

Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





'Yatra', performed at the event 'Anandadhara', 27-28 April 2024, celebrating the 20th anniversary of Kolkata Sanved, in Kolkata, India. Photos: Kolkata Sanved and The Story Jar



World Dance Alliance
Asia-Pacific

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Cover: Team Projonmo from Bangladesh performing 'Fireflies', choreographed by Md Hanif, at Chayanaut Cultural Center in Dhaka. Photo: Yeamin Muzumder

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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.



'Everything Potentially is Something Else', created by Prashant More and Somya Kautia, performed in LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4, February-March 2024 in Kolkata, India. Photo: Adrija Samal



President's letter

by Urmimala Sarkar Munsri

International Dance Day has just been celebrated with great fervour all over the world. This year the International Dance Day Message was written by Marianela Núñez, a dancer from Argentina for the International Theatre Institute ITI - World Organization for the Performing Arts. The message ends with, "Although the future and the present capture our attention, without the solid foundation of the past, without the fertility of our land, the dance tree cannot flourish. The roots are tradition and at the same time... nutrients."

The message is of extreme importance at a time when we are witnessing escalating violence and destruction of human civilization. It is a time when we need to wake up to the need of sensitization towards inclusivity, equality and rights to freedom and respect. Dance can only happen if we ensure freedom to live, move, and can ensure a safe life of dignity, education and happiness for the children of the future. I hope we remain committed to peace and justice and express our commitment through our dance and our lives.

While we wake up everyday to the news of hope in the collective actions on one hand and war and destruction on the other, our work must continue. Global projects in the past years have been to establish, mentor and facilitate Network activities for cross-regional projects and activities. I sum up what we tried to do in post COVID years:

- Channels – WDAAP Newsletter continued through the pandemic years, and is continuing its fantastic journey.
- *The Journal of Emerging Dance Studies*

(JEDS) slowed down and missed a year of its publication and delayed the second, but now it has uploaded smaller but powerful volumes for 2021 and 2022–2023.

- New mentorships/networking and facilitations were provided by WDAAP for building resilience in dancers through the project Begin Again, Small Grants for Individual Dance Makers, to support young and emerging dancers and choreographers from India and Bangladesh. We had 11 successful dance film projects that were showcased at the SWEAT, the Hong Kong WDA event in June 2022.
- In February 2023, the WDAAP was invited to the Khajuraho Dance Festival in Khajurajo, India, by the Alauddin Khan Sangeet Akademi. We participated as an organization with six countries from the region i.e. Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Taiwan, India and Canadian-Iranian choreographer Sashar Zarif with his team of dancers.

Now, let me share the most wonderful news for 2024. WDAAP is getting ready to celebrate its dedicated engagement and commitment to the dance community in the Asia and the Pacific through the Singapore International Dance Festival (2-4 September 2024) and the Annual General Meeting of the WDAAP in Singapore on 1 September 2024. We thank Singapore for organising this opportunity to celebrate and reassert our faith in the capacity of dance to make life meaningful.



Vice President's report

by Stella Lau

I hope this report finds you well and filled with the same excitement and passion for dance that has brought us together. As we reflect on the dance activities and initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region, it becomes evident that dance has the remarkable ability to bring about transformative impacts on diverse communities. It also serves as a powerful force, preserving and promoting cultural identity, and fostering unity among people. The initiatives and collaborations we witnessed in each region during the first half of this year have showcased the profound influence dance has on individuals and societies.

In Australia, Ausdance National and the State and Territory Ausdance network have united their voices to advocate for dance, recognizing its immense value and the need for a holistic cultural policy. This collaboration aims to ensure that the benefits of dance are recognized, celebrated, and made accessible to all.

In Bangladesh, the celebration of International Dance Day brought communities together to experience the beauty and power of dance. Performances, workshops, and awards highlighted the significance of dance as a means of self-expression, discipline, and the exploration of artistic potential.

The Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA), celebrating its 30th anniversary, has been at the forefront of promoting dance in the region. Through galas, awards, symposiums, and cultural exchanges, HKDA provided a platform for talented artists to showcase their skills, while fostering connections and collaborations within the dance community.

India witnessed the milestone of Kolkata Sanved's 20th anniversary, emphasizing inclusivity and joy in dance through their 'Anandadhara' program. Furthermore, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation's LEAP! Season 4 brought together artists from six countries, celebrating the transcendent power of dance.

In Indonesia, dance initiatives challenged societal norms and showcased the evolution of dance and emerging choreographers. Projects like Gymnastik Emporium and the Babad Lembana festival demonstrated the potential of dance as a medium for artistic expression and social activism.

Malaysia's MyDance Alliance has been

instrumental in fostering commitments and partnerships within the dance community. Through collaborations with The Actors Studio and the George Town Festival, they provided platforms for performances, workshops, and cultural exchanges, showcasing the diversity and talent of Malaysian dancers.

Taiwan's dance scene thrived with young dancers making their mark on national stages. International collaborations by Dance Forum Taipei, as well as the resumption of the International Young Choreographer Project, demonstrated the commitment to nurturing emerging talent and promoting dance as a universal language.

Papua New Guinea experienced significant development in its dance sector, with the establishment of a Dance Division and participation in international events. The celebration of International Dance Day and the country's achievements in international competitions have solidified dance as a powerful medium for cultural expression.

The Philippines, renowned for its rich dance heritage, witnessed exceptional performances by Ballet Manila, the Philippine Ballet Theater, and Ballet Philippines. These companies showcased traditional and contemporary works, narrating stories that reflect the diverse cultural tapestry of the country.

As we conclude this report, I would like to remind you of the upcoming Singapore International Dance Festival, happening 2–4 September 2024, and the WDAAP Annual General Meeting on 1 September 2024 to be held in Singapore. This event provides an invaluable opportunity for us to come together, share our experiences, and further strengthen our commitment to dance in the Asia-Pacific region. Let us seize this occasion to foster collaboration, inspire one another, and envision a future where dance continues to enrich lives and communities.

In closing, I extend my gratitude to all the dedicated dance organizations, artists, and supporters who have contributed to the vibrant dance landscape across the Asia-Pacific region. It is through your collective efforts that dance has become a driving force for cultural preservation, unity, and artistic excellence. Let us continue to celebrate, nurture, and advocate for the transformative power of dance.



A screenshot from the dance film 'Looped', created and performed by Pritha Kundu. Photo credit: Pritha Kundu



Secretary's report

by Julie Dyson

International Dance Conference & Festival

Singapore, City Ballet Academy, 2–4 September 2024

World Dance Alliance Singapore invites you to the vibrant and bustling city of Singapore for the [2024 Singapore International Dance Conference and Festival](#) to showcase, participate in and learn from one another. The festival will be an opportunity to share ideas, knowledge, viewpoints, artistry and virtuosity through the language of dance.

SIDCF will be this year's annual WDAAP event, and will include performances, masterclasses and a conference, with participants expected to attend from all over the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

- [Registration forms](#) (SGD \$100 / SGD \$70 WDA members & students)
- [Call for papers](#)
- [Performers' applications](#)

Notice of World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific Annual General Meeting

The WDAAP board gives notice of its Annual General Meeting, to be held the day prior to the festival opening, on Sunday 1 September 2024 at 2pm. The agenda will include the election of a new Executive Board and will be sent to AP chapter heads for circulation.

Nominations will be called for shortly, also via communication with Asia Pacific chapter heads. However, if anyone is interested in being elected to the WDA-AP Executive Board, we would welcome your application. Please contact Secretary [Julie Dyson](#) as soon as possible for further information.



Poster for the 2024 Singapore International Dance Conference and Festival, picturing dancer Rei Elizabeth Lim. Photo: Kuang Jingkai

ORGANISED BY: SUPPORTED BY:

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.

