

Asia-Pacific CHANNELS






Before We Say Goodbye,
choreographed by Po-
Cheng Tsai, performed by
B Dance of Taiwan.
Photo: Mo Cho

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World Dance Alliance
Asia-Pacific
Channels, No. 2, December 2021
Newsletter of the World Dance Alliance Asia
Pacific
ISSN: 1328-2115
Editor: Bilqis Hijjas (contact@mydancealliance.org)
Publisher: World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific



Cover: Eri Sorilla's Musa,
performed by Katrene
San Miguel, Gianna
Hervas, Karla Santos,
Gladys Baybayan, Nicole
Barroso and Rissa
Camaclang for the
Professional Dancer's
Support Program of the
Cultural Center of the
Philippines, filmed at
the CCP Main Theater
and streamed on their
YouTube channel from 24
October 2021. Photograph
from the live performance by
Lester John Reguindin.



Singapore Chinese Dance
Theatre in *Tempting Heart*,
choreographed by co-artistic
director Benedict Soh.

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 Munsu

Hello friends,

Hope this newsletter finds all of you well and happy and dancing!

There are a few important things I want to share.

The first is the exciting news that the WDA Asia Pacific is going to have its annual meeting on-site and face-to-face in Hong Kong in June – during the inaugural SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival, that will be held between 13-25 June 2022 at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Save the dates and look for details inside *Channels*, as well as please follow the updates on our Facebook page.

The second piece of news is equally exciting. It is about the fruition of a wonderful idea initially expressed by choreographer Sashar Zarif who had been the resident choreographer for the 2019 Choreolab organized by the WDAAP and the Bangladesh Dance Alliance – Nrityajog. The Choreolab was attended by many dancers from India and Bangladesh. The outcome, a work-in-progress choreography named *Chand*, that was showcased at the Ocean Dance Festival in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in December 2019, was really not the end of the collaboration, but the beginning of one. It was the beginning of his prolonged conversations with young dancers who refused to give up hope. We at WDAAP have been excited by the ongoing conversations between Mr. Zarif and the community of young dancers (mostly from Bangladesh and India – two countries ravaged by Covid-19 related deaths) that

remained together through Zoom meetings across time and space, to continue holding hands and being a support group for each other throughout the pandemic times. We were overjoyed seeing the resilience with which these emerging artists were creating ways to communicate across geographies, and it made us all realise that many of these new works of emerging choreographers are in the form of videos because of the ongoing pandemic related restrictions.

Through a lot of consultations and conversations, a special committee with Bilqis Hijas at its helm and Sashar Zarif as the invitee was formed. Finally we named the project "Begin Again – Small Grants for Individual Dance Makers", to support young and emerging dancers and choreographers from India and Bangladesh. You shall be reading the details of the project inside. I would like to thank all of the contributors for the funds you all helped us raise to support 11 projects of dance films that will be showcased at SWEAT in June 2022, that we are all looking forward to.

The third exciting piece of news is that the JEDS – the WDA *Journal for Emerging Dance Scholarship* (<http://www.jedsonline.net/>), is on its way with Julie Mulvihill (current President of WDA-Americas) and Ilana Morgan as volume editors. We are looking forward to the new volume and are thankful to the volume editors.

As the world tries hard to settle in the new ways that it must go on, and also as we get adjusted to new restrictions, keep well, friends. I sincerely hope we can meet in Hong Kong in June 2022.



Vice President's report

by Stella Lau

Dance acts as a bridge to connect dance practitioners across the Asia-Pacific region. For the past two years, colleagues and friends have remained committed to their work in the industry, continuing to enhance the development of dance education and training, dance research and documentation, performance and presentations, and dance technology in the region.

I have the pleasure to share with you the latest happening with SWEAT, co-organized by the Hong Kong Dance Alliance and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, beginning on 13 June 2022 over a two-week period to 25 June 2022. Taking the resurgence of COVID into account, it will be in a hybrid format to allow further flexibility.

The SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival in Hong Kong is a platform to meet, share and dance. Through workshops and masterclasses, DanceCross Project, Dansathon and Digital International

Festival for Dance Academies, it promotes innovation, inter-exchange, research and incubation that goes beyond dance presentation.

As part of the umbrella event of SWEAT, the WDA Global Summit will take place on 22-25 June 2022. With the theme of Dance Offer/On New Energy, it aims to promote dance and wellness in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which severely impacts the wellbeing of dance practitioners globally. The Summit will include network meetings, scholarly paper presentations, PechaKucha presentations, and dance video screenings. The call for proposals is now open online, please [click here](#) to submit your application!

I so much look forward to your joining this event. Together, we uphold the mission of the WDA, to build and connect relationships through this robust network, to facilitate the educational and professional development for bright emerging dance artists.

**SW
E
AT**
SWEAT
HONG KONG
INTERNATIONAL
DANCE WORKSHOP
FESTIVAL

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.

Rolex Presents: William Forsythe's *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time No. 2*. Photo courtesy of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Hong Kong

Education & Training Network report

By Sarah Knox, chair

A key event that took place in the later part of 2021 was the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) World Summit. This took place virtually, between 11-15 October, and was hosted by Creative Generation and The University of Florida. The World Alliance for Arts Education is made up of the World Dance Alliance, represented by Ralph Buck, the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA), the International Society of Education through Art (InSEA), and the International Society for Music Education (ISME). World Dance Alliance members are automatically members of the WAAE.

With a broad focus on arts education, the summit took arts assessment as its central theme. The purpose was provide a platform for arts education professionals worldwide to share their research, thought, and practice in arts education assessment and evaluation.

The Summit was grounded in the following shared beliefs:

1. All students are inherently artistic. Every person has the capability to experience, learn, and engage with the arts meaningfully.
2. Assessment and evaluation of arts learning is best when it is ongoing and not episodic. Arts learning progresses over time, and the assessment and evaluation of that learning is a continuous process.
3. The multidimensional nature of the arts creates opportunities and challenges for

designing evidence-based measures. The arts are a complex, multidimensional human experience. The design of assessment and evaluation models must reflect those characteristics.

One goal of this summit was to develop a set of international principles for arts assessment. Through discussions within and across the art forms of dance, visual arts, drama/theatre and music the following topics were explored:

- Decolonizing Assessment in Arts and Cultural Education
- Assessment and Evaluation in Virtual Environments
- Futures of Teacher Training in Assessment Literacy

The initial draft of the international principles was derived from the work of Dr. Timothy Brophy and Martin Fautley within the context of music education. This draft was then redeveloped and refined through a series of discussions with conference delegates throughout the summit, with a focus on art form and location. It is hoped that the principles will act as a series of provocations for arts educators, rather than 'rules', when considering assessment purpose, design and actualisation. They are aimed to be relevant to an evolving world, responding to issues pertinent globally and within diverse contexts.

New Zealand School of
Dance Classical Ballet
students in *Reset Run*,
choreographed by
Tabitha Dombroski, at the
Graduation Season 2021.
Photo: Stephen A'Court



Research & Documentation Network report

by Anja Ali-Haapala and A.P.
Rajaram, co-chairs

2022 SWEAT Dance Festival

In the upcoming SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival, from 13 to 25 June 2022, the World Dance Alliance Global Summit component is presented by World Dance Alliance in partnership with Hong Kong Dance Alliance. The Global Summit, held between 22 and 25 June, will include an academic conference of article presentations, dance video screenings, and Pecha Kucha, where young academics will present ideas from their research.

Otherwise, the Global Summit will include the usual WDA Annual General Meeting and organisational network and executive meetings. The open call for proposals to the academic conference has been extended to 21 January 2022, and the assessment and selection will take place in February 2022. The summit will take place with a hybrid approach, both online and on-site. Details of this conference and the important dates are on the website: <https://sweat-festival.hkapa.edu/website/238/>.

Network

Following on from our last update regarding network communication, we are progressing our proposal to create a WDA Asia-Pacific Research & Documentation Network Google Group. This idea was presented at the WDA Online Catch-Up in July as a way to better facilitate dialogue between members and more seamlessly integrate new members into the network. It received support from the members present and, through a discussion

on the matter, the following points were raised:

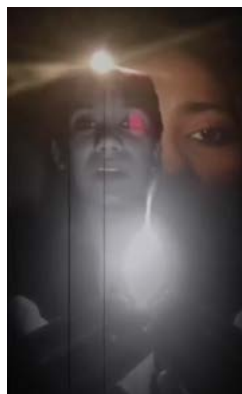
Getting more people writing in the Asia-Pacific region is important, as most dance writing is still Euro-centric. While this Google Group is not intended to generate more dance writing directly, we hope that greater communication among the network and visibility of the dance writing that is happening might contribute to this indirectly.

