



OUR HISTORY...
OUR LEGACY...
OUR LIVES.

MENU



Diversity All Around Us Artwork by
Ryan Ostrowski for Dancers over 40.

**Can't Stop the Music,
Can't Stop the Dance!!**

Diversity All Around Us...

**AN INCREDIBLE EVENING OF SHARING,
DECADES IN THE MAKING,
ABOUT DIVERSITY IN DANCE**

**And Passing it on to the Next
Generation!**

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THIS EVENT**

**MEMBERS - See 15 Videos of this event
now!**



**Raindrops, performed by the Nai-Ni Chen Dance
Company,
featuring Tyler Brown, Greta Campo, Yia-Yin Goh and Bo
Pang**

**DO40 Features over Two Dozen Dancers, Performing
and Speaking about their Lives**

Dancers Over 40 celebrated diversity in dance with *Can't Stop
the Music! Can't Stop the Dance! Diversity All Around Us!* – on

Wednesday, October 14th at St. Luke's Theater in NYC. With over 22 panelists, 3 live performances, videos and audience guests, it was one of the most important events we have ever produced. Special thanks to DO40 Advisory Board member Jerry Mitchell and his production team on his new Broadway bound musical comedy, *Gotta Dance*, for allowing us to preview the show with cast members – and DO40 members Lori Tan Chinn, Lenora Nemetz – and Nancy Ticotin. Also along, producer Lori Berinstein, who explained how the show came to be (she also produced the movie of the same name in 2008). Broadway World's crack entertainment ace Richard Ridge moderated the event. Each performer related their dance, music, acting backgrounds and how they came to be here – cast in a new Broadway show – at over 60 years old each!

DO40 member Lenora Nemetz mentioned going on for Gwen Verdon at a Wednesday matinee and then going on for Chita Rivera that night – during the original run of *CHICAGO*. DO40 prez John Sefakis mentioned she had tied DO40 member Iva Withers' record, of going on for the stars of *Oklahoma* and *Carousel* on the same day (but at different theaters, of course) back in 1947 – making Lenora the new Iva Withers (who left us last year at 97!!!). Long live Lenora!

Nancy Ticotin's career has also been astounding, from *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* to the first revival of *West Side Story*, cabaret, acting gigs on TV and more.

And long-time DO40 member Lori Tan Chinn spoke about being ready to pack her bags and leave NY, figuring after 60 years in show business (!!!) it was time to call it a day! Then came *Orange is the New Black* – and *Gotta Dance*! Now she has groupies! (At a DO40 lunch last month with Sefakis, a young woman came over Lori to ask for a selfie with her!)



**The Gotta Dance Panelists – Nancy Ticotin, DO40
members Lenora Nemetz and Lori Tan Chinn,
producer Dori Berinstein and moderator Richard Ridge
from Broadway World**

Then on to the serious matter of the Elephant in the Room – or in our case, the Pig in the Room (long story from Lillian Colon – we'll get to that later!), Janet Collins biographer Yael Lewin spoke with dancers Carmen Lavallade and Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson about this groundbreaking African-American ballerina, the first to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in 1951. Janet was also Carmen's first cousin, and she prepared Carmen for her voyage to NYC and the dance world she would encounter. (More on Mel in the next panel!)

Act I ended with an encore performance by Solomon Dumas from our highly successful DO40 CARES dance concert June 8th at the Ailey Citigroup Theater/Joan Weill Center for Dance. Choreographed by long-time DO40 member Sasha Spielvogel, it showcased one of the youngest members of that evening's panel. Someone commented, "Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson was the Desmond Richardson of his day, and Solomon Dumas is training to become the next!"



**Solomon Dumas, performing an excerpt from our DO40
Cares concert in June,
with accompanist Roger Ansanelli**

Act II began with a beautiful excerpt from Raindrops, a modern dance piece based on a Chinese umbrella dance, choreographed and danced by the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company.

