

# VANTAGE

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A project addressing Xenophobia, Race, and Advocacy for AAPI Solidarity through Dance.

*ZIRU*  
*Dance*

ODC Theater  
April 7 - 10, 2022



# A letter from our Artistic Director:

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Dear Guests and Friends:

In direct reflection to the times in which we live, *VANTAGE* first began, as everything else in life, as a feeling which transposed and developed into a clear thought. To assemble *VANTAGE*, I spent over half a year researching and reaching out to hear the stories and the lived experiences from so many. The amount of conversation which preceded my choreographing vastly outweighed any approach I had creatively taken in the past. But, that is what new times ask of us. It asks us to continue questioning, growing and to break pattern with what we had flawlessly implemented before.

*VANTAGE* is the first work I have created which directly relates to current events. My father is from Taiwan and my mother is from China. The very nature of the ongoing China/Taiwan geo-political divide has given me a lifetime to perfect the art of edging gracefully aside from fraught debate. Yet, I could not indefinitely remain inside the philosophical armor of the person I was decades ago. To be honest, it's hard to even be the person I was 5 years ago.

So, inspired by articles and the multitude of pivotal conversations with all the cultural groups represented in *VANTAGE*, I stood up in solidarity with my AAPI and BIPOC community. I stood up because if my children are to grow up here, the expected experience for our legacy and for those who follow after is ripe for adaptation. If this is to be our country, if this is to be the place we call home, then it is only fair that we not hide in the shadows or subconsciously expect to be considered as less due to factors of race and ethnicity. And, more importantly, this transition will only exist if I, the adult, create and hold it open for them to: walk, breathe and live inside. Thus, I give you *VANTAGE*; our first sweep into holding up our small yet sonorous corner of the sky.

This weekend, I am humbled by the 3 soaring choreographers who joined me in this quest. I am honored by the distinguished panelists who represent those who have been visible in the community for so much longer than I. Yet, what matters more than myself are the ZiRu Dancers who are about to appear before you.

This evening, I am most grateful for their presence and enduring commitment to this challenging and emotional work. If you will, please take a moment and read through their biographies. Look at the expanse of heritage presented in ZiRu's community. In each of their performances and solo moments, I invite you to look carefully and hear their respective lived experiences. I encourage you to look one level deeper and allow yourself to feel their unique and brave stories unfold through the exquisite tapestry of their dance.

Thank-you for joining us.

Warmly,  
Philein



# VANTAGE

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Artistic Director: Phlein Wang

Managing Director & Producer: Sarah Mann

Creative Consultants: Karah Abiog & Christian Burns

Featured Choreographers:

Phlein Wang

Christian Burns

Winifred Harris

Alejandro Perez

Rehearsal Assistant: Shaylen Keller

Rehearsal Director: Alysia Chang

Assistant Rehearsal Director: Vincent Chavez

Administrative & Development Coordinator: Shaylen Keller

Administrative Assistants: Byron Roman & Nicholas Wagner

Original Lighting Design: Dan Weierman

Lighting Execution: Harry Rubeck

Stage Manager: Byron Roman

Backstage Manager: Charmaine Butcher

Light Technician: Krys Swan

Sound Technician: Erin Laetz

Costumes: Sarah Mann

Panel Coordinator: Em Withenbury

Panel Moderator: Keith Weng

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# ABOUT ODC THEATER

## MISSION AND IMPACT:

ODC Theater exists to empower and develop innovative artists. It participates in the creation of new works through commissioning, presenting, mentorship, and space access; it develops informed, engaged, and committed audiences; and advocates for the performing arts as an essential component to the economic and cultural development of our community. The Theater is the site of over 150 performances a year involving nearly 1,000 local, regional, national, and international artists.

Since 1976, ODC Theater has been the mobilizing force behind countless San Francisco artists and the foothold for national and international touring artists seeking debut in the Bay Area. Our Theater, founded by Brenda Way and currently under the creative direction of Chloë L. Zimberg, has earned its place as a cultural incubator by dedicating itself to creative change-makers, those leaders who give our region its unmistakable definition and flare. Nationally known artists Spaulding Gray, Diamanda Galas, Molissa Fenley, Bill T. Jones, Eiko & Koma, Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, Ban Rarra, and Karole Armitage are among those whose first San Francisco appearance occurred at ODC Theater.