A Google Group like this, where any member can email the entire membership, requires active moderating. As R&D Network Co-chairs, we are prepared to take on this moderating work.

A question about monetising WDA-AP services was raised in relation to broader organisational sustainability. Is the Google Group something that could be income generating? Given that the central purpose of the Google Group is to facilitate increased connection between existing (and hopefully new) members and that content for the Google Group will essentially be crowd-sourced, we feel that it is not suitable to be a paid service.

Since the meeting, we have received approval from WDA-AP President Urmimala Sarkar Munsu to set up the Google Group and are now working towards this.

Members who have attended a WDA-AP R&D Network Meeting in the last three years will automatically receive an invitation to join the Google Group. If you have not been able to attend a meeting in that time frame and would also like to join the Google Group, please contact Anja (anja@ali-haapala.com.au) or Raja (raj.knooftm@gmail.com).



Special Project Report

Building Resilience to Begin Again

by Bilqis Hijjas

In the video, a woman's face floats in darkness, a bright spark hovering before it. A voice sings yearningly, another voice whispers. The frame shifts; now it shows a man sitting alone in a room. But always the bright spark, the burning flame.

This symbolic imagery appeared in an experimental video created by The Chand Family for the fundraising benefit Building Resilience, run by WDAAP in August 2021.

The Chand Family are the participants of the WDAAP Choreolab held as part of the Ocean Dance Festival in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in 2019, under the mentorship of Toronto-based dance artist Sashar Zarif.

In April 2021, Sashar approached the Executive Committee of WDAAP to propose a donation drive with the help of the Chand Family to uplift and empower the Covid-besieged dance communities of India and Bangladesh. Sashar's proposal lit a fuse: very quickly, with the help of supporters from around the globe, the proposal grew into a fully-fledged fundraising benefit for a small grant project for dancemakers in India and Bangladesh.

Fundraising for Building Resilience

A committee of organisers from WDAAP – among them Urmimala Sarkar, Yunyu Wang, Julie Dyson, Jeff Hsieh, Bilqis Hijjas, A.P. Rajaram, Lubna Marium and Zuariyah Mouli – joined Sashar to coordinate an online fundraiser. This centered around the online publication of a benefit video, to remind donors of the importance of building community and international connections through dance.

The online fundraiser kicked off on 15 July 2021, promoted through our Facebook page, Instagram posts and through the private networks of members of the organising committee and other well-wishers in the global dance community. The fundraiser eventually raised USD 3300, collected through the PayPal account of MyDance Alliance, the Malaysian country chapter of WDAAP. Particularly generous donations came from Yunyu Wang, Anna Chan, Hong Jo Jun and Urmimala Sarkar.

More information about the fundraiser is here on our website.

The Fundraising Benefit Video

Sashar Zarif directed the creation of the benefit video, which runs for an hour and can be watched on the WDAAP YouTube Channel. The video featured:

- *Chand: The Reflection of a Wish*, a video documentary reflecting on the process of the WDAAP Choreolab in November 2019.
- A dance tutorial in Bengali folk dance, conducted by Chand participant Maria Farih Upama.
- A short experimental video created from a collage of video letters shared by the Chand Family throughout months of online meetings with Sashar during the pandemic.
- A brief joyful outro showing members of the Chand Family dancing in their homes.

As of this writing, the video has been viewed over 400 times. We extend our great thanks to Nancy Baltazar for creating promotional images for the benefit and Manuel Garcia for his video editing, and most of all to Sashar for continually engaging with the Chand Family, and for sensitively bringing both their worries and wishes together in this video.

Inviting Applications to Begin Again

Once the funds had been collected, another process began to determine how the funds should be equitably distributed. It was clear from the size of the funds that we would not be able to make a difference to the lost livelihoods of dancers in India and Bangladesh. However, we saw the funds as a kind of seed grant, a small ray of hope to inspire dancemakers to begin again, moving forwards from the anxiety and suffering that accompanied the recent wave of COVID-19 illness and death across the subcontinent. We also felt it was important to look forwards to future opportunities, and especially to incorporate the upcoming WDA Global Summit at the SWEAT Festival in Hong Kong in mid 2022.

It was decided that the funds should support small grants of USD 300 each for successful applicants to create short dance films, to be presented at the WDA Global Summit. Two out of the 10 grants were earmarked for members of the Chand Family.

Subsequently, we gathered together a committee of experienced individuals to design the materials for the small grant application, and to assess the applicants. The panel of assessors consisted of Shyamla Eswaran, Nguyen Ngoc An, Yunyu

Wang, Md. Anisul Islam Hero and Meghna Bhardwaj. Shyamla Eswaran and Julie Dyson contributed significantly in drafting the guidelines for application.

The online application process launched in mid August, and closed on 1 October 2022. You can view the full applications guidelines on our website.

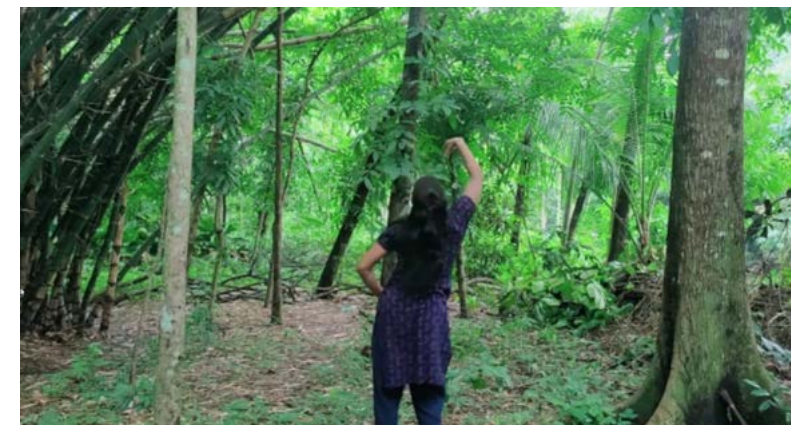
Assessing the Applications

We were delighted to attract a total of 28 applications. Thanks to Meghna's efforts in coordinating the panel as it developed criteria for selection, the panel eventually selected 11 successful recipients for the grant.

A. P. Rajaram collected the applications and has been liaising with the applicants. Yunyu Wang, Lubna Marium and Urmimala Sarkar topped up the funds to ensure there was enough for all 11 of our successful applicants. At this moment, the funds have been transferred to India and Bangladesh, and Raja is also helping to inform the successful applicants. We look forward to seeing the new dance film creations from our applicants, and to meeting them, even if only online, at the SWEAT Festival next year.

Due to the keen support from all the participants, the greatest challenge of the project was *not* coordinating a team of people across many different time zones to devise the project, develop the materials, promote the fundraiser, create the benefit video, publish the video, collect funds, conceptualise the application process, invite applicants, assess the applications, and organise the delivery of funds. Many WDAAP members across many countries selflessly devoted time and energy to this project; it was heartwarming even to be a part of the process.

The greatest challenge turned out to be logistical and bureaucratic: how to collect money transparently and efficiently from donors across the world, and how to transfer it across international boundaries to reach its rightful recipients. This difficulty in moving and accessing international funding merely illustrates the systemic obstacles that exist towards building a mutually-supportive global dance community, and why many find it difficult or impossible to channel support to the people who need it most. So while our impact was small, I like to think it was significant – like the spark of hope in the video, the light at the end of the tunnel.



All images in this report are screenshots from the fundraising benefit video for Building Resilience created by Sashar Zarif and members of the Chand Family.

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.

Students from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, filming *Civic Bodies*, a dance film presented at the Singapore da:ns Festival in October 2021. "When filming, the outdoor locations subjected them to the unpredictability of Singaporean weather."

The team exhibited great adaptability and resilience when forced to switch locations at the last minute or shooting in the rain," according to programme leader Melissa Quek. Photo: Crispian Chan for LASALLE College of the Arts



Aotearoa New Zealand report

by Sheryl Lowe

The Royal New Zealand Ballet premiered its newly created contemporary production of *The Firebird* by choreographer Loughlan Prior.

