



Home Run for US/Japan Connection

photo by Takuya Matsumi, Hanabi Takemiya

During a three-week curatorial trip in April 2014, NPN's Japanese colleagues in the US/Japan Connection Project saw more than 20 artists in New York City, Chicago and Austin. Ritsuko Mizuno, Artistic Director and Producer of the Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN), became fascinated with New York-based choreographer Nora Chipaumire and invited her to research and rehearse "Portrait of Myself as my Father. Read more about the project: jus2014.jcdn.org/en/pg41.html.

Reiko Hagihara, the Artistic Director of the Kyoto Arts Center, was struck by the originality of Allison Orr's work, and invited the Austin-based choreographer to create Play Ball!, a new work with the local professional women's baseball team, presented at Wakasa Stadium on September 23, 2014.

NPN is proud to announce that the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and the Japan-US Friendship

Commission have renewed their support to continue the exchange project with Japan for the next three years. CGP awarded NPN \$45,564 for the first year of the next three-year cycle for the Japan Connection: Building a Community while JUSFC has awarded NPN \$60,000 for the first year with the possibility of re-applying each year for the additional two years.

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Why a Network Cares about the Net

As part of its ongoing cultural policy efforts, NPN/VAN is concerned with what Net Neutrality means for the arts field. As a member of the Performing Arts Alliance, NPN/VAN is able to keep abreast of important issues such as this and to advocate for important change.

The open architecture of the Internet creates opportunities for arts and cultural organizations and artists to promote their missions, programs, and services in order to grow their audiences, sell their work, and make a living. Without regulation, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) could block certain Internet applications, slow the delivery of certain online content, stifle speech that

they find objectionable, discriminate against threatening business models, or compromise users' privacy.

Open Internet Reservation Act of 2014 (H.R. 3982; S. 1981) restores the FCC's Open Internet Rules prohibiting ISPs from engaging in discriminatory behavior or blocking content altogether.

For more information go to: www.theperformingartsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Net_Neutrality_Issue_Center

NPN/VAN Awards \$15,000+ in Mentorship & Leadership Initiative

With funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts, NPN/VAN makes semi-annual awards for projects that support the professional development of its Partners' staffs. The latest MLI grants were awarded to:

Columbia College Chicago Center for Community Arts Partnerships and **Katie Collins**, CCAP's Urban Missions Coordinator.

www.npnweb.org/partners/profiles/npn-partner-profiles/ccap/

Dance Place (Washington, DC) and **Sarah Kramer**, to expand her curatorial practice.

www.npnweb.org/partners/profiles/npn-partner-profiles/dance-place/

Skirball Cultural Center (Los Angeles, CA) and **Daniel Soto** as he transitions into program coordinator. This project was selected for the Wesley V. Montgomery MLI Award for Emerging Leaders of Color.

www.npnweb.org/partners/profiles/npn-partner-profiles/skirball/

Tigertail Productions (Miami, FL) and **Marissa Alma Nick**, director of Tigertail's ScreenDance Miami, as part of the organization's 35th Anniversary.

www.npnweb.org/partners/profiles/npn-partner-profiles/tigertail/

Read full descriptions of the latest MLI projects here:

www.npnweb.org/whatwedo/programs/mli/awards/

Play Ball Kyoto Hits it Out of the Park!

by Allison Orr & Renata Petroni

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photo by Takuya Matsumi, Hanabi Takemiya

On September 23, a national holiday in Japan that marks the first day of autumn, the Kyoto Art Center, choreographer Allison Orr, and the world's only women's professional baseball league, the Japanese Women's Baseball League, welcomed 500+ fans to Kyoto's Wakasa Stadium for a premiere performance of "Play Ball Kyoto," a dance directed by Allison Orr and featuring the West Flora and South Dione baseball teams.

The Kyoto Art Center, a partner in NPN's US/Japan Connection, hosted Allison in the final year of the US/Japan Connection project. During her five-week residency, Allison shadowed and observed the players in practices and games, and in collaboration with two teams—West Flora and South Dione—she created an evening-length dance utilizing the movements of baseball and the stories of these players. The dance also included the stadium grounds crew, a cast of 20+ community dancers, and original music

performed live by Allison's longtime musical collaborator Graham Reynolds.

The Japanese women's baseball team won the International World Cup in women's baseball in August, so there could not have been a better time to make a dance about women's baseball in Japan. Play Ball Kyoto received great press: it was featured in two Kyoto newspaper articles and in a televised documentary piece presented by a Japanese news channel. Finally, Allison Orr and Graham Reynolds were selected as Creative Ambassadors by the City of Austin, and both, along with Kyoto Art Center Staff, met Kyoto's Mayor Kadokawa to present a gift from the City of Austin.

"A new era in community-based dance making has begun in Japan!" one longtime artist remarked to Allison after the premiere of the dance. Allison herself was transformed by her experience with the Kyoto Art Center, including an unforgettable memory of being

thrown up in the air by the ball players after the show was over. Kyoto Art Center staff is still collecting feedback from the JWBL and other project participants, but you can read more about the project and Allison's reflections along with show photos and video on the "Play Ball Kyoto" page of Forklift Danceworks' website.

Renata Petroni, director of NPN's International Program, says "Allison has the passion and a special ability for giving voice to the people in a community who don't always have opportunity or incentive to speak up or express themselves. Her past works with firemen, electricians and sanitation workers are highly acclaimed and wholeheartedly embraced by the participants because Allison throws herself into the community, works with them side-by-side, and in the process, finds beauty in their everyday movements which she turns into elegant dances." ■



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Opportunity for Ensemble Travel & Exchange

The Network of Ensemble Theatres' Travel and Exchange Grants is now accepting letters of intent to apply for its next round of funding. Letters are due Dec 10, 2014, 3pm Eastern.

*For more information about this opportunity, check:
ensembletheaters.net/content/exchange-grants-how-apply*

Thank You!

NPN/VAN was recently awarded a 3-year grant of \$40,000 from the Quixote Foundation to support engagement in its home community of New Orleans. This funding maintains NPN/VAN's work with smaller arts organizations and artist-driven projects, called Local Network Partners, and its new space, Arts Estuary 1024, a multi-tenant arts facility.

The Robert Sterling Clark Foundation continues to support NPN's Performing Americas Program (PAP) with a two-year grant of \$150,000. PAP provides touring and Creative Exchange Residency opportunities for U.S. and Latin American/Caribbean artists and increases the capacity of NPN Partners to present international work through network-to-network collaborations.