

# Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





**World Dance Alliance  
Asia-Pacific**

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**Cover:**  
*en/un/re/multi fold,*  
part of the Singapore  
Biennale 2019 Finale,  
at the National Gallery  
of Singapore, on 20  
March 2020. Presented  
by students from the  
Diplomas of Fashion  
and Dance of LASALLE  
College of the Arts. Lead  
lecturers of project:  
Susan Sentler, Daniela  
Monasterio, Ginette  
Chittick. Screenshot image  
by Susan Sentler, courtesy  
of film by National Gallery  
Singapore.

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**Breath 梦以随**, an interdisciplinary project by Margret Wibmer with Dance, Fashion Studies and Fine Arts students, on 31 Jan 2020 at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore. Photo by Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.

## Executive reports

The Executive Board of the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific (WDAAP) is elected by the membership every two years at the Annual General Meeting, which is held in a different country each year and is hosted by the local WDA chapter. The Executive Board consists of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and four regional Vice Presidents, who represent the interests of their regions: East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. Members with a specific interest in the affairs of one of these regions should contact the designated Vice President. If members wish to contribute to issues within their own countries, they should contact their Chapter heads.



## President's report

by Urmimala Sarkar Munsri

Dear friends, near and far,

In the present times distances do not matter; some of you are near and yet very far because of the lockdown, and many are very far away and yet are on my phone screen more often than ever before.

So distances really do not matter in these times for those who have ways and means of staying indoors. Unfortunately, at these times of complete shutdown of everyday life, there are many people who are fearing for their survival. Some are longing to reach the safety of their homes just to feel safe with their near and dear ones. The world is reeling under loss of human lives, livelihood, and hope – as it braces for a very bleak time ahead.

Many dancers are facing the same vulnerability as well. In these bleak times we need to stand by each other, hold hands to strengthen the resolve to fight for health, peace and happiness and remain connected through our love of and work around dance. We note with gratitude a lot of work that has been done by WDAAP members. This is also a time when actually all that we know as our regular work has stopped. At the time of Covid-19 lockdown all over the world, on one hand funding has stopped, performances have been cancelled, and for many dancers economic uncertainties have taken over their lives as performers, teachers, and entrepreneurs. But on the other hand, dancers are working hard: to create their presence in the social media, to be there for each other, and to connect over unsurmountable geographical distances digitally, to create wonderful dance projects together.

On this World Dance Day 2020 the beautiful message released by the International Theatre Institute ITI -World Organization for the Performing Arts, written by Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, a dancer, actor, choreographer and dance educator from South Africa, said:

“We are living through unimaginable tragedies, in a time that I could best describe as the posthuman era. More than ever, we need to dance with purpose, to remind the world that humanity still exists.”

On the same day, Journal for Emerging Dance Scholarship Volume 07, 2019, was uploaded on the website [www.jedsonline](http://www.jedsonline).

net. This volume of JEDS was edited by two colleagues, Sarah Knox and Anja Ali-Haapla – and is extremely exciting! The new journal awaits your reading and reviews eagerly.

In these bleak times, let's again celebrate the wonderful energies that WDAAP brings to our lives. World Dance Alliance (WDA) works through its regions. The Asia Pacific region has its very own beautiful empathetic networking rhythms. The region is still reverberating with the rhythms of the Ocean Dance Festival of the December 2020, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Bangladesh has just experienced an intercultural project directed and choreographed by the British Bangladeshi dancer of international repute, Akram Khan, who created an 8-min piece titled 'Father: Vision of the Floating World', that featured as part of the 100-year anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Sheik Mujib. The performance premiered on Tuesday, 17 March 2020, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The work was performed by three Akram Khan Company dancers who spent four weeks in a rehearsal residency in the heart of the country teaching the movement to 25 dancers from Dhaka. We in World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific are fortunate to have the link of this performance on [www.wda-ap.org](http://www.wda-ap.org), thanks to our South Asia Vice President Lubna Marium.

Also from India we have a World Dance Day video message, at the time of Covid-19. The Indian dance video is compiled by Smt. Maitreyee Pahari, and presented by Birju Maharaj, a leading Kathak exponent. Well-known dance personalities from India as well as from all over the world feature in this video, that is now also a part of the [www.wda-ap.org](http://www.wda-ap.org) website.

We face a dilemma regarding the future of our yearly meetings/festivals in different locations in the world, that have always helped us to dance together, to strategize and plan, and to hear each other's research annually in some location every year. We are still a bit unsure whether we can survive only on the basis of digital communication. But for now, thank heavens for the internet, and all the fantastic possibilities it has offered us in these times to virtually dance with each other. Let us stay safe, and continue to dance.



## **Vice President's report**

**by Stella Lau**

In the first half of 2020, we are going through the worst pandemic of recent history, with Covid-19. It took away thousands of lives of our loved ones, severely impacting our communities and affecting every one of us individually. With countries in lock down, social distancing, cancelled events, and closure of venues during the outbreak, colleagues and friends of Asia-Pacific come together in this issue to share their creative voices how they strive to create, connect and engage in their practices during this challenging time.

It is heart warming to see how artists and arts organizations in the region adapted quickly to the crisis. Some turned their canceled events into digital events; some turned their performances to a live-stream series; some provided free classes to the public and some shared videos of their productions through social media – all to blow away the Covid blues that have been piling up.

In an effort to support education and training of young dancers, institutions in the region have moved classes online. Despite the equity and privacy issues, this enables them to continue to learn in their isolated homes. For the past three months, I have been witnessing my students and colleagues overcome and adapt to the 'new normal' while the novel coronavirus lingers.

With no predictable end to the pandemic, I would like to send my warmest wishes to my friends and colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region, and let them know that HKAPA is still keeping in mind the possibility of the WDA Global Summit in June 2021. The planning will be resumed in good time.

Thanks and please keep safe.



## **WDA Secretary General's report**

**by Mohd. Anis Md. Nor**

Dear Friends, Practitioners, Scholars, Advocates, and Supporters of Dance World Wide,

This is a message of hope and aspiration.

As the world reels under the Covid-19 pandemic, we are all confronted with having to adapt to a new normal amidst great challenges to our dance community. Natural disasters such as the Amphan cyclone in South Asia, the bushfires in Brazil and Australia, and the global Covid-19 pandemic continue to pose great uncertainties, destroying precious lives and livelihood, causing our robust economies to decrease into trickles, affecting the arts industry to reach an unprecedented low point.

Nonetheless, our resilience in responding to such calamities has been exceptional, as we engage our dance communities to adapt to the ever-changing landscapes. Our myriad backgrounds and culturally diverse communities have been our greatest reservoir of talent for our creative endeavors, time tested and fastidiously honored.

As an independent, non-profit, non-political organization that promotes the recognition, development and mutual understanding of all forms of dance, WDA stands as a united community against all forms of racial inequality, ethnic hegemony and cultural superiority. Dance is Life and lives lived in inequality matter.



*Father: Vision of the Floating World, choreographed by Akram Khan, performed by dancers from Bangladesh and Akram Khan Dance Company, 17 March 2020, in Bangladesh.*

## **WDA Message of Hope on International Dance Day**

The World Dance Alliance supports dance communities everywhere as we all face unprecedented loss of health, income, career opportunities, creativity and the human to human connections so intrinsic to dance practice, through the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic has significantly impacted dance and dance workers everywhere, and it may take many years to recover. WDA, through its regional organisations and networks, supports dance artists across the world as they struggle to maintain their health, professional work and livelihoods during this tragic period.

While the world turns to the arts to lead and to make sense of this tragedy, there is hope as we witness so many inspirational dance practitioners who have found ways to come together, to teach, to choreograph, to perform and to stay positive, often through humour, and with their special skill in communicating meaning through dance.

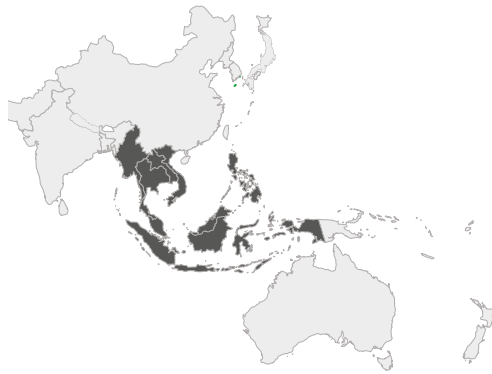
This year's International Dance Day Message from Gregory Vuyani Maqoma notes that "We are living through unimaginable tragedies, in a time that I could best describe as the post-human era. More than ever, we need to dance with purpose, to remind the world that humanity still exists".

We applaud dancers everywhere who have been so sadly affected by loss of income, performance opportunities and teaching, but who are nevertheless continuing to inspire and lead the way forward through dance.





<b>South East Asia</b>
Malaysia
Philippines
Indonesia
Singapore
Thailand



## South East Asia report

by Vice President Bilqis Hijjas

Singaporean festival director Ong Keng Sen was recently asked about cultural thought leadership in Southeast Asian, in [this interview on Arts Equator](#).

As I read it, I wondered, where is the cultural thought leadership in the specific context of dance in Southeast Asian? Who are the people in our context who are gathering resources, connecting individuals and communities, and forging new and interesting paths which others will follow?

There is a tendency, as Keng Sen noted, to wait for others to arrange these networks for us. "For me," he says, "That would go against independent solidarities, because you're waiting for the big brother or big sister to create it."

Certainly there are several agencies from outside Southeast Asia willing to take on this role, such as the SEAD program started by British Council with Mekong Cultural Hub to connect arts and culture with sustainable development, and the Arts Leaders Program for the Asia Pacific run by Australia Council. But even in these programs, there are few

representatives from the Southeast Asian dance community.

Why is this? Is it, as I often argue, because we are so lacking in resources that we simply cannot afford to network on a regional scale? Perhaps, but as Keng Sen points out, it also reflects a lack of will. "It just needs a kind of urgent purpose," he says, "Everybody says they want to meet, but as soon as it's not done by somebody else, the desire breaks down."

Is this shortcoming something peculiar to dance, because dance is so tightly tied to the body, that where our bodies cannot go then our art and our networks cannot follow? Now, with the Covid-19 pandemic, we are all being forced to reimagine our art as something dislocated from our flesh-and-blood standing-in-front-of-you bodies. So how now do we imagine cultural thought leadership for dance in Southeast Asia?

I am certain that the current 'pivot to digital' means more than just throwing our old performances onto the Internet for the amorphous public to watch. I believe it requires a whole new paradigm, a total shift in the way we think about why we dance, how we dance, how we watch dance, what

**Wirastuti Susilaningtyas, performing in Day 3 (29 April 2020) of *Distance Parade*, an online dance video collection, coordinated by the Directorate-General of Culture, Indonesia, and the Indonesian Dance Foundation.**







***kogomefi*, an online InstaStories collaboration project incorporating dance, found poses and original music, coordinated by choreographer Ferry C Nugroho; this performance featuring dancer Galih Puspita Karti and musician Yozhy Leopold Hoely, from March 2020.**

a dance is, what defines good technique or a successful dance production, and whether that is even important anymore. We need to think in terms of distracted audiences with shorter attention spans, not the captive audiences of live theatres. We must consider the demands of lighting, editing, and technology. We have to not only understand but be able to manipulate and exploit the special opportunities that the digital realm offers.

