYFA Award for Choreography and in 2007, The Alpert Award for Choreography. Jeanine has been on the Artist's Advisory Board of Danspace Project since 2003.

**John Heginbotham** is a rising New York-based choreographer and dances with Mark Morris Dance group and is a graduate of the Juilliard School. John has collaborated with such organizations as Pilobolus Dance Theater, The Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, Oasis Theater, and the Museum of Modern Art. Most recently, he created *throwaway* set to the music of the legendary French electronica duo, Daft Punk, winning honors in the *Festival Twenty Ten* DanceNOW Challenge (Dance Theater Workshop).

**Melanie Ríos Glaser** serves as the Artistic Director & Co-CEO for The Wooden Floor. Born and raised in Guatemala, Melanie is a movement artist, curator and choreographer who received her BFA from the Juilliard School in 1994, was named a Kennedy Center Fellow in 1998, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Europe from 2003-2004. Melanie has created more than 30 pieces for various dance companies, universities, The Wooden Floor and her own Mosquito Dance Company. Her solo and group work has been presented internationally. As a dance educator for over sixteen years, Melanie has a marked interest in dance improvisation, contact improvisation and dance composition. Melanie enjoys volunteering as a consultant for other nonprofits on issues of nonprofit management, governance, and programming.

## **Event Details**

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**Name:** The Wooden Floor's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Concert

**When:** May 29 - 31, 2014 – Performances 8pm nightly, with a 2:30pm matinee performance on May 31

**Where:** Irvine Barclay Theatre - 4242 Campus Drive in Irvine

**Tickets:** \$20 General Seating; \$50 Benefit Seating – Available at 949.854.4646 and [www.TheWoodenFloor.org](http://www.TheWoodenFloor.org)

## **About The Wooden Floor**

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**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 pursued higher education. This is about three-times the national average for their socioeconomic peers. **Find out more online at [www.TheWoodenFloor.org](http://www.TheWoodenFloor.org)**