



Mocean Dance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Mocean Dance announces new leadership:
Susanne Chui appointed new Artistic Director with Sara Coffin as Artistic Associate**

June 15, 2012 – Halifax, NS – Mocean Dance begins its 2012/2013 season with the exciting news of new leadership. The Halifax-based contemporary dance company will welcome Susanne Chui as Artistic Director and Sara Coffin as Artistic Associate, beginning in September 2012. At the same time, Mocean will bid farewell to company co-founder and Artistic Director Carolle Crooks Fernando.

Both established local dance artists, Chui and Coffin bring a wealth of experience to the table. Chui is certainly no stranger to the local and national dance scene. Working independently and with many collaborators, including the collective she helped found, SiNS (Sometimes in Nova Scotia) dance, Chui has been making her mark here and across the country as a highly regarded dancer, choreographer, teacher, as well as for her involvement behind the scenes with numerous dance organizations. Chui is delighted to take on this new challenge.

“I am excited to bring to Mocean the knowledge I have gained from being an independent dance artist for the past 10 years,” says Chui. “I look forward to the new experiences that will come with this position.”

Coffin, a Halifax native who ventured home from the West Coast last season to act as the company’s Interim Artistic Director while Crooks Fernando was on maternity leave, will be continuing her work with the company as Artistic Associate while she also pursues her Master of Fine Arts in Choreography at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

“Returning home to lead Mocean Dance this season has been a rewarding experience, and it has been wonderful to immerse myself in the community again,” says Coffin. “I’m thrilled to be able to keep my professional work tied to my MFA studies and I look forward to weaving the two together. The company is also launching many new programs and artistic developments this year that I’m eager to provide vision for, alongside Susanne.”

After over a decade with Mocean, dancing, co-directing and then acting as sole Artistic Director for the company, Crooks Fernando will be stepping down to pursue the next phase of her career.

“The experience of helping build and manage Mocean Dance has been so rewarding and I have so much gratitude for everyone who supported the company and me personally throughout this journey,” says Crooks Fernando. “As I turn my focus to my family and my career transition, I’m eager to see the work of the original members being carried forward. I know that Mocean will continue to bring dance to the region for years to come.”

Through Chui’s leadership, Mocean will continue to work with both local and national choreographers, providing opportunities for dancers to work and collaborate with other artists here in Nova Scotia.

“Working with a range of choreographers challenges local dancers and brings fresh energy into the community,” says Chui. “I plan to honour this spirit of creativity and collaboration by continuing to commission works as well as initiate new kinds of projects that will ignite the imaginations of dancers and audiences.”

Mocean has a stellar season in store, chalk full of incredible creation and performance activities. The company will tour work to the Festival of New Dance in St. John’s, and to Goosebay, Fredericton, Winnipeg, and across the province; perform a new commission in Live Art Dance Production’s presentation of New Brunswick’s Lesandra Dodson; and begin a new creation with Sara Coffin.

“It was important to the co-founders that Mocean continue,” says Crooks Fernando. “It’s one of our anchors of dance activity here and an important piece of the artistic landscape. I have total confidence in the strength of this new leadership. Susanne and Sara are dedicated to their craft and to the development of Halifax as a centre for dance creation and production. They value the company’s vision and its potential for moving forward.”

Biographies

Susanne Chui is a Halifax-based contemporary dance artist. The recipient of the 2012 Dianne Moore Creation Scholarship, Susanne collaborates regularly with Jacinte Armstrong, Lesandra Dodson, Gwen Noah Dance, Phin Performing Arts, and SiNS (sometimes in Nova Scotia) dance, a cross-Canada collective she co-founded in 2005 with Armstrong and Sara Coffin. Susanne trained professionally at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre and was based in Toronto from 1999 to 2007, when she danced for many independent choreographers and with TILT sound+motion dance company. In 2011, Susanne performed with Mocean Dance in Tedd Robinson’s work, “Canvas 5x5” and will be joining the company full-time as Artistic Director in September 2012.

Sara Coffin, originally from Nova Scotia, returned East after being based in Vancouver for 11 years to lead Mocean Dance as Interim Artistic Director for the 2011/2012 season. Recent awards include the Iris Garland Emerging Choreographer Award and the BC Emerging Dance Artist Award. Sara received her BFA in dance from Simon Fraser University, as well as a Kinesiology degree from Halifax's Dalhousie University. With a keen interest in dialogue, research and collaboration; Coffin has danced with Daelik (MACHiNENOiSy), Jennifer Clark, Susan Elliott, the Holy Body Tattoo, Claire French, Kinesis Dance, Jennifer Mascall and TILT sound+motion. Sara's artistic practice is deeply rooted in dance and technology and is a co-founder of SiNS (Sometimes in Nova Scotia) dance. As a choreographer, Coffin's work has been presented across Canada in many prominent dance festivals and her recent full-length work was included in the Dance Centre's special 10th anniversary publication. Sara will continue next season with Mocean Dance as Artistic Associate while simultaneously pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Choreography at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

About Mocean Dance (www.moceandance.com)

Based in Halifax, Mocean Dance was founded by dancers Carolle Crooks Fernando, Sarah Rozee, Sara Harrigan, Alicia Orr MacDonald and Lisa Phinney Langley. Working with both locally and nationally renowned choreographers, Mocean brings together talented artists to create exciting new work that is rooted in collaborative process, stretches physical and emotional boundaries and finds authenticity.

Mocean has produced and presented new shows annually, creating over 20 new works with choreographers from across the country. The company has developed residency programs bringing contemporary dance to communities across the Atlantic region and has performed and led workshops for thousands of students. Recently, Mocean launched a pre-professional creation project, the *Gen Y Project*, to promote the development of the next generation of professional dancers in Halifax.

Mocean is committed to being based in Nova Scotia and contributing to its growing dance and arts community by providing opportunities for creation, performance, collaboration, development and education.

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