Firebird & Rite of Spring, choreographed by Iván Pérez, performed by Dance Forum Taipei and Dance Theatre Heidelberg. Photo: Dance Theatre Heidelberg

Education & Training Network report

by Sarah Knox, co-chair

I was honoured to represent the World Dance Alliance at the UNESCO Conference for Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi in February. Over three days, the conference fostered dialogue with arts educators, advocates, researchers and policy makers about the value and future directions of culture and arts education. The event culminated in the adoption of the Abu Dhabi Momentum, a new Framework to drive the next decade of culture and arts education globally.

The World Alliance for Arts Education, in partnership with dance and the Child international (daCi), hosted a Side Event at the Conference bringing together arts educators, with guest speakers, Sara Brighenti (Deputy Commissioner for the National Plan for the Arts of the Government of Portugal) and Shik Kim Young (Vice President for Asia and Pacific Region of WFUCA (World Federation of Clubs and Associations) for UNESCO). The side event explored the Framework Implementation Modalities in a discursive workshop format with key prompts: Implementation Recommendations and Implementation Challenges. The conversations were documented for future reference and reporting back to UNESCO. You can read more about our side event, including the final report, here: https://www.waae.online/waae_wccae2024.html

The conference concluded with UNESCO announcing a new initiative with three pillars to support the enactment of the Framework: grants, an international mobility program for teachers, and capacity building for African Member States.

I look forward to discussing the Framework further with WDA and WAAE colleagues and friends, and hope we may put the Framework into dance action at the Singapore International Dance Conference in September and at the WAAE Global Summit in Athens in October.

Research & Documentation Network report

by A.P. Rajaram, chair

We are glad to inform everyone that the call for articles for the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2023, Vol X, had an intense response. As we had mentioned earlier, the team had selected five articles. However, two of the scholars had withdrawn their submissions as they were busy with their academic engagement, but had promised to submit their work in the upcoming call for publications. So, we had three articles published on International Dance Day 2024.

The articles follow the theme 'The Moving Body, Identity, and Non-Human Interactions', featuring the scholars' work in theoretical paradigms of corporeal experiences in geographical and cultural locations, thereby exploring and understanding dance in more intrinsic and personal terms. The dance scholarship in this issue ranges from classical dance focusing on the various intricacies of artistry, to the nuances of virtuosity in dance such as the inter-artistic space, the exploration of motion sensors, disembodiment, dance spectatorship, semiotic interpretation, Klauss Vianna Technique, etc.



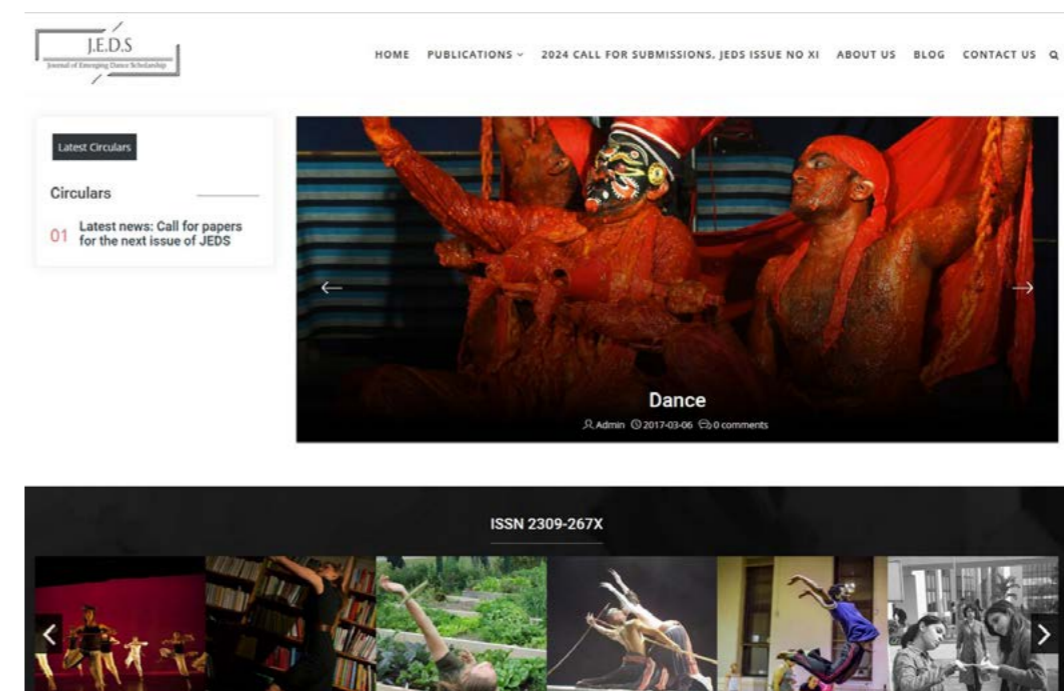
The new team of editors comprised of Debanjali Biswas, A.P. Rajaram and Akhila C. Vimal had worked on reviewing and advising the scholars in incorporating the advised changes in the articles. The JEDS articles for 2023 have been uploaded on the website; [read them here](#).