ODC Theater is part of a two-building campus dedicated to supporting every stage of the artistic life cycle-conceptualization, creation, and performance. This includes our flagship company, ODC/Dance, and our School, in partnership with Rhythm and Motion Dance Workout down the street at 351 Shotwell. For more information on ODC Theater and all its programs please visit: [odc.dance](http://odc.dance)

ODC Theater is a proud member of Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Western Arts Alliance, Dance/USA.

ODC Theater relies on the generous support of donors like you. To give to ODC Theater, visit: [odc.dance/support](http://odc.dance/support)

## ODC THEATER STAFF:

ODC/Dance Artistic Director/Founder .....	Brenda Way
Executive Director .....	Carma Zisman
ODC Theater Creative Director .....	Chloë L. Zimberg
Theater Program Associate .....	Brian Williamson
ODC Executive Associate / Dance Stories Editor .....	Garth Grimball
ODC School Director .....	Kimi Okada
ODC Fellow .....	KT Nelson
Director of Production .....	Jack Beuttler
Associate Director of Production .....	Thomas Bowersox
Production Coordinator .....	Chris Chamberlin-Miner
Director of Marketing & Communications .....	Kellyn Lopes
Operations Manager .....	Dennis Lickteig
Audience Services Coordinator .....	Charlie Levy
Producer and Host of Dance Cast.....	Sima Belmar
Publicist .....	John B. Hill

## "VANTAGE"

At the intersection of movement,  
cultural identity  
and social justice,  
"VANTAGE" asks of you to examine  
how you look and what you see.

Through an emphasis  
on the position from where you view,  
with openness and empathy,  
you can see and hear  
the social injustice  
which someone lived through.

For hundreds of years,  
countless minority races,  
and more specifically Asian Americans,  
living in the United States suffered from  
verbal and physical Xenophobic assaults.

More often than not,  
these incidents were survived  
through a cycle of silence.  
Those who suffered from these incidents  
Were encouraged by everyone to be silent.  
Those who spoke up about these incidents  
Were not supported or believed.

This cycle can end,  
Through a series of increased steps  
Of added awareness,  
Of being encouraged to participate in Civic Engagement,  
And through regular exposure to Advocacy.

*This cycle can end.*

It can be  
as simple  
as someone stepping forward  
and saying they "Disliked"  
what was done.

It can be  
as simple  
as someone sharing their story  
With a friend who hears, understands,  
And catches you.

For all of you who see this,  
For all of you who have yet to  
experience the chronic whiplash auto-replay effect  
Of Xenophobia and Racism,  
For all of you who have yet to  
share your singularly unique  
And universally shocking experience of this divide,  
I hope you do.

I sincerely hope you do.

I sincerely hope you do

Step forward, share your story and embrace

your First Amendment Rights

much sooner than I did.

I never stepped forward  
Or shared my story  
With anyone until now...

It has taken me 4 decades

To find and share with you - my community

My "VANTAGE."

If this ever happens to you  
Or someone you know,  
please

Step forward - share

Express your Dislike

And your VANTAGE.

We will be here to catch you.

@ Philein Wang

December 2021

# Program

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## *Dislike*

Vantage: AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander)

Choreographed by: Philein Wang

Performed by: Vincent Chavez, Jenna Marie Graves,

Babatunji Johnson, Sharon Kung, Fabiana Santiago

Music: Julia Kent "Flag of No Country"

Director's Note:

*The sign language phrase "I dislike" is seen throughout the piece. To sign "dislike", move your hand away from your chest while bringing all your fingers to your thumb. As your hand continues to move away from your chest, twist your wrist down, keep your fingers in place and then open your fingers as though dropping and letting go of something.*

