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PRESS RELEASE JANUARY 16, 2014

Next Stage & Fresh Works: Dance residency showings feature brand new works by local and international choreographers

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KST is a platform for audiences to experience new ideas and new ways of making art. As incubators of new works by emerging artists, KST is proud to present works made during our residency programs. KST residencies for local and national artists, such as current Next Stage artists-in-residence **Gia T. Cacalano** (Pittsburgh) and **Mana Kawamura** (NYC/Japan), create a forum for exploring new ideas and taking risks.

“We’re known for great dance, and this season exemplifies our commitment to supporting great dancers,” says Executive Director Janera Solomon. “KST’s spring season showcases so many new talents to watch. This is your chance to see their work first and meet the choreographers and ask them questions while the work is fresh and new.”

This season, KST welcomes back former artists-in-residence Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project and Sidra Bell Dance New York. During Baker & Tarpaga’s residency at KST in 2011, they worked on *Beautiful Struggle*, which will have its Pittsburgh premiere at 8 p.m. February 21–22 at KST. Bell’s *garment*, which the internationally acclaimed choreographer developed during a residency at The Alloy Studios, will give its world premiere performance at 8 p.m. on March 7–8.

With this season serving as a homecoming of sorts for previous artists-in-residence, it’s only fitting that KST’s current artists-in-residence kick things off. First up is a showing for the **Next Stage Dance Residency**, established in 2009, at 8 p.m. on February 1 at The Alloy Studios, 5530 Penn Ave.

“This season’s Next Stage artists Gia T. Cacalano and Mana Kawamura reflect what we find most exciting and important about dance today and we are pleased to provide a platform for their work,” says Solomon.

Presented as a work in progress, Cacalano’s new ensemble work will blend choreography with sections of improvised material.

Several dancers in the Pittsburgh community asked Cacalano to make a work with local dancers. “I thought this would be an enormous challenge in regard to the variety and range of technical, improvisational, and performance abilities I may source,” she says. Using social media, she invited those with an interest and availability during the designated practice time to contact her and she made her selec-

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Clockwise from top left: Mana Kawamura (R) with Mei Yamanaka (L) at newMoves 2013; Gia T. Cacalano at newMoves 2013; and Alan Obuzor.



tions from there. “The dancers are all incredibly different in aesthetic styles, experience, and technical and performance qualities. Still, I have not been disappointed.”

This working group, GIA T. PRESENTS “frameworks,” features five professional Pittsburgh dancers who have performed with Dance Alloy, August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble, Labco, and Pittsburgh Theater Company; this group should not be confused with Cacalano’s ongoing international improvisational ensemble “Gia T. Presents.”

“The themes and concepts are open to change as I change,” she says. “The world around me changes and my experiences change.”

Mana Kawamura says her work features two female dancers and one male dancer and explores “human relationships outside of love, friends, enemies, or family.”

Kawamura previously performed in newMoves Contemporary Dance Festival at KST in 2011 and 2013.

Those who attend the Next Stage performances will receive 50 percent off admission to the **Fresh Works** residency showing featuring artist in residence **Alan Obuzor** and vocalist **Anqwenique Wingfield** at 8 p.m. on February 7 at The Alloy Studios. Fresh Works is a creative laboratory for Pittsburgh-based artists who seek to make connections between dance and the rest of the world. Lead artists are given 80 hours at The Alloy Studios to explore cross-genre collaborations. The program culminates with a performance during Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn.

About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh’s East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professional equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater’s Gallery of Stars. The building, opening in 1914, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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