The editorial team has also come up with the next call for papers and invites contributions for JEDS 2024, Volume X that critically engage with the theme: 'Complexities and Challenges in Dance/ Dance Studies.'

Articles may focus on:

- Representation and Identity
- Aesthetics and Politics
- Dance Historical Scholarship
- Technology and Innovation
- Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Interdisciplinary Dialogues.

We seek submissions on a wide array of topics, including but not limited to the above-mentioned contexts.



A screenshot of the JEDS website, showing the call for papers, and linking to the new edition.

Support & Development report

by Sohini Chakraborty, chair

Dancers' mental health and well-being matter to us!

I am delighted to share the report of successful completion of a comprehensive survey conducted by the Support and Development Network, aimed at addressing the crucial topic of dancers' well-being. With a primary focus on understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within the dance community related to wellbeing, this endeavor has provided invaluable insights into the holistic overview of mental health and wellbeing of dancers in WDAAP.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Srabasti Ghosh for her invaluable support throughout both the survey process and documentation. Additionally, I am deeply thankful to the 14 participants for their generous contribution of time, energy, and insights. Their invaluable input has been instrumental in the success of the survey and the subsequent design of the action plan.

The overarching goal of this survey was threefold:

- Creating awareness of mental health within the dance community in South Asia: Recognizing the importance of mental health awareness, particularly within the dance community of South Asia,
- Promoting dance movement therapy as a self-care practice for dancers & performers: Our aim was to focus on the significance of prioritizing mental well-being among dancers.
- Facilitating regular dance movement therapy sessions with members: Building upon the survey response, our goal extended to establishing regular DMT sessions within the dance community, providing members with consistent opportunities for self-reflection, expression, and rejuvenation.

Survey Findings

Through online data collection, this survey has yielded valuable insights into the mental health practices and needs of dancers. From exploring the prevalence of regular mental health practices among participants to uncovering their attitudes towards DMT and Creative Art Therapy, the findings serve as a foundation for informed interventions aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of dancers.

In the subsequent sections of this report, we explain the specific findings and analysis derived from the survey responses, highlighting key areas of concern and opportunities for growth within the dance community.

Participants: A total of fourteen participants from nine countries, including India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, China, USA, Philippines, Korea, and Burkina Faso, took part in this survey. Notably, 92.9% of the participants identified themselves as dancers or performers, with 71.4% engaging in regular practice.

Mental Health Practices: When questioned about regular mental health practices, only 42.9% affirmed doing so, while 28.6% responded affirmatively regarding frequent engagement. Activities such as reading, walking, mindfulness practice, and listening to music were mentioned, yet almost half of the participants admitted to finding performing stressful.