## *Through the Shut Door*

Vantage: Caucasian/Mixed Race

Choreographed by: Christian Burns

Performed by: Alyria Chang, Lucia Flexer-Marshall, Sawako Gannon, Zaria Jackson

Recorded Voice: Zenas Burns

Sound Score Arrangement: Christian Burns

*Through the Shut Door developed from a recorded conversation I had with my 11yr old bi-racial son (half Japanese, half European). He shared his feelings about identity, race and class which surprised me to know how much he already understands about injustice in the world. As he transitions into adulthood and greater awareness, so too does our Nation transition towards a greater awareness about institutionalized injustice. In the Japanese tradition there is a formal ceremony of attaining adulthood called Genpuku (dating to the Nara Period 710 AD). Metaphorically the child steps through a doorway that they can never walk back into again. The challenge for us is to never go back after we have awoken. I would like to thank my son Zenas for lending his voice and to my wife Mari who gave this piece its title and conceptual foundation and helps me be more aware of the unique challenges of being Asian American.*

## *Contigo*

Vantage: LatinX

Choreographed by: Alejandro Perez

Performed by: Alejandro Perez

Music: Alan Watts & MoStFeAr "Beautiful Error"

## *Silent Corridor*

Vantage: African American (black female)

Choreographed by: Winifred R. Harris

Performed by: Claire Fisher, Jenna Marie Graves, Zaria Jackson, Fabiana Santiago, Nicholas Wagner

Music: Philip Glass "Glassworks: Facades"

— 15 Min Intermission —

## **VANTAGE**

Choreographed by: Philein Wang with contributions from the dancers

Collaborators: Christian Burns & Karah Abiog

Performed by: Alyria Chang, Vincent Chavez, Claire Fisher, Lucia Flexer-Marshall, Sawako Gannon, Jenna Marie Graves, Zaria Jackson, Babatunji Johnson, Sharon Kung, Alejandro Perez, Fabiana Santiago, Nicholas Wagner

Music: Olafur Arnalds "This Place was a Shelter," Olafur Arnalds "Only the Winds," Max Richter "Dream 8 (late and soon)," Polaris (feat. Kamila Nyvllová) "End of Silence"

Director's Note:

*The sign language phrase "I dislike" is seen throughout the piece. To sign "dislike", move your hand away from your chest while bringing all your fingers to your thumb. As your hand continues to move away from your chest, twist your wrist down, keep your fingers in place and then open your fingers as though dropping and letting go of something.*

*At the end of the work, you will see a gesture where the dancers circle their arms and bring their hands together in front of their bodies, signifying "together."*

— 3 Min Pause —

Please join us for a panel discussion immediately following the performances:

Friday Evening Show - Panel Discussion with choreographers & community members

Saturday Matinee Show - Q&A with select dancers

Saturday Evening Show - Panel Discussion with choreographers & community members

Sunday Matinee Show - Q&A with select dancers

## About VANTAGE:

VANTAGE, a highly anticipated, high energy cross-cultural celebration through dance, diversity, and positive dialog debuts at the ODC Theater in San Francisco, California, April 7 - 10. Presented by ZiRu Dance -- a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) non-profit dance company founded by Phlein Wang -- VANTAGE was created as a catalyst for social justice, inclusion, and community.

VANTAGE was conceived during the pandemic when Wang, who was born in Michigan to Taiwanese and Chinese parents, became alarmed by the dramatic upswing in Xenophobic slurs, assaults and hate crimes on individuals of Asian descent. "Most Asian Americans are encouraged to remain silent about such incidents, myself included. But as hatred and violent behavior spread during the pandemic, I became frightened for my children's future," explains Wang.

## About ZiRu Dance:

ZiRu Dance is a Redwood City-based, 85% BIPOC nonprofit dance company that promotes cross-cultural collaborations and the creation of innovative dance work that amplify BIPOC voices. ZiRu's intentional and inclusive actions, focused artmaking, and active role in our community enable our small but mighty organization to achieve broad impact as we seek, through dance, to uplift our BIPOC communities. Our programs are presented in collaboration with community partners in Silicon Valley that share this commitment. Each partner offers a different access point—education, social work, mental health, homeless advocacy, community services—to our programming, and each provides particular organizational and networking capabilities for advancing ZiRu's priority of using dance as a catalyst for social change. Our 2022-2023 season prioritizes this relational organizing in engaging BIPOC communities, embedding our artistic initiatives within our community's history and their desire for change, and tackling social/racial justice issues through art.



