

Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





World Dance Alliance
Asia-Pacific

Channels, No. 2, December 2020
Newsletter of the World Dance Alliance Asia
Pacific
ISSN: 1328-2115
Editor: Bilqis Hijjas (contact@mydancealliance.org)
Publisher: World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific



Cover:
*Jaring Laba-Laba di
Beranda Angka (The
Spiderweb on the
Digital Verandah),*
choreographed by Ari
Ersandi, photographed
by Erwin Octavianto,
presented in the online
festival *Jagongan Wagen*,
by Padepokan Seni
Bagong Kussudiardja
(Yogyakarta, Indonesia),
on 24 July 2020.

Contents

Executive reports	1
President's report	2
Update from the Global Executive	3
Special Thanks	4
Network reports	6
Education & Training Network report	8
Research & Documentation Network report	10
Chapter reports	12
Aotearoa New Zealand report	14
Australia report	16
Bangladesh report	18
Hong Kong report	20
India report	22
Indonesia report	24
Malaysia report	26
Philippines report	28
Singapore report	30
Taiwan report	32
2020 WDA events	
2020 WDAAP/TDRS Conference and AGM	34
About the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific	35
World Dance Alliance key contacts	36



Cheene Limuaco in her work *Salom*, first prize winner in the WiFi Body choreographic competition directed by Myra Beltran, which premiered online on 28-30 August 2020, presented by Cultural Center of the Philippines.

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

In these strange times, one remembers Antonio Gramsci's words "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" that he wrote in his Prison Notebooks. Covid-19 holds us literally in our 'safe' spaces, prisoners of our concerns for others and selves. This pandemic restricts our thoughts, movements and our communicative processes in more ways than one.

Dance has suffered, and so have dancers. Lack of freedom to use studios, lack of patronage in the troubled times, and lack of any possibilities of performing for a live audience seemed like a death knell for dance and dancers for a while. But the relentless "optimism of the will" has prevented us from becoming discouraged and most dancers are trying different ways and means to dance, to conquer the challenges and to make a living.

The internet is a saviour for many in these times. It opens small, limited but powerfully enabling windows of communication for all, and dancers have managed to change their modes, mediums and methods of moving, teaching, choreographing and being visible. "Cynicism of the intellect" may be debilitating at times, but it has not been able to kill the "optimism of will". World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific extends its encouragement and support to the dance community. DANCE WE MUST – for us, for those around us, and for our future generations.

I am extremely happy to report that the Taiwan Dance Research Society (TDRS) and World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific (WDAAP) are organising the International Dance Conference in Taiwan and the WDAAP Annual General Meeting – scheduled to be held on 26th and 27th of December 2020 – as a symbol of hope and love for dance. Let us all thank Tsoying High School for hosting the conference in these difficult times. The international presentations shall be on screen while Taiwanese scholars and dancers shall come together for this significant event. We are happy that Prof. Yunyu Wang's unbound energy and enthusiasm helped us to continue WDAAP's yearly event and AGM.

Last year we had a beautiful event – the Ocean Dance Festival, on the serene sea shores of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Looking back the memory of the event seems almost surreal in its intensity and sincerity.

We shall go on dancing, researching dance, and celebrating the spirit of togetherness through dance.

In these troubled times filled with bereavements, ill-health and fear, let's promise to keep dancing and remember what Pearl Primus said:

"The dance is strong magic. The dance is a spirit. It turns the body to liquid steel. It makes it vibrate like a guitar. The body can fly without wings. It can sing without voice. The dance is strong magic. The dance is life."



Left: Cheryl Stock, WDA Secretary General from 2009 to 2016, at the WDA Global Summit in Taipei, Taiwan, in 2004. Right: Mohd. Anis. Md Nor, WDA Secretary General from 2016 to 2020, at the WDA Global Summit in Brisbane, Australia, in 2008. All photos on this page by Julie Dyson.

Update from the Global Executive

As previously announced in an email to the WDA Global Executive from the Secretary-General, Prof. Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, this position will not be contested at the next meeting of the Executive.

The position of Secretary-General was created in 2008 in an effort to bring under one umbrella the work of the WDA regions, i.e. Europe, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific. Much was accomplished during that period under two SGs, Dr Cheryl Stock and Prof. Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, and we acknowledge the fine work undertaken by both to formalise our modus operandi and to share common ambitions for WDA. These achievements will be preserved as WDA moves forward to a new era.

This pandemic year has seen massive shifts in our expectations and the ways in which the regions are responding, so we have agreed that at the next Global General Meeting (at the next WDA Global Summit, in Hong Kong in June 2022, if all goes according to plan) the key agenda items will be a review of WDA structures and

communications with a view to finding a new way forward for the organisation.

We invite members to submit ideas and suggestions for a new look WDA, perhaps even considering working across regions through networks chaired by expert leaders in their fields (e.g. research, education, health & welfare, etc). We should also consider new governance for WDA, membership and communication methods, and ways of evaluating effectiveness as a world dance organisation connected through common interests and skills.

This conversation is important for the future of WDA and our membership, and we look forward to continuing the discussion directly with regional heads, chapter heads and individual members.

WDAAP announces the initiation of a global dialogue on the contemporary concerns of dance and dancers, in the form of a webinar series.

We shall be planning two days of keynote speeches and round-tables to have a focused and yet inclusive dialogue on 'Dancing and 'Net'-working: Presence and Representation in a Changed World.' Please look for updates on our [Facebook page](#).

Sweety Das Chowdhury and Maria Farih Upama performing 'Porakrom Manobi', choreographed by Manipuri dance exponent Sweety Das Chowdhury for Dakshaja, a six-day virtual festival on the multifarious forms and aspects of Goddess Durga, organized by Maitree Pahari, director of Lok Chhanda, New Delhi. Photo: Abir Haque

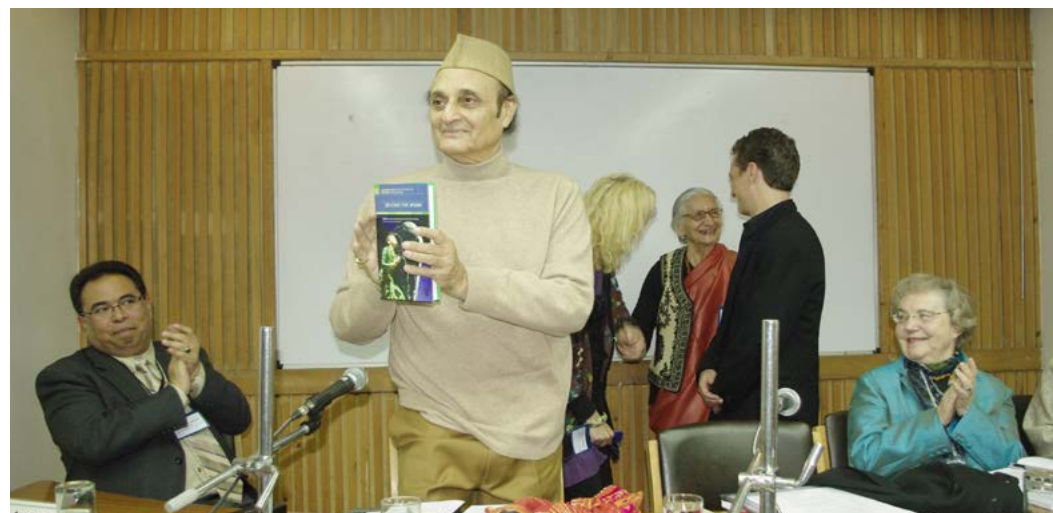


Special Thanks

World Dance Alliance wishes to thank Prof. Mohd. Anis Md. Nor for his service as Secretary General of our global organisation

from 2016 to 2020. We look back on decades of international events bringing the global dance community closer together.

At the launch of the book *Beyond the Apsara: Celebrating Dance in Cambodia*, at the International Conference on Dance Research and the Annual General Meeting of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific in New Delhi, India, in November 2009. L-R: Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, Karan Singh, Stephanie Burridge, Kapila Vatsyayan, Fred Frumberg and Adrienne Kaeppler. Photo: Benil Biswas



The World Dance Alliance Executive meeting in Paris in 2013. L-R: Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, Julie Dyson, Cheryl Stock, Hazel Franco, Mary Jane Warner, Yunyu Wang and Jin-Wen Yu.



The World Dance Alliance Executive meeting with the team from the National Centre for Contemporary Dance, Angers, in France in 2013.



Mohd. Anis Md. Nor with Julie Dyson in Angers, France, in 2013, in preparation for the WDA Annual General Meeting in 2014.



In Taipei for the Dance in Proximity World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific Conference and Annual General Meeting, in November 2017. L-R Urmimala Sarkar, Sal Murgiyanto, Julie Dyson, and Mohd. Anis. Md. Nor.



Mohd. Anis Md. Nor (front row, 6th from left) with his team from Nusantara Performing Arts Research Centre, as well as WDAAP Executive Board members and conference performers, at the Dance in Proximity World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific Conference and Annual General Meeting at Taipei National University of the Arts, Taiwan, in November 2017. Photo: TNUA



Un-form by T.H.E. Dance Company, Singapore.
Photo: Bernie Ng

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

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.