Interest in healing and wellbeing: A significant majority (57.1%) expressed interest in attending sessions on healing and wellbeing through Dance Movement Therapy and Creative Art Therapy, citing previous positive experiences. Additionally, nearly half of the participants indicated a desire to attend DMT sessions monthly for healing and wellbeing.

Analysis

These findings underscore the imperative need to address mental health within the dance community, particularly in South Asia. Despite the passion for dance among participants, there exists a notable gap in implementing regular mental health practices. The acknowledgment of performance-related stress highlights an area of vulnerability within the community.

The keen interest in DMT and Creative Art Therapy sessions suggests a promising avenue for intervention. Incorporating these modalities into regular practice routines could not only mitigate stress but also enhance overall well-being among dancers and performers. Moreover, the willingness to participate in monthly DMT sessions indicates a significant need for mental health and well-being support in this community.

In conclusion, this report reflects both the challenges and opportunities within the

dance community concerning mental health. By fostering awareness and integrating DMT practices, we can cultivate a culture of holistic wellbeing. By harnessing these insights, we aspire to pave the way for a future where dancers not only thrive artistically but also flourish in their mental and emotional health.

Our Action Plan for the next year: Based on this survey, we have decided to initiate virtual Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) and Creative Art Therapy sessions from August 2024, aimed at promoting wellbeing among dancers who are members of WDAAP. These sessions will be conducted with nominal fees, utilizing a sliding scale to accommodate varying financial circumstances. For further information and registration details, please reach out to us at wda.networkstatusanddevelopment@gmail.com.



Photo: Annelotte Medema, courtesy of Kolkata Sarved

Chapter reports

Countries, cities or defined geographical areas within a regional centre may become organisational members (Chapters), 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, Beijing, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taipei and Thailand.

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



Aditya Warman's work from Padang Panjang, Sumatra, Indonesia, during the performance night of Sasikirana Dancecamp, at Jebor Fajar-roof section of Jatiwangi Factory, on 18 November 2023. Jatiwangi is a roof tile factory located in Majalengka, West Java, still operating today. Photo: Inashifa, courtesy of Sasikirana.

Australia report

by Julie Dyson



Ausdance network meeting in Adelaide. L-R: Jacob Williams (National President), Julie Englefield (Qld), Cathy Adamek (ACT), Rebecca Williams (SA), Isla Gibson (National), Amy Wiseman (WA), Julie Dyson (National).

The first half of 2024 has seen the consolidation of the work of Ausdance National with that of the State & Territory Ausdance network.

Together, these Ausdance organisations present a powerful voice for dance at all levels of society in Australia, and it was a very special experience to be able to come together in person (at last!) to develop a joint advocacy strategy to support dance at all levels into the future.

We have taken the opportunity to again review Australia's 2023 National Cultural Policy *Revive*, and while we welcome its aspirational ambitions, we note that it rarely mentions dance specifically, yet dance reaches every corner of cultural life, from creation, performance, marketing and administration to teaching in schools, studios and communities. There are well-researched benefits in the health and wellbeing of young people through school dance curricula and youth dance practice, and in chronic illnesses such as Parkinson's Disease.

Ausdance has also noted a disconnect in our shared vision for the dance industry, which Ausdance interprets much more holistically than current 'silo' funding allows.

We want to see a cultural policy that is relevant to the dance sector across the whole spectrum of its activity, from First

Nations practice to dance in schools and communities.