## ZIRU DANCE ARTISTIC / PRODUCTION TEAM:

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### Philein Wang (Chinese/Taiwanese American) - Artistic Director / Founder / Choreographer:

An award-winning International Artist, Chinese-American poet / choreographer and distinguished Artistic Director, Philein Wang leads ZiRu Dance. Over the last half century, Philein herself has firsthand lived through racism as a native of Oakland, California. As a result, she has developed deep ties to African-American, Latino-American, and other Asian-American communities over several decades.

Philein's exploration of her own Chinese/Taiwanese American heritage led her to create a new dance form for her body and identity. Her goal is to build cross-cultural bridges, uniting generations of immigrants through a unique blend of dance elements from Asia, Europe, Africa, and America, in tandem with original music. Using a distinct combination of influences – modern dance, ballet, martial arts, and tai chi – she hopes to create something unique to offer Asian Americans, so they have a way to feel at home in their bodies and minds. Since 2008, she has self-produced and presented full evenings of work for ZiRu Dance in Asia and the U.S. with an intrinsic understanding of cross-cultural experiences. ZiRu is a company committed to continually bringing to light how we can grow and evolve in positive ways. This process of growth and healing from difficult, shocking, and divisive events and environments in the U.S. and worldwide is at the core of ZiRu Dance's mission and work.

"When a young person is feeling confused as I was, and looking for answers to the question, 'Who am I?' maybe this dance can help them find their identity, their culture, and their strength. Help them know where they belong." – Philein Wang.

Philein has received choreography mentorships from the late Bella Lewitzky, Lin Hwai-Min, Artistic Director of Taiwan's world-renowned Cloud Gate Dance and Margaret Jenkins. In 2016, she was recognized as an honoree at the first-ever Asian and Pacific Islander Heroes of San Mateo County reception. ZiRu Dance has received awards from many foundations and institutions including the Community Foundation of San Carlos, twice awarded grants from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, the Fleishhacker Foundation, the Creative Work Fund, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and San Mateo County Strong. Nancy Pellegrini of Time Out Beijing said, "Wang herself is a force of nature, raising money, creating projects, and sharing the stage with artists of every stripe. And that alone is well worth a look." Pellegrini added that the multidisciplinary artist has a "...staggering level of broad-based talent... whatever you do, don't miss her show." When she's not directing, choreographing, or raising her young family, Philein is dedicated to building new investment and community bridges to support the company. She is also a partner at Silicon Valley Social Venture Philanthropy (SV2)

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### Christian Burns (Caucasian) - Choreographer:

Christian Burns has been choreographing, teaching and performing in the Bay Area for 21 years. His pursuit for finding meaning and purpose through dance has yielded a dynamic range of interdisciplinary dance works for stage, video and visual art.

In the San Francisco Bay Area his work has been presented by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, ODC Theater, Counter Pulse, The Garage, Headlands Center for the Arts, Z Space Theater, Dancers Group Studio Theater, Shotwell Studio Theater, Howard Street Studio Theater Beyond, his work has also been presented at The Walker Art Center, Canal Danse in Paris, Taipei Artist Village in Taiwan, Nightingale Theater in Brighton UK, WINLAB Independent Festival in London, Escapade Festival at MovingArtsBase in London, The Dada House in Zurich Switzerland, OT301 in Amsterdam NL, The Southern Theater in MN, as well as performances in numerous independent studio locations in Brussels, Oslo, Copenhagen, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Southern France, New York and Western Massachusetts. His dance-video work has been shown at Pacific Film Archive Berkeley Art Museum, Impakt Festival (NL), Dutch National Television (NL), Moving Pictures Festival for Dance on Film and Video in Canada, Roberta Beck Cinema (NY), Santa Fe Art Institute and Stuttgart FilmWinter Festival in Germany.

His commissions include Hope Mohr Dance, The Cambrians, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, James Sewell Ballet, Stanford University, USF, Mt. Holyoke College, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, The Laban Center London, Interlochen Center for the Arts, LINES Ballet BFA at Dominican University and LINES Ballet Training Program. He created over 70 dance pieces for the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance during its fourteen year history between 2004-2018.