Photo: Stephen A'Court



After a first half year with live performances occurring at almost pre COVID-19 levels, the latter half of 2021 saw the dance and performing arts industry of Aotearoa New Zealand seriously impacted once again, as restrictions expanded to varying degrees across different regions in response to outbreaks of the COVID Delta variant.

Major arts festivals scheduled to take place during this period – Hawkes Bay Arts Festival, Nelson Arts Festival and Te Tairāwhiti Festival (Gisborne) all scaled down their events resulting in many programmed dance performances being casualties. Fortunately, a few of the smaller festivals were able to proceed later in the year. Performance Art Week Aotearoa returned for a fourth season in Wellington in November after a hiatus in 2020, bringing together a wide variety of local and international performance artists. The Ōtautahi Tiny Performance Festival, curated by Artistic Director Julia Harvie of Movement Art Practice in Christchurch, was also staged in November.

Contemporary dance company Footnote New Zealand Dance was fortunate to be able to tour the country in July and August with their work *Dance Danced Dancing* by choreographic duo Josie Archer and Kosta Bogoeievski. The New Zealand Dance Company endured a three-month lockdown along with the rest of Aotearoa's largest city Auckland and was sadly prevented from touring their season of *Night Light* – the second cancellation for them this year. Due to be presented were *The Fibonacci* by newly appointed co-Artistic Director Tor

Colombus, as well as the world premiere of emerging Māori choreographer Eddie Elliott's *Uku – Behind the Canvas*.

Disability-led performance company Touch Compass celebrated their 25th year in 2021 and a celebratory performance evening */ritaha*, originally planned for October/November, is now postponed to February 2022. Meanwhile, company founding member Rodney Bell presented as a Foundation Artist for Alter State – a major online arts and disability festival for artists and audiences from Australia and New Zealand, launched in November. Touch Compass also presented #a11yArts: International Creative Leadership Series – an online webinar series exploring topics around the intersectionality of disability and performance, self-identification, climate, touring and COVID.

Along with many others pivoting to online offerings in the COVID environment, Pacific Dance New Zealand moved their entire programme online for the second half of the year. This encompassed work from their 2021 Artist in Resident, Fijian heritage choreographer and artist Alipate Trail; their Transform Series; and Choreographic Lab with choreographers Tupe Lua, Desiree Soo-Choon and Anton Pulefale. They also attempted two world records for participants in online Pacific dance workshops in *Siva Samoa* and *Fijian Meke*.

New Zealand Pacific contemporary dance company Black Grace was forced to postpone their major production of *(m) Orpheus* – a collaboration with New Zealand Opera due to tour in September/October

and now rescheduled for 2022.

The Royal New Zealand Ballet was successful in completing a well-attended national tour of *The Firebird with Paquita*, with shows in all but two centres going ahead. Unfortunately, their October-November production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* could only be performed in Wellington due to prevailing COVID-19 restrictions. The move to offer both productions as digital 'Live in Your Living Room' performances was a highly popular one, consoling would-be live audiences around the country and at the same time extending accessibility.

As artists continue to shift their practices in response to the changing pandemic situation, we have seen a sustained high volume of digital dance presentation along with increased cross-genre performance and collaboration amongst established and emerging artists. A recent example was Porirua Pātaka Gallery's cine-dance music production *Where Memories Sleep*, created by artist Jason O'Hara and musician Warren Maxwell, with contemporary dance and choreography by Ooshcon Masseurs. Emerging dance film ventures included new company Threading Frames whose recently released work *Walk with Me* – a three-part dance film (*The Way*, *The Verse* and *The Final Rest*) has already secured a number of international film festival awards.

Tertiary dance institution the New Zealand School of Dance ended the year on a high note with their Graduation Season 2021 featuring works by nine New Zealand choreographers, performing to sell-out albeit capacity-restricted audiences in two locations – Wellington and Kapiti. Unitec Dance in Auckland faced tough challenges with COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, eventually presenting their end of year SHOWCASE MMXXI as an online programme of six dance films by choreographers Claire O'Neil, Tamsin Russell, Tianyi Liu (Beijing), Jessie McCall, Alaolii Tapu, Joshua Faleatua and Sarah Foster-Sproull. Rounding out the academic year, the University of Auckland hosted a timely online Dance, Inclusion and Wellbeing Research Symposium with both national and international participation.

As we head towards a new year of ongoing uncertainty and pandemic centred challenges, the dance community of Aotearoa New Zealand is showing continued resilience. Community dance



participation levels are as high as ever and appreciation of the health and wellbeing benefits of dance has predictably expanded. Dance education, research and academic activity remains vibrant and strong, and planning and creation of dance work has been undiminished. Significant works currently under development include those programmed for the 2022 Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts such as Movement of the Human's dance/aerial work *Belle – a movement of air* by prominent choreographer Malia Johnston, works from Māori performance company Hawaiki TŪ, contemporary choreographer Bianca Hyslop (collaborating with performance designer Rowan Pierce), the Royal New Zealand Ballet, and inclusive dance company Jolt to name a few.

There is much dance to look forward to in 2022 and indisputable ongoing evidence of the enduring value and power of dance for society in these testing times.

1. A still from *Walk with Me*, a dance film presented by Threading Frames, directed by Tyler Carney, DOP/editing by Joshua Faleatua, choreography by Tyler Carney in collaboration with Georgia Beechey, produced by Zoe Nicholson.

2. Footnote New Zealand Dance in *Dance Danced Dancing*, choreographed by Josie Archer and Kosta Bogoeievski, performed by Nadiyah Akbar, Oliver Carruthers, Sebastian Geillings, Veronica ChengEn Lyu and Cheyanne Teka. Photo: Kerrin Burns



Australia report

by Julie Dyson

Stephen Page, artistic director of Bangarra Dance Theatre, and Frances Rings, incoming artistic director in 2023.
Photo: Bangarra/Daniel Boud



With half the country in lockdown again, and the other half enjoying relative freedom from Covid outbreaks, the impact of the coronavirus has been mixed, but causing major disruption at all levels of the dance industry.

As government regulations and border closures gradually change, the industry was looking forward to a more relaxed summer and a season of performances, end-of-year concerts and the resumption of regular classes and workshops.

Ausdance National continued its work with a new National President, Lizzie Vilmanis, and several new board members, all of whom are contributing to a major shift in the organisation's priorities.

One of these priorities is to work towards the formation of a permanent task force to advise on issues of diversity and inclusion. A statement of intent has been published, and a working party established to develop terms of reference for a future task force.

We are particularly grateful to board members Ella Havelka and Shyamla Eswaran who are on the working party, and prominent First Nations dance artist Marilyn Miller who chairs the committee, but it's exciting to have all board members fully engaged in ensuring that we embed real action into policies of diversity and inclusion.

Shyamla has also joined World Dance Alliance colleagues in assessing applicants for the 'Begin Again' small grants for individual dance makers program to

support young and emerging dancers and choreographers from India and Bangladesh. She will also be part of the Pecha Kucha selection panel for the Global Summit in Hong Kong in June 2021. Shyamla runs her own South Asian dance company BINDI BOSSES.

Ella was the first Indigenous member of The Australian Ballet, and has now stepped down to found the Ella Foundation, an organisation that supports Aboriginal dancers to realise their ambitions. Ella Scholarships provide tuition fees for First Nations youth to attend dance lessons on a regular basis in a number of dance schools across Australia.

Ausdance National has recently re-formed the Tertiary Dance Council of Australia, and convened its first meeting since 2017 in August. Professor Emeritus Sue Street AO stepped back into the role of interim Chair, and surveyed the thirteen member institutions to find out current student numbers, funding and resources.

It was a sobering report, finding that "Dance has become less visible with fewer opportunities for artists. Show closures and the loss of employment for professional artists is a growing concern. Motivation to continue training for an industry that may not exist is evident. There is a growing fear of not getting a job." An updated survey is planned for 2022 and will be used as an advocacy document prior to the Federal election.

Ausdance National has recently

responded to several reviews, including the review of the Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and an earlier parliamentary inquiry into Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions.

The ACARA review proposed revisions aimed at 'decluttering' the Arts curriculum by improving its clarity and refining the content descriptions and achievement standards. The Ausdance National education committee – representing all States and Territories – prepared the submission and continues its work under the chairmanship of Dr Jeff Meiners and Sue Fox, our representatives on the National Advocates for Arts Education.