Those of us who are not digital natives will struggle with this. Many of us – and I include myself in this – may fail to make the jump to hyperspace. Our communal solidarities which have developed around physical space – like the concept of the Southeast Asian region itself – may cease to be relevant. As Urmimala Sarkar points out in her president's report, it is now just as easy to work with someone on the other side of the world as it is to work with someone next door, barring the difficulties of time zones.

At the moment, the Southeast Asian

dance artists with the most global ambitions for networking seem to be coming from Indonesia. The Indonesians have been proactive in community building during the pandemic, organising vast numbers of dancers to contribute to what we might call 'chain dances'. Perhaps the Indonesians are predisposed to do this by the extremely scattered nature of Indonesian geography, where local arts communities have always been separated by vast distances. A good example is *Distance Parade*, discussed in the Indonesia report in this edition. Another example is *ChOReO-iNstAnt*, a project which included 39 dancers, including ones from Indonesia, USA, Malaysia, Uganda, Japan and Australia. Whether or not these chain dances are artistically significant is debatable, but at least these initiatives have been interested in a regional and globalist viewpoint, rather than having their worlds shrink into only the immediate four walls, as many of us have found during this lockdown.



**Foo Chiwei (Malaysia) performing in *ChOReO-iNstAnt*, an online video collection co-hosted by Gatot Gunawan (Indonesia), Galih Mahara (Indonesia) and Rithaudin Abdul Kadir (Malaysia)**



- East Asia
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Korea
- Taiwan



## East Asia report

by Vice President Hong Jo Jun

### Trip to Fujairah Arts Festival 2020

Early this year I attended the Fujairah Arts Festival, in Fujairah, one of the seven United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The UAE became a British protectorate in 1952, and gained independence in 1971. Bordered on the east by Oman, on the south and west by Saudi Arabia, and on the northwest with Qatar, to the north it faces the Persian Gulf. While Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates, where most of the oil is produced and which provides all the financial support, all six rulers of the UAE have the right to vote. Fujairah also has many other industries, especially cement, mining, agriculture, and a developing resort hotel industry in its beautiful natural environment.

The festival was held for nine days from 20 to 28 February, with a budget of 3 million Euros. The festival looked like a national event; the presidents of Abu Dhabi and Dubai and the ruler and crown prince of Fujairah attended the opening and closing ceremonies, and the Hamad al Sharqi Award for Arab Emirate artists.

The purpose of Fujairah in supporting

such an international event is to reduce the national dependence on oil, and also to increase international industrial connections, and cultural and artistic development on an international scale. The festival director is Mohamed Saif Al-Afkham, who is also a mayor of Fujairah, president of the International Theatre Institute (ITI), and director of the Fujairah Culture and Media Authority. While he is an engineer, not an artist, he studied abroad in the USA.

More than 100 artists from all over the world were invited by Fujairah Arts Festival 2020, with their entire expenses subsidized. The highlight of this event was the experience of Arab life and culture in the Heritage Village next to the theatre, where we could see Arab traditional performance, experience Arab life, and enjoyed unlimited servings of Arab traditional food. It was a pleasure every day.

The population of Fujairah seem happy to receive support and benefits from their government. The opening and closing ceremonies were filled with awe and respect for their rulers. As the Arab culture and traditional food mingled with the arts events, it became the venue for an international festival which engaged the general public.

I still miss the Arab ritual of tea time I enjoyed before every performance. I sincerely hope that WDA will be able to participate in future editions of the Fujairah festival, and can contribute to world-class dance exchanges with the Arab dance community.





**Cultural events in the Heritage Village, part of the Fujairah Arts Festival 2020, in the United Arab Emirates. Photos: Hong Jo Jun**



Image from film *HERE* by Alexandra Page in collaboration with Holly Finch. Presented as part of the DANZ 2020 Social Media Takeover Season. Filmed on location in Maungarei/ Mt Wellington, Auckland, New Zealand. Photo: Gemma Lynch, edited by Alexandra Page.

## Network reports

The World Dance Alliance works through four Networks, based on specific areas of interest and embracing the mandate of the organisation. Each network has a chairperson and co-chair who coordinate activities to advance the issues raised by these special interest groups. Network Chairs initiate and drive the work of special interest groups within the WDAAP and provide two reports annually on their activities for *Asia-Pacific Channels*.

## About the networks

**The Education and Training Network** provides a forum for professional exchange to improve dance curriculum content and delivery, and opportunities for sharing information and resources.

**The Research and Documentation Network** supports and initiates projects that engage contemporary insights into dance as a vibrant part of diverse scholarly and artistic conversations. The network regularly publishes journals, books and conference proceedings and encourages members to participate in writing, editing and reviewing for these publications. It also encourages publications in differing formats and languages whilst maintaining English as the lingua franca for communication. Individual projects proposed by members addressing the heritage and future of dance, to include ideas for implementation, are encouraged and supported through this network.

**The Support and Development Network** focuses on dance-based activities in terms of management, promotion, distribution, advocacy, policy and funding, through members who practice in these areas. It equally encompasses members who are concerned with the social and physical well being of dance such as health professionals, somatic practitioners, community facilitators and legal advisors. In all these aspects communication networks—professional and social—are an important driver for dance sustainability.

**The Creation and Presentation Network** provides opportunities for choreographic development, presentation, networking and cultural exchange. It includes choreographers, dancers, designers, composers, filmmakers and other collaborators.



## Education & Training Network report

By Sarah Knox, chair

It is my pleasure to write this WDAAP Education and Training (E&T) report as the new Network Chair. Based in New Zealand, I am a Lecturer in Dance Studies at The University of Auckland. I have a background in contemporary dance performance and choreography and have been a dance educator in diverse contexts for 14 years. My research is concerned with the nature of collaboration within both educational and professional choreographic realms. I have been steadily building a relationship with the World Dance Alliance since 2013 and it is an honour to take on the role of Chair of the E&T Network. I work closely with previous E&T Co-Chair Ralph Buck and am pleased to have his mentorship into this role.

Over the coming months I aim to pick up where Ralph and Jeff left off in strengthening the E&T network, find ways to pique interest, formalise membership activities, and create opportunities for sharing, connecting and learning. I am keen to understand more about how the E&T Network might bridge dance educators throughout the Asia Pacific, particularly within countries where WDA does not currently have representation. This goes alongside the task of creating a robust membership list so that we may disseminate E&T Network news directly.

May 25-31 is UNESCO International Arts Education week. The theme for 2020 is Be Radical. Within our current global challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, our teaching



Sarah Knox (seated R), with Nicholas Rowe, Stephanie Burridge, and Mohd Anis Mohd Nor, at the launch of *Moving Oceans: Celebrating Dance in the South Pacific*, during the WDAAP Annual General Meeting in Taipei, Taiwan, in November 2013. Photo: Julie Dyson

practice, the ways in which we connect with our students, how we make and disseminate our research and practice all require us to be radical in our approach. One marvellous thing that has come out of recent events is the enormous amount of information sharing across the international dance teaching community. You can contribute to International Arts Education week by creating a radical art work or activity of any kind and sharing it on social media with the tag #ArtsEdWeek.

Unfortunately, so far this year, we have seen a number of arts education conferences cancelled or postponed, including the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) World Summit (postponed until 2021). However, you have the opportunity to tune into a virtual WAAE seminar on 26 October 2020. The seminar will bring together several invited international experts and host a discussion of evidence-based practices aimed at measuring impact of arts learning and arts programming. Register at <https://creative-generation.org/waae-virtual-seminar>

I look forward to meeting many more World Dance Alliance members virtually and in person over the next few years. Please stay safe in these uncertain times. Do contact me if you have any questions or suggestions for the E&T Network: [sarah.knox@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.knox@auckland.ac.nz)



## **Research & Documentation Network report**

**By Stephanie Burridge, A.P. Rajaram and Anja Ali-Haapala, co-chairs**

### **Research and reflection during Covid-19**

It is an incredibly challenging time for everyone right now so the main thing is to keep each other and our loved ones safe, stay well and connected. Our R&D team wanted to put together a brief, personal report about how we are managing during this Covid-19 time. I know so many of us have had to scramble to get material working online for students as well as coping with uncertainty, loss of income across the sector for artists, part-time lecturers, freelancers and everyone associated with productions that have been cancelled, and more. An upside for research might be that it is an ideal time to write, so some of our members will use the period to upskill, complete academic papers, thesis chapters and books... Below we share some of our experiences and reflections. Stay well and safe until we all meet again.

### **Stephanie (Singapore)**

Everything seemed to happen so quickly. Academic staff had to get used to directives coming daily, half daily, then sometime even more frequently, as universities raced to respond to the rapidly evolving Covid-19 situation. The last few weeks of my BA elective module Dance: East and West at Singapore Management University is always fun as students work in groups on their final projects. The topics are all dance-based but very diverse – this batch ranged from looking at ballroom dancing as therapy for dementia, dance and multimedia, and the question of ‘is it borrowing or cultural appropriation?’ to name a few. An important part of each project involves primary research and interviews, observations and immersive sessions with local respondents – these soon became restricted and eventually impossible. On top of that, our eight international exchange students from the US, Canada, India, Japan and South Korea were

immediately called home. This hit us all very hard to see young people having to try to get on flights, pack up their gear and miss out on so many wonderful opportunities to travel and enjoy the region over the summer break before returning back home. (They all made it but our New York students had a four hour wait on arrival at the airport.) I experienced the pressure to facilitate the best options for them to finish the course such that they felt they contributed equally with their Singaporean group-mates. The students form deep bonds of friendship working together over a semester, and tears were shed all around as new mates just had to go home with such short notice. Thanks to technology we were able to use various platforms to include recorded video material, WebEx, Skype and more. For the locals, it was masks on, present your group work managing safe-distancing, and go home – no photos of me with the students that are usually treasured, no long farewells, nor tea with my amazing teaching assistant Cynthia.

Other cancellations were disappointing. Our proposed book launch in March of *Dancing Across Borders: Perspectives on Dance Education, Young People and Change* (editors: Charlotte Svendler Nielsen and Stephanie Burridge, series foreword: Sir Ken Robinson) featuring a dance seminar with guest speaker Anna Chan from Hong Kong at LASALLE College of the Arts had to be cancelled. Many other challenges remain as we move forward but it is always the people, the dancers, the friendships and networks, like the WDA family, that sustain us during these dark days.

### **Raja (India)**

As a faculty member of Department of Performing Arts at Presidency University, Kolkata, India, my colleagues and I are at a time when thinking without stressing, writing without worrying, and planning without uncertainty has become impossible,

given the situation. As a comparatively new faculty, I need to think anew about engaging meaningfully but creatively with students of dance studies. Sharing articles, while being careful about citations, and sharing videos with all possible copyright issues attended to and guarded, has been a task in these changing times – that strikes me as something entirely different to consciously engage with at the time of online sharing of educational materials. This is an experience I shall incorporate and work on, as the idea of online teaching comes with serious implications on education around dance. Even though I have serious problems with the limitations of online teaching, this seems to have become the new normal.