Education & Training Network report

By Ralph Buck

Preamble

UNESCO has established a global initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet. This project is titled: Futures of Education: Learning to Become. The final report will be released at the 41st General Conference of UNESCO November 2021. Details can be found at <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/>

The World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) of which WDA is an Executive member, was asked to provide input. Sarah Knox, WDAAP Education Network Chair and Ralph Buck WDA representative on the WAAE, contributed the comment below.

Dance Education and Futures of Education

Humans need meaning and community. We have always valued myths, stories, rituals, performance, and dance as a way to explain and understand our self and the people we exist with.

When we as dance educators and artists consider our present global and local contexts and the future of education we must consider the integral, if not central, role the arts play in enabling us to make sense of now and plan for the future. As we make meaning, we make culture and re-make it through history. Importantly diverse communities make diverse cultures and they are equal, though history persistently reveals inequities, colonization and destruction of such diversity.

As we look forward, we do this championing diversity in every eco-system, knowing that there is no universal truth and no universal model for education. That is teachers, learners, curriculum, contexts,

careers, communities, families will all be diverse, and for us as a humanity to survive (and for our planet to survive) we must cherish, accept, love, foster, protect and understand diversity.

As we seek a peaceful co-existence inclusive of diverse political systems and nation states we argue that culture and dance education are integral and sustainable assets. The arts can in the next generation serve us in protecting ourselves and the planet much better than we do now. How?

- Championing dance education pedagogies that value inclusion, participation, agency, experience and dialogue
- Ensuring that dance education is relevant to learners, their communities, their aspirations
- Respecting that at the heart of education be it in the studio or on-line is the relationship between teachers and learners. It is rooted in a humanity of relationships
- Welcoming and celebrating the interplay between dance educators and artists
- Championing the methodologies and practices in which dance education helps children express their ideas, fears, concerns, solutions and aspirations
- Championing dance educators as assets that can enable future policy development that seek solutions to global concerns re climate change, moral degradation, nationalism, socio-economic inequities, gender inequity and bio-diversity

- Recognising that the interplay between education, society and work will be much more fluid, that is, learners will be in and out of formal education systems throughout their life span; that informal education outside of regulated systems will increasingly provide core education experience
- Critiquing and researching cultural practices and dance education with a view for fostering inclusion and tolerance of others world views and practices
- Maximising participation in quality dance education in formal and informal education contexts
- Making education concrete and real through tangible arts experiences where in the learner has ownership and agency in a safe learning environment
- Integrating dance education across other disciplines of knowing and researching
- Seeing the arts as a 'technology' for archiving, documenting, facilitating knowledge creation
- Celebrating dance education as a means for initiating and interrupting social revolution, and that such alternative ideas come from a freedom to explore and express oneself.

Here, we advocate for the transformative role and power that dance education has and can enable. This rests on valuing dance education as being a requisite part of all people's education in the year 2050.

Atamira Dance Company
of Aotearoa New
Zealand performing
Ngā Wai. Dancer and
choreographer Sean
MacDonald. Photo: Toaki
Okano



Research & Documentation Network report

Thanks to Stephanie Burridge by Anja Ali-Haapala, co-chair

In this *Channels*, we are announcing that Stephanie Burridge has officially stepped down as Research & Documentation (R&D) Network Co-Chair. We thank and acknowledge Stephanie's 14 years of service and leadership in the R&D Network. Since joining Urmimala Sarkar Munsri as Co-Chair in 2006, Stephanie has proposed ambitious projects. Most significantly, the Celebrating Dance in Asia and the Pacific Routledge book series has raised the profile of dance scholarship and practice across our region. This series is also significant as an early example of foregrounding the artist voice alongside academics and presenting multiple perspectives from diverse communities. Seven titles have been published to date, focusing on Australia, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, the South Pacific and Taiwan. More recently, Stephanie co-edited *Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, a project that was jointly supported by WDA and daCi. Stephanie's work on this anthology supported several Asia-Pacific R&D members to contribute chapters.

Behind the scenes, Stephanie has been a key contributor to the coordination of scholarly presentations at WDAAP conferences, often undertaking the significant task of facilitating the peer review process. Additionally, Stephanie has been a strong supporter of initiatives for emerging researchers exemplified through her championing of the Emerging Scholars session at the 2015 WDAAP conference in Singapore. Her sustained work within the R&D Network has led to new collaborations,

greater profile and connectivity for dance research and practice in the Asia Pacific and beyond.

We also would like to acknowledge Stephanie's considered approach to transitioning the network into new leadership. Since 2018, this has been a gentle process of onboarding where Stephanie has taken on the role of mentor as we navigated our new roles in the WDAAP network. This slow transition has given us a solid foundation from which we will leap into the next phase of the R&D Network.

Navigating Location, Negotiating Identity: 2020 Conference by A.P. Rajaram

This year, The R&D network has collaborated with the TDRS (Taiwan) conference committee mentored by Prof. Yunyu Wang and her wonderful team to conduct planning for the scholarly presentations for the conference 'Navigating Location, Negotiating Identity 2020', being held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Even though the conference's specific focus was discussed after the WDAAP and daCi conference in Adelaide, Australia, the active participation of R&D's team in assisting and discussing started only after December 2019, right after the Ocean Dance Festival in November 2019 at Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. The discussions were regular in finalizing the deadlines and organising the received abstracts for the academic papers. The original conference dates were fixed for 8-9 August 2020. When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out affecting multiple nations from March 2020, it was decided by the conference committee

that the deadline needed to be extended for submissions as a part of organising the conference. After a series of lockdowns, the conference has been shifted, with suggestions from WDA board members, to 26-27 December 2020. It involved a lot of effort and mentorship from Prof. Yunyu Wang to change the schedule.

The conference focuses on navigating locations and negotiating identities in the context of various dance forms in the world. The academic papers that were selected this time include research on dance practices, choreographic analysis, ritual practices, performance practices of various geographical localities, pedagogical understanding of dance, histories and ethnographies. We have worked to confirm selections of sixty-three papers which include scholarly presentations, panel presentations and lecture demonstrations. Along with academic papers, there are about twenty-one dance works for the showcase and sixteen master classes conducted by international dance exponents.

After the imposition of strict travel restrictions due to Covid-19 in the host country, and its regulations and advice from the government officials, the committee members from both WDA and TDRS decided that the international scholars can record and send a film clip of their academic paper presentations. This idea was well received by the international scholars, and those who cannot make it to the conference are sending their clips. These film clips are planned to be showcased along with the presentations by those presenters who are already there in Taiwan.

Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship (JEDS) 2020 Editorial Team

by A.P. Rajaram

The R&D Network is happy to introduce our new guest editorial team for the Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship (JEDS) who are actively working on the 2020 issue. Discussions about putting together a team started during the Ocean Dance Festival in 2019. This editorial team consists of four scholars: Dr. Priyanka Basu, Dr. Ilana Morgan, Dr. Julie Mulvihill, and Dr. A.P. Rajaram (as the coordinator of submissions). Dr. Priyanka Basu is a Project Curator at Two Centuries of Indian Print at the British Library and a Visiting Scholar at SOAS South Asia Institute, both in London. Dr. Ilana Morgan is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Dance and Director of the Community Dance Centre at Texas Women's University, USA. Dr. Julie Mulvihill was trained and taught with Birmingham Ballet in Birmingham, Alabama, and is a regular member of the summer faculty, teaching at the Academy of Dance Arts in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA. Dr. A. P. Rajaram is an Assistant Professor, Performing Arts Department, Presidency University, in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The team is meeting virtually on a regular basis and working on publishing JEDS Vol. 8 digitally as early as December 2020 and, as usual, this issue will present a variety of interesting topics.

#Yes or No,
choreographed
by Bulareyaung
Pagarlava, performed
by Bulareyaung Dance
Company of Taiwan.
Photo: Lin Chun-yung





A dance in the Cangget ritual procession performed by Sanggar Cangget Budaya Lampung on 30 October 2020, in the Cangget Bara Festival (part of Indonesian Lampung) in Sumatra, Indonesia. Note the face shields worn as Covid-19 protection. Photo: Ghali Muhammad

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.

Aotearoa New Zealand report

by Sheryl Lowe

Bjorn Aslund and Sacha Copland of Java Dance Theatre in *The Metamorphosis Trail*. Photo: Paul Taylor



In this latter part of 2020, we have been fortunate in Aotearoa New Zealand to see the lowering of Covid-19 alert levels across the country and the consequential lifting of restrictions on live performances and gatherings. It has been both a pleasure and relief to see our dancers and dance companies finally taking to the stage again after so much disappointment and financial loss earlier in the year. New Zealand audiences have enthusiastically swarmed back to theatres and other venues, with many seasons quickly selling out.

With the return of live dance performances artists have also embraced the opportunity to collaborate across art forms once more. The natural connection between dance and music in particular has been fully exploited as artists have emerged from the constraints of lockdown to the joy of creating and performing live together in front of audiences as before.