The parliamentary inquiry has issued its report, *Sculpting a National Cultural Plan – Igniting a post-COVID economy for the arts*, a first-ever bipartisan parliamentary report with recommendations for creating a national cultural plan. The committee noted that "The value the cultural and creative industries provide to Australia cannot be measured in economic value alone. It provides an unquantifiable cultural and social value to our health and wellbeing, society, education and Australia's identity in the world."

In momentous news for Bangarra Dance Theatre, artistic director Stephen Page has announced that he will be stepping down at the end of 2022, with Kokatha woman Frances Rings taking the helm as the company's incoming artistic director in 2023.

"Frances Rings is an exceptional dancer and a gifted and visionary choreographer. Her works for Bangarra, among them the acclaimed *Unaipon*, *Terrain* and *Sandsong*, stand as precious works of profound artistic and cultural truth," said Page.

After 12 years working with Bangarra, Daniel Riley also takes over as artistic director of Australian Dance Theatre in 2022, another important milestone for Australian dance (see June 2021 edition of *Asia Pacific Channels*).

2021 saw the passing of two prominent dance artists – Lucette Aldous AC, prima ballerina, teacher and mentor who died in Perth in June, and Annie Greig, former artistic director of Tasdance, who died in November in Launceston.

Ausdance National remembered Lucette as "a great ballerina and a great teacher, who inspired and taught generations of dancers, especially at the Australian Ballet School and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA)." Lucette was made a Companion of the Order of Australia



Rudolf Nureyev and Lucette Aldous in The Australian Ballet's 1973 film of *Don Quixote*.

in 2019, and her artistry, supported by spectacular technique, can still be seen in the famous Australian Ballet film of *Don Quixote* with Rudolf Nureyev.

Annie Greig was remembered by Ausdance as "a true force of nature in the dance world – a leader of integrity, innovation, generosity of spirit and great humour." Annie had contributed widely to the development of dance in Australia, and was a former Ausdance National Vice-president and an honorary life member. She received the Centenary Medal in 2003 and an Australian Dance Award for services to dance in 2014.



Annie Greig in 2014.
Photo: Pia Moore

Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli

A still from Shadhona's production *Mohanonda 71*, made for Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Dance Against Corona project.



The last one and a half years have made us realize the definite reality, the risk and the uncertainty that comes with the joy of dancing. The way the field has thought about dance in the past has changed as a result of the pandemic. Organizations and individual dance artists have had to embrace the concept of sharing dance digitally to keep it alive – to share with those who enjoy and support the art form. Finally, though, after one and a half years, everyone is getting back to the old normal. Educational institutions in Bangladesh started in-person classes in October 2021, maintaining Covid-19 safety precautions. Organizations are reopening, and dancers and choreographers are returning to studios and stages around the country, with enhanced safety measures.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has introduced a project named 'Dance against Corona'. Under this project, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy is providing grants to 75 choreographers from the whole country to prepare 75 new short dance productions. Shilpakala has taken this initiative to help the dance companies and dancers financially and to give them an incentive to get back to the creative process. Shilpakala also arranged a 10-day cultural festival, Gonga Jomuna Sangkritik Utshob, in October 2021, where they invited 140 cultural organizations from the country to present their dance and musical productions. After the government

suspended travel restrictions in September 2021, dance organization Rhythmos arranged a two-day art tour, Dance with Wave, where they held dance workshops in the most famous tourist spot of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar (known for its longest beach).

Though physical dance practices have started, the dance industry of Bangladesh is still carrying forward the ways in which we have to rethink performance and how we share dance with other parts of the world. Nrityajog, the Bangladesh chapter of WDAAP, organized a virtual Bharatnatyam dance workshop by Padmasree Guru Leela Samson from India in August 2021. Almost 60 participants from the whole country successfully participated in the two-week workshop. Shadhona Cultural Center also arranged workshops on 'Script & Space – The Importance of Dance Pedagogy', conducted by Guru Sharmila Biswas, and Mayurbhanj Chau, conducted by Subhashree Mukherjee and her team. Bangladeshi dance troupe Katthakiya presented their dance production 'Chironton – A Tribute to the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam' in the 18th North American Virtual Nazrul Convention, organized by Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts (BIPA), USA.

Nrityajog has also taken the initiative to organize the very first short online course on Bangladesh Dance Studies, conducted by Lubna Marium and Dr. Manjulika Rahman since July 2021. The aim of this course

is to create a framework for Bangladesh Dance Studies and to show a path to young dancers for writing scholarly articles about the diverse dance practices of Bangladesh. Many international dance scholars, such as Donald Byrd and Ananya Chatterjee, have conducted sessions for the students as guest lecturers.

Slowly, the dance world has begun to move towards the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

After returning to the floor, most dancers have realized that Covid-19 has affected their performance. Students and performers are working hard to condition their bodies and regain their stamina for dancing. The pandemic has also placed a lot of pressure on people and caused not only a health crisis but also mental, socio-cultural, economic and emotional stress. As dancers, we need the presence and bodies of each other to move, collaborate, and create. Establishing connections with each other and with our audiences will always be important to us. It is indeed this human interaction above all that allows us to move and break free from our isolation.

We should never forget what we went through in the last one and a half years. We need to plan ahead and be patient, as we still have a long way to go to recover from the financial and emotional damage we have experienced. The world has changed and is moving forward; we need to recognize the new conversations and attitudes about life,



and be more empathetic towards the world, towards people. We all need to adjust, deal and recognize that indeed we are living in a post-new normal. The only consistent thing we must deal with every day is change. As Rumi said, "What is fear: non-acceptance of uncertainty. If we accept the uncertainty, it becomes an adventure." So, let us embrace the future, and stay safe.



1. A still from *Chironton*, a production by Katthakiya, directed by S.M. Hasan Ishtiaque Imran. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Sabbir (Robin Khan)
2. A still from Shadhona's production *Mohanonda 71*, made for Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Dance Against Corona project.

Hong Kong report

by Tobie Chan

-ology, choreographed by Vivian Luk. Photo: Maximillian Cheng, courtesy of Hong Kong Dance Alliance



With the public starting to get used to various anti-pandemic measures at performances venues, the dance sector in Hong Kong is gradually resuming its vibrancy and diversity. The annual *New Force in Motion* Series, presented by the Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA) for the first time this year, successfully took place in September. Serving as the primary voice and support group for dance in Hong Kong, HKDA recognizes the need to provide a professional platform for emerging choreographers to stage their artistry. Having gone through a few selection stages, three up-and-coming choreographers were handpicked by HKDA this time to receive artistic mentoring from established artists along with administrative and production support to premiere their own full-length works together with 10 promising dancers.

Tai Kwun, which used to be a police station complex with prison and judiciary unit in the 19th century, and now a venue which promotes heritage and art, staged several interesting presentations. The critically acclaimed *Diary VII • The Story Of.....* told a touching story of its choreographer and dancer, veteran dance artist Mui Cheuk-yin's experience with stray cats. *Minute Moonshine*, which experimented with ARG (Alternate Reality Game) in a dance theatre setting, was devised by five London-

based Hong Kong artists to display their perceptions of Hong Kong culture. Pichet Klunchun, one of Thailand's greatest masters of Khon, illustrated the 60th pose/movement of traditional Thai dance in a contemporary dance lecture-performance, *No. 60 Back to Basic*, with Hong Kong dancers. Tai Kwun also joined hands with Unlock Dancing Plaza, a dance company committed to breaking boundaries and pursuing innovative approaches, to organise free outdoor dance performances and workshops within the historical site.

West Kowloon Cultural District has also been providing a diverse spectrum of dance events for audiences, ranging from the interactive installation by William Forsythe, *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time No. 2*, to on-site performance of *Transition* by one of the most sought-after Chinese choreographers, Gu Jiani. Hong Kong Dance Company performed there the long-awaited *Nine Songs* by renowned Hong Kong choreographer Helen Lai, award-winning composer Tan Dun and set and costume designer Tim Yip, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its premiere. Sydney-based choreographer, filmmaker and installation artist Sue Healey returned with her *ON VIEW* series as a cross-cultural collaboration involving artists of different disciplines from Hong Kong, Japan and



Diary VII • The Story Of..... choreographed and performed by Mui Cheuk-yin. Photo: Eric Hong, courtesy of Tai Kwun

Australia.