### **Anja (Australia)**

Even though my life is entirely 'from home' right now, I'm able to focus on my work in higher education and independent research. Like many people working in the arts, I've also been stood down from community dance teaching and have used this time to support my local dance sector to transition to online learning (which is something that I've, fortuitously, been upskilling in over the past year). For researchers, particularly research students, isolation is a feeling that many of us know through our work. We spend lots of time alone with our computers, literature, and ideas. This has and continues to be my experience. For several years now I've sought community, to connect with other isolated dance researchers. This initiated the Dance Early Career Researchers Community in 2014 which, so far, has done well with information sharing but we haven't figured out peer support yet (we've had a few fabulous fails). Focusing on the human side of research seems more relevant than ever. I hope a silver lining of Covid-19 is learning how we can more meaningfully connect our international dance research community.

**Dr. Sohini Chakraborty,**  
the new Chair of Support  
& Development Network,  
**WDAAP.** Photo: Micky  
Wisedel, courtesy of Vital  
Voices.



## Support & Development Network report

By Sohini Chakraborty, chair

I am Dr. Sohini Chakraborty, the incoming Chair of Support and Development for WDAAP. Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am an Ashoka fellow, sociologist, dance activist, dance movement therapist and Founder Director of Kolkata Sanved. I am one of the pioneers of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) in India and South Asia. I am also an International Working Committee Member for Rise Learning Network, which works for recovery and reintegration for children who have experienced sexual exploitation.

My contribution is in leading Kolkata Sanved in developing an approach (called Sampoonata) through which dance and movement can be used as therapy in psycho-social rehabilitation and reintegration for vulnerable/marginalized children, young people and adults. 23 years ago, I introduced this innovative approach both in DMT and in the social development sector. For me, creating a pool of DMT practitioners from the grassroots level and from survivors has been my significant contribution to the global DMT approach.

Honed over the past two decades, Kolkata Sanved's Sampoonata model is globally recognized today. Kolkata Sanved was able to create and launch one of India's first

Diploma programmes in DMT in 2012, with Centre for Lifelong Learning, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Learn more about our work at [www.kolkatasanved.org](http://www.kolkatasanved.org)

I am very happy to be taking on this new role in WDA.

### What's happening for S&D?

This network is still very nascent in WDAAP, in comparison to other networks. We are in a brainstorming stage to understand what are the things that will benefit the dance community. To get direction and form an outline for the network, Dr. Urmimala Sarkar, President WDAAP, Bilqis Hijjas, VP Southeast Asia and I had a brainstorming meeting on 20 June.

I am very hopeful that, with all of your support, we can make this network functional together. As dancers, it is important for us to explore ways to bring solidarity into the world of dancers and extend our thoughts of dance beyond performance to topics like benefits of the dancer as an artist, aging and dance, injuries and dance, and dance as a tool for healing and wellbeing. I welcome new ideas so that we can think out of the box. Please send your thoughts and new ideas to [kolkatasanved@gmail.com](mailto:kolkatasanved@gmail.com)

I would like to share two exciting pieces of news, to help kickstart this conversation:

### **Festival of Wellbeing: Kolkata Sanved and British Council India Initiative.**

Our present global crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, presents an especially large risk to mental health and emotional wellbeing by compounding pre-existing stressors with new and unprecedented modalities of living. There is an increased level of violence and abuse. Isolation, loneliness, fear and uncertainty get in the way of accessing wellbeing.

In response to this wellness crisis, Kolkata Sanved, in collaboration with British Council India, will be organising a digitally-hosted arts-based wellbeing festival for both the artist community and public at large. This festival will bring together information, resources, creative opportunities, and art forms integrated to enhance wellbeing in togetherness. During this month-long festival different art forms will provide for healing and wellbeing support. The platform will also provide experiential learning opportunities. Community mental health is a part of this festival.

We are currently looking for people who can assist as:

- **Moderators:** dynamic moderators whose background is strong both in performing art and wellbeing. To nominate yourself please, send your brief CV and brief video to [kolkatasanved@gmail.com](mailto:kolkatasanved@gmail.com).
- **Dancer:** young creative artists who work from community perspectives to participate as panellists. To nominate yourself please, send your brief CV and brief video to [kolkatasanved@gmail.com](mailto:kolkatasanved@gmail.com).



We also need volunteers for the following:

- **Tech:** platform, FB live, provide registration link; designing of creatives. Please nominate yourself with brief CV for selection. Volunteers will receive letters of recommendations from Kolkata Sanved. We hope to see you all during this Festival of Wellbeing in August.

### **Psycho-Social Support Guideline by Kolkata Sanved**

Kolkata Sanved has developed a guideline on how to implement DMT and other creative processes for psycho-social support during the Covid-19 pandemic. This document has been developed based on learning and reflections from our regular online DMT sessions. It aims to enable practitioners to stay mindful of context and risks, and lays down a strategy for responding to emergency situations when we do not have the opportunity to be present in-person.

This is an adaptable guideline. You can translate it into any language, while duly acknowledging Kolkata Sanved. What

we seek to present through this document is a roadmap: something from which to guide your own actions and activities in the crisis situation.

Please click the following link to read and download the full document: <https://kolkatasanved.org/kolkata-sanved-online-dmt-session-and-psycho-social-support-session-guideline/>







## Chapter reports

Countries or defined geographical areas within a regional centre may become Chapter members, providing information and coordinating the dance activities within their boundaries. They are important points in regional and global communication and networking. These Chapters propose and implement projects that address not only the general goals of WDA and WDA Asia Pacific, but also the specific needs of the local dance community.

### Chapters

Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Countries with representatives but no formalised Chapters: East Timor and Papua New Guinea.





*FreeSteps – NINi*, performed by Yu-Ting Fang, choreographed by Wei-Chia Su, of HORSE, in the playground in front of the National Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Taiwan. Photo: Chang-Chih Chen

## Aotearoa New Zealand report

by Sheryl Lowe

*Strasbourg 1518*, by  
Borderline Arts Ensemble,  
choreographed by Lucy-  
Margaux Marinkovich.

Photo: Phillip Merry



Like our counterpart organisations in other regions, DANZ (Dance Aotearoa New Zealand) works closely with New Zealand's multifaceted and diverse dance community to help promote, grow and strengthen the sector nationally, in the face of many challenges both domestic and external. Over the last few months, with growing concern, we have seen our dance community striving to deal with the professional, economic and creative fallout resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dance in New Zealand began 2020 on an exceptionally positive note with our arts festival season, including: New Zealand Festival of the Arts, Auckland Arts Festival, NZ Fringe Festival, and Auckland Fringe. The quality and diversity of offerings represented through those programmes showcased the high standards of creativity, innovation and expertise of dance in this country.

Of note were two new works premiered for the NZ Festival in Wellington, which contain many references touching on current times:

- Lemi Ponifasio's major new work, *Jerusalem*, created in turbulent and perplexing times, and inspired by the epic *Concerto Al Quds* by the great poet Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said Esber);
- Borderline Arts Ensemble's *Strasbourg 1518*, directed and choreographed by Lucy Marinkovich and written and composed by Lucien Johnson, exploring the unsolved and enigmatic history of the 1518 Strasbourg dance epidemic.

These and many other projects were the outcome of years of research, physical and intellectual experimentation and study.

As the Covid-19 pandemic reached New Zealand right in the middle of our major festival season, many performances disappointingly had to shut down halfway through, with a devastating and possibly long-term impact on many of our loved and respected artists and companies.

However, as so often in difficult times, creative people and organisations show their true spirit and strength. The arts community in New Zealand rallied, and the scope and quality of online performances, dance instruction, and community activity has been truly inspiring and encouraging.

The Royal New Zealand Ballet stepped up quickly to present a weekly series of free 'Live in Your Living Room' broadcasts, featuring recordings of some of the company's most popular performances, both contemporary and classic, from previous years. The series kicked off on 5 April with choreographer Loughlan Prior's 2019 celebrated season of *Hansel and Gretel*. Through this home broadcast season many new, non-traditional and less accessible audience segments were able to be reached.

Black Grace had just opened *Verses* when the tour was postponed due to Covid-19. The show was quickly transformed to *Virtual Verses*, an offering online until the company could get back on the road. As a video compilation, *Virtual Verses* is an unexpected celebration of the human spirit – in kitchens, living rooms, screens and porches.

Footnote New Zealand Dance also went online to deliver free presentations of *Mass Solitude* on Facebook Premiere. Choreographed by Sarah Foster-Sproull in collaboration with Guangdong Modern





**Principal dancer Katherine Precourt as the Witch in Royal New Zealand Ballet's *Hansel and Gretel*, choreographed by Loughlan Prior.**

Dance Company, *Mass Solitude* was created in Guangzhou in 2018. The work premiered as part of Footnote's *Hemispheres* season touring China in 2018 and then New Zealand in 2019, to wide acclaim from audiences and media.

New Zealand's International Dance Day celebrations took to the small screen for a wonderfully positive day of Zoom workshops; from Kids Zumba, Madagascan Dance, Hawaiian, Hip Hop, Siva Samoa, Bulgarian Folk, African Dance and Contemporary - there was something for everyone and for all ages and abilities. This was followed by an online broadcast of Short New Zealand Dance films, further showcasing the diversity of dance in New Zealand.

The annual Tempo Dance Festival reconfigured its programming to deliver dance experiences in a digital space for the remainder of 2020.

And recognising the loss of creative and performance opportunities during the pandemic for younger generation dance artists and practitioners, DANZ launched a 3-month social media takeover programme to provide a platform for promoting the work of newer up-and-coming artists and some lesser known dance genres, by way of commissioned content.

Economic and operational challenges presented by Covid-19 were also far-reaching for the dance studio, recreational and community sectors. Physical distancing, hygiene, partnering, administrative controls and contact tracing concerns, among others, all needed to be addressed through industry best practice guidance distilled from many sectors, fields of expertise and government

and non-government advisory sources.

Our country's Covid-19 lockdown has been a time of reflection for many in the dance sector, with several online seminars throughout the country convened to discuss and contemplate the sustainability of its future both over the next few months and 'post pandemic'.

While New Zealand has transitioned back to a new "Business as Usual" earlier than many other parts of the world, we must remain vigilant with controls in case outbreaks resurface and threat levels rise again. This may constrain some performance norms, such as close and direct audience interaction in some settings – and will be an ongoing challenge for performers, venues and audiences.