The Royal New Zealand Ballet fittingly opened their luminous end of year production of *The Sleeping Beauty* on World Ballet Day 29 October, having cancelled two seasons earlier in the year as a result of the pandemic. Live orchestral accompaniment to the ballet made its welcome return to the theatre at the same time and this traditional pairing of two art forms is providing heightened enjoyment to dancers, musicians and audiences alike as the show traverses the country on national tour.

Contemporary dance company Footnote New Zealand Dance is just wrapping up its national tour of *Undercurrent* – two absorbing new dance works created by Japanese artist Kota Yamazaki and

New Zealand choreographer Rose Philpott. Both works are paired with powerful original sound scores by New Zealand sonic artists Jesse Austin-Stewart and Eden Mulholland respectively.

Atamira Dance Company has also returned to the theatre with brand new work *Ngā Wai*. Choreographed by Sean MacDonald and supported by a multidiscipline

design team, the creation of *Ngā Wai* is a celebration of some of Aotearoa's most creative performance artists and the wealth of stories that are held by Māori.

Black Grace is yet another company returning to theatres and debuting new work with the premiere of *3 Dances*. Choreographed by Founding Artistic Director Neil Ieremia, these poetic works of unrelenting physical power aim to inspire with themes of resistance and resilience.

After its inaugural success in 2019, *Experimental Dance Week Aotearoa*, curated by Alexa Wilson, is excited to present another live festival this year in December. After many re-programmings and re-schedulings in the Covid-19 climate, they will be bringing cutting-edge live dance, workshops and talks to audiences, enabling the power of art and performance to speak to and connect people in these transformative times.

2020 marks the 11th year that the Pacific Dance Choreographic Lab has been presented in New Zealand. It seeks to foster creativity, ingenuity, risk-taking, discovery and collaboration which impacts the future of dance for our Pacific artists, not just in Aotearoa but globally. Selected choreographers for 2020 Ankaramy Fepuleai, Lomina-Meteri Araitia and Albert Latailakepa presented thrilling narrative-based dance pieces to an appreciative audience at Auckland Art Gallery as part of Auckland Art Week's Late Night Art event in October.

Our leading tertiary dance education providers – the New Zealand School of Dance, Unitec Dance, University of

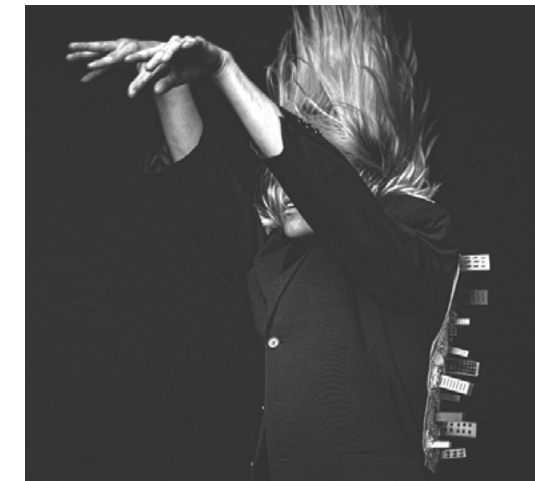
Auckland, University of Otago – have all ended this most challenging of years on a high note with their respective Graduation Seasons. New Zealand School of Dance is presenting *There & Then / Here & Now*, showcasing the depth of student talent and the School's creative diversity. The Unitec Dance *SHOWCASE 2020* similarly celebrated diversity featuring three new works by choreographers Chrissy Kokiri of The New Zealand Dance Company, Charlene Tedrow, Artistic Director of Ura Tabu Pacific Dance Company, and Yiling Chen, who worked remotely with students from Unitec's shared programme with Beijing Dance Academy, to develop a dance film reflective of their unique collaborative relationship.

Many of those who had to cancel their live performances due to Covid-19 found inventive ways to keep creating and presenting work. DANZ was proud to support the launch and presentation of an experimental project from Java Dance Theatre, which highlighted the connection/process between dancers and musicians in creating new works under difficult times. Inspired by 101 duets during lockdown, Java Dance Theatre brought 26 dancers and musicians together in Wellington to experiment, progressing to a live-streamed showing in Wellington and a performance at Hawkes Bay Arts Festival. Tempo Dance Festival made the decision early in the year

to move their entire festival to the digital platform and have presented an inspiring menu of live and pre-recorded dance works throughout the year.

Aside from all of the major productions and companies returning to the stage, it has also been a great relief for the hundreds of dance studios throughout the country to be able to welcome their students back – now happily enjoying regular classes again.

We are most fortunate to be in this position in Aotearoa New Zealand to have almost full access again to all that dance offers and fervently hope that other countries will soon enjoy a similar return to former levels of creative engagement across the entire dance spectrum.



Above: Amber Liberté, *APOCALYPTIC POLITIC* // *WE FLOAT*, in *Experimental Dance Week Aotearoa 2020*. Photo: Jocelyn Janon Photography
Below: Pacific Dance New Zealand in the Pacific Dance Choreographic Lab Showing at Auckland Art Gallery, part of Auckland Art Week's Late Night Art in October 2020. Photo: David St George

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



While the Covid-19 pandemic continues, there has been some lifting of domestic travel restrictions for most Australians, and for events including live performances, sporting events and family gatherings. International travel – both in and out of Australia – is still banned except for returning residents and emergency medical situations.

Ausdance National elected a new board at its Annual General Meeting earlier this year, and it was decided to revive the Australian Dance Awards which had been discontinued in 2019 due to limited resources. The board felt that work produced in 2018 and 2019 should be acknowledged, and nominations were called for both years back in May.

With nominations now completed and **short lists announced** in twelve categories for both years by an expert panel, preparations are being made to live-stream the Awards ceremony on 8 December.

The two Lifetime Achievement Awards have been announced in advance, going to Janet Karin OAM for 2020 and Jill Sykes AM for 2019, with citations provided by dance historian and writer Dr Michelle Potter. Janet's citation reads in part:

For over 60 years Janet Karin has been a significant force in the world of Australian dance. She has been respected as a dancer, teacher, artistic director, mentor, researcher and academic and in each of those roles has shown a deep commitment to dance and an intelligent and searching approach to the growth of the art form.

Jill's citation states that:

Jill Sykes has been writing about the arts, dance in particular, since 1960 when she began working as a cadet journalist in Adelaide with *The Advertiser*. She has been freelancing since 1979 and is respected as a dance writer and critic for the breadth of her outlook, which encompasses all forms of dance; for the honesty of her approach; and for the inspiration her reviews and articles generate for her readers.

The Ausdance network will actively participate in the Awards presentation ceremony by organising watch parties and the presentation of trophies to those who reside in their States or Territories.

In other news, Ausdance National has established a dance education advisory group to work with the National Advocates for Arts Education reps Jeff Meiners and Sue Fox. The group met for the first time in November and agreed to formalise the arrangement for future consultation. Its first task is to assist in the review of *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts (Dance)* being undertaken by ACARA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority. Similar advisory groups are being formed by the other four art forms included in the curriculum: drama, music, visual arts and media arts. These are all now given equal space in a curriculum that emphasises equal opportunity and entitlement for all students from Kindergarten to Year 10.

In this year of Covid-19 there has been

a plethora of parliamentary inquiries into the impact of the pandemic on the arts and related industries. The latest, a Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions, called for submissions in September, so Ausdance National made a comprehensive submission about the breadth of dance practice in Australia, its impact on the lives of everyone from the very young to the aged, and the financial and artistic issues now being faced by dance companies, independent artists, teachers and dance studios. All submissions can be read [here](#).

The Ausdance network has continued to make a powerful contribution to dance dialogue this year, facilitating Zoom meetings across all sectors of the dance industry when so many small businesses, companies and freelance artists are suddenly isolated from peers and reliable information about the

Covid-19 environment. Studio teachers have been particularly impacted by the pandemic lock-downs, and Ausdance offices in each State and Territory have worked with them to clarify rules around practice, Covid-safe plans and re-opening.

The Ausdance network has also introduced Zoom programs such as the Street Dance Roundtable; a forum on accessible dance education, training and practice; a discussion entitled 'My Same, Your Difference: Disability, Ability and the Body'; 'Holding Live Events, Productions & Performances' and 'Recreational Structured Partner Dancing'.

As some Ausdance offices are offering free membership until the end of the year, numbers have soared, a wonderful way to connect with all sectors of the dance community across the country and to share information and support.



Janet Karin (above) and Jill Sykes (below), recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Awards at the Australian Dance Awards 2020.

Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli

Gaudia dance exponent Rachel Priyanka performing Gaudia dance, choreographed by Prof. Mahua Mukherjee, in the virtual dance festival 'Dance Synergy Danceathon' organized by Sujata Banerjee Dance Company, UK.
Photo: Mehedi Rahman Ehab



2021 is approaching and people are getting used to this new normal. The dance industry of Bangladesh has made a noticeable shift in the last few months. Dancers are making the best use of the resources available to create and communicate.