A spotlight towards the end of this year was given to the City Contemporary Dance Festival in November. Themed as "Danzcation", the festival presented not only contemporary dance-focused programmes, but also a blend of dance with other art forms, such as film, theatre, music, song and storytelling. There was a dance video installation exhibition, as well as a special outdoor performance by City Contemporary Dance Company's own young troupe, WuDaoQingNian.

It is with utmost joy and excitement that HKDA announces the return of the Hong

Kong Dance Awards – after pausing for a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic reducing the number of live performances. The preparation is currently in full swing as the nomination and voting will be kicked off soon. The Alliance is looking forward to celebrating all the outstanding achievements in the local dance sector over the two years from 2020 to 2021 – and especially to recognizing the unremitting efforts of our counterparts to keep the dance scene alive and dynamic amid the difficulties posed by the pandemic. Stay tuned on our Facebook page or Instagram account for more updates!



A promotional image for the program *Danzcation*, presented by City Contemporary Dance Company.

India report

by Paramita Saha

Power and What It Does

In our recent Arts & the Law sessions organized by Unmute.help one question returned often: “If the person on the other side is a really powerful one, what should we do?”

That brought me to the question of what power is and how it is perceived and by who! What makes the powerful truly powerful, what corrupts the powerful and how do they wield their power?

The earliest perception of power is in the family when we are children. Who makes the rules, who calls the shots, who decides, who pays for things, where does the buck stop? Then in school: who knows more, who can instruct, who can punish? Then in our relationships, who decides what happens, who apologizes more often, who has more money, who knows more about how things work, at work who reports to whom, who can force you to do more, who can make you work on your holidays, who can taunt you, goad you, ridicule you, bully you?

Sociologist James Coleman says that power is associated with personal characteristics of individuals or groups whereas authority is tied to social positions or roles. Abuse of power in the arts happens as a strong decoction of both of these. Traditional authority invested in our gurus or teachers is socially legitimate, historically valid, morally conforming to precedent. Students are supposed to ‘obey’ and not question. Students of the arts, especially dance, are physically vulnerable to corrections by the teacher or seniors acting as teachers or seniors assuming to be teachers who finding bullying a common way to impose their authority.

There is also the charismatic authority of the guru or teacher or senior based on their special capabilities or gifts that make them unusual and their advice coveted. Their ways are esoteric and the student can only ‘learn’ by experiencing. Often these teachers or leaders are socially revered and may be venerable on social and other news media; that makes them even more special. Power need not be consensual but authority has a way of making it rational and almost legitimate in some ancient patrimonial way!

Young students have no language to protest to verbal abuse, body shaming, slut shaming, or shaming based on class or religion. In the case of sexual abuse – which also happens in many ways, devious and indirect, direct and violent, and in all cases deeply mentally distressing – the student, trainee, intern, or employee artist is on the receiving end of fear, pain, stress and helplessness. There is fear of isolation from peers, anxiety over lost opportunity, and shame and guilt around repercussions from social and parental circles.

There is in all cases a total ignorance of what rights they may have to protect themselves and speak up against the guru or senior. Is it even possible?

Arts organisations need to prepare themselves for these situations as early as possible. Organise for suitable training of all students and teachers including the heads of departments and organisations, and form internal complaints committees that need not be large but rather trained, authentic and effective. Have suitable and visible communication across rehearsal spaces, studios and change rooms. Anyone who undergoes such an experience or observes one should know where to go to report or seek help. There should be suitable access to mental health counselling and guidance. The organisational structures, functions, and hierarchy of decisions need to be transparent and clear to all, with contracts for professional dancers and freelancers, clear rules of conduct for teachers, and guardians to be closely involved in the mental wellbeings of their wards.

Why do the powerful abuse their position? What turns them into opposites of themselves? How do they think and act selfishly, aggressively, impulsively and lesser and lesser from other people's point of view? Some of the power-wielding gurus of today may have been victims yesterday or co-opted as enablers before getting here and hence have a tweaked moral compass. Often, they forget the lessons on their way up to a position of power and forget empathy and kindness. The trends hold for not only older and more traditional organisations but also those who are younger and appear

more radical and progressive.

The digital explosion of identities often brings a false sense of pride to those in power. The apparently powerful are over-celebrated: those who show off and visually assert their position and achievements are celebrated without critical questioning or rational understanding.

This easily creates a false culture of adulation and hero-worship along with a deeply rooted stigma against those who do not fall in line as expected, who stand out, who ask questions and demand action. The troublemakers are isolated and weeded out in subtle and not so subtle ways.

There is an urgent need to educate

ourselves about the laws that exist in our systems to protect the rights of the survivors! To be open and non-judgemental towards young students of the arts, their ideas, opinions, thoughts, anxieties and dreams. To respect humans beyond divides of age, caste, religion, colour and body shape. To truly dream through shared artistic vision of an equitable and just world. To imagine a world of beauty, creativity and joy. To unmute and speak up against abuse of power every time! As I answered the young attendees of the Arts and the Law sessions, “Do not be dazzled by the light, question the source without fear or inhibition!”

unmute.help

is a performer's Guide to Speaking Up. Kri Foundation, Artsforward and Sruti Performing Troupe have curated this resource center that would serve at once as a space for information, reference material, guides to laws, rules and regulations, compelling research content, audio-visual documentation of expert conversations along with being a space of networking for performing arts organisations willing to create new and equitable workplace ethics.

Paramita Saha is a performer, contemporary dancer, curator, and arts manager working out of Kolkata. Paramita was repertory member and co-director of Sapphire Creations Dance Company, Kolkata, for 24 years. As co-director of Artsforward for the last 10 years, Paramita works with artists and the creative community to build moving messages for social change. She is deeply engaged in the field of environment, audience development for the arts, nurturing and supporting creativity, capacity building and artistic ability in the youth, curating, and designing creative art projects. She runs At the Still Point, India's only crowd-funded dance platform. She is an ArtThink-SouthAsia 2016 Fellow and a Global Fellow of International Society of Performing Arts 2018 and 2021. She has founded ArtAloneTogether, India's first and only am-pm, mixed arts online festival featuring artists across disciplines and borders, as

well as a Continued Learning Program in dance called Continew operating in both online and of-line formats. She co-founded www.unmute.help, an online resource centre to safeguard the rights of performing artists. and equitable workplace ethics.

This article was first published in the November 2021 edition of Narthaki.com. It is reprinted with permission of Anita Ratnam/narthaki.com



Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas

L-R: Leong Xu Xin, Emer Leyla Ridzuan and Chen Jia Yen, apprentices of the new Ballet Theatre Malaysia, which had its first performance in December 2021.

Photo: Joie Koo



Thanks to widespread vaccination, Malaysia has moved to the final phase of its Covid restrictions, and we are looking forward to opening our international border to tourists and visitors in 2022. Performances are gradually ramping up in local arts centres, subject to some restrictions on capacity, mask-wearing audiences, and other SOPs.

MyDance Alliance has shifted its proposed projects at the new Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre to 2022, while continuing to work on online projects. Our intern Lee Beiyi, a student of the Dance Department at the University of Malaya, conducted a survey of Malaysian choreographers in August this year, now featured on our website. The list includes 60 choreographers in genres from contemporary to classical and traditional dances, hip hop, acrobatics, music videos and musicals. We hope the list will be useful for members of the public who want to commission commercial dance services, or for artists looking for collaborators.

Three other interns from the UM Dance Department worked on short videos of critical appreciation of recent Malaysian dance films. You can check out 4 episodes of these appreciation videos and some of the dance films on our YouTube channel.

Face-to-face learning is still rolling out gradually in major arts institutions, with some continuing online learning for non-final-year students or by teachers who are in high-risk groups. Some institutions have doubled

down on their online training opportunities. Temple of Fine Arts launched a virtual learning platform called Bindu - Click. Join. Learn. One of their popular sessions, a conversation between TFA gurus Shankar Kandasamy and Umesh Shetty with London-based choreographer Mavin Khoo, is now available to watch on YouTube.

Damansara Performing Arts Centre offered D'Class, a series of free online classes, from October to December 2021, including unusual perspectives of stagecraft like face painting, the stage manager's prompt book, and paperwork for lighting design.