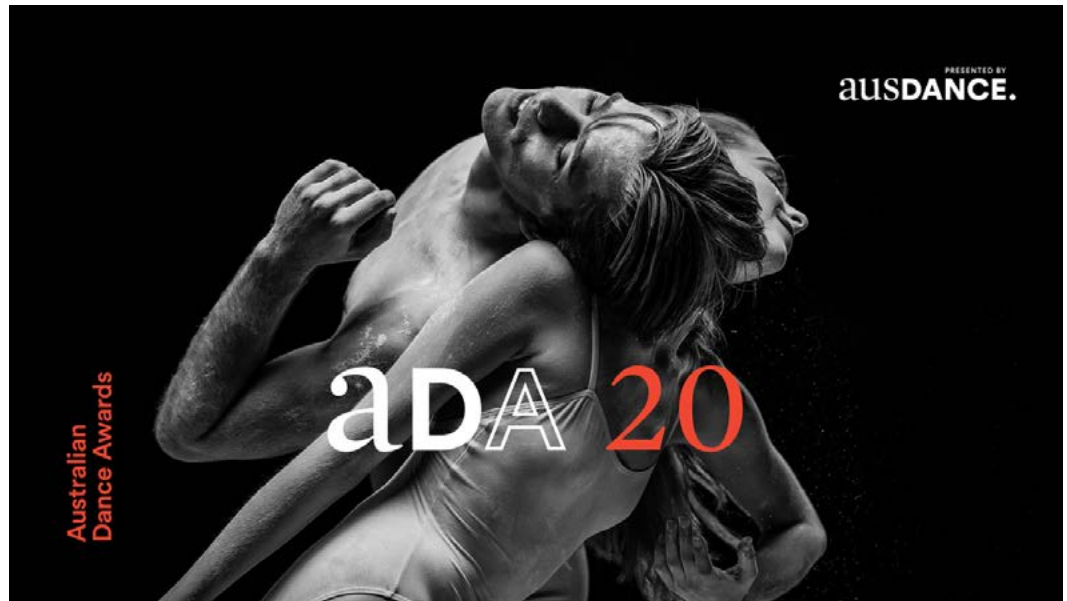
However, the digital platforms artists and organisations have been exploring have enabled the reach of dance to be expanded to those who might not usually experience live performances for a number of reasons. Online delivery has the potential to make dance more accessible. Bringing performances and classes into peoples' homes has been a way to reach new audiences, participants and fans, expose existing followers to dance forms they are not familiar with, and encourage increased uptake across all dance genres.

Going forward, our dance world will be different, but companies, choreographers, studios, dancers and dance organisations are already displaying the enthusiasm, innovation and resilience needed to keep adapting in a changing environment, and to ensure dance continues to be integral to our cultural and everyday life.

## Australia report

by Julie Dyson

Promotional image for the Australian Dance Awards 2020, featuring *Untitled 2019*, with dancers Pol Andrés Thió and Libby-Rose Niederer, of Queensland Ballet, in 2020. Photo by David Kelly



In these unprecedented times, Australian dance artists, companies, community dance practitioners and studio teachers are all now operating in a world of uncertainty, along with artists around the world.

While Australia has been relatively lucky in terms of living with Covid-19, this success has come at the cost of rigorously enforced lockdown rules including closure of state and national borders, theatres, festivals, schools, businesses and the now well-known term of 'social distancing'.

Dance practice had to cease almost completely, apart from those able to quickly adapt their work to an online environment, some incredibly successfully. However, all have noted the loss of that unique quality of dance practice, the body-to-body contact that is so integral to teaching, learning, rehearsing and performing. An Ausdance survey gathering information about the impact on the dance industry of Covid-19 is underway at present.

National and international touring has also been at a standstill, although some relaxation of travel between Australian States and Territories has been announced. However, resumption of international travel is unlikely before 2021, so tours that have been years in the planning have been thrown into disarray.

'Return To Dance: Principles and framework for restarting dance activities post-Covid-19' was prepared for the dance studio sector, a project led by Ausdance Queensland but applicable across the whole Ausdance network. It provides clear

guidelines for the development of Covid-safe plans, required by all jurisdictions for businesses, including dance businesses. Ausdance Queensland also produced a template for Covid-safe plans, now replicated by each Ausdance office with the resources to do so.

In response to severe restrictions and years of funding cuts, Ausdance National launched a new project called *From the Vault* during Australian Dance Week, inviting various dance sectors to search back through their archives for footage of long-archived work. It's important for artists to be able to point to work that's been lost so that our grassroots advocacy campaigns can be backed by evidence.

We have also prepared a new advocacy document called *The Politics of Dance – an action plan*, which it is hoped will empower artists to contact their local Members of Parliament and other representatives to point to this loss of dance culture in Australia.

Ausdance National and the Ausdance network have worked very closely throughout this pandemic to make sure the dance profession is properly represented at government levels, both Federal and State. This cooperation has led to numerous cross-border Zoom conferences with various sectors, including independent artists, small companies, studio teachers, etc. The consultation has provided Ausdance with the evidence needed to take concerns to politicians, at the same time giving hope to dance practitioners that future 'recovery' may be viewed with some optimism.

Ausdance National also made a comprehensive submission to the Senate Select Committee on Covid-19, in which we identified job losses, severe loss of income for independents and sole traders, financial stress for large and small companies, and, in many cases, the industry's struggle to adapt to the online environment with limited resources and low student numbers. We also profiled Australia's dance teaching excellence in a letter to the Prime Minister and the National Cabinet.

The nominations process for the 2020 Australian Dance Awards were finally opened in May, having been postponed at the outbreak of the pandemic in February. The presentation ceremony later this year will probably take place online, as it's anticipated that large gatherings will still be banned in Australia, perhaps until December.

The IDD's International Dance Day Message by Gregory Vuyani Maqoma was well received in Australia, and Ausdance National also issued its own message to celebrate 29 April.

The latest edition of the World Dance Alliance's Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship was guest edited by two young dance scholars, Anja Ali-Haapla (Australia) and Sarah Knox (New Zealand), mentored by Urmimala Sarkar Munsri. Vol. VII focuses on the 2019 JEDS theme: Practicalities of Practice through a 21st Century Lens. Congratulations Anja and Sarah!

**Promotional image for *From the Vault*, a new project for Australian Dance Week, highlighting archival footage.**







## Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli

The world is going through a tough time because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Everything has come to a standstill. Like every other sector, the dance field has also faced unprecedented loss which may take a long time to recover. Worldwide all shows and celebrations have been cancelled this year and so too in Bangladesh, but dancers are trying to carry out various dance-related activities from their homes.

Just before all this started, Bangladesh had a grand dance event on 17 March 17 2020, celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of the father of our nation, Bongobondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The main attraction of that event was the production *Father: Vision of the Floating World*, choreographed by internationally-recognized dancer and choreographer Akram Khan. 29 Bangladeshi dancers performed in that production with three other dancers of Akram Khan Dance Company. They had a month-long intensive training with AKDC in Dhaka which has led them to a new direction of dance and choreography. This training has also helped them to maintain their fitness and stamina in this lockdown condition as well.

This was the last event before the lockdown started in Bangladesh. This time of the year is usually the peak season for most performers, especially dancers. However, this year, things have not been easy for those who rely on stage performances as all the shows and classes got cancelled because of this pandemic. It took some time for dancers to find a way to continue their part of the job to survive. After a while, things started to change and dancers decided to switch

to online activities. Some dance schools, for example Kolpotoru, Srishti Cultural Centre, started taking online classes for their students. Performing artists were trying to find a way so that they can create online platforms to perform.

Shadhona Cultural Centre took the initiative to launch their first online event on 14 April 2020, on the occasion of Pohela Boishakh (the first day of the Bengali year). Usually people in Bangladesh observe Pohela Boishakh in a majestic way. It used to be a busy day for dancers. This year there was no celebration outside but only on social media. Shadhona released their event *Bakshobondhi Boisakh* on their Facebook page and YouTube channel. It got huge public response in social media. Simultaneously, other dance schools, for example Kolpotoru, Dhriti Narthanalaya and Vabna, have also released their performance videos on social media. Dancers individually have also released thematic dance videos on this tough time and this effort has been much appreciated by the audiences online. The motive of these videos is to spread positivity and cautiousness through dance in this crucial moment.

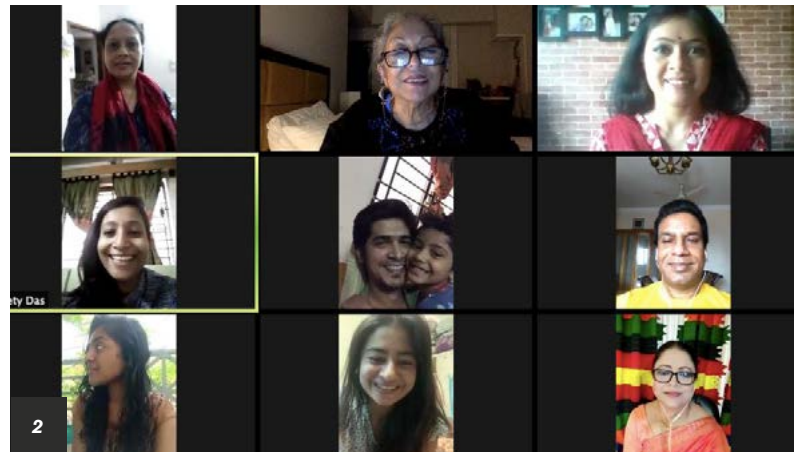
As we all know, usually on International Dance Day dancers rejoice through concerts, dance recitals, and other forms of stage performances all around the world. But this year dancers celebrated it in a different way because of the pandemic situation. Nrityajog, World Dance Alliance (Asia Pacific)—Bangladesh Chapter, took up several initiatives to mark International Dance Day 2020.

*Father: Vision of the Floating World* was

***Father: Vision of the Floating World*, choreographed by Akram Khan, performed by dancers from Bangladesh and Akram Khan Dance Company, 17 March 2020.**

screened on the day from the website of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific. Nriyajog also held a special online conference on Zoom where renowned dance exponents Anisul Islam Hero (President), Lubna Marium (General Secretary), Laila Hasan (Chief Adviser) and Munmun Ahmed (Executive Member of the organization) elaborated on different aspects and adopted several initiatives to address issues emerging from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This discussion was open to all, and several other active members of Nriyajog also attended. During the conference, Laila Hasan, Lubna Marium and Anisul Islam Hero called for a greater unity of dancers. They also unanimously decided to work for the betterment of all the dance artists of Bangladesh, emphasized on engaging promising dancers on the district level with their initiatives, and suggested that dance leaders should unanimously approach the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, different corporate houses, event management companies and mass media to disburse effective incentives, promotion and patronage so that they can survive, sustain and continue their dance practices during this crisis period. Other organizations also celebrated International Dance Day by arranging online events.

In the meantime, Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka, arranged a free online workshop, 'Guru Prathaa', on music and dance, which started on 10 May 2020. Renowned Bangladeshi artists Sujit Mustafa,



Anisul Islam Hero, Benazir Salam, Tamanna Rahman, Sadi Mohammad and Sharmila Banerjee conducted workshops on the dance genres of Nazrul Geeti, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Manipuri, Rabindra Sangeet and Rabindra Nritya.

With the fall of the economy, the world is facing is a challenge. Dancers all over the world are somehow realizing how unstable their statuses are as artists and this can have an impact on their mental health and motivation. Still, the community is trying hard to adapt to this shift and trying their best to be connected and serve their art. There is a saying, 'What does not kill you makes you stronger.' May we all survive this pandemic and be stronger and prepare to face all the challenges which are waiting for us in the near future.



1. Bakshobondhi Boishakh, an online event to celebrate Pohela Boishakh, by Shadhona Cultural Centre, 14 April 2020, on Facebook and YouTube.
2. Online Zoom conference organised by Nriyajog, for International Dance Day.
3. Flyer for online workshop 'Guru Prathaa', organised by Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka, starting on 10 May 2020.





## Hong Kong report

by Stella Lau & Sophie Lau

The pandemic of Covid-19 had a massive impact on the performing arts scene in Hong Kong. The operation and activities in the dance sector have almost come to a halt since mid-January. Major performing arts events have been either cancelled or postponed, including the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the 22nd Hong Kong Dance Awards. In addition, the performing arts venues were closed, and dance classes in community centres, studios and schools were also suspended. This has severely affected the dance practitioners including freelance artists, teachers and choreographers in the dance community.

