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MAHEA UCHIYAMA CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DANCE IN BERKELEY CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH PERFORMANCE AND OPEN HOUSE IN SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 29 PERFORMANCE FEATURES WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCES AT VALLEY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN OAKLAND

Berkeley, CA, June 12, 2018 – One of the Bay Area’s most respected and long-standing dance institutions--the Mahea Uchiyama Center for International Dance (MUCID)—will celebrate 25 years with world premiere performances of new hula, and ori Tahiti, as well as kathak, Zimbabwean, Middle Eastern and devotional whirling dance in a performance and open house this September. The performance will be given on Saturday, September 29, at 8 pm at the Valley Center for the Performing Arts at Holy Names University in Oakland. The evening will feature premieres of new dance works choreographed to original music from MUCID founder, artistic director and kumu hula Mahea Uchiyama’s upcoming CD, *Pasifika*, a Tahitian dance suite performed by members of the MUCID halau and performances by guest artists. The public is also invited to an open house on Friday, September 21st, at MUCID in Berkeley featuring rehearsals and preparation for the concert. The Center is located at 729 Heinz Avenue Tickets for the 25th anniversary performance on September 29th go on sale August 20 and are priced \$30 - \$45 and may be purchased at www.centerforinternationaldance.org .

The 25th anniversary season will kick off with a four-hour benefit cruise on San Francisco Bay on the yacht Eden on Saturday, July 7. The cruise will convene at Emeryville Marina by 4:30pm and return by 8:30pm. In addition to spectacular views of San Francisco Bay, the event will include drinks and appetizers, and features live music by Hoku Award-winner Patrick Landeza with hula by Hālau Ka Ua Tuahine. Minimum donation is \$200. For information, visit www.centerforinternationaldance.org .

“We hold that through exploring that which we are drawn to in depth, we can learn about ourselves, connecting more deeply with who we truly are as well as with others from different cultures.” Says Mahea Uchiyama. “ The work of our dance

center is to create a refuge for our diverse community to have a welcoming place to connect with each other. Our 25th Anniversary Concert will showcase what can happen when we convene in an atmosphere of acceptance, support and goodwill.

About MUCID

Since Mahea Uchiyama founded MUCID in 1993, it has been known as the Center “where the world comes to dance.” Her vision has provided a place where dancers of all abilities take part in multicultural dance experience through traditional training, lecture, demonstrations, performance opportunities and workshops with master teachers. The Center approaches dance as a manifestation of the human spirit, rather than merely a collection of movements, and artists are encouraged to explore and celebrate their cultural differences and common humanity.

In addition to MUCID, Uchiyama is director of Hālau KaUaTuahine, an internationally recognized company of dancers and musicians dedicated to the perpetuation of the performing arts of Hawai‘i and Tahiti. The hālau is named after the gentle “sister” rain that falls in the valley of Mānoa in Honolulu. The halau has won numerous awards at the San Jose Tahiti Fete’, including top honors in the Drumming and Music Categories. They also perform internationally, having appeared in venues ranging from the Hollywood Bowl, the Ka ‘Aha Hula ‘O Hālauaola of Maui, O‘ahu and Kaua‘i, the Heiva celebrations of Tahiti French Polynesia and the National Museum of New Zealand.

About Mahea Uchiyama

An award-winning dancer, musician, composer, choreographer, recording artist and teacher, Mahea Uchiyama is an advocate for cultural understanding, was recently named Co-Artistic Director of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, the largest and most comprehensive event of its kind in North America. She is the creator and director of the annual Kāpili Polynesian dance and music workshops and has led numerous performance tours to Tahiti, New Zealand, and the islands of Hawai‘i, and has taught workshops throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada.

At Stanford University, Uchiyama has been an instructor of Hawaiian Language, and in 2010 she contributed a chapter on the hula for the book *Dancing on the Earth, Women’s Stories of Healing and Dance*.

Her CD, *A Walk by the Sea*, was awarded the Hawai‘i Music Award for Best World Music Album. The 2009 recipient of the Aloha Spirit Award for contributions to the Bay Area Hawaiian community, she has also been presented the Ke Kanaka Po‘okela (Person of Distinction) Award by the Berkeley Hawaiian Music Festival. She has served on the panel of judges for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and the Tahiti Fete of San Jose and Hilo.

She is the author of the publication *The Haumāna Hula Handbook: A Manual for the Student of Hawaiian Dance* (North Atlantic Books and Penguin House Publisher Services).

Shaped by her personal history and dedication to dance and music, Mahea Uchiyama founded MUCID to be a place she had always personally sought out: an inclusive and welcoming space and culture that encouraged all kinds of people to explore their love of performing arts. Born in Washington, DC, Mahea is the daughter of a former Pullman Porter and a mother who made Mahea's early childhood interest in culture, particularly dance and music, a priority. Mahea began studying ballet at an early age in an era when it was extremely rare for African American children to have access to ballet training—there was only one ballet school in the DC area that would accept Black children. Her parents eventually opened a nightclub and young Mahea was exposed to jazz and rhythm and blues artists of the "chitlin circuit", which furthered her interest in performing arts. Ultimately not feeling at home in the ballet world, she took a leap of faith and began studying Hawaiian hula at age 11, a passion that eventually led to her acceptance at the University of Hawai'i, where she studied hula and Hawaiian culture and language, sparking her deep and lifelong devotion. Mahea moved to the Bay Area in 1982 And is a respected and beloved leader in the dance community here.

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