In a meeting with the federal Department for the Arts, the Ausdance network took the opportunity to share the outcomes from last September's *National Dance Gathering* which identifies many similar issues, in particular on page 13 which focuses on the need for an effective voice for dance (an issue possibly replicated across the Asia Pacific region). Here are the report's four recommendations:

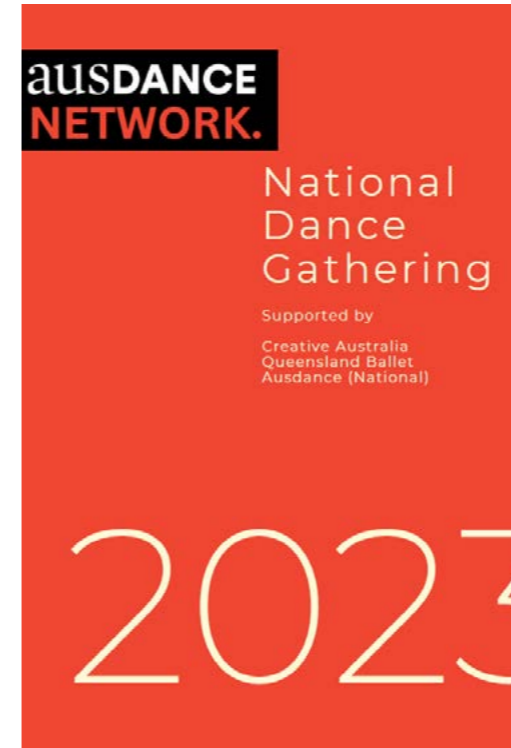
Advocacy for dance

With a coordinated national voice, needs can be met and the huge benefits of dance will be well understood.

Advocacy is the practice of representing the needs and priorities – and celebrating the great wins – of a sector, group, individual or community. We've long heard the dance sector doesn't feel this is done well enough, meaning the decision and policy-making (processes) in governments and institutions do not reflect the value of dance.

The dance sector is disconnected

Dance studios, communities, schools, institutions and companies work on their own, in silos and disconnected from their peers. There is inefficiency when shared



The cover of the new publication documenting the National Dance Gathering 2023, available online.

services or assets would be beneficial.

We are missing a national industry focus

The dance sector is becoming unsafe, unprofessional and unsustainable. Consistent collaborative national consultation, strategy and programs are the most efficient and effective way of improving this.

No group has good lobbying power

Without a trusted and well-resourced advocacy 'voice', the needs of the sector are not understood across all levels of society. We are unable to deliver key messaging promoting the physical, mental and social benefits of dance.

It must be noted that Australia lost its strong national advocacy voice when Ausdance National was defunded in 2016. However, together the Ausdance organisations will continue to advocate for dance across all levels of practice and genres into the future.

Revive provides the opportunity to bring these concerns to the table with decision makers across the federal bureaucracy and into the political spectrum.

Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli



They call it dance, we call it life. Dance is a medium of expression for the dancers, an integral part of human culture to bring people together, inspire creativity, and promote physical and emotional well-being. Through International Dance Day, people all over the world are reminded of the importance of preserving and celebrating this rich cultural heritage. International Dance Day is a day of celebration for the dance community around the world. It is a day to recognize the power of dance.

This year, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh Nrityashilpi Sangstha hosted a joint program to celebrate International Dance Day. Bangladesh Nrityashilpi Sangstha organized week-long events from 23 to 29 April 2024. On 29 April, the BNS organized a dance show at Central Shaheed Minar in the morning followed by a procession and a closing ceremony at the National Theatre Hall of the BSA in the evening featuring a discussion, dance show and awards

ceremony. The BNS honored renowned dancer of Bangladesh Shamim Ara Nipa, with Sammana Padak. The former adviser Mohammad Elias Haider and former vice-president Nigar Chowdhury were also awarded with Nrityacharya Bulbul Chowdhury Smriti Padak. Saju Ahmed and Munmun Ahmed staged Kathak dance while Tamanna Rahman staged Manipuri dance recital. Zuairiyah Mouli and Hasan Ishtiaque Imran staged a duet performance. Nritya Sur, Nabaras, Spandan, Vabna, Nandan kala Kendra, BAFA and many other dance troupes performed at the event.