In response to the adverse situation, the Hong Kong Dance Alliance has joined forces with members of the Hong Kong Dance Sector Joint Conference (HKDJC), including Hong Kong Ballet Group, Hong Kong Dance Federation and Association of Hong Kong Dance Organizations, to advocate for independent dance practitioners, dance studios and dance schools who did not receive any financial aid in the first round of the Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme of the Anti-Epidemic Fund launched by the Hong Kong SAR Government in late February. The HKDJC has reflected this to Legislative Council members and dispatched a questionnaire to collect comprehensive data on the loss of income in the dance education sector caused by the pandemic. It received over 1,200 responses in a few days, and a press conference was hosted on

17 March to urge the government to cover these dance practitioners and organizations in the second round of the Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme. It was encouraging that the government has extended an one-off subsidy to dance tutors and has added a subsidy scheme for rental for dance studios and schools in April.

Despite the hardship of the current situation, stakeholders of the Hong Kong dance sector have responded swiftly to the challenge of social distancing and the dance scene has kept thriving in the past few months moving from a physical to a virtual platform. City Contemporary Dance Company held a series of Anti-Epidemic Think Tank for Dance Practitioners Online Symposia with topics covering 'Connecting Online Space And Physical Theatre Creation' that allowed hundreds of participants worldwide join together for collective thoughts. Both Hong Kong Ballet and Hong Kong Dance Company have kept up their outreach activities by launching live-streaming dance classes for children and adults. The publishing of video archives of past productions from these flagship companies also enabled audience to review flashbacks of the dance history of Hong Kong. Furthermore, the Hong Kong Street Dance Development Alliance initiated the campaign *Online Battle* to encourage Instagram users to join the battle by submitting a dance video that can be filmed at home or any location. There are

**Press conference for the report on losses in the dance education sector caused by the Covid-19 epidemic in 2020, on 17 March at the Legislative Council Conference Room.** Photo: Hong Kong Dance Alliance



countless virtual sharing meetings within the dance sector, most notably the Dance Sector Virtual Gathering hosted by Daniel Yeung, Chairman of Dance of Hong Kong Arts Development Council, organized by the Alliance on 28 April. This new form of publishing, interacting and exchange of information in virtual space has continued to showcase the creativity of artists, producers, and arts administrators under these unusual times in Hong Kong.

This April, the Alliance has called for proposals for a new initiative, Dance Tutorial Video Testing Ground, which aims to support independent dance tutors of all genres to present their dance tutorials in a video or digital format in creative ways. The selected tutors will receive a research subsidy from the Alliance and the dance tutorial video will be published on the Alliance website and other media platform to allow the public to have a free dance experience in their own space.

With the epidemic nowhere near the end, the dance sector in Hong Kong has united to demonstrate the power of art, and continues to bring creativity to all walks of life in Hong Kong.

**Photo of Zoom meeting: Dance Sector Virtual Gathering with Daniel Yeung, Chairman of Dance of Hong Kong Arts**

**Development Council, organized by the Alliance on 28 April 2020.** Photo: Hong Kong Dance Alliance

**dance journal/hk (Apr/ May) Issue 22-2 published by the Alliance with the focus "Keep Dancing And Carry On".** Photo: Hong Kong Dance Alliance



## India report

by Meghna  
Bhardwaj



Promotional image for  
*A Sudden Strangeness*,  
co-curated by Pickle  
Factory and Arts Forward  
in Kolkata.

In the Indian context, a few of the arts organisations that have been dedicating very sincere efforts towards sustaining the visibility and wellbeing of the dance community during the current crisis, and therefore deserve an acknowledgement through this report are Kolkata-based Pickle Factory and Arts Forward, and Chennai-based Prakriti Foundation. Right from the beginning of the lockdown in the country, Pickle Factory and Arts Forward have been constantly collaborating with each other as well as with other organisations to come up with several creative projects and conversations on dance and arts over social media. The first was *The Sudden Strangeness* wherein the two organisations co-curated 2-minute improvised performances from over 20 dance artists across the world. At the moment, Pickle Factory is inviting weekly sessions of artist sharings in collaboration with Topcat CCU-

Body Languages, and plans to archive all sessions over their YouTube channel, while Arts Forward has announced an online festival in collaboration with Smoke Inc, which promises to bring together dance alongside music, stand-up theatre, word, films, and discussions over a span of 12 hours on Zoom. What is significant about this festival is that it is a ticketed event and intends to generate earnings for the participating artists.

As much as Pickle Factory and Arts Forward have been facilitating performative platforms for the artists, Prakriti Foundation has taken on the responsibility to address issues pertaining to the mental health of the isolated artists and arts managers. They have recently announced a series of talks titled Wellness Matters by Dr. Lakshmi Ravikanth, to be held on social media between 8 and 15 May 2020. The talks hope to bring out perspectives on building mindfulness and



resilience while focusing on story-telling as a method of artistic therapy.

Yet, without discounting the rigour and enthusiasm with which not just these organisations but in fact many in the world are working to maintain the presence of dance in the public realm amidst crumbling economies, each of these efforts limited by their virtuality must also be critically analysed. In other words, it is perhaps the current overload of dance on social media that may have made way for dance thinkers to emphasize, more than ever before, two core issues ever existing within the theories and practices of dance.

One is to do with the universal philosophy of dance as an embodied human act that can only make itself emerge through its ephemerality and materiality. This is to say that all that has been celebrated within the contemporary arts about the 'liveness' of dance as its characteristic property, co-produced by the performing and the spectating body, has been to do with the sweat, the breath, the age, the illness, the injury or more precisely the fragility and vulnerability of a moving human body, which technology may have sometimes been successful in creating 'impressions' of, yet only eventually controls and cleans out. In light of which, it is now that we may argue, at least in theory, that what social media constitutes as dance is a near anti-thesis of dance. Perhaps it is now we know that not everything is dance!

The second issue is the ever-disturbing

question for dance, that is, the question of exclusivity and class divisions within dance and performance spaces. Sadly, social media, be it in the moment now or time before, has offered no respite. Especially in a semi-rural society like India, which is nowhere close to ready-to-go-super-digital, the 'crisis-attending' over-presence of dance on social media is constructed only by the urban and socially dominant voices. Considering both these issues I have underlined here, the current situation is constantly demanding of us to ask of ourselves what Vikram Iyenger, one of the co-directors of Pickle Factory, articulated for me in an email: how to exist as dancers without compromising what it means to be the practitioner of a live art form. The answer to which may somewhere lie in what another dance scholar friend, Shrinkhla Sahai, suggested on a Facebook post: that this may be the moment that is calling for the dancers to practice a sense of creative stillness, and take a pause. But then to whom does this creative stillness belong as a resource? Whose pause will get noticed and be valued as a pause? Who has the right and affordability to assert an absence that will mark the historical and performative specificity of the current time? I believe it is in the answers to these questions that the difference between pre-Covid and post-Covid dance can possibly be located, based on which a so-called 'new normal' for the dance world may be created.

**A** #Art Alone 2gether

At a time when time is no longer a luxury but our freedom is.  
At a time when our futures are uncertain, our livelihoods at stake and our lives alone and in isolation. At a time when everyone is creating in the corners of their homes. At a time when all artists are trying to perform the real, trying to keep their audiences engaged and minds sane. At the same very time we realise we can be together connected through our art and by supporting artists who are keeping us entertained and happy.

Alone and yet together in art!

AN INITIATIVE BY: **SMOKE INC** | **ARTS FORWARD** | **OF BEAT**

Promotional image for #ArtAlone2gether, an online festival initiative by Smoke Inc, Arts Forward and Beat.

## Indonesia report

by Michael HB Raditya

An online masterclass in choreography with Eko Supriyanto, presented by the Directorate-General of Culture on its social media account Budaya Saya.



“We’re all in the same boat now!” Slavoj Zizek declared, in his book *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World*. Indeed, every country in the world has cases of the novel coronavirus. Indonesia got the first virus cases on 2 March 2020, after which the Indonesian President enacted regulations to stop the spread of the virus, similar to other countries, encouraging working from home and social distancing.

As dancers, choreographers, and other arts workers were forced to postpone projects, the impact of Covid-19 on the performing arts, particularly dance, becomes critical. What is the condition of Indonesian dance performances in the pandemic era? What do dancers, choreographers, and art-workers do to face this problem?

Dance performances in Indonesia were made chaotic by the pandemic in the first couple of weeks. The virus’ impact limited the physical activity of choreographers and dancers, either practicing in public spaces

or performing in art spaces. However, the dance community started to address that problem gradually. The first initiative that I noted was the online discussion. It is shameful to say that the virus was a blessing in disguise, but it has encouraged the dance community to fully engage with the habit of discussion. As online connections have hacked physical distance, online discussions accommodate many groups who have the same opportunity and openness to make them, and viewers have greater accessibility to watch them.

In Indonesia, online discussion can be found in various forms, such as masterclasses, artist talks, or panel discussions. These online discussions are not only organized by the dance community but also by the government. As soon as the coronavirus started to spread, the Directorate-General of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Culture, created masterclasses and discussions

in several areas, such as dance, music, theater, film, animation, and fine arts. In the dance area, Budaya Saya, the social media account of the Directorate-General of Culture, presented a masterclass in choreography with Eko Supriyanto, a choreographer, dancer, and lecture

Saweran Online Talk, hosted by Ratri Anindyajati, featuring choreographer Jecko Siompo, presented by Budaya Saya in collaboration with Jakarta Arts Council.



at ISI Surakarta. This masterclass ran six times with a duration of approximately 45-120 minutes, to articulate the process of making choreography.

Another program from Budaya Saya, in collaboration with the Jakarta Arts Council, is artist talks titled Saweran Online Talks. These talks invited several dancers, choreographers, and artistic directors from dance groups to discuss group orientations, dance creations, or their perspectives on dance. The artists included Jecko Siompo and Rianto. Another artist talk was presented by Ruang Tumbuh in West Sumatra. They invited senior choreographers such as Hartati, Ery Mefri, and Rianto, or junior choreographers such as Ayu Permata Sari and Kurniadi Ilham, to share their experience.

The impact of online activity is not only for discussions but also for dance practice and collaboration, either by individuals or groups. For example, emerging choreographer Ayu Permata has presented her dance practice on her Instagram account. Another alternative is traditional dance challenges on Instagram. The most famous dance challenge was made by Rianto, who invited other dancers to follow his movements and post their videos on Instagram.

Last but not least, this situation offered some groups or communities the opportunity to perform commissioned works online.

The Directorate-General of Culture and the Indonesian Dance Foundation created an online performance that showed commissioned work, titled Distance Parade: Streaming Online Dance Performance. *Distance Parade* invited 40 dancers—curated by Hartati and her team—from various regions to respond to the coronavirus. The 40 pieces were held for 5 days, 27 April to 1 May. The duration for each dance was approximately 10 minutes. The dancers included artists from regions

across Indonesia like like Otniel Tasman and Bobby Ari Setiawan (Central Java), Eka Wahyuni (Yogyakarta), Fadlan Auliananda (Aceh), Ainar Tri Asita (Central Sulawesi) and Isak Menufandu (West Papua).