Nirtyajog, the WDA (Asia Pacific)-Bangladesh chapter, has emphasized inspiring young choreographers and performers to think, read and write about dance more, along with performing. Several initiatives have been taken by various organizations. Since June 2020, Shadhona Cultural Centre, headed by Lubna Marium, has started a series of online workshops on safeguarding, inventorying and conducting critical research on the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Bangladesh. Initiatives have been taken to build a national, online, community-led, ICH-pedia collaborating with 13 other cultural institutions.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has been arranging a series of webinars on dance research and dance styles of Bengal since July 2020. Nrityanandan, headed by leading Manipuri dance exponent Sharmila Banerjee, has been organizing an interesting online event on Facebook, 'Nritto Upolobdhi' (Realization of Dance), where each episode is based on a specific dance style; prominent local and international dancers then share their experience with that style.

Eminent Kathak dance exponent Munmun

Ahmed has launched a Facebook webcast, 'Nritter Nepothe' (Behind the Dance), where legendary dance artists of Bangladesh are sharing their journey of dance. Following the lead of the seniors, Tahnun Ahmedy, a promising young contemporary dancer and choreographer of Bangladesh, has started a live webcast on Facebook interviewing renowned international dance artists, while dancer and organizer Shohag Mahabub Hasan from Bogura is also conducting online interview sessions of dance artists and organizers from around the country. These webinars and webcasts are motivating the dancers to gain knowledge about dance and dancers around the world and to explore other aspects of dance as well.

Dancers are not only confined to webinars but also share their creativity and passion for dance on national and international online dance platforms. Manipuri dance exponent Sweet Das Chowdhury's choreography, 'Porakrom Manobi', a dance piece exploring the power of women, has been presented in Dakshaja, a six-day long virtual festival on the multifarious forms and aspects of Goddess Durga, organized by Maitree Pahari, director of Lok Chanda in New Delhi.

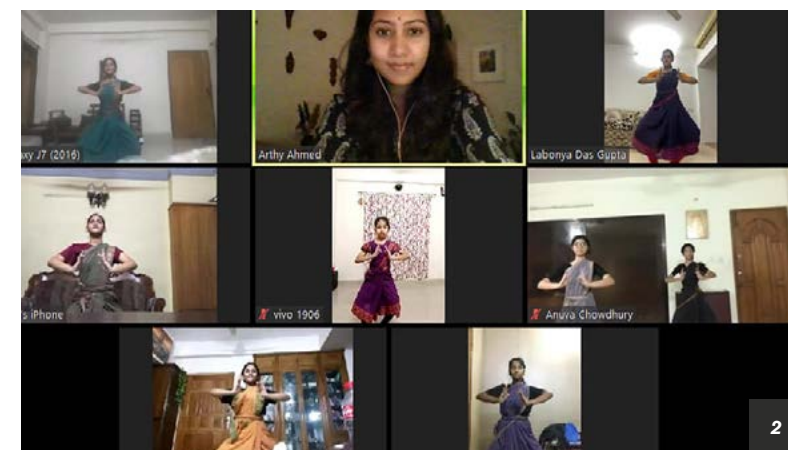
Gaudiya dance exponent Rachel Priyanka received accolades by performing in the Dance Synergy Danceathon organized by Sujata Banerjee Dance Company (UK), in Women of the World, a festival by British

Council. Dhriti Nartanalaya, headed by Manipuri dance exponent Warda Rihab, has presented dance drama 'Shaktrurupen' on an online event organized by Kalhar (USA), and many more. On the other hand, promising young dancers Sudeshna Swayamprabha, Moumita Jaya and Hasan Ishtiaque Imran have presented solo Manipuri and Kathak dance recitals in prestigious virtual festivals in India. The dancers have admitted that the online screens cannot provide half of the excitement and involvement that stage performance does but 'the show must go on!'

In addition, national television channels have started recording dance shows while maintaining safety measures. Many young independent dancers are sharing creative content via their Youtube channels and Facebook while the number of online festivals and competitions is increasing day by day.

Though some studios have started their physical classes on a limited basis, most dance schools are conducting classes online as the government has not withdrawn the lockdown on schools yet. One positive side of these online classes is students from remote districts, who earlier could not come to the city to join dance class, are now getting the opportunity to have good training in dance through online classes.

But both students and teachers feel that online dance classes are more stressful than physical classes. Madhurima Roy, a young student from Kolpotoru dance



school said, "The struggle it takes to figure out every moment of footwork as well as hand gestures through the screen while learning something new is far more mentally exhausting than it is to physically do real-time classes for longer hours. I remember the times we arrived at classes early and had detailed discussions on what we had learnt so far as well as reminding each other of the forgotten parts from the newly learnt piece which eventually cleared up a lot of confusion and mistakes. I miss those fun times."

Teachers are trying their best to overcome communication barriers and make online classes more interesting. And everyone is waiting for this pandemic to be over, to go back to studios and stages as they are tired of watching dance and meeting each other through the rectangular screen.



1. An online workshop on safeguarding and inventorying intangible cultural heritage, conducted by Lubna Marium, Artistic Director, Shadhona Cultural Centre
2. Kolpotoru Dance Studio in Dhaka, Bangladesh, conducting online dance classes.

Hong Kong report

by Sophie Lau

Outstanding Large Venue Production at the 22nd Hong Kong Dance Awards awarded to City Contemporary Dance Company for *Winterreise - The Rite of Spring*. Photo: Cheung Chi Wai @ Moon 9 Image



The performing arts scene in Hong Kong continues to face hurdles and uncertainty amidst the pandemic. Due to the third wave of COVID-19 cases spiking from July, social distancing measures were tightened and hence all performance venues were closed again until early October.

Nonetheless, the pandemic did not deter the Hong Kong Alliance from hosting the annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of the local dance scene. The 22nd Hong Kong Dance Awards changed from a physical ceremony to an online presentation on social media Facebook and YouTube on 18 July 2020. The results were announced via the livestream, including the prestigious Distinguished Achievement Award. It was presented to Daniel Yeung, a veteran dance artist, choreographer, curator, mentor and critic, for his immense contribution to dance development in Hong Kong.

Amongst the total 16 awards in 14 categories, the lion's share of the awards went to City Contemporary Dance Company who received 6 awards, including Outstanding Large Venue Production, Outstanding Ensemble Performance, Outstanding Medium Venue Production, Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer, as well as awards for Outstanding

Dance Education and Outstanding Services to Dance.

In embracing the 'new normal', artists and dance companies premiered their works through online platform and initiated cross-disciplinary collaborations between dance and digital media. For example, R & T (Rhythm & Tempo) redesigned its 2.0 version of *Jazz It Up*, a tap dance performance which was cancelled in February, to be broadcast online in June. Ghost and John presented their multimedia ensemble work *Meniscus Going Online* in July. It presented a collision of online gaming experience and visual culture in the form of dance performance and spoken text. In September, City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) opened their Digital Dance Season with the Jumping Frames International Dance Video Festival "Local Focus", an online streaming that lined up a series of dance films directed and produced by local artists.

Despite the closure of theatres and performance venues, the pandemic situation inspired artists and arts administrators in seeking alternative ways to make works and present them. With the utilization of internet, audiences of theatres across the globe can be reached beyond the geographical boundary. It encouraged acceptance and cultivated more cross-over between dance



Left: Daniel Yeung, winner of the Distinguished Achievement Award at the 22nd Hong Kong Dance Awards. Photo: Cheung Chi Wai @ Moon 9 Image

Below: Shirley Loong, Chairperson of the Hong Kong Dance Alliance during the livestreaming of the 22nd Hong Kong Dance Awards. Photo: Ziv Chun

and multimedia as well as other disciplines of art forms.

In August, the Hong Kong Dance Alliance conducted focus group meetings with dance practitioners including producers, dancers from small and medium dance companies and independent choreographers to understand better their challenges and difficulties under the pandemic situation. Questionnaires were also distributed to stakeholders to collect the impact of cancellation of dance performances and

the adverse effect of COVID-19 to the local dance scene. These findings were summarized and had been submitted to the related government departments and parties. This is to advocate for further support from government and raise public concern on the adverse effect by the pandemic on the local dance scene. The Alliance will continue to uphold the responsive actions and strive to bring the dance community together through this tough time.



