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ODC/DANCE NAMES MIA J. CHONG CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Mia J. Chong, left, and Brenda Way. Photo credit: Natalia Roberts.

odc.dance

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, September 29, 2025 – ODC and ODC Founder and Artistic Director **Brenda Way** are thrilled to announce **Mia J. Chong** as co-artistic director, a position she will assume this December as the company prepares to leave on tour to Taiwan. Chong currently serves as ODC/Dance's staging director. She is also the founder and artistic director of EIGHT/MOVES, a contemporary dance company in San Francisco.

"Following over a decade-long country-wide search for the right leader with the imagination, commitment and verve to take ODC into the future, we returned, like Voltaire's *Candide*, to our own garden, where the ideal candidate was virtually hiding in plain sight," said Way. "I so look forward to helping launch the next ODC generation in concert with Mia and her compelling artistic, educational and social vision."

"I am deeply honored to step into the role of co-artistic director at ODC, a company that has long been a home for my artistic journey," said Chong. "The many years of guidance and partnership with Brenda and Kimi Okada have profoundly shaped me as an artist and leader. Together, I look forward to carrying ODC into its future with fresh eyes and a deep commitment to artists, audiences and community."

Chong, age 28, has been a part of the ODC family since she was five years old – first as a student at ODC School, then as a member of the Dance Jam, ODC’s pre-professional teen dance company, followed by six seasons as a member of ODC/Dance, during which time she earned a coveted Princess Grace Award.

Apart from ODC, Chong trained at the Kirov Academy of Ballet, San Francisco Ballet School, the Ailey School, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the School at Jacob’s Pillow and BANDALOOP, and she has enjoyed performance stints with Post:ballet, Robert Moses’ Kin, Dance Theatre of San Francisco and the San Francisco Symphony.

As a choreographer, Chong has earned support from Jacob’s Pillow, the Zellerbach Family Foundation and the San Francisco Arts Commission, among others. Her choreography has been commissioned and presented by Berkeley Ballet Theater, BODYSONNET, FACT/SF, Gonzaga University, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Post:ballet, RAWdance, the University of California-Berkeley and more. Her choreography for film has been selected and screened by more than 15 festivals around the world, reaching audiences in Japan, South Korea, England, Turkey and Italy.

This past summer, ODC/Dance commissioned Chong to make her first dance on the company, *Theories of Time*, which will be remounted March 5 – 8, 2026 as part of ODC’s annual home season at YBCA, **Dance Downtown**. Her second commission for ODC/Dance, set on dancers from ODC and EIGHT/MOVES, will premiere at **Summer Sampler**, July 30 – August 2.

Rounding out her preparation for the role of co-artistic director, in 2022 Chong completed a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences with a concentration in Organizational Behavior and Change from New York University, and in 2024 she received a Master of Science in Arts Administration and Cultural Entrepreneurship from Northeastern University.

As co-artistic director, Chong will play a hands-on and critically important role in conceiving, developing and implementing ODC’s artistic vision as the West Coast’s leading contemporary dance company, promoting ODC’s dual commitment to artistic excellence and accessibility. She will assist in determining what to bring to the stage, while also playing an ongoing role in the organization’s articulation of the ideal relationships between its program areas – ODC’s School, Theater and Healthy Dancers’ Clinic, together with its flagship company, ODC/Dance.

In 2023, while completing her graduate degree at Northeastern, Chong founded EIGHT/MOVES as a platform for marginalized artists to flourish, centering Asian American and Pacific Islander, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and women voices. Earlier this month, EIGHT/MOVES completed its second season presenting a triple bill that featured premieres by Chong and Tsai Hsi Hung, alongside *Steam*, a work co-choreographed by Chong and ODC Fellow KT Nelson, that premiered last year. Chong’s vision of celebrating difference and creating space for diverse artists to thrive will continue to serve the community through EIGHT/MOVES as she steps into leadership at ODC.

This fall, Chong will continue as ODC/Dance’s staging director, with the company’s annual holiday program, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, opening November 29 with six shows through December 7.

Prior to *The Velveteen Rabbit*, on Friday, October 17, ODC/Dance will present its next edition of **Unplugged**, a recurring platform offering a rare and candid look into the creative process of ODC’s

choreographers. Next month's Unplugged will spotlight Brenda Way's *After the Deluge*, which will premiere at Dance Downtown, March 5 – 8, 2026 at YBCA. Ticket-buyers are invited to a complimentary pre-show reception at 6 p.m. For reservations, visit odc.dance/unplugged.

In addition to a premiere by Way and a remount of Chong's *Theories of Time*, next spring's Dance Downtown program will feature a first-time commission by guest choreographer **Gypsy Snider**, co-founder of The 7 Fingers, an artist collective based in Montreal, Canada. Daughter of the founders of the Pickle Family Circus, Snider was born and raised in San Francisco, and she received her first tap dance training from ODC founding member **Kimi Okada**.

Additional events in ODC/Dance's 2025/26 Season include *Path of Miracles* at St. Joseph's Arts Society, April 14 – 16; Dancing in the Park SF in Golden Gate Park, April 25; and Summer Sampler at ODC Theater, July 30 – August 2. Summer Sampler's program will include two new works, one by Chong and another by returning guest choreographer **Catherine Galasso**.

ODC/DANCE'S 2025/26 SEASON AT A GLANCE

ODC/DANCE UNPLUGGED

ODC Dance Commons, Studio B

October 17, 2025

Friday at 7 p.m. (Reception at 6 p.m.)

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT

Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA

November 29 - December 7, 2025

Saturdays at 11 a.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 3 and Friday, Dec. 5 at 11 a.m.

TAIWAN TOUR

December 31, 2025 – January 16, 2026

DANCE DOWNTOWN & GALA

Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA

March 5 - 8, 2026

Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday at 8 p.m. (Gala)

Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday at 5 p.m.

PATH OF MIRACLES

St. Joseph's Arts Society

April 14 - 16, 2026

Monday at time TBD

Tuesday at time TBD

Wednesday at time TBD

DANCING IN THE PARK SF

Music Concourse at Golden Gate Park

April 25, 2026

Saturday at 1 p.m.

SUMMER SAMPLER

ODC Theater

July 30 – August 2, 2026

Thursday – Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday at 5 p.m.

ABOUT ODC

Founded in 1971 by Artistic Director Brenda Way, ODC is a groundbreaking contemporary arts institution: a world-class dance company (ODC/Dance), a theater with year-round presenting and mentorship programs (ODC Theater), a training school for dancers and movers of all levels (ODC School), and a fee-free, educational Healthy Dancers' Clinic. Known nationally for its entrepreneurial savvy and artistic innovation, ODC is unique for its holistic vision, now including a robust digital platform. With its home in San Francisco's Mission District, ODC makes a dynamic contribution to the Bay Area's vibrant dance and arts ecosystem, cultivating artists, inspiring audiences, engaging the community, and fostering diversity and inclusion through dance performance, training and mentorship.