These activities reveal how dancers have responded to the limitations of physical space with online activity. However I have heard many comments from dancers that online training or performances are different from physical training and live performance. They still feel strange when they practice dance or watch performances online. In fact, while it is undeniable that the migration from offline to online activity cannot fully solve the problem, online activity is helping them to face the condition, decrease the stress, and “play” with #stayathome or #workfromhome.



An artist talk presented by Ruang Tumbuh in West Sumatra, featuring choreographers Hartati and Ery Mefri.



1. Dancer-choreographer Ayu Permata Sari sharing some of her dance practice on her Instagram account.
2. Promotional image for *Distance Parade: Streaming Online Dance Performance*, produced by the Directorate-General of Culture and the Indonesian Dance Foundation.



## Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas

**Imran Syafiq of ASK Dance Company [L] and Maddie Gan [R], dance student at ASWARA, in their versions of ASWARA Faculty of Dance's Multicultural Dance Challenge, on Facebook videos posted May 2020.**



Malaysia went into lockdown against the Covid-19 pandemic on 18 March. From the middle of May, we have enjoyed some loosening of restrictions, but public gatherings and entertainment spaces like galleries and theatres remain closed, with no timeline for reopening. Some brave souls are scheduling productions for the last quarter of the year, but others are content to sit tight and see which way the wind will blow. Even before the middle of March, many dance performances had been cancelled due to uncertainty, and much revenue had already been lost.

However, many Malaysian dancers have the debatable privilege of not being able to depend upon income from dance at the best of times. For this reason, they may be less vulnerable to this sudden loss of income caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to dancers in other countries. The lockdown has thrown many dancers upon their backup plans: either family support or other jobs. Lecturers in university dance department also continue to receive their salaries as universities have shifted to online learning, although the learning curve involved has been steep and challenging, multiplying the working hours involved.

Some dancers have taken this opportunity to rest, recoup, and assess their priorities. The only MyDance Alliance activity which continues is our e-newsletter. In the past few editions, we have tried to compile

local online dance activities, which include companies broadcasting videos of shows from their archives, free and paid online classes and special guest workshops, forum discussions, dance challenges, and other short instructional and inspirational videos. It has been impressive to witness the perseverance and creativity as our local dance community 'pivots to digital'.

This is still a time of great challenge, however, and the federal government's reactions to the need to support the Malaysian arts community have been patchy. At the beginning of March, a parliamentary coup overturned the elected government of May 2018, ushering in a so-called 'backdoor government'. While the new government has been exemplary in its quick and decisive response to Covid-19, some of the ministers have struggled to find their feet in their new portfolios. Nancy Shukri, the new Minister of Tourism and Culture, which includes the National Department of Arts and Culture, told a local news channel that she was not worried about the future of arts in Malaysia: "The arts are actually at the front now because they are the fastest to recover in terms of being in the arts industry, a lot of people are very keen in what they are doing." While it is undoubtedly true that many Malaysian artists are passionate about their work, many of us were deeply disappointed to see the arts sidelined once again in favour of the clearer economic benefits of tourism.



CENDANA, the Cultural Economy Development Agency, has taken a more proactive approach, despite its limited budget. They reached out to arts organisations to collect data about lost income among artists, and launched a program to provide food aid for artists in need. They also launched the quick-response Create Now Funding Programme, offering grants up to RM3,500 (USD 800) for digital arts projects. Penang State Government has also been relatively supportive and concerned about the future of artists in its state, and was the first to issue a comprehensive SOP to support the reopening of arts spaces.

One of the possible bright sides of the Covid-19 epidemic and the ensuing lockdown has been the way artists have come together in support of each other as well as more vulnerable members of society. Networking organisations like the local advocacy coalition ReformARTsi have been vocal and active, and people have tapped their online networks to spread news about their continuing activities.

Another bright side is that Malaysian artists, suddenly placed on the same Internet playing field as other artists around the globe, have had to find their own unique selling point to distinguish them from other (better resourced) players. Notable responses have embraced Malaysia's multiculturalism and wealth of local dance traditions. The Faculty of Dance of the National Academy of Arts & Heritage launched the Multicultural Dance Challenge, which asks participants to combine short phrases in Malay folk dance, classical Indian dance, classical Chinese dance, and dance styles from East Malaysia, to the folk tune 'Lenggang Kangkung'. It is amazing to see the diversity of skill in our community! And now that distance is no factor, Malaysians have also been reaching out to their dance networks overseas, making boundary-breaking work.

I believe the greatest danger now is to our more developed private institutions which have higher overheads in terms of salaries and venues. Private theatres like Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, and the handful of full-time dance companies like ASK Dance Company and Dua Space Dance Theatre, have heavy seas ahead of them. They have an inestimable impact on our dance community, and I hope we will all be able to emerge from this to dance together again someday.



**LOCKDOWN EDITION No. 2**  
 A compendium of online activities from the Malaysian dance community, during the period of restrictions against Covid-19. If you have activities to add for the next edition, please email [contacts@mydancealliance.org](mailto:contacts@mydancealliance.org)

**Online Performances & Events**



**Configurations by Shobana Jeyasingh Dance**  
 Shobana Jeyasingh Dance (UK) broadcasts Configurations for the first time live on Facebook featuring a dream team of Malaysian dancers: Rathimalar Govindarajoo, Muhammad Khalir Mokhtar, Mohd Yunus Ismail and Sooraj Subramaniam. Viewable until Tuesday, 28 April at 2am. [Watch here.](#)



**ChOreO-iNstAnt #stayathome**  
 The project presents a daily recording until 28 April. On International Dance Day on 29 April, we will feature 50 artists in one recording. Want to be involved? We are looking for interested participants! [Register here.](#) Links to videos are on the [Facebook Event page.](#)



**KL Dance Works Shows from the Archives**  
 A broadcast of previous productions from KL Dance Works. On **Saturday 25 April** at 8pm. A collection of KLDW's selected international Ballet Gala Highlights. From live performances in 2014 and 2019 at Istana Budaya. <https://youtu.be/c8t8tD7Wp2s>  
 Watch this page for updates on future shows: <https://www.facebook.com/klcanceworksproductions/>



**Dance Film 0**  
 A new dance film with dancing by Rathimalar Govindarajoo, and videography, music and editing by Lesly Leon Lee. Filmed in one take! Check it out with headphones on, to catch the stereo sound effects. [Watch here.](#)



**Multidancing: Indian Classical meets Contemporary**  
 Expanding on the concept of "Multidancing", Suaki Yas and Kavya Iyer worked with two different dance forms: Indian classical (elements of Bharatanatyam and Kathak) and contemporary. [Watch here.](#)



**Beating the Boredom Series**  
 Mahavithya Dance Theatre offers charming videos of Bharatanatyam practice, inspired by the lockdown. Episode 6: Is your hair in disarray like Shiva's locks? Episode 4: If Lord Muruga can stay in Batu Caves, you can stay at home. <https://www.facebook.com/mahavithyadance/>



**Main Zapin 2017**  
 The Dance Faculty of ASWARA shares a broadcast of one of their Malay dance productions, *Main Zapin 2017*.

**A screenshot of the MyDance e-newsletter featuring online activities of Malaysian dance during the Covid-19 lockdown, 24 April 2020.**

## Philippines report

by Clarissa  
Cecilia R.  
Mijares

**Rhosam Prudenciado Jr., shown here leaping in Mia Cabalffin's 'Singap (Gasp)' at Neo-Filipino 2018, has been passionate about raising funds for performing artists in the Philippines.** Photo: Erica Marquez-Jacinto.



### Stop dance

Apart from the global pandemic, the country grapples with serious economic difficulties and political turmoil. Manila was placed under quarantine due to Covid-19 in mid-March 2020. Announcements and guidelines were released piecemeal until a total lockdown was established.

For dance companies who ran regular seasons, March was devoted to their season-enders. For dance schools, this time was supposed to be the start of summer dance intensives. Performances were put on hold and classes postponed due to the risk of disease. Dancers had no choice but to put their feet up and were advised to “wait it out”.

The first few weeks of the enhanced community quarantine felt like a much-needed break. Most remained hopeful that studio work and productions would resume in a month’s time... until they didn’t.

### Displaced, disempowered dancers

Many Filipino dancers are informal workers, paid for every performance or hour of dance instruction. They do not receive the government-mandated benefits of social security contributions or health insurance, and very few have the privilege of savings.

There are three major dance companies in the metro. The government-run Ballet Philippines (BP) informed its dancers that operations are on hold until November 2020 and company members will not be receiving training nor compensation during the time off. Along with this notice was a reminder

for company members to not render performances nor instructional services to any other institution or dance school, to uphold the standards of the premier dance center. One dancer from BP joked, “*Gusto nila magluto kami and magbenta online*” (Perhaps the company wants us to become online sellers of home-cooked meals).

The two other dance companies – Ballet Manila and Philippine Ballet Theater – are able to transition their company classes online and to provide partial honoraria for their dancers. These private companies also allow their dancers to be engaged by other dance schools for additional income.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines has announced that theater facilities will not be operational for the rest of the year. The closure of the theater greatly impacts the seasonal productions of the major dance companies.

Former members/alumni of these dance companies and other networks of support have come through to gather as many resources as possible to be shared by the dancers. The provision of aid, however, does not come easy.

### Unidentified bodies

Among the biggest challenges of getting help to these disempowered artists is the lack of a reliable database of Filipino dancers and creatives involved in dance production.

According to the existing database of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) between 300,000 to 400,00 cultural workers are impacted by the

global pandemic. The NCCA is the overall policy and grant coordinating agency of the Philippine government. It initially allocated PhP 4 million (about USD\$80,000) as financial aid for affected artists. In April, the Dance Sector of the NCCA headed by Ms. Shirley Halili-Cruz released a call for information with the intention of selecting 450 recipients of PhP5000 (USD\$100) cash assistance.

The agency set out to help 150 dance-artists from the three major island groups of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao and the city center Metro Manila, without ample basis. The NCCA eventually conducted a survey among dance companies in May, before announcing another round of selection of beneficiaries. The survey gathered information on existing dance groups from different parts of the country and the number of members each troupe had. Independent dance artists and freelancers who do not regularly train or perform with any specific group were not included. Disregarded, as well, were non-dancers or stage crew members of these groups.

### **Corps work – dancers for dancers, artists for artists**

Filipinos have long been warned of the instability of careers in dance. This pandemic came as a confirmation of this adage. Engagements and corporate performances that used to provide freelance dancers lucrative per gig professional fees have been cancelled. Even dance schools that used to thrive suffered from low enrollment.

Efforts of private individuals and collectives came through more efficiently compared to structural government support. As early as March, #CreativeAidPH, a group of Filipino artists and cultural workers, ran a survey among freelance artists. The online survey collected demographic information on age, gender, and industry, and projected that the mean income loss in the following months could range from PhP 171,050 to PhP 4.5 million.

Rhosam Prudenciado's Likhaph set-up a donation drive for displaced contemporary dancers. Prudenciado, an acclaimed contemporary choreographer, together with independent dance groups such as Airdance Philippine, GalawCo, and Daloy Dance Company curated movement classes and offered them online for free. Students and other patrons have the option of forwarding monetary support. The endeavor #sweatandsupport has since raised half a

million pesos (USD\$10,000) and has helped about 50 freelance dancers from city centers such as Manila, Cebu, and Iloilo.