India report

by Srabasti Ghosh, Sumedha Bhattacharya and Urmimala Sarkar

Screenshot from Presidency College Alumni Association presentation *Duhshamoyer Atmodorshon* about pandemic times. Performer and photo: Srabasti Ghosh



A promise to dance on

Dancing the present

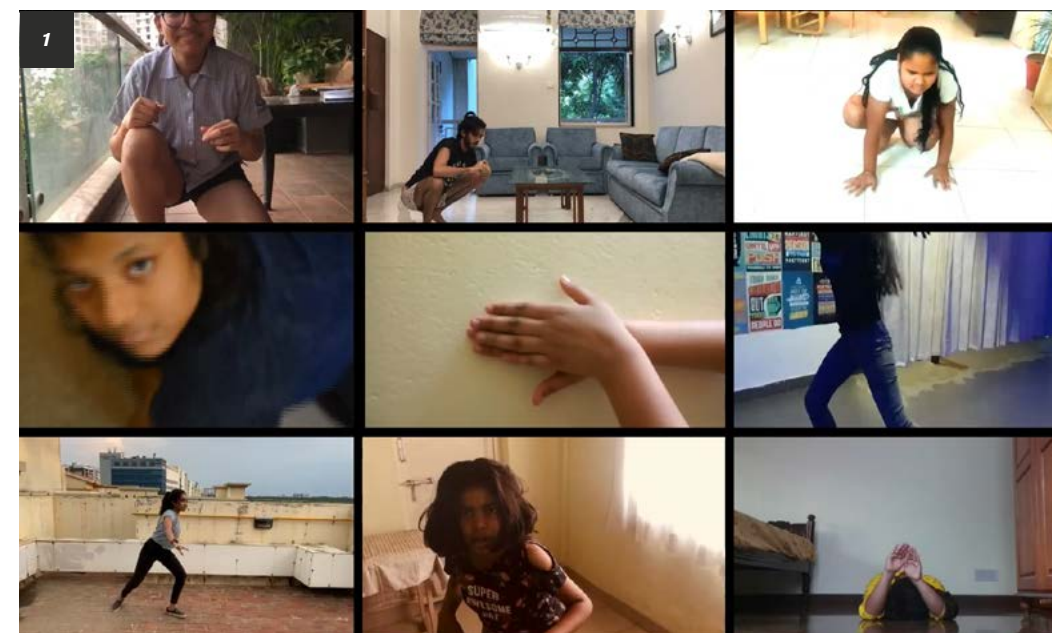
While the pandemic has created a certain pause in the performance spectrum, it has opened up many possibilities of experimentation that expand negotiations between space, body and movement forms. In India, it has also created a painful distinction between those who can afford or access the new media platforms that come at a certain price as well as privilege, and those who are deprived of such privileges due to geographical, economic or other reasons. For the dancers who can afford a smart phone at least, the camera has become the central part of a dance performance, a conduit, an assistant at times, and a controller at others. As there is no direct interaction or exchange happening between performer and spectator, a whole new possibility of dancing for self is getting discovered. Due to the inaccessibility of performance spaces, festivals, and social and ritual gatherings where many community dances survive and which revitalise us as humans, an unending vacuum is created in place of vital corporeal connectivities.

At the onset of the pandemic with the Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing, many of us who know, make, and create dance were restricted to the indoor rectangular frame of the outdoor online world. The frustration of uncertainty and powerlessness forced us to reconsider our relationship with the camera. The extension

of lockdown in India saw our bodies 'extend' towards an unprecedented mediation of technology, with a desire to be seen and remembered. Dance educators started adapting to the online class settings, justifying their practice and presence in the form. Practitioners started to explore the idea of an extended practice / teaching / performing to make a living as well. The rectangular box was no longer a limitation, and started to be seen as a chance of possibilities, with an upsurge of online festivals like Anita Ratnam's Boxed Festival, Arts Forward India and Pickle Factory's Arts Alone Together and many more.

Dancing/screen dancing: towards the future

Some of the young Indian, Taiwanese and Bangladeshi dancers who participated in the 15-day Choreolab in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, last year with choreographer Sashar Zariiff from Canada as their mentor, have continued to work together online. Their work together has given shape to a post-performance presentation based on the experience of *Chaand*, the performance that was staged as a work-in-progress at the Ocean Dance Festival in November 2019. The continuity of workshoping across borders is possible only because of our digital proximity. This embodied conversation has also pushed us to create a presentation by three Indian choreolab participants – Tanushree Chatterjee, Srabasti Ghosh and Durga Madhar – to be a part of the International Dance Festival and WDAAP



1. Screen-dance film *Animal Kingdom* made by undergraduate students at Ashoka University in 2020, facilitated and video essay edited by Sumedha Bhattacharya (participatory project by Numeridance TV, Akram Khan Dance Company). Individual submissions and final global participatory project are available online. Screenshot: Sumedha Bhattacharya

AGM, to be held in Taiwan on 26- 27 December 2020, where they plan to present a pre-filmed panel with Sashar Zariiff as the moderator/discussant. The presentation is being edited in a documentary format by Sumedha Bhattacharya.

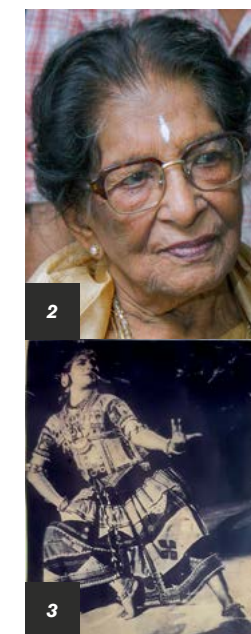
There is an explosion of dance online, with huge number of dancers from India constantly posting on social media. We dancers are now multi-tasking with dance theatre, screen-dance and dance therapy, trying to be there for each other in economic and other kinds of distress and even designing dance for camera for others – on the online platform.

End of an Era: The Passing of Amala Shankar and Dr. Kapila Vasyayan

Amala Shankar (27 June 1919 – 24 July 2020), the famous dancer, choreographer and teacher, passed away peacefully at the age of 101. Dance had happened to her at the age of eleven years, and since then Amala Shankar dreamt, talked and lived dance till the last day of her life. She joined the world renowned dancer Uday Shankar's school in Almora in 1940 and married him in 1942. She continued to be his principle dancer while becoming a successful choreographer herself. Amala was a teacher par excellence. At her institution Uday Shankar India Culture Centre in Kolkata she taught children and adults for 50 years, from 1965 till 2015. She always insisted that a good dancer is a keen observer and the student who does well in dance also achieves excellence in her academics.

She trained young bodies and minds for fifty years, and her students have made their distinctive place in dance in India and abroad. She will be remembered for creating a modern dance pedagogy along with her husband Uday Shankar.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan (1928 - 2020), the President of Dance Alliance (India) passed away recently in Delhi, bringing an end to an era of planning and building of cultural institutions and bodies in India – in the form of the three Akademis, centralised museums, art galleries, drama school, film school, crafts centres and research bodies. One of the earliest and best recognized dance scholars from South Asia, Dr. Vatsyayan published pioneering research on performing arts and aesthetics. Her absence is a great loss to the large community of dancers and dance scholars.



2. Smt. Amala Shankar. Photo: Urmimala Sarkar Muni

3. Amala Shankar pictured in the program for a production by the impresario Sol Hurok, in 1952.

4. Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan at the opening session of the Annual General Meeting of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific 2009 in Delhi, India, with Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, and Dr. Adrienne Kaeppler. Photo: Benil Biswas



Indonesia report

by Galih Prakasiwi

Live performance of the Tayub ritual, featuring Endang Setyaningsih, in Klowoh, Wonosobo, Central Java, 14 October 2020. Photo: Nanang Setiawan



Second Semester in the Pandemic Year: Rising Up Mode

"YouTube link or URL will be sent by email."

This sentence is a common one at the moment. The new normal amid the coronavirus outbreak has become a semi-normal condition in Indonesia, where from July to November more events have been held than in the first semester. During this pandemic, the performers and the organizers have seen several opportunities to stage events in various modes, such as 1) fully virtual performance, 2) live performance, and 3) virtual and live performance combination.

The platform showing fully virtual performance is usually social media; this mode involves no audience engagement in the video-making process. Only a few people are involved in video production and enter the same physical area. I found that there are three modes of fully virtual performances: documentation mode, dance

film mode, and live streaming. One using documentation mode was by Jayadipuran Culture & Art (JCA), a festival organized by Centre for the Preservation of Cultural Values in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (BPNB D.I. Yogyakarta), and aired via its YouTube channel from 12-16 October 2020. Ten dance groups based in Yogyakarta participated in this event, choosing classical or contemporary dance, with all the shooting taking place in one take in a single day.

Two live streaming mode models exist; first, live broadcasting what is on stage, and second, an edited video broadcast by streaming. For example, the Bedhaya Sapta dance performance on 19 October 2020 was posted through live-streaming from a performance on stage, broadcast via Kraton Jogja's YouTube channel. The spectators could see whatever movements the camera was shooting; while they missed seeing other movements, they were able to see the part in the shot in detail.

The recorded live-streaming is the second model, for example the work of Ari Ersandi in Jaring Laba-Laba di Beranda Angka, part of the program Jagongan Wagen organized by Padepokan Seni Bagong Kussudiardja. Due to the pandemic, Ari's work transformed into a virtual performance. Ari discussed with the video team how the camera becomes the eyes of the audience, and he controlled the angle of the camera to enhance the concept of the work.

Supporting virtual performance requires many tools and internet access. However, some Indonesian people cannot access the internet well. One such case was the

Tayub ritual show held in Wonosobo, Central Java, which proceeded live. To support the performance, Endang Setyaningsih, a dancer from Klaten, went to Wonosobo to perform Tayub on 14 October 2020. The reason for the Tayub ritual is because people in the Klowoh village of Wonosobo believe that Tayub brings fertility and bountiful crops. For the performance to proceed safely, they emphasized their safety methods. They isolated the village from people outside while the ritual was held. In the previous year, people from all over came to watch the performance, but not this year.