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### Winifred Harris (African American, black WOMAN) - Choreographer:

Winifred R. Harris is a multi-faceted artist, teacher, and community activist. As a choreographer, she consciously balances the inherently beautiful escapism of dance and the social realities that form today's aesthetic and cultural values. She enjoys working with fantasies and dreams, as well as understanding and taking responsibility for issues grounded in reality. In short, Ms. Harris is a visionary who creates art as conversation, a connective tissue to the world, and a means to see beyond what we think of as "limits." Her work is a strong balance of technical prowess and expression through gesture. Ms. Harris began her training under the guidance of Denver's critically acclaimed Cleo Parker Robinson. She then went on to dance professionally for Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble for 10 years, Dallas Black Dance Theater immediately following, and also enjoyed a solo stint in New York and abroad during that time. In October 1991, Ms. Harris relocated and made her home in Los Angeles, founding the critically lauded and award nominated Winifred R. Harris' Between Lines - a contemporary modern dance company. During the past fifteen years of Ms. Harris' work as a choreographer, she has garnered special notice from both the Los Angeles Times and the California Arts Council for LA Cultural Affairs. In recognition of her work, she has been nominated for the Lester Horton Choreography Award as well as the Alpert Award. In recognition of her dedication and commitment in bringing dance to underprivileged youth through her teaching efforts within the Los Angeles community, Ms. Harris has received several awards from the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles.

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### Alejandro Perez (Mexican American) - Choreographer / Dancer:

Aleks is a first generation Mexican American from Los Angeles California.

His introduction to dance came at the age of 14 when he joined a street dance crew where they choreographed works to compete in the U.S. as well as other countries. His passion for dance only grew when he enrolled in a dance arts high school and began training in classical techniques.

Before graduating from high school, he received a summer scholarship for the UCLA dance and theater intensive where he met and started dancing with Versastyle Dance Company. His hunger to expand in versatility grew during college. He attended the Alonzo King Lines Training program where he received a full scholarship to attend in 2016. He was then recognized as a full scholarship recipient of the Jacob's Pillow Summer program. Since then, he has been expanding his opportunities to perform and choreograph. He has been presenting work all over Los Angeles for the past two years.

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### Karah Abiog (Filipino/Afro-Caribbean) - Creative Advisor:

Karah has served as an Artistic Advisor for ZiRu Dance since 2013, helping to slowly shape the company, repertory and programming.

This is Karah's 12th year as the LINES Ballet | Training Program Director and is now also the Summer Program Director. She takes pride in creating an environment of discovery, creativity, and transformation for students, educators and guest artists from around the globe. A priority is placed on diversity, versatility, and individuality as both genuine dance artists and human beings.

Karah is originally from Saratoga, California and received her Bachelor's Degree in Dance from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. For over twenty years, she enjoyed dancing and touring with various companies including Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater and worked with many choreographers ranging from modern pioneer Katherine Dunham to today's Camille E. Brown. Karah has also taught extensively over the years - youth to professionals. She has been abroad in Canada, China, Spain and mostly in Brazil as a guest teacher, performer and adjudicator at the International Seminar of Brasilia for 15 years and is still bringing Brazilians back to the US to train. She was a full-time visiting professor for the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. For many years, Karah also taught throughout the LINES Ballet Education Programs.

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### Sarah Mann (Lebanese/French Canadian/Jewish) - Producer & Managing Director:

Sarah has been dancing since the age of 10, in a multitude of styles ranging from musical theatre to ballet to modern. However, her main focus and passion have always been for hip hop dance. Sarah studied at Chapman University in Orange, CA, from which she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance. After college, Sarah moved to Los Angeles to pursue a commercial dance career.

Since moving to L.A., Sarah's primary focus has shifted towards the fusion of aerial arts with dance, first with her company Jagged West, and now as a solo artist. Sarah has been featured on America's Best Dance Crew (with Jagged Crew), FOX's TV Show Mobbed (with both Jagged West and Mischief Makers), and in the documentary Off The Floor, which followed Jagged Contemporary Pole Dance Company.

Sarah has her own production company, THE MADMANN, which specializes in nightlife shows and events. She currently works as a producer for The Toledo Show in Los Angeles, CA, as well as the production assistant for D'Amour Creative in Hollywood. She is also the co-founder and co-director of Madcap Creative, an LA based alternative cabaret company.