The most needy among ballet company members also receive some assistance from the Dance and Donate Program of Erica Marquez Jacinto. Formerly a dancer with Philippine Ballet Theater, Jacinto directed her efforts to inviting top Filipino ballet dancers to give master classes to pre-company and company members online. Collected class fees from students were given to ballet dancers in the most dire situations.

Dole outs can only help artists for a limited period and are not sufficient to support entire households. It is encouraging to see dancers discover other talents and having the courage to promote themselves online. Other efforts such as a local version of IlostMyGig (for freelance artists), Open HousePH (for theater performers) and Aidvertising (for stage crew members) are greatly appreciated by artists, to help tide them over the leaner-than-lean months.

### **Solidarity and the stage**

Quarantine has relaxed in most parts of the Philippines. Moving from enhanced community quarantine to general community quarantine allows for some intercity travel. Gyms and studios, however, are not yet allowed to operate; group exercise is identified among activities that pose higher risks of infection. Mass gathering exceeding 10 persons are also not allowed at this time.

While the pandemic has definitely crippled many economically, it has shown that the Philippine dance community can come together for a common cause. Major dance companies have reached out to smaller ones. Local impresarios are tapping their networks now more than ever, targeting to support lesser known groups. Dancers are learning from one another, finally having time to explore other genres unconstrained by Manila traffic. Through the streaming of full-length productions online, the industry is establishing an audience base and the public seems to have taken an interest.

Together we will be able to come up with more sustainable means of income and alternative modes of dance production until such time that dancing together will be allowed in the Philippines. Filipino dancers have not ceased creating dance pieces in quarantine. When dance productions are finally permissible, the country better be ready: the dancers are raring to take centerstage.

## Singapore report

compiled by  
Peter Gn

Intensify3, organised by  
Peter Gn, at JCube Mall,  
26-27 Oct 2019.



### Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts

**Arutthaya Exhibition Opening on 17 Jan 2020 at the Ngee Ann Kongsi Galleries 1 & 2**

'Urban Textures', a collaborative student performance for the Arutthaya opening, was choreographed by David Zeitner (Senior Lecturer, Dance Programme) with music composed by Alicia Joyce De Silva (Adjunct Lecturer, School of Music). Year 2 Dance students presented their video pieces for the Arutthaya exhibition: 'A Warp in Time', 'Aqua: Marine' and 'Nahm'.

**Breath 夢以隨 on 31 Jan 2020 at Dance Studio C6-38**

'Breath' was an interdisciplinary project showing by Margret Wibmer, artist-in-residence (13 – 31 Jan) with Dance, Fashion Studies and Fine Arts students. It revealed human imagination and creativity through the dancing body, the folding and unfolding of a nonconventional garment. The dancers explored space, and the vital materialism of human body and textiles through dance improvisation. The design of the garment was based on a concept Margret Wibmer developed over a number of years under the conceptual umbrella of 'Infinite Play'.

**Up Side Right on 31 Jan 2020 at the Studio Theatre, NAFA**

Two dancers from the Dance Department self-produced a promising triple bill on a shoestring budget. The standout work was Xenres Kirishima's 'Tempest', distinctive for his own 'Water Breath' technique, which blends Chinese dance, Taoist philosophy, qigong, bagua, taiji and aikido, and skims capoeira and micro-acrobatics.

Kirishima was a captivating presence in his meditative solos, surrounded by contrasting rapid sequences by a cast of six other

NAFA-trained dancers. The cast was uniform in their embodiment of Kirishima's style. Beverly Wan's niche appeal here was her skill in acrobatic handbalancing and partner acrobatics. She has developed this interest in recent years through Singapore's sole amateur circus collective, Bornfire Circus. Her two choreographies incorporated elements of acrobatics, contemporary dance and mime.

**Dance Forum: Forging Your Path on 6 March 2020 in Turquoise Room, NAFA**

Invited Dance alumni Naomi Tan (2013) who also was the moderator, was joined by Afiq Noorazwa (2013), Supawalee Rochanavibhata (2016) and Jereh Leung (2008) to share their perspectives on the current dance climate in Singapore, and various opportunities for dancers entering the professional dance industry. They also gave insight on how one may better position one's self to seize opportunities or to create new pathways which may not yet exist.

### Dance Dynamics

Dance Dynamics performed a dance 'Flower Girl' for the Chinese New Year Charity Dinner event for elderly beneficiaries organised by the Illumin Bodhi Volunteer Mission on 18 Jan 2020.

### Intensify3

**JCube Mall on 26-27 October 2019**

Designed and organised by dance educator-choreographer Peter Gn, this spectacular dance event over 2 afternoons saw the involvement of more than 100 dancers from age 8 to 60. Spanning genres from contemporary to hip hop, ballet and cultural dances, the event saw large crowds of dance enthusiasts among the audience.



**LASALLE College of the Arts**  
by Susan Sentler

Two collaborative projects were created during the 2019/20 academic year at LASALLE College of the Arts, both involving the School of Dance & Theatre, Diploma in Dance students, one interdisciplinary with Diploma in Animation students, the other cross-disciplinary with Diploma in Fashion students. Each project created starting points rooted in somatic bodily exploration guided by Lecturer in Dance, Susan Sentler. Both collaborations were conceived by the lecturers themselves, supported by their various programmes, with the desire to encourage intersections and conversations through cross/interdisciplinary practice; a major part of LASALLE's overall vision. Fashion and Dance was in its fourth iteration and Animation and Dance in its second. With each reiteration, the lecturers have gained greater pedagogic and overall artistic knowledge on how best to shape, deliver and stimulate the students' process. The projects inspired a sophisticated palette of making for the varied disciplines, creating novel hybrids of responses. The somatic underpinning encouraged all involved with greater agency and creative confidence; going beyond their default modalities into new artistic horizons.

**Animation & Dance, *Inbetweens***

The performance *Inbetweens* was the result of an interdisciplinary project where Dance and Animation students are exposed to each other's creative discipline and methodology. The first 6 weeks focused

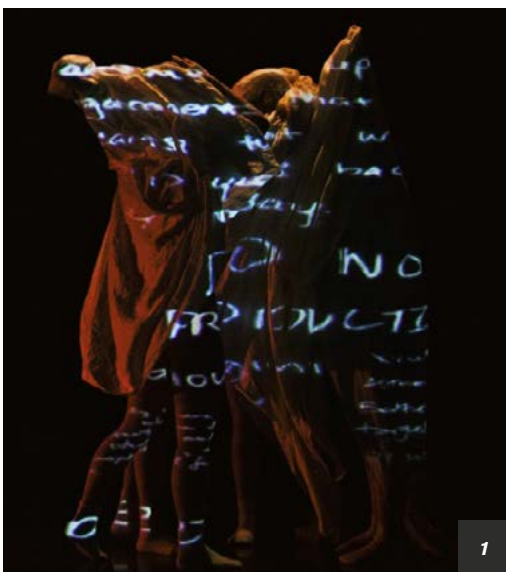
on the practice of experiential anatomy, and the final weeks on creating choreography and design rooted in a thematic exploration that integrates live performance and projected animation.

- Dancers in project: Shahizman, Christina Cai, Naval Elisha, Jude Cenaro, Goh Xue Li, Joanne Seow, Keanna Sharon, Stefanie Teo, Tiara Rahyuni, Serene Tung, Tam Ye Qi
- Lecturers of project: Susan Sentler, Fanny Bratahalim

**Fashion & Dance, *en/un/re/multi fold***

Revisiting the ancient art of origami in new and transformative modes, a collaborative project developed between our Diploma dance and fashion students, rooted in its underlying principle of the fold, inspired by philosopher Gilles Deleuze, 'The smallest unit of matter is not the point, but the fold.' The students were stretched beyond their disciplines working experientially with the concept and activity of the fold and folding as well as responding thematically to visual art references of minimalism and anti-form. The choreographic solos that emerged are a dialogue between garment and body; body becoming garment/costume, garment/costume body. The research supports forward shifts of ideas in and around materiality. Live streaming of the performance was part of the Singapore Biennale 2020 Finale at the National Gallery Singapore, 20 March 2020.

- Dancers in project: Shahizman, Christina Cai, Naval Elisha, Jude Cenaro, Goh Xue Li, Joanne Seow, Keanna Sharon, Shania Regina, Stefanie Teo, Kok Suwei, Tiara Rahyuni, Serene Tung, Athina Kamarudin, Natasha Fawzi, Tam Ye Qi, Herman Keh
- Lead lecturers of project: Susan Sentler, Daniela Monasterio, Ginette Chittick



1. 'Breath' by Margret Wibmer with NAFA Dance, Fashion & Fine ART students, 31 Jan 2020, at NAFA Dance studio C6-38.  
2. *Inbetweens*, by Dance & Animation students of LASALLE College of the Arts.  
3. Dance Dynamics in 'Flower Girl', their Chinese New Year charity performance on 18 Jan 2020.

## Taiwan report

by Su-Ling Chou



The Covid-19 pandemic was announced in the middle of January in Taiwan, almost a week before the Chinese New Year holiday between 23 and 26 January. Taiwan kept the situation in control and has been praised by the world as a model. However, this is only the beginning of the suffering of many countries in the West, not to mention many performing artists. Without audience present in theaters, how do we share the presentation? How do we continue to dance at a distance? How do we survive not going to the dance studio? How do we live as a dancer without what we used to hold?

Yet, many dance groups try their best. One was lucky, the *2020 Dance Shoe*, an evening dance production performed on 11 and 18 January in two cities in south Taiwan. But many others are not that lucky; social distancing rules allow only 100 or fewer people, including the performers, are set for indoor theater productions after 1st March. The following companies, scheduled to perform in March and April, followed the rule of only 100 people in the theater and managed to complete their performances. They are Horse Dance Company, Century Contemporary Dance Company, B. Dance Company, Hung Dance Company, Bulareyaung Dance Company and Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company. It was mentally challenging for the dancers, choreographers and those limited audience members in the huge theaters usually seating about 500 people.

The only program out of the usually 30 to 40 productions for the yearly Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival which was successfully performed is the program of site-specific

dance. Those are Solar Site Dance Theatre's *Century Paradise*, 21-22 March at Fongshan Huangpu Veterans Quarter; Hsu Chen Wei Dance Company's *Shall We Dance?*, 28-29 March at Pier-2 Art Center, Dayi Park; BeMove's *A Social Declaration on Plastic Waste*, 28-29 March at Pier-2 Art Center, Dayong Area; Solar Site Dance Theatre's *The Shadow of Time*, 28-29 March at Pier-2 Art Center, Penglai Area; S. C. Dance's *Image Dadong*, 29 March at Dadong Arts Center, Outdoor Plaza; and Somatic Theater Company's *The Light of Life*, 4 April at MRT Formosa Boulevard Station, The Dome of Light.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government-sponsored National Kaohsiung Center of the Arts at Weiwuying decided to put its scheduled music program online, to be enjoyed by all who are interested to take part. Called *Musical Offering by Weiwuying*, to participate, follow the steps below:

1. Place your mobile phone or any devices to recording mode, and press Start.
  - Say Hi to everyone
  - Start playing your Musical Offering
  - You can share some words before pressing Stop
2. Upload the video to your social media.
  - Please tag your friends to join the challenge, and hashtag #musicalofferingweiwuying

With the second online program called *Weiwuying x KSAF Digital Concert Hall*, the central government and local institutions worked together to keep the arts rolling amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The two major cultural institutions of Kaohsiung City, the National Kaohsiung Center for the

*The Shadow of Time*, choreographed by Kuo-chuan Wang, performed by Solar Site Dance Theatre, in 2020 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival Site-Specific Dance, produced by the Bureau Affairs of Kaohsiung City Government, performed 28-29 March at the Penglai Area of Pier-2 Art Center. Photo: Ren-hua Liu





Arts (Weiwuying) and the Bureau Affairs of Kaohsiung City Government, made plans for the performing arts on top of various preventive measures. The Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival invited Kaohsiung Symphony Orchestra, Kaohsiung Chinese Orchestra, Counterpoint Ensemble, Kaohsiung City Wind Orchestra, and renowned pianist Wu Ya-Hsin to work together to present the Weiwuying x Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival Online Concert Hall. Every Saturday at 7:30pm from 25 April to 30 May 30, audiences online enjoyed the marvelous performances on the stage of Weiwuying Concert Hall through the internet platforms of Weiwuying and Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival.