Elsewhere, Nrittoshilpi Foundation Bangladesh and Bangladesh National Museum organized a 2-day festival at the National Museum auditorium. Freedom fighter Nasrin Ahmed, UNESCO Bangladesh officer-in-charge Susan Vize, dancers Shibli Mohammad and Shamim Ara Nipa were present as special guests at the inaugural ceremony, which was presided over by Md Kamruzzaman. The opening



1. 200 dancers together at the Spring festival organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.
2. A workshop organized by Angshee, conducted by Tomas Bungler.



day's program featured dance recitals by special children's dance troupe of SWID Bangladesh, Kolpotoru, Bhangima, Sohag Dance Troupe, Samarpan Kala, Surobhi and Ghungur. Kolkata-based dance artist Suman Mandal also performed at the venue. An online dance journal *Nritto Probaho* was launched on this auspicious occasion.

Spring is the last season and is considered the king of all seasons. Every year, the first day of the Spring is celebrated with dance and music. Many organizations arranged programs, including Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, who organized an event at the Ramna park where 200 dancers performed together. This colorful presentation enthralled the audience. This performance was followed by a procession and a cultural program at the Unmukto Moncho, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Projonmo, a group of budding artists headed by Md Hanif, with the collaboration of Tajim Chakma, Aparna Nishi, and Mst. Ana Akhter, organized an event to showcase

performances of young artists on 27 February 2024 at the auditorium of the Chayanaut Cultural Center in Dhaka. Two guest dancers from Kolkata, India Pooja Chatterjee and Tiyasha Dey, enthralled the audience with solo classical dance in their own classical dance forms. They also presented the production *Fireflies*, which originally premiered in 2012 by Shadhona (choreographed by Amit Chowdhury and Sabbir Ahmed Khan) in Bangladesh; it was given a transformative choreographic reinterpretation by Md. Hanif.

Dance is a global language, and in Bangladesh it has been developing and merging with our own culture, as with other global practices. Nrittobritt, headed by Golam Mostofa Boby, organized a three-day long bharatanatyam workshop conducted by Rajdeep Banerjee from India. Dance organization Angshee arranged a 2-day contemporary dance workshop by Tomas Bungler from Germany. By these workshops, dancers from Bangladesh can participate in global dance practice and get motivated to practice and create their own language of dance. While sharing the experience, Rajdeep Banerjee said, "One must believe the art form they are practicing. Indian classical dances are not a matter of imitating someone. Indian classical dances provide the opportunity to explore oneself while staying in the discipline. Dance should not be only performance-oriented, it is like meditation. One should have the urge to practice not only for performing somewhere but also improving and exploring the dance form."



Performances for International Dance Day, organized by Nrittoshilpi Foundation Bangladesh (NFB) and Bangladesh Nritto Shilpi Songstha in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy:
1. 'Nature and Environment' by Kolpotoru for NFB, choreographed by Shabbir Ahmed Khan.
2. Zuairiyah Mouli and Hasan Ishtiaque Imran performing a duet.

Hong Kong report

by Mark Choi

25th Hong Kong Dance Awards Presentation & Gala Performance Awardees. Photo: Lee Wai Leung@Worldwide Dancer Project, provided by HKDA



This year commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA), and during the first half of the year HKDA organized a series of events to honor this significant milestone. Speaking of celebrations, it is impossible not to mention the highly anticipated 25th Hong Kong Dance Awards Presentation & Gala Performance, which took place on 20 April 2024. With the theme 'Celebration of Dance,' the gala showcased dazzling performances by acclaimed dance companies and groups such as the Hong Kong Dance Company, City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong Ballet, Beyond Dance Theater, and a captivating finale by a talented ensemble of street dancers.

A total of 19 awards were presented, including two Outstanding Achievement awards and two prestigious Lifetime Achievement awards. The Outstanding Achievement awards rightly recognized CCDC resident choreographer Sang Jijia's and veteran dance arts administrator Kevin Wong's exceptional contributions to the local dance scene. The Lifetime Achievement awards were presented to Sylvia Wu and Mandy Petty, in tribute to their significant and enduring impact on the local dance community for many decades. Additionally, Mao Wei was honored with the esteemed Tom Brown Emerging Choreographer Award. The evening was filled with a lively and harmonious atmosphere and countless memorable moments, punctuated by exuberant cheers.