Sarah began her journey with ZiRu Dance in 2013 when she joined the company as a dancer and Rehearsal Director for ZiRu's 2014 China tour. Sarah produced the 2017 and 2018 Silicon Valley Dance Festivals, and acted as Company Manager throughout the 2017 and 2018 seasons. She is always thrilled to work with Philein and the cast of talented dancers that ZiRu Dance draws.

## ZiRu Dance Company Members

**Vincent Chavez (Hispanic/Native American)** was born and started his dance career in Albuquerque, NM. Vincent is one of the founding company members of ZiRu Dance and currently works as a freelance dance artist in the Bay Area. His performance experience includes New Mexico Ballet Company, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Robert Moses' KIN, and Oakland Ballet Company. Vincent started dancing with ZiRu Dance in 2007.

**Alyisia Chang (Taiwanese/Italian American)** was born in Berkeley, CA and is a freelance dancer in the San Francisco Bay Area. She graduated from SUNY Purchase with a BFA in Dance and a Minor in Arts Management (magna cum laude). Her performance experience includes Sacramento Ballet, The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and The Radio City Christmas Spectacular in NYC. Alyisia is ZiRu Dance's Rehearsal Director for the current 2022 season and has been with ZiRu Dance since 2013.

**Lucia Flexer-Marshall (Jewish/Italian)** is a freelance contemporary dancer and teacher based in the Bay Area, holding a BA in Dance from UC Santa Cruz. Her professional experience includes working with Janice Garrett, Fullstop Dance, Alyssa Mitchel, Tandy Beal, and Robert Moses. This is Lucia's first season with ZiRu Dance.

**Claire Fisher (Japanese/Hungarian/Panamanian/Eastern Indian/Caribbean)** was born and raised in Tracy, CA. She trained at The Academy of Performing Arts under the direction of Deborah Skinner. Claire attended the LINES Ballet Training Program and then at the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. Her professional experience includes Liv Schaffer, Nicole von Arx, Khala Brannigan, Fullstop Dance, The MoveMessenger(s), Dazaun Soleyn, RAWdance, Hayley Bowman, and Garrett + Moulton Productions. This is Claire's first season with ZiRu Dance.

**Sawako Gannon (Japanese)** is originally from Japan. Upon moving from Tokyo to San Francisco, she graduated with a BA in Dance from San Francisco State University. Their professional experience includes David Herrera Performance Company, Concepto4, A Pulso Dance Project, dog+pony, STEAMROLLER Dance Company, and more. This is Sawako's first season with ZiRu Dance.

**Zaria Jackson (Black/Native American)** was raised in Alabama. After high school, Zaria attended the Alonzo King LINES Ballet | Training Program. Their professional experience includes Fermata Ballet Collective and SALT2 in Salt Lake City. This is Zaria's first season with ZiRu Dance. They also teach for ZiRu Dance's outreach program at the Nueva School.

**Babatunji Johnson (African American)** was born in Portland, OR and grew up on the Big Island of Hawaii. At 15 he discovered the art of hip hop. Following over a decade of self-taught street performance, he has developed a unique approach to various styles of hip hop. Babatunji's professional experience includes having worked and performed around the world with Alonzo King LINES Ballet for 6 years, among other inspiring companies. Babatunji has worked with ZiRu Dance since 2011. He is also a Guest Artist for ZiRu Dance.

**Sharon Kung (Chinese)** was born in New York and currently resides in the San Francisco Bay Area. She received her early training at the Jean M Wong School of Ballet in Hong Kong and continued in the Bay Area before graduating from UC Irvine with a BFA in Dance Performance and a BA in Economics. She is currently a freelance dance artist in the San Francisco Bay Area as a performer, choreographer, and teacher. Her professional experience includes Dance Theatre of San Francisco, KAMBARA + DANCERS (San Francisco), Thodos Dance Chicago, and various freelance projects. Sharon began dancing with ZiRu Dance in 2021.