In addition, there was the Weiwuying Theater 6 series. In addition to the four indoor halls and the outdoor theater of the

Weiwuying Center, they conceptualised the Internet platform as their sixth theatre. From 26 April to 31 May, every Sunday at 9:30pm, 6 teams of different types of elaborate drama and dance works were launched to provide more performances by the participating teams, creators, and theater workers. Viewers were able to enjoy the splendid performances online through the designated YouTube channel. The weekly performances were announced on each Friday of the week, so audiences around the world can stay tuned to enjoy the performing arts during this pandemic time.

Seeing many countries across Asia, we in Taiwan feel we are blessed. We are praying for many of our WDAAP member countries to be strong and hold on tight to dance, even in your distant places; you know we are with you.



**Above and below:**  
**Century Paradise,**  
choreographed by Yi-yun Liu, performed by Solar Site Dance Theatre, in 2020 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival Site-Specific Dance, produced by the Bureau Affairs of Kaohsiung City Government, performed 28-29 March at Fongshan Huangpu Veterans Quarter, Kaohsiung. Photos: Ren-hua Liu

# 2020 WDA Events

## 2020 WDAAP/TDRS Conference and AGM

Postponed to 26-27 December 2020  
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

### “Navigating Location, Negotiating Identity”

At this conference, we explore dance and its relations to identity with its many ramifications, focusing on the currents and flows involved in navigating location in and outside of relation to the nation and to the global. We investigate how “dance” provocatively (re)interrogates and (re)conceptualizes fundamental questions about region, nation, and location, as well as their representations. This includes the rich dynamics between intraregional and international studies of dance practices and theorization. The dialectic potential between “inner” and “outer” as well as “intra” and “inter” points to the need in dance studies to reexamine the issues of identity and geopolitics across lands and waters as well as across the global and regional; it celebrates and interrogates the connecting, mediating and negotiating power of dance, as well as the shifting relationships and pedagogies in the development of diverse dance histories.

Presentations may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Identities and identifications through dance and movement analysis.
- Dance histories related to identity formations through gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexuality, (dis)ability, (non)religiosity, nation, and region.
- Role of dance in formation of imagined / symbolic / contested / socially defined communities.

**We are still taking submissions for scholarly papers, Pecha Kucha presentations for emerging scholars, panels, and lecture-demonstrations.**

However, submissions for master class and showcase performance are now closed.

Please note: Papers that are pre-grouped into panels are encouraged and have higher likelihood of acceptance. Individual papers will be grouped into panels by the program committee.

Please indicate the category “Scholarly Paper” in the title of email subject in sending as well as on the title of the attachments.

[Download the application form for the scholarly paper here.](#)

Please send application forms to: [wdaap.taiwan2020@gmail.com](mailto:wdaap.taiwan2020@gmail.com)

**The last date to submit your proposals is 1 August 2020.**

Please note: if international travel is hindered due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the hosts will facilitate paper presentations by video recording, for those from outside Taiwan.



# About the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific

## Our Mission

WDA serves as a primary voice for dance and dancers throughout the world, and encourages the exchange of ideas and the awareness of dance in all its forms.

World Dance Alliance operates via its regional centres with an overarching Global Executive Committee, and a Secretary General, bringing the regions together in matters of policy and global projects. The current regional centres are

- WDA Americas
- WDA Asia Pacific
- WDA Europe (being re-formed)

WDA also has partnerships with other international organisations such as WAAE (World Alliance for Arts Education), International Dance Committee of International Theater Institute ITI / UNESCO (ITI), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and daCi (dance and the Child international).

## Our Goals

- To promote the recognition, development and mutual understanding of all forms of dance.
- To facilitate communication and exchange among dance individuals, institutions and organisations interested in dance.
- To provide a forum for discussion of matters relating to dance.
- To encourage and support the research, education, criticism, creation and performance of dance.
- To liaise, co-ordinate and participate in activities with other dance organisations in the world.

## Our Founder

Carl Wolz

## Our Background

This independent, non-profit, non-political organisation began as the Asia-Pacific Dance Alliance in Hong Kong in 1988. In 1990, the global body, World Dance Alliance (WDA), was founded at the Hong Kong International Dance Conference. In 1993, the name of the Asia-Pacific Center was changed to WDA Asia Pacific to reflect its relationship to the global body.

WDA Asia Pacific is one of the regional centres that make up WDA. The other is WDA Americas <<https://www.wda-americas.net/>>.

## Membership

Open to any organisation or individual interested in furthering the objectives of the society.

## Membership benefits

- Biannual newsletter *Channels*
- Annual regional assemblies
- Triennial global assemblies
- Participation in the WDA Asia Pacific Networks
- Discounts to certain member events
- Privileged access to WDA Americas services and activities
- Networking opportunities

## Types of membership and annual subscription fees (subject to change)

- Chapter / Organisational US\$ 200
- Associate Organisational (to be advised)
- Associate Individual US\$ 20

## To join

Contact your Chapter Head (contact list on back of this issue) for details on how to join the local chapter.

## Visit our websites

[www.worlddancealliance.org](http://www.worlddancealliance.org)

[www.wda-ap.org](http://www.wda-ap.org)

[www.facebook.com/WorldDanceAlliance/](https://www.facebook.com/WorldDanceAlliance/)

# World Dance Alliance key contacts

## WDA Presidents

### WDA Asia Pacific President

Urmimala Sarkar Munsri  
School of Arts & Aesthetics  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi 110067, India  
urmimala.sarkar@gmail.com

### WDA Americas President

Cristina Goletti  
Dept of Theatre & Dance  
Fox Fine Arts Center - D371  
University of Texas at El Paso  
El Paso, Texas, 79968-0549, USA  
cgoletti@utep.edu

### Secretary General

Mohd. Anis Md. Nor  
anisnor55@gmail.com

## Asia-Pacific Executive

### President

Urmimala Sarkar Munsri (India)  
urmimala.sarkar@gmail.com

### Immediate Past President

Yunyu Wang (Taiwan)  
yunyuge@gmail.com

### Vice President

Stella Lau (Hong Kong)  
stellau@hkapa.edu

### Secretary

Julie Dyson (Australia)  
julie.dyson@home.netspeed.com.au

### Treasurer

Jefferson Chieh-hua Hsieh (Taiwan)  
performerxie@gmail.com

### Vice President South East Asia

Bilqis Hijjas (Malaysia)  
bhijjas@gmail.com

### Vice President East Asia

Hong Jo Jun (South Korea)  
jhj57@sungshin.ac.kr

### Vice President Pacific

Sheryl Lowe (New Zealand)  
sheryl@danzt.org.nz

### Vice President South Asia

Lubna Marium (Bangladesh)  
kanchendzonga@gmail.com

## Asia-Pacific Network Chairs

### Education & Training

Sarah Knox  
sarah.knox@auckland.ac.nz

### Research & Documentation

Stephanie Burrige (Singapore)  
stephanieanneburrige@gmail.com

### A. P. Rajaram (India)

raj.knootfm@gmail.com  
Anja Ali-Haapala (Australia)  
anja@ali-haapala.com.au  
Rosemary Bennett (Australia)  
rosemary.bennett@monash.edu

### Creation & Presentation

Shiu-chin Yu (Taiwan)  
yu-dance@stu.edu.tw  
Joelle Jacinto (Philippines)  
joelle.jacinto@gmail.com

## Asia-Pacific Chapters

### Aotearoa New Zealand

Sheryl Lowe  
Dance Aotearoa New Zealand  
(DANZ)  
PO Box 9885  
Wellington New Zealand  
T +64-4-8019885  
F +64-4-8019883  
sheryl@danzt.org.nz  
www.danz.org.nz

### Australia

Julie Dyson  
Ausdance National  
julie.dyson@home.netspeed.com.au  
www.ausdance.org.au

### Bangladesh

Lubna Marium  
General Secretary, Shadhona  
A Center for Advancement of  
Southasian Dance & Music  
House 69, Road 5, DOHS (old),  
Dhaka 1213  
T +88029889426  
M +8801713040814  
kanchendzonga@gmail.com

### East Timor representative

Colleen Coy  
Dili Wellness  
T +670-7824-1931  
diliwellness@gmail.com

### Hong Kong

Sophie Lau  
Hong Kong Dance Alliance  
7/F, 26-28 Tai Yau Street  
San Po Kong  
Kowloon, Hong Kong.  
T +852 22676663  
sophie@hkdanceall.org

### India

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan  
Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts  
New Delhi 110 001 India  
F +91 1 1338 1139  
asiaproject@gmail.com

### Indonesia

Michael Raditya  
Secretary  
WDA Indonesia  
michael.raditya@gmail.com

### Korea

Kim Geung-Soo  
Chung Ang University  
72-1 Nae-Ri, Daeduk-Myun,  
Anseong City, Gyeong-Gi Do  
Republic of Korea  
director@cau.ac.kr

### Malaysia

Bilqis Hijjas  
MyDance Alliance  
P.O. Box 12409, 50776  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
T +6017 310 3769  
contact@mydancealliance.org  
www.mydancealliance.org

### Nepal

Rajendra Shrestha  
Nriya Sahakarya Nepal  
(Nepal Dance Alliance).  
Home No. 98 Kopundol,  
Lalitpur-10, Nepal  
T +97 98 4133 7147  
rajen60np@yahoo.com

### Papua New Guinea

representative  
Naomi Faik-Simet  
Institute of Papua New Guinea  
Studies  
Box 1432, Boroko 111, NCD,  
Papua New Guinea  
simet\_naomifaik@yahoo.com.au

### Philippines

Basilio Esteban Villaruz  
College of Music  
University of the Philippines  
Diliman, Quezon City 1101  
Philippines  
T +63 2 428 7772  
besvillaruz@gmail.com

### Singapore

Dr Siri Rama  
sirirama@hotmail.com  
Peter Gn  
peter\_GN@moe.gov.sg

### Taiwan

Su-ling Chou  
Dance Division, Tsoying High School  
#55 Hai-Kung Road  
Tsoying, Kaohsiung, Taiwan 81326  
T/F +886 7 585 3083  
sulingchoudance@gmail.com

### Thailand

Prof. Sanchai Uaesilapa  
Dean of the Faculty of Music and  
Performing Arts  
Burapha University  
Chonburi, Thailand  
uaesilapa@gmail.com