The Open Arts Classes series from CENDANA, the national Cultural Economy Development Agency, ran from October to November, providing introductory workshops in the visual and performing arts. The dance-related sessions were by Rose Belare and Salomon Gau teaching traditional dances of the Kenyah people of Borneo, Shankar Kandasamy of Temple of Fine Arts sharing insights into understanding bharatanatyam, and Zamzuriah Zahari, currently Dean of the Faculty of Dance at ASWARA, instructing on appreciating Mak Yong as an art form.

ASK Dance Company continues its long-running Forging Traditions series of workshops teaching traditional Malay dance, with the Beyond Borders version offered online through a new website. All the courses are free and include a certificate of completion. The session on learning



the basics of zapin and joget started in mid November. The program will be open to international participants starting from January 2022, with classes in both Malay and English.

An exciting development in the local ballet sector has been the launch of Ballet Theatre Malaysia, the country's first professional ballet company. It is a joint endeavour between Datin Jane Lew, founder of Damansara Performing Arts Centre (DPAC) and the Dance Space Academy, Choong Wan Chin, founder and artistic director of KL Dance Works which since 1998 has produced spectacular shows in our national



1. Dancers of ASK Dance Company in promotional images for the Forging Traditions series of online workshops, teaching the traditional Malay dances of joget (left) and gambat zapin (right).

2. Rose Belare (right) taught online classes in the traditional dances of the Kenyah people, part of CENDANA's Open Arts Classes series. Photo courtesy of The Tuyang Initiative.

Philippines report

by Joelle Jacinto

Screenshot of Eli Jacinto's *Yugto (Chapter)* performed by TEAM Dance Studio, which premiered on their YouTube channel on 23 October 2021.



Since live performances have been prohibited in the Philippines following the country going into lockdown in April 2019, and, as of this writing, still prohibited, the local dance communities have resorted to mostly online activities. Classes and workshops are held over Zoom and other online conference platforms, while performances and competitions have been filmed and uploaded to social media, premiering live to simulate a real-time audience experience, with comments, reactions and congratulations posted in the comments. It was admittedly difficult in the beginning, but it seems that those Filipinos who are able to adjust have done so nicely, judging from the quality of current online dance films and how even six-year-olds know to adjust the camera so that their dance teacher can see their feet.

Interestingly, in the midst of this worldwide pandemic, two Bachelor degree programs in performing arts have opened, one at the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies in Pasay City, near Manila, and another at the Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges in General Santos City, in Southern Philippines. Both offer tracks in either Dance or Theater; the first seems to have a strong culture and

heritage slant and aims to provide higher education for those who wish to become overseas entertainers. The second provides production, management and technical training as much as artistic, which is what is already offered by the current dance programs at the University of the Philippines (which has two dance programs actually, one of which was conceived and developed by our chapter head, Basilio Esteban Villaruz, known to most of you as Steve), the De La Salle College of St. Benilde, and Guang Ming College. The significance of the dance program in RMMC is that it is in a region far from the capital of Manila and benefits the local community.

Ideally, we are all optimistic about someday performing or watching shows in a theater again, and perhaps by the time the freshmen of these additional programs graduate, they might be able to contribute to the rebuilding that the performing arts industry will need when audiences can gather in theaters again. At this moment, movie houses are being opened at half their original capacity, but given that regular theater operations have more demanding requirements, it is unclear when the next stage performances would happen.

It should not be surprising that there is a bigger focus on education at this time, when education is the best platform to decipher, fully comprehend, and negotiate these issues. Likha PH continues its workshops, with the addition of Sasa Cabalquinto organizing butoh workshops with Japanese butoh artists, supported by Japan Foundation. The Cultural Center of the Philippines Choreographers Series had proceeded with this year's Koryolab, a choreolab for mid-career choreographers, as a virtual residency, which prioritized and produced lectures from experts of other arts genres over collaborations between the participants where they could be sharing their processes and learning from each other. While the lectures about how to integrate or find inspiration from other art forms were indeed interesting, they might be better suited to the composition or choreography classes for beginning choreographers that are already offered in the aforementioned university dance programs. For instance, apart from discussing the merits of identity construction in film, could there also be a participative investigation about what dance films are being produced at this time and their relevance to their practice, or to the art form, in general? I, for one, would be very

interested as to whether these artists are looking at other artists' uploads, and what these artistic products achieve.

There is currently a plethora of dance films with new choreography, to sustain efforts of keeping the dance community active, accessible through YouTube and Facebook. The CCP's Professional Dance Support Program, where professional dancers continue to train and stage dances in the CCP Main Theater under the required health protocols, airs videos of classical and contemporary ballets on YouTube weekly, ensuring that dancers, teachers, choreographers, and restagers are able to continue making a living through dance. CCP also celebrated its 52nd anniversary by uploading films from the resident performing arts companies, with new work from both Ballet Philippines and Philippine Ballet Theatre. With grants from the NCCA, Teatro Ambahanon was able to continue its OpenStudio + OpenSeason with five dance films, which premiered on November 25. The Association of Ballet Academies, Philippines (ABAP) had several ballet schools producing dance films in lieu of their regular competition in the ABAP Dance Education Challenge, which concluded in October.



Screenshot of Beauty Balaga's *Unod (Flesh)*, performed by Teatro Ambahanon for OpenStudio + Open Season "The Dancers are Absent but the Dance Isn't", which premiered 25 November 2021.

Singapore report

by Filomar Cortezano Tariao

The Span of Us, choreographed by artistic director Low Mei Yoke, marks Frontier Danceland's inaugural performance in the Esplanade Theatre, as part of the Esplanade da:ns Festival, October 2021. Photo: Bernie Ng, courtesy of Esplanade, Theatres on the Bay.



More than a year after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Singapore dance scene has rebounded and found ways to persist amidst very challenging safe management measures (SMM). In Singapore, where the vaccination rate is already 85% as of this writing, performers still have to produce a negative Antigen Rapid Test (ART) for COVID-19 before being allowed to perform onstage.

Low Mei Yoke's Frontier Danceland presented its yearly *Dancer's Locker* with works from its company artists: Sammantha Yue, Mark Robles, Ma YueRu and Tan Xin Yen. Intimately set at the Aliwal Arts Center, the performance became more meaningful given the select number of people allowed to view the pieces due to the stringent event protocols.

With the gradual easing of SMM from a Phase 2 lockdown in June, dance and fitness classes were finally allowed indoor mask-off activities in July. The mandate limited activities to groups of two with no more than 30 participants safely distanced from one another in any venue. These calibrated measures made conducting in-person dance classes more challenging for studio owners. However, this did not dissuade Dance Edge Academy owner Elizabeth Lee from finding alternative methods of teaching. "Social distancing has been a blessing in disguise because it has forced me to change my approach to teaching," said

Miss Lee. She teaches Progressive Ballet and Contemporary Techniques in her studio which opened its doors in March 2021.

August brought in a variety of dance workshops and master classes in the dance studios around the island, with The Dance Place offering fusion contemporary workshops and dance-theatre classes from local industry leaders. Similarly, in-person academic dance training resumed at the Lasalle College of the Arts and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) Dance Programmes. The month also ushered in Jenny Neo and Benedict Soh as the new artistic and creative directors respectively of the Singapore Chinese Dance Theatre (SCDT). The digital premiere of *The Susurrations of the Tree*, a full length piece by the artistic duo, accompanied this transition of leadership within the locally-grown company.

Rising numbers of infection in KTV and market clusters resulted in the retightening of SMM's in the city state in September. Undeterred, SCDT launched its installation *MidAutumn Celebration Online-Togetherness*, while the NAFA Dance Programme's *Dancers@Work* presented eight dance creation works-in-process by five BA (Hons) Performance Making students. The informal showing, organised by senior lecturer Gillian Tan, also saw Dance students manage production aspects of the performance.

In October, with travel restrictions still preventing international dance companies from visiting Singapore, the Esplanade Da:ns Festival pivoted its focus to the local dance scene under the programme In Good Company – A Spotlight on Singapore Dance Companies. Under Esplanade's distinctive durian-inspired architecture, Chok Productions, Frontier Danceland, P7:1SMA, Raw Moves, and The Human Expression (T.H.E.) Dance Company shared two weekends in the main indoor theatre, while Singapore Dance Theatre debuted at the outdoor theatre with a triple bill of contemporary works entitled *Forces of Dance*. All the performers were maskless while the audiences were masked and safely distanced from one another.