**Jenna Marie Graves (Black/Puerto Rican/Native American)** was born in Philadelphia. Jenna began her dance training at Olga Kresin's Ballet School and later attended The Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts. Her professional experience includes Ailey II, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Nai Ni Chen Dance Company, Momix, The Metropolitan Opera, Ballet Hispanico, Post:Ballet, and Robert Moses' KIN. Jenna was featured in the documentary "First Position," has been a guest artist with The Black Iris Project, and worked for Beyoncé, Romeo Santos, Nile Rodgers, and Betsey Johnson. Jenna began dancing with ZiRu Dance in 2020.

**Alejandro Perez (Mexican American)** Refer to the choreographer section for his bio.

**Fabiana Santiago (LatinX, Italian/German)**, from Crystal Lake, Illinois, began training at the age of 4 under Judith Svalander. She furthered her training with the Boston Ballet, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and the Bolshoi Ballet Academy (BBA) resulting in a full scholarship to study in Moscow. She attended Butler University where she earned a BFA in Dance Performance. Her professional experience includes Menlowe Ballet, Alyssa Mitchel Choreographer, Marika Brussels, and Em(body) Dane Project. Fabiana began dancing with ZiRu Dance in 2020.

**Nicholas Wagner (Caucasian)** grew up in the Seattle area and graduated from Chapman University with a BFA in Dance Performance and a Minor in Kinesiology. He has worked in the Bay Area dance community as a performer with RAWdance, administrator, and somatic healer. He is a Certified Massage Therapist in CA (CMT) and a Responsive Body Level 1 Practitioner. His private practice can be found at nwbodywork.com. This is his second season with ZiRu Dance.

# ZiRu Dance is proud and honored to have the following community members and supporters as part of our inaugural *VANTAGE* panel:

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Jean Han was born in South Korea, immigrated to NY at 9 yrs old. She spent most of adult life working and living in NYC working for global companies (Tiffany's, Harry Winston, Tourneau, Samsung) traveling the world. Jean worked and lived Seoul and Hong Kong and moved to SF 2019.

She currently advises start-ups and is looking to make a meaningful impact in the world of business and the arts.

Jean is open to mentorship regarding navigating the corporate world: contact: [Jeanhan30@gmail.com](mailto:Jeanhan30@gmail.com)

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Eleanore Fernandez brings with her nearly twenty plus years of marketing, public relations, event planning, and community outreach experience to any organization. She has held various executive board positions, most notably as the Vice President of YFPA/ Your Filipino Professionals Association for ten years. She was also an executive board member with GFN/ Global Filipino Network. A key GFN highlight was when she co-produced a well attended, global cultural arts forum entitled "Sangdiwa" at the San Francisco Philippine Consulate Office.

Historical, cultural, and arts nonprofit organization Manilatown Heritage Foundation chose Eleanore Fernandez, a longtime community organizer and public servant as its Board President in 2020 and their Executive Director in 2021 navigating programming during the pandemic. She is now the new Deputy Director at the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco. She works hand in hand with the Executive Director and the team to manage the successful implementation of the organization's strategies and program budgets to help the CCC explore short and long-term development opportunities.

In 2012, she was also selected by The Filipina Women's Network as one of the TOP 100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the U.S. in the "Builders and Emerging Leaders" category at their summit that year. At the summit, Eleanore delivered a spoken word piece about remembering our legacy, honoring ancestors, and empowering her fellow Pinays. In 2016, she was recognized with a community service award from then San Francisco District 10 Supervisor, Malia Cohen and also, given a congressional recognition by the Honorable Madam Speaker, Nancy Pelosi during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

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Robert Moses: Choreographer, Writer, and Composer - Robert Moses has created over 100 works of varying styles and genres for his highly praised dance company, and has composed many of the sound and narrative scores for his works since 2008. Moses has choreographed for dance, opera, and theater companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Opera, Olympic Arts Festival, Ailey II, Philadanco, Lorraine Hansberry Theater, Cincinnati Ballet, Eco Arts, Transitions Dance Company of the Laban Center in London, African Cultural Exchange (UK), Bare Bones (UK), Oakland Ballet, New Conservatory Theater, Los Angeles Prime Moves Festival (L.A.C.E.), Moving People Dance, and Robert Henry Johnson Dance Company, among others. He has taught on college campuses throughout the US, including UC Berkeley, UC Davis, Cal State Long Beach, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Goucher College, University of Texas, Stockton University, University of Nevada, and University of South Florida.