In mid-March, HKDA organized a

special event tailored for local young choreographers. In collaboration with the Hong Kong Ballet, the Choreographers' Symposium took place in Eaton HK, hosted by Vladimir Angelov. The symposium aimed to provide young choreographers and dancers in Hong Kong with a deeper understanding of the trends in 21st century choreography and offer valuable networking opportunities to support their choreographic endeavors. The participants engaged in insightful exchanges, sharing their perspectives on current choreographic trends, fostering a dynamic environment for mutual learning.

In the latter half of May, social worker Dr. Melody Fung hosted the DanceHub series 2024: 'Mind Listener.' This event aimed to guide participants in exploring their inner selves and establishing somatic self-care rituals. Attendees had the opportunity to delve deeper into the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit, and discover the profound relationship that exists within.

HKDA's renowned project, *dance journal/hk*, has embarked on a new development to continue its scholarly direction. In April, HKDA introduced an exciting new podcast series called 'Here 4 Dance,' incorporating entertaining and relatable content alongside informative and professional insights. Hosted and curated by dance critic Tomas Tse, the podcast welcomes a lineup of guest hosts who share their expertise and enthusiasm, embarking on a delightful exploration of the profound joy that dance brings. In the upcoming months, the program will cover a



diverse range of topics, allowing both local dance enthusiasts and the wider audience to deepen their appreciation and knowledge of dance.

The local dance scene in Hong Kong is brimming with captivating programs, and there has been a growing trend of cultural exchange between local and international artists. A notable example is seen in this year's Hong Kong Arts Festival, where the Pichet Klunchun Dance Company mesmerized the local audience with the unique dance form called khon. Khon is a traditional Thai court dance-drama, and the company ingeniously translated their two decades of research into a contemporary dance piece titled *NO.60*, exploring its potential for the future. This year marked their return to live presentations, and Pichet Klunchun also collaborated with diversified local choreographer Terry Tsang for a performance in Thailand, further enhancing the opportunities for cross-cultural exchange between the two regions.

HKDA has been actively engaged in cultural exchange initiatives, striving to promote local choreographic works on the global stage.

Recently, we had the privilege of inviting local choreographer Alice Ma to participate in the International Young Choreographer's Project (IYCP) in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024, sponsored by WDA-Taiwan and the ChinLin Foundation. Alice Ma has been chosen through an adjudicated process and will collaborate with a group of talented Taiwanese dancers over a span of two weeks, diligently preparing for a performance scheduled during the third week.

In the latter half of 2024, we eagerly anticipate the local dance community shining even brighter, as talented individuals continue to make their mark in different parts of the world. We look forward to more exciting follow-up events celebrating the 30th anniversary of the HKDA!



1. Choreographers' Symposium at Eaton HK. Photo provided by HKDA
2. *NO.60* by Pichet Klunchun Dance Company. Photo: Hideto Maezawa, provided by Hong Kong Arts Festival

India report

by Paramita Saha, Sohini Chakraborty, Srabasti Ghosh and Vikram Iyengar



Kolkata Sanved marks 20-year journey with 'Anandadhara'

by Sohini Chakraborty and Srabasti Ghosh

On 29 April 2024, Kolkata Sanved (KS) completed its twenty year journey. To mark this milestone, KS organised a 2-day program, named 'Anandadhara', meaning the flow of joy, on 27-28 April 2024. Throughout the program, KS collaborated with many partners who have been integral to its journey, including Dance Alliance India (DAI), which also celebrated its 20th year. Both KS and DAI have made substantial contributions to the arts ecosystem in India in various ways, reflecting their enduring commitment to the arts and their communities. KS is a women-led organisation and pioneer in the field of dance movement therapy (DMT) for promoting holistic well-being and enhancement of quality of life. As