The festival also highlighted productions of the local preprofessional dance institutions. According to LASALLE programme leader Melissa Quek, "The recent highlight for LASALLE College of the Arts was filming *Civic Bodies* for the festival. The film features choreography by alumni Dapheny Chen, Yarra Iletto and Pat Toh, Melissa Quek and choreographer Germaine Cheng, who worked with film producer and LASALLE alumnus Jeremy Chua to refine their approach to the medium."

Meanwhile, the NAFA Dance Programme showcased Singapore's diverse talents with a live performance film, *Nātaya*, by Supatchai Lappakornkul, a NAFA alum. Dr. Caren Cariño, Head of NAFA Dance Programme, says of the choreographer,



"Supatchai returns dancers and musicians to their bodies and instruments, to present his Thai heritage through a contemporary perspective. Thai dance movement and children's games are married with ballet and contemporary dance... With this work, Supatchai embraces new technologies to further, but not replace, the physical celebration and expression of our human experience and imagination."

The rest of the year looks hopeful with a majority of the population being fully vaccinated. Riding this wave of optimism is WDA Singapore's preparations for its next virtual conference on dancers' well-being, with speakers from Singapore, Australia, United States and Hong Kong. WDA Events in this edition has more information.



1. Singapore Chinese Dance Theatre in *The Susurrations of the Tree*, which premiered online, choreographed by co-artistic director Jenny Neo.
2. Students of LASALLE College of the Arts in the dance film *Civic Bodies*, presented in the Esplanade da:ns Festival in October 2021. Photo: Crispian Chan for LASALLE College of the Arts

Taiwan report

by Su-Ling Chou

Before We Say Goodbye, choreographed by Po-Cheng Tsai, performed by B Dance. Photo: Mo Cho



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic spread from May in Taiwan, the whole country has been in a close state of alert for around five months. During this period, all performances, conferences and exhibitions were sadly cancelled. All courses at schools changed to online teaching. The situation continued till the end of the summer vacation. Schools could not start any activity on campus until September when the Fall semester started. At this time, the COVID-19 pandemic finally slowed down. The restrictions in the performance theaters were also relaxed. Therefore, most of the performances that were cancelled because of the pandemic gradually came back to theaters in the second half year of 2021.

There is a very tense performance schedule in all theaters and performance groups this Fall. It is regretful to see international performances still seriously restricted because of the requirement of quarantine on touring. However, online theater is growing to be a new trend. The performing arts in the second half year are blooming everywhere throughout the island of Taiwan.

In addition to those performances in blossom, Shu-yi Chou, a well-known dancer/choreographer, was invited by National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (NKCA) Weiwuying to be their city-sited artist for two years. He is going to promote creativity in the performing arts in Kaohsiung. Furthermore, he will collaborate with NKCA to do research regarding the local development in arts. It



is hoped that by way of Chou's observation and creation, NKCA can widen the vision on arts as well as merge multiple cultures.

We are very lucky to have the joint dance conference by Taiwan Dance Research society and daCi-Taiwan chapter, titled "2021 Gazing into the Past to Step Towards the Future", which was hosted by Tainan University of Technology on 23 and 24 October. There were keynote speeches by Emily Wilcox from USA and Jeff Meiners from Australia. Twenty scholarly papers were presented in seven sections, and the six workshops included ballet, modern dance, Balinese dance, body conditioning, yoga and dance education for children. Four roundtable discussions focused on documentation of indigenous dance pioneers during the early years in dance in Taiwan – Shatao Madiljin, and dance forerunners Hui-mei Lee and Chien Huang – as well as the transformation and the challenge of choreography at the present time in Taiwan.

We are delighted to inform you that one of WDAAP-Taiwan members, Po-Cheng Tsai, the artistic director of B. Dance, was awarded as one of the 59th Ten Outstanding Young Men in Taiwan. This award has been hosted by Junior Chamber International of the Republic of China (Taiwan) from 1963. Ten outstanding youths were selected from the whole country for their excellent achievements in various fields. Po-Cheng Tsai received the award for his achievements in the art of dance. Meanwhile, another

WDAAP member, Chien-chi Chang, the artistic director of Chang Dance Theater, recently received the first prize of 2021 MASDANZA, the International Contemporary Dance Festival of the Canary Islands (Spain) with his work "Divergent". We are happy to share Taiwan members' excellent achievements.

Due to the closing border of Taiwan, the 2022 International Young Choreographers Project (IYCP), hosted every other summer by WDAAP – Taiwan, that was postponed from 2021 is still in uncertainty. We greatly hope to make an announcement regarding a 2022 season in the beginning of February 2022, but it is contingent on the COVID situation.

The middle of 2021 was a big shock for most of the performing groups in Taiwan, as it was for many around the world suffering under the pandemic. Fortunately, after September, Taiwan was able to return to the theater under some restrictions and we hope to welcome those from abroad to come back to join us soon. We cannot wait to see all our WDA friends be together.

WDA-AP Taiwan Members Activities, July-December 2021

Performances

Tso's Dance Association

- 2021 Dance Concert of Tsoying Senior High School, 22-28 November, at Tsoying Dance Theater, 4 December at Performance Hall of Taitung County Government Bureau of Cultural Affairs, 11 December at Auditorium of Taichung City Tun District Arts Center, 17-18 December at Kaohsiung City Da Dong Arts Center, Taiwan

Chang Dance Theater

- Bon 4 Bon*, 27-28 November at Dapo Lake, Taitung County, Taiwan

SunShier Dance Theatre

- Sun-Shier Salon Dance Exhibition, 20-21 and 27-28 November online

Hung Dance

- Life-playing Game*, 13 November at Taitung Art Museum, Taitung County, Taiwan
- 2021 Stray Birds Dance Platform, 24-26 December at Experimental Theatre of Taiwan Traditional Theater Center, Taipei City, Taiwan

B. Dance

- Before We Say Goodbye*, 30-31 October at the Metropolitan Hall, Taipei City, Taiwan
- Alice*, 1 August Livestream

Horse

- FreeSteps*, 27-28 November at Performing Hall of NTUA Performing Art Center, New Taipei City, Taiwan
- One Danced*, 3-5 December at Experimental Theatre of NTUA Cultural and Creative Industry Park, New Taipei City, Taiwan



Divergence, choreographed by Chien-chi Chang, which received the first prize of the 2021 MASDANZA International Contemporary Dance Festival of the Canary Islands, Spain. Photo: Mo Cho

Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company

- Vibrating*, 30 October at Auditorium of Cultural Affairs Bureau of Nantou County, Taiwan
- The Third Person Singular*, Tainan Arts Festival, 12-14 November at Tainan Great South Gate, Tainan City, Taiwan

Kaohsiung City Ballet

- Wind*, 14 August at Jhihshan Hall of Bureau of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Government, 21 August at Native Theater of International Hall of Tainan Municipal Cultural Center, 4 September at Pingtung Performing Art Center, Taiwan

Bulareyaung Dance Company

- No. 191, Sec. 2, Zhongxing Rd.*, 28 September online
- 2021 Kaohsiung Music Center Grand Opening Show-BDC Night, 13 November at Live warehouse, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan
- # Yes or No*, 29-31 October at Playhouse of National Taichung Theater, 27 November at Theater of Chiayi Performing Arts Center, Taiwan
- Not Afraid of Sun and Rain*, 17 October at Opera House of National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts Weiwuying, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan

Conferences

- 2021 Joint Conference of Taiwan Dance Research Society and daCi Taiwan "Gazing into the Past to Step towards the Future", 23-24 October at Tainan University of Technology, Tainan City, Taiwan
- 2021 International Symposium on Arts Talented Education: Advancing Curriculum and Educating Arts Talented, 16-17 October at Taiwan Normal University, Taipei City, Taiwan

Thailand report

by Pornrat Damrhung

Napat Rodboon performing contemporary piece "From... SEEDA" for an online offstage theatre festival for the Department of Dramatic Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 6-14 November 2021. Photo: Ruengrit Santisuk



Dance in Thailand has been very quiet in the last four months due to a lockdown after a COVID-19 resurgence – if not the last 18 months, since the first wave hit us.

Schools are still mostly closed and dance is limited, but some private dance schools are open, and extremely busy, with mostly girls dancing. The third wave of the pandemic was very serious and people were not moving around much. The government was distributing vaccines, and now about half the country is fully vaccinated, but it seemed the situation was out of control, and people spent much energy extending helping hands to hospitals and volunteering to help communities within Bangkok, so we can all move forward. Most offices are still closed, and working from home is still normal.