Moses' work explores topics ranging from oral traditions in African American culture, contemporary urban culture, and the complexities of identity, to the simple joys and expressive power of pure movement. Moses has worked collaboratively with numerous artists and organizations, among them are Terence Marling, Latanya d. Tigner, Julia Adam, Margaret Jenkins, Alonzo King, Sara Shelton Mann, Joanna Haigood, Carl Hancock Rux, SoVoSo, Marcus Shelby, Keith Terry, Frank Boehm, Will Power, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble, Bill Morrison, Ann Galjour, David Worm, Kid Beyond and Youth Speaks.

A highly sought after master teacher, Moses has taught nationally and internationally, including International Festival of Contemporary Dance "Espuma Cuanatica" (Ensanada, Mexico), International Dance Festival, "Crossing Bodies" (Tijuana, Mexico), OPEN LOOK St. Petersburg International Dance Festival, and Serendipity Arts Festival (Kolkata, India). Moses has been a returning guest artist at the Northwest Dance Project and a mentor with Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange (CHIME). He conducted movement and performance workshops internationally for artists of African descent with State of Emergency Limited in the United Kingdom.

In 2005, Moses was named Stanford University Choreographer-in-Residence and the Artistic Director of the Committee on Black Performing Arts at Stanford University. He was Professor of Practice at Santa Clara University from 2018 to 2019 and is currently the Melody and Mark Teppola Presidential Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Dance and Theater Studies at Mills College in Oakland, CA.

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Vincent Pan is Co-Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) and a leading voice on issues of racial justice and social change. Founded in 1969 and based in San Francisco, CAA has led pioneering advocacy on a range of issues including immigrant rights, education equity, and community safety and justice. In 2020, CAA co-founded Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition to track and address escalating anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to joining CAA, Vincent worked with the William J. Clinton Foundation in Beijing to start and expand HIV/AIDS programs in China and before that, he co-founded and led an AmeriCorps program in Washington, D.C. Vincent also co-chairs the board of the Center for Asian American Media, helps lead the Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality social justice network, and is a former member of the San Francisco Police Commission.

For more information, people can visit [www.caaf.org/](http://www.caaf.org/)

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Michael Young is a former State Department Foreign Service Officer and Army Reserve Officer, and is presently a real estate broker in the Bay Area. His previous assignments include consular and management tours in South Korea, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Pakistan and the Bureau of Counterterrorism in Washington, DC. Michael received his commission through the California Army National Guard and subsequently served with the 1/185th Mechanized Infantry in San Jose, CA and 2ID ROC in South Korea. He was honorably discharged as a Captain after a decade of service. Michael volunteered to serve in diplomatic hardship posts, in the army infantry, and spoke fluent Mandarin, a condition for his employment in the State Department. Yet bewilderingly, the State Department would not allow him, and any many other Chinese American diplomats, to represent the United States as a US diplomat in China. Despite repeated requests for transparency into the assignment preclusion process, Michael received no answers. He took his case to the public and helped established AAFEN to represent other Asian Americans in national security who also faced discrimination and unequal treatment in their respective federal agencies. To this day, Michael continues to advocate for equal treatment of all Americans in US national security."

<https://www.aafen.org/>

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If you are interested in presenting a "VANTAGE" Panel Performance or sitting on a future panel, please contact us at [admin@zirudance.com](mailto:admin@zirudance.com)

# RECOMMENDED READING:

My Life Was Shaped By Anti-Asian Racism.  
I Can't Hide My Pain Anymore.

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/venessawong/asian-american-invisible-hate-crimes>

Links for Support and where to report  
Xenophobic attacks:

<https://stopaapihate.org/>

<https://www.ocnational.org/>

<https://advancingjustice-aajc.org/anti-asian-hate>

<https://standwithasians.com>

If you have an untold story of xenophobia and race which you would like to share with Artistic Director, Philein Wang, she welcomes you to write to her.

[philein@zirudance.com](mailto:philein@zirudance.com)

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*Thank You!*