Other events combine live and virtual performance. People cannot get permission to hold an event gathering many audiences physically. To minimizing the risk of Covid spread, organizers combine live and virtual performance to reach more people. Kotabumi Art Festival used this method. Kebudayaan Lampung Utara's YouTube channel streamed this festival on 30 October 2020, with the live performance attended by selected people such as local government members of Lampung Utara district. The seven performances consist of both dance and music.

Lastly, the Indonesian Dance Festival (IDF) was held by combining all of these methods. From 7 until 14 November 2020, IDF had several activities including discussions and performances. This event is the first year for the organizer to hold the festival and its preparation in virtual mode. Eun Me Ahn, a Korean choreographer, presented her work 1'59 in the opening ceremony. She started this project with a workshop held once a week for six weeks and



attended by 60 participants from different professions, backgrounds, and religion. Each participant created their own short performance, and Eun Me arranged the dramaturgy. Other programs in IDF included Kampana, a platform for young Indonesian choreographers who performed virtually via the IDF YouTube Channel, as well as the main performances. One of the main performances was Li Tu Tu by Ayu Permata Sari. The performance showed in two modes – live performance and virtual performance – performed by Ayu Permata Sari on two different days.

In the last few months, Indonesian dance performance has combined several methods. Though virtual performance is not a new practice, in my opinion, this model accelerates technological innovation. This method can become a new tradition, thanks to the dynamic aesthetic of every dance technique.

Rajapala performed by I Putu Bagus Bang Sada dan Renata Astria, choreographed by I Putu Bagus Bang Sada. Videoed in Bali, it was streamed online for Kotabumi Art Festival (part of Indonesiana Lampung Utara) 2020. Virtual photo: Arya

One of the Kampana Trajectory programs performed by Gege Diaz (Flores, Indonesia) for IDF 2020.zip, aired via Indonesian Dance Festival YouTube Channel from 8 November 2020. Photo screenshot: Erwin Octavianto



Bongkel Gunungsari performed by Endang Setyaningsih, Galih Prakasiwi, Elan Fitra Dianto and Paimin in Jayadipuran Art & Culture 2020. Choreographed by Supriyadi PW, filmed at Dalem Jayadipuran Yogyakarta on 9 October 2020. Photo: Nanang Setiawan

Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas

'Jué', choreographed by Chan Kar Kah and performed by Marrow Collective, in Dancebox on 22-23 August 2020, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre. Photo: Mohd Nor Azmil



When we wrote our last report, Malaysia was in Covid lockdown. We are now back to lockdown – albeit a more limited one – probably until the end of the year. Once again, theatres and dance studios are closed, and university dance departments are teaching online.

However, MyDance Alliance tries to continue our activities as much as possible. We had some respite from restrictions during the middle of the year, from mid-June to mid-October, and managed to make good progress in that time.

In early September, we held our Annual General Meeting, where we welcomed dancer, choreographer and dance educator Wong Jyh Shyong (known as JS Wong) as our new President, ushering in a new era and direction for our organisation. Bilqis Hijjas, who had been president for 10 years, thanked the MyDance members who had given her so much support during her tenure. In his welcoming speech, JS Wong envisioned the potential to pursue multi-year projects that build from year to year, so that the organisation becomes more impactful and sustainable in the long term. We also welcomed new committee member Kyson Teoh.

The AGM attendees launched a spirited discussion about how Covid restrictions have affected the teaching of dance – in primary, secondary and tertiary education, in private studios and through informal

activities. Teachers suggested methods to gain the confidence of parents to bring their children back to class after the lockdown. Other teachers discussed how to engage students over Zoom. Some teachers mentioned they had been able to deepen their students' experience of dance – including lots of video-watching and discussion – in the online context. Their comments and suggestions showed the perseverance and creativity of Malaysian dance teachers during this time of existential crisis.

In August, MyDance held a very successful edition of our performance platform Dancebox, with three shows instead of the usual one to counteract the restriction in seats. Both performers and audiences were extremely enthusiastic and responsive, showing how much we have missed live theatre. MyDance is proud to continue working with Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, especially at a time when private theatre venues are suffering more than anyone in our arts community.

JS Wong and Faillul Adam also conducted Dance on Camera, an online project mentoring 18 Malaysian artists to create new short dance films. The online project involved 2 workshops and 6 previews providing critical feedback. Now we await a lifting of restrictions, for a live launch celebration of the new dance film works.

In other projects, committee member Lau

Beh Chin briefly relaunched the teaching of dance to a group of refugee students from the Chin community in Myanmar. We accepted two dance students from Sultan Idris Education University as interns, working on archiving plus their own projects. Plus, our online publication Langkah is currently producing its 2020 edition, with 7 articles in the editorial process.

We look forward to our organisational grant from CENDANA, the Cultural Development Agency of Malaysia, being extended to mid-2021. In line with our aims for that grant, we hope to hold a MyDance Festival early next year.

Expanding our organisation's scope, JS Wong spearheaded a proposal for a host of dance activities to be held at Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre, a new private venue which will start operations in the popular 1 Utama Shopping Centre next year.

Outside MyDance, the rest of the Malaysian dance community is prioritising its pivot to digital. Among prominent developments, Kwang Tung Dance Company

launched Merentas Awan, a series of original dance films and photos, on topics from Loneliness to Love. Sutra Foundation and Masakini Theatre Company organised Gerak Angin, an online festival of Malaysian art, supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. It offers sumptuously filmed dance items including established players The Performing Arts of Todern and Dua Space Dance Theatre. Dancer Hii Ing Fung and theatre director Loh Kok Man organised Dancing Forward: A Roundtable Marathon for Dance: two days of discussions on key dance issues (MyDance president JS Wong appeared on the panel on "bad dance"). Finally, ASK Dance Company launched Forging Tradition: Beyond Borders, taking its popular series of traditional Malay dance classes online.

The Malaysian government recently announced MYR 15 million (USD 3.6 million) to support the arts and culture community affected by Covid restrictions, to be disbursed by CENDANA in 2021. If this funding goes where it is needed most,

the Malaysian dance community may emerge relatively unscathed from our current state of somewhat suspended animation. We look forward to a brighter stronger future.

1. Chan Kar Kah teaching a group of teenagers from the Chin refugee community, as part of the Teaching Art for Refugees project organised by MyDance committee member Lau Beh Chin.

2. MyDance Alliance's new president JS Wong giving feedback during a preview session of the Dance on Camera project.

3. Krithika Ramachandran and Zhen-Zhu Chandrasekaran in 'Madhava Vandhanam & Madhava Kauthvam', choreographed by Usha Dorai, in Dancebox on 22-23 August 2020, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre. Photo: Mohd Nor Azmil



Philippines report

by Nicole Primero

Nicole Primero in *Soup of Grace*, Episode 1: *Hakus (Embrace)*, conceptualized by Herbert Alvarez and Elena Laniog, filmed by Ruelo Zuendo, which premiered online on 3 Oct 2020.



Dancers are flexible, literally and figuratively. Filipinos are resourceful people used to finding creative means to earn income. Barely a few months into the mandatory lockdown, some studios and companies were already on the verge of shutting down completely, yet it seemed only natural for Filipino dance artists to immediately find audacious ways to thrive.

Behind the Screens

The Cultural Center of the Philippines' Choreographers Series (CCPCS) used digital platforms to expand the reach of its programs to a critical mass of people for the promotion of contemporary dance. *WifiBody* directed by Myra Beltran, is a competition for the solo-duet form, and this year's virtual edition focused on using the domestic space or lockdown site. This stretched the possibilities and visions of budding choreographers and questioned the modes of production brought about by the pandemic. The competition streamed online from 28-30 August 28, via online platforms. Second place was a tie between Jasper Narvaez's "A Crowd of One" and Rose Panuelo's "Distan(t)ce". Cheenee Limuaco won first place for "*Salom*". As described by judge Nes Jardin, "The piece won for its solid composition, and powerful cinematic imagery based on a concept marked by simplicity and raw emotion. It is also outstanding for its effective and dramatic use of limited space and its innovative interplay of movements, light, and lilting guitar music."

CCPCS's NeoFilipino: "The Man is Not Your Friend" was directed by Denisa Reyes. This choreographers' initiative has been archiving Philippine political realities since 2015. It illustrates the pulse of Filipinos by telling collective stories through dance in collaboration with music, film, theater, and animation. Going virtual was an opportunity to look back at what has been done during its years of existence, as well as presenting new pieces that are socially and politically engaged. Team 1's Adrienne Vergara, Sig Pecho and Stephen Viñas, Team 2's Paw Castillo and Paul Morales, and Team 3's Mia Cabalfin and Jose Olarte created collaborative works in response to the current situation. Three new works premiered from 28-30 October 2020, along with revisited works from Erl Sorilla, Mia Cabalfin, Myra Beltran and Denisa Reyes. "The Man is Not Your Friend" was a powerful weapon beyond words and confinement.

Continuing the trend of creating films, *Soup of Grace* was a choreographic research project confronting the limits of creation. Conceptualized by Herbert Alvarez and Elena Laniog, it was designed to be a four-part series involving several artists from across the globe. The first episode entitled "*Hakus*" (*Embrace*) edited by filmmaker Ruelo Zuendo with music of Teresa Barrozo, premiered on 3 October 2020. The collaborative process included one-on-one sessions online between Laniog and the artists, exploring her "no touch-touch" concept.