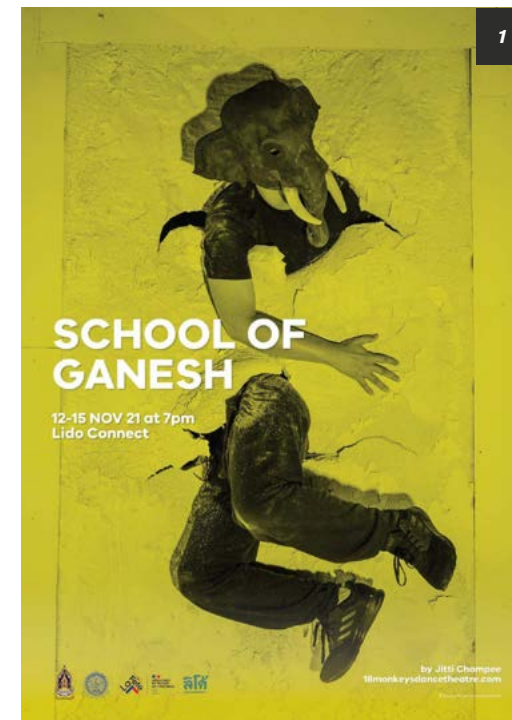
Dance moved to online platforms for learning and performance. In a world where professional dance stopped, everyone seemed to realize they could dance just well enough to share with family and friends. People could enjoy their homebound movement in a viral way. Dance courses were held online to keep people healthy and to have fun. People took up Zumba, belly dancing and ballroom dance from their living rooms. People stayed home and due to social distancing took to social media to move with their friends and family. While this dance was not as refined and beautiful as professional dance, it allowed people to

express and enjoy themselves and others, through online platforms.

Bangkok was quiet but in the provinces one could see dance rehearsals and the preparations of amateur dancers working in teams. They shared clips of their line dancing or of grandmothers dancing and these were wonderful examples that made people happy. In many areas outside Bangkok the pandemic was not too serious, and this allowed sharing of dance activities or even dance theatre performances, often performed and streamed live online so that people could pay to watch. Traditional forms like Likay and Lakorn Chatrri in Central Thailand and Morlum in Northeastern Thailand were quite popular.

Artists in Bangkok are now planning to return to work, since much of Thailand, including the City of Angels, opened again on November 1.

Pichet Klunchuen spent much of the pandemic focusing on what he has called No. 60, with the opportunity to give a big talk on Zoom to more than 200 Thai classical training students in July 2021 and to reach out to young Thai dancers. This project was launched by PATHS, a Thai performance organization. This allowed him to create a new platform to launch his approach to training and choreography aimed at embodying freedom in dance – what he calls No. 60. He spent time in his studio doing



online international workshops with Hong Kong dancers and letting them come up with their own version of No. 60.

Pichet is also rehearsing with his company a set of shows to perform in France this December. Besides preparing a new version of a traditional piece – the abduction of Sita and the Fight of Rama and his Monkey armies against Ravana and his giants – the company will perform the 2012 piece *Black and White*, and Pichet will perform *Pichet Klunchun and Me* with Jerome Bel.

Jitti Chompee opened a new piece *School of Ganesh* at Bangkok's Lido Connect on 12 November, as part of a long research project based on the knowledge gained from his interviews with Thai khon masters and searching for the feminine in classical dance characters. One piece derived from this project, "Melancholy of Demon", was already performed live in March 2021 during a pandemic lull in Bangkok, when it was well received by foreign and Thai audiences.

An exciting moment and a big development will happen on December 17, when UNESCO will inscribe Nora, a form of local folk performance in Southern Thailand, on its Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Nora dancers in Southern Thailand are preparing for it in a big way. There will be a lot of talks and a project for sharing Nora knowledge and also celebrating the art forms throughout the south of Thailand.

1. *School of Ganesh* poster for a contemporary *khon* piece by Jitti Chompee and the 18 Monkeys Dance Theatre troupe, performed at Bangkok's Lido Connect, 12-15 November 2021. Image courtesy: Jitsee Chompee

2. Pichet Klunchun (below left) rehearsing at his Chang Theatre in Thonburi on 21 November 2021 with two young classical *khon* performers playing Rama (Narongrit Petcharas) and Sita (Patcharin Bundit), for the abduction

of Sita scene from the Ramakien as part of their invited performance *Le combat de Rama et Todsakan* for the Musée du Quay Branly - Jacques Chirac, Théâtre Claude Lévi-Strauss on 17-19 December 2021. Photo: Lowell Skar



2022 WDA Events

SWEAT
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INTERNATIONAL
DANCE WORKSHOP
FESTIVAL

EA
T
SW

Masterclasses & Workshops |
Dancross/ArtsCross |
Dansathon

World Dance Alliance (WDA)
Global Summit | Digital
International Festival for
Dance Academies (IFDA)

Hong Kong
13-25.6.2022

Save the dates & stay tuned for the latest news at our [website!](#)
Enquiries: info@sweat-festival.com

World Dance Alliance (WDA) Global Summit
Paper Presentation | PechaKucha Presentation
Dance Film Screening | Network Meetings

Digital International Festival for Dance
Academies (IFDA)
Digital Performances On-demand Screening |
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Wellness in Dance:
A Holistic Approach
to Training

22 January 2022 8pm FLA
23 January 2022 9am SG/HK

World Dance Alliance (Singapore) is hosting its first virtual webinar in 2022 focusing on dancers' training as it encompasses physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. We will be learning from dance artists who have managed to successfully cultivate their artistry while maintaining a healthy balance between their different passions. Counterpointing this perspective will be two medical experts as they share their knowledge and experience in physical training, injury prevention and rehabilitation, mental hygiene and stress management. Join Dr Jennifer Marie Yang, Dr Lielanie Mae Aguilar-Pascasio, and dancers Jason Yap and Maybelle Lek as they discuss key issues that dancers face in their training with our moderator, Dr Filomar Tariao.

Click [here](#) for more information about the event.
Click [here](#) to register.

Partner Organisation Reports

In addition to its country chapters and internal networks, WDAAP furthers its vision and mission by working in partnership with other like-minded organisations throughout the world. We are proud to support their efforts, as we develop and strengthen networks for dance.



Josie Archer, Steven Park and Kosta Bogoievski in *Present-ing*, at Ōtautahi Tiny Fest 2021,

Christchurch, Aotearoa/ New Zealand, in November 2021. Photo: Petra Mingneau

Dance and the Child International

daCi promotes the growth and development of dance for children and young people internationally. WDA has partnered with daCi in several significant international events, notably the 2014 World Dance Congress / Global Summit in Adelaide, Australia



daCi (dance and the Child international) Report Virtual Conference

July 10-15, 2022

Conference Theme: Dancing into Communities

Programming will include many of the events and activities that we all associate with daCi conferences, including performances by children and youth, scholarly presentations, and opportunities for children and youth to create and collaborate with others.

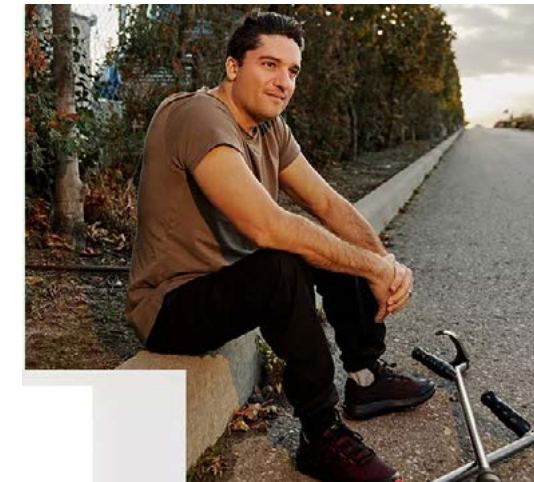
Registration Opens: Monday January 24, 2022

Questions can be directed to either of the Dancing into Communities co-chairs:

Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt: normasue@yorku.ca
Nancy Francis: nfrancis@brocku.ca

Click here to go to the conference website: <https://www.daciconference2022.yorku.ca/>

Featuring keynote speeches by:



Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli, dancer, choreographer, motivational entertainer



Santee Smith, Indigenous choreographer, activist, researcher



Alfdaniels Mabingo, Ugandan dance researcher, performer, educator

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/

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