The following panel was the longest and most information-packed of the evening, featuring a bevy of dancing beauties, all related through dance, and through decades! Carmen de Lavallade, Hope Clarke, Gail Reese, Karen Brown, Sarita Allen, all spoke about their beginnings, and videos were shown of all the ladies performing in Gus Solomons jr's dance company, Paradigm. Also on hand was Solomon Dumas, for that next generation's story, and DO40 Legacy Award honoree Gemze de Lappe, recalling Agnes de Mille and the ballet The Four Marys, danced by many on the panel. This was moderated by Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson, dancer extraordinaire, from NYCB, Dance Theater of Harlem, and a list too long to be featured here! He was the youngster among the women - at 61!



**Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson (center) moderating the panel discussion on Gus Solomons jr and Agnes de Mille
L to R: Carmen de Lavallade, Gail Reese, Hope Clarke, Mel, Solomon Dumas, Karen Brown and Sarita Allen**

The last panel's topic was community, and featured Jill Williams of the Clark Center, Nai-Ni Chen (Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company), DO40 member Fernando Carrillo (Ballet Hispanico, Ailey II, *Lion King*), Plu Sayampol (STEPS jazz teacher and club performer) and Baayork Lee (The National Asian Artists Project, *A Chorus Line*, *Seesaw*, *Promises*, *Promises*..and so much more!). This was moderated by DO40 member and the first Puerto Rican Rockette, Lillian Colon. It was she who mentioned that the pig was a very popular animal in Puerto Rico, so it was OK that our Elephant in the Room... wasn't!!



Moderator Lillian Colon with Baayork Lee, Fernando Carrillo, Jill Williams, Nai-Ni Chen and Plu Sayampol

The evening's discussion were celebratory and focused on the careers and lives of all these talented individuals, but we did move into some uncomfortable territory dealing with racism, sexism, ageism and homophobia. Matter of fact, in the curtain call photo we DID include the Pig in the Room in the photo, to add more humor to the evening!



Those that were able to stay for the Curtain Call!

L to R: Lillian Colon, Fernando Carrillo, DREAMGIRLS

**Jaygee Macapugay, Robyn DeGuzman and Jonelle Margallo,
DO40 Prez John Sefakis, Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson, Sarita Allen, Jill Williams, Carmen de Lavallade, Karen Brown, Solomon Dumas, Gail Reese, Baayork Lee, Yael Lewin, Nai-Ni Chen and Plu Sayampol – and yes, the Pig in the Room!**

(Missing: Dori Berinsein, Lori Tan Chinn, Lenora Nemetz, Nancy Ticotin, Richard Ridge, and the Nai-Ni Chen Dancers Greta Campo, Jia-Yin Goh, Tyler Brown and Bo Pang)

But the Finale, was breathtaking! Baayork Lee brought performers from her National Asian Artists Project to perform the number DREAMGIRLS (from the musical), and it was a stunning ending to the show – and well worth the wait!!!! (The show ran a bit long.... sometimes that happens!!)



Baayork Lee's DREAMGIRLS, Jaygee Macapugay, Robyn DeGuzman and Jonelle Margallo

As always, a copy of this evening's event will be donated to the Dance Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, and it will be available for viewing only to DO40 members on our website's video page. There will also be a photo gallery with over 100 pictures of the show (those are already on our DO40 facebook page for all to view)!! The best perk of being a member, whether in NYC or California,

is to be able to view our events if you can't get there in person! So if you haven't joined DO40 yet, please do! As DO40 Advisory Board member Chita Rivera says, "We Simply Cannot Do It Alone!"



DO40 Legacy Award Honoree Gemze de Lappe, with Carmen de Lavallade, Gail Reese and Hope Clarke



The Gotta Dance Team – producer Dori Berinstein, DO40 members Lori Tan Chinn and Lenora Nemetz, moderator Richard Ridge and Nancy Ticotin



**Backstage with dancer Solomon Dumas and the Nai-Ni Chen Dancers,
Greta Campo, Jia-Yin Goh, Tyler Brown and Bo Pang**



Seen in the audience, DO40's OWN Dreamgirls!!! Leni Anders, Norma Doggett-Bezwick (7 Brides for 7 Brothers in 1954!!!)


and soon-to-be DO40 Legacy Award Honoree Janice Herbert!



Dr. Mel A. Tomlinson, DO40 President John Sefakis, Gemze de Lappe and Karen Brown after the show

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Photo By Jeff Eason, Wilsonmodels, Inc

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