Fifth Wall Fest (FWF) was the Philippines' first online international dance film festival founded and directed by Madge Reyes which ran from 7 to 11 October 2020. They advocated bringing further value to the art of dance filmmaking, and challenging experimentation between dance and film while exploring possibilities and boundaries in the genre. FWF hosted a competition, with entries chosen for their excellence and innovation in the craft. Notable international artists were invited as judges. "Dotted Bodies" by Sagarika Debnath and Prakriti Sharda from India won the Grand Jury Prize, while Filipina Patricia Rivera's "What Happened to You, Arna?" was awarded the Japan Foundation Prize. The successful festival bridged the gap between local and international communities.

Maintaining Dance Communities

National Commission for Cultural and the Arts (NCCA) provided a venue for the community to showcase their best recent works prior to and during the pandemic. More than 50 dance groups from each of the country's major islands participated in *Dance Xchange on Air*. Each group received PHP 25,000 (USD 515) as honoraria. About 10 were featured every weekend the whole of October, making it a busy month for dance.

The LikhaPH Sustainability Program began as a fundraiser to equip members of the Philippine dance community. Launched in April 2020, it reached a milestone by successfully raising more than a million pesos through the generosity of individuals

and institutions. The small group led by Rhosam Prudenciado Jr. was able to support 200 displaced Filipino dance professionals, and has partnered with independent artists for more initiatives. November marked the end of LikhaPH Online which launched last July. Dance teachers were provided a platform to teach free-for-all classes, after which they were paid a fee for their services. Throughout the program's duration, 107 teachers have participated. LikhaPH also held an online discussion night called *Kwentuhan* which live-streamed every other Sunday of each month. Guests have been invited to talk about current and upcoming dance projects, dance education, and dance and working overseas, among other topics. LikhaPH remained true to their three pillars, which are create, collaborate and community.

While dance going digital may be a different experience, somehow the sense of awareness and accessibility were heightened. Dance reached a large number and a wider scope of viewers online. Dancers would rather dance on screen than not dance at all. Amazingly a lot of groups kept organizing projects focused on nearly every advocacy. Initiatives covered fundraisers, creative visions, education, and even a just balanced well-being. The strengthened sense of community is indeed a blessing. Despite the clichéd "dance like nobody's watching" as we are used to, in the near future we all wish to be able to celebrate and dance because someone is finally watching.

Mia Cabalfin in "The Man is Not Your Friend", which premiered online on 28-30 Oct 2020 in CCPCS's NeoFilipino.



Singapore report

by Filomar Cortezano Tariao

NAFA freshmen Dance students in contemporary floor work assessment preparations. Photo: NAFA



On 7 April, the Singapore government declared a circuit breaker period which restricted social interaction in the community, to minimize the spread of Covid-19. This meant a significant loss of income for dance teachers, studio owners and entertainment venues and other artists. Some studios had to close permanently, while performing arts schools had to move assessment presentations online. The Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) 2020 moved online to keep the spirit of camaraderie of the festival alive, allowing digital video entries from students.

The partial lockdown was eased by mid-May. In the tertiary performing arts institutions, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and LASALLE, performances continued only online. Collaborative works, which meant intermingling of different cohorts, were cancelled or postponed, to the frustration of the students. However, they understood that, with the developing health crisis, such constraints were unavoidable.

Several Singaporean institutions host international learners; summer holidays in June usually mean that foreign students return to their home countries. Even as the circuit breaker was lifted and Singapore started reopening, the worsening infection across the world necessitated the closure of ports. Students risked not being able to finish their studies if they chose to return to their countries of origin. Staying, on the other hand, entailed added board and lodging costs. This became more worrisome, as the students were stuck in a limited space without proper training to keep fit

for the next school year. Fortunately, The Human Expression's (T.H.E.) M1 Dance Festival workshops were moved online, and preprofessional dancers could join the activities, allowing them to maintain form and function as they awaited returning to school.

NAFA opened its doors to students at the end of July, with strict guidelines, including 14-day quarantines for students returning from overseas, mask wearing and social distancing. Work from home and face-to-face schedules cycled on alternate days. Pas des deux and contact partnering classes became non-contact and variation classes, respectively. Intermingling of cohorts was discouraged and contextual work migrated online. All these changes entailed meticulous planning among the faculty, staff and students.

By August, dance studios in Singapore started to reopen, although co-curricular activities in government schools were still on hold. The Ministry of Education (MOE) encouraged its dance teachers to enroll in continuing education courses, including the Safe Dance Practice workshop conducted in cooperation with the MOE, National Arts Council (NAC) and NAFA. The course focused on the fundamentals of dance anatomy and science as well as class planning. Close to 400 teachers have taken the course, with more than a thousand awaiting their turn.

Third Space, the yearly collaboration between NAFA and the Esplanade Dans Festival moved in-house to the academy's Studio Theatre, and was livestreamed



Pur(e) An Experimental Virtual Performance by T.H.E Dance Company, presented as part of M1 CONTACT Rewired. Photo: T.H.E Dance Company

in November. They presented works by a multicultural and locally-based team of international artists: Christina Chan, Muhammad Norisham Bin Osman, Son Yu Joung and Filomar Tariao. This year, the school has also allowed student choreographers to showcase their works.

LASALLE School of Dance and Theatre resumed classes in September with recommended safety measures. It continued with its annual collaboration, *Piano Voyage*, with the School of Contemporary Music. For this iteration, Polish contemporary dance maker Maria Stoklosa (via Zoom), together with Frank Joseph de Meglio (Music) and Susan Yeung (Dance), mentored selected interschool students to improvise, create and perform to the music of Chopin.

Independent artistes similarly struggled during this period. Former WDA Singapore Secretary Peter Gn met with scheduling and venue setbacks for his doctoral research work *For Reasons Undisclosed*. Undaunted, the collaborative dance project pushed through with musician Philip Tan and film maker Jireh Koh providing the score and visuals for filming the piece, which premiered to more than 600 students in Singapore on 24 September.

Performance venues, clubs and theatres were still not allowed to operate at this time, so most productions streamed online. Singapore Dance Theatre's (SDT) yearly *Ballet Under the Stars* was cancelled, while Maya Dance Theatre moves some of its offerings into the virtual arena. The government announced it might allow theatres and performance venues limited operation capacity by the end of the year.

For the first time after 6 months, Singapore reported no new community cases on 13 October. Within dance schools, no infectious incident was reported throughout the entire period; a tremendous feat, as most classes

are conducted within enclosed spaces. And even if shows had to go on without the concomitant applause, dancers still found time to post their skills and works online to their followers.

Singapore, as an urban hub within the region, depends on the constant flow of travelers and international stakeholders to sustain a robust economy. A global health crisis curtailing the access of tourists, students and businesses into the city threatens the financial vigour of this island-state. Dance, as a social activity, will always be affected.

However, this has not discouraged local practitioners but has inspired and emboldened them to explore different means to create and connect anew, even within this small island. After all, ours is a calling of creativity, and creativity is what is exactly needed to survive during these unprecedented times.

Piano Voyage, a Music and Dance Collaboration Project of LASALLE, with Polish guest artist Maria Stoklosa, led by music lecturer Frank Joseph De Meglio and dance lecturer Susan Yeung. Photo: Kuang JingKai



Taiwan report

by Su-Ling Chou

#Yes or No, by Bulareyaung Dance Company, choreographed by Bulareyaung Pagarlava. Photo: Lin Chun-yung



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all performances in the first half year of 2020 were sadly cancelled. Since March, Taiwan has been in a good condition, allowing people to get together but with the requirement of mask wearing and distanced sitting. International and Taiwanese groups which postponed their programs in the first half of the year are now returning to the stage, packing theaters with performances. The performing arts in the second half of the year is blossoming like spring.

The National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (NKCA) Weiwuying, a major performance site in south Taiwan, sponsored the biennial Taiwan Dance Platform for the third time, 2 to 8 November 2020. The theme of this year is 'Encounter', open for all in dance and related arts. NKCA has tried to enlarge the imagination related to dance performances, by relocating theater performances into the environment of people's daily life. They announced that dancing is more than just words but also physical action. The week-long festival presented performances, workshops and films exhibitions; people of all ages joined with high energy.

In dance performances, Weiwuying presented B. DANCE performing *Floating Flowers*, Bulareyaung Dance Company in *#Yes or No*, and a triple bill of Tjimur Dance Theater's 'Varhung – Heart to Heart', Resident Island Dance Theatre's 'Ice Age', and Dua Shin Te Production's 'A Piece of Cake.'

In film, Weiwuying presented *Weiwuying ONE Minute VR Stage* which included filmed your own dance with an app to create dance videos, and the interactive

exhibition *Encounter* in which sound artist Chi Po-hao explored sounds of everyday life in the streets of Fengshan, Kaohsiung, and invited the audience to become the artist. *Encounter.Dance Film* featured short works including 'TPE-886' by Chang Ching-ju, Wu Jia-jing, Cheng Liam and Lee Yi-chi; 'Siamoise' by Hsu Hai-wen; 'Fading Flower' by Lai Maurice Yu-man; 'Breaking Waves' by William Lu; 'Planting the Cycle of Pure' by Peng Hsiao-yin; 'Like Grass' by Huang Lo-ya; 'The Gift' by Cheng Aiko; 'Swim Upstream' by Chiu Ann; 'Weiweyung International Partnership Project – Museum of Human E-motion' by Lai Maurice Yu-man; and 'Fox Trott' by Nina Chalot and Romain Delamart.

Tainan Arts Festival, established in 2012, continued this year with performances, workshops and lectures with the theme 'Dance – Encounters with Legend'. The performances included *Tainan in the Night*, an artistic crossover of Fevrevine Dance Theatre collaborating with video and electronic music, *Deluge* by Lin Ting-Syu Studio, and *View Hunting* by Ku & Dancer.

The National Taichung Theater in central Taiwan presented the Fall for Great Souls series from 26 September to 27 December, with the theme 'Being, Soul and Core'. In 'Being', Lin Lee-chen answered the deepest calling in her Heaven, Earth and Man Trilogy. For 'Soul', Cheng Tsung-lung, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre's new Artistic Director, was inspired by Dipamkara (lamp-bearer), Buddha's evocative Chinese name, to create *Sounding Light*, exploring the essence of body and sound. For 'Core', Daniel Wang, NTT's first artist in residence,

shared a personal tale of living with his father in the profoundly longing *Wonderful*.

WDAAP-Taiwan has fought to keep the 2020 WDAAP-Taiwan International Dance Conference alive. We are proud to work with Taiwan Dance Research Society (TDRS), the most distinguished dance scholarly organization in Taiwan. All presenters who are in Taiwan will present their papers and performances in person, and those outside Taiwan will submit filmed versions. The event includes 30 scholarly papers from WDAAP and 30 from TDRS, 10 Masterclasses, and 24 live works and 10 filmed works in the Showcase category. The event will be held in the official WDAAP- Taiwan office in Tsoying

High School. The campus offers one middle size professional theater and five dance studios (two in the newly-built Arts building).

Due to Taiwan's border closures, the 2021 International Young Choreographer Project (IYCP) hosted every other summer by WDAAP-Taiwan is still uncertain. We hope to make an announcement in February 2021 to see if we can hold the event.

2020 is a special year in the history of performing arts, as it is for everyone around the world under the pandemic. But in Taiwan, after June we have all returned to the theater, and we are waiting to welcome those abroad to join us. We cannot wait to see all of our WDA friends again.



Floating Flowers, choreographed by Po-Cheng Tsai, performed by B. DANCE. Photo: Chao-Sheng Ho

WDA-AP Taiwan Members Activities, July - December 2020

Tso's Dance Association

- 2020 Dance Collection of Senior High Schools' Dance Divisions, 25-29 November, at Tsoying Dance Theater, 05 December at Performance Hall of Cultural Affairs Bureau of Kinmen County, 9 December at Tainan Cultural Center Performance Hall, 11 December at Yuanlin Performance Hall, 18-19 December at Kaohsiung City Da Dong Art Center

2020 WDAAP TDRS

- International Dance Conference @ Taiwan, 26-27 December at Tsoying Senior High School

Chang Dance Theater

- BOU*, 30 October at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu0fKJ8qucVoYwOPmpPhqPg>

SunShier Dance Theatre

- Lost and Found*, 23-25 October at Well Spring Theatre, 7 November at Black Box of National Taichung Theater

Hung Dance

- No. Me*, 18-20 September at Experimental Theater of National Theater & Concert Hall, 13-14 November at Black Box of National Taichung Theater

- See You*, 6-9 November at Well Spring Theater
- 2020 Stray Birds Dance Platform*, 11-13 December at Experimental Theatre of Taiwan Traditional Theater Center

B. Dance

- Floating Flowers*, 6 November at Opera House of National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts-Weiwuying
- 2020 Taipei Music Festival – Hwang-Long Pan & B.DANCE*, 22-23 August at Metropolitan Hall of Taipei City, 30 August at Grand Theater of National Taichung Theater

Horse

- We Island Dance Festival: Shulin Jump
- Solo On The Go*, 9-20 November at Shulin District
- My Turn*, 21 November at Performance Hall of Shulin Arts Center
- I Am My Body*, 22 November at Performance Hall of Shulin Arts Ceneter

Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company

- Hide Out*, 21-22 November at Taikang Cultural Center Theater, 5-6 December at Well Spring Theater

Kaohsiung City Ballet

- Dance to Kid's Dreams*, 7-8 November at Jhihsan Hall of Bureau of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Gornvernment Tso's Dance Association

2020 WDA Events

reported by Yunyu Wang

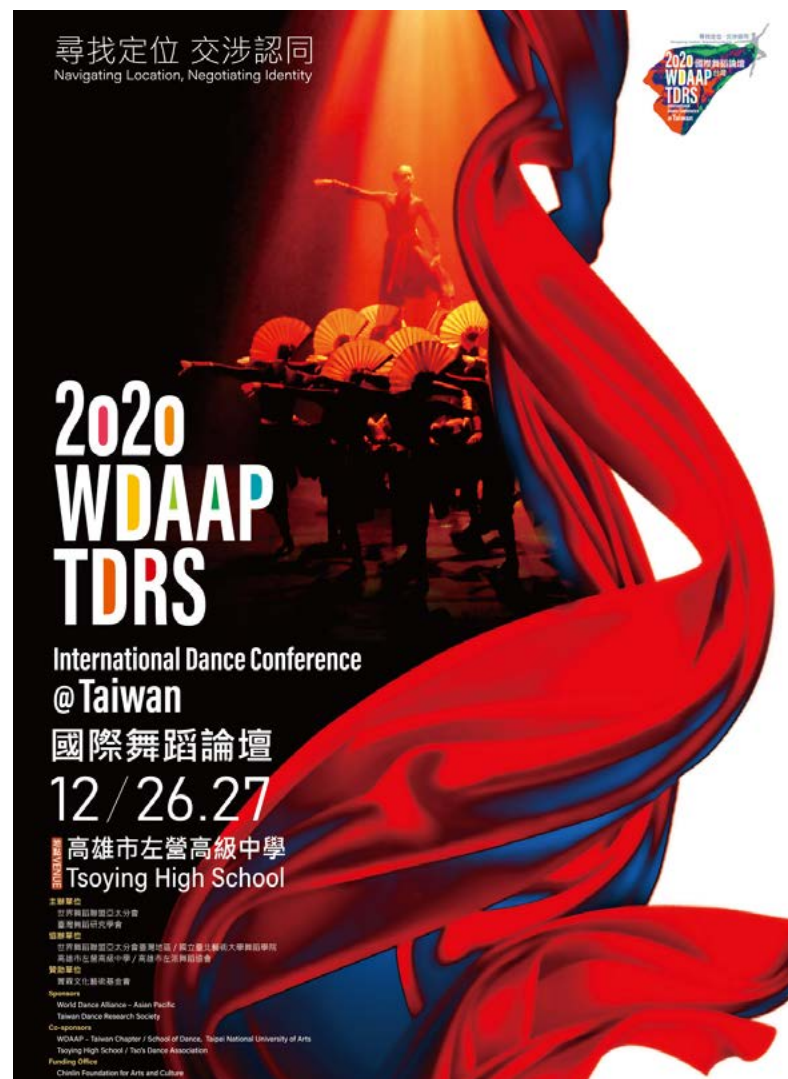
2020 WDAAP/TDRS Conference and AGM

26-27 December 2020
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

“Navigating Location, Negotiating Identity”

The conference is confirmed to be held in Taiwan from 26 to 27 December this year, co-sponsored by WDAAP and the Taiwan Dance Research Society. Since no travel is allowed during the pandemic time, the conference is honoring all selected presenters from abroad through video presentations as well as local presenters live on site in Kaohsiung, the second largest city in Taiwan. There will be around 200 participants from Taiwan, while 19 paper presenters will be placed side by side with the local scholars in the same panel. In addition, eight selected dances will be displayed in the Showcase Film Program with pre-recorded video submissions from India, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and the United States.

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.

The pandemic could not take away the passion for dance from professionals, students and scholars. Taiwan is fortunate to be able to hold an onsite conference. Although we wish we could have our entire WDA family joining us so that we could connect with each other, the conference will keep the dancing spirit alive.

Refer to this website for the conference agenda, biographies of presenters, and other information: <https://dancerchris.wixsite.com/2020wdaaptdrs>

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
www.wda-ap.org
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

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

A. P. Rajaram (India)
raj.knootfm@gmail.com
Anja Ali-Haapala (Australia)
anja@ali-haapala.com.au

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

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

India

(Interim contact)
Urmimala Sarkar Munsri
urmimala.sarkar@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

Wong Jyh Shyong
MyDance Alliance
P.O. Box 12409, 50776
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
T +6012 327 3029
contact@mydancealliance.org
www.mydancealliance.org

Nepal

Rajendra Shrestha
Nritya 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

Filomar Tario
worlddancealliancesg@gmail.com
www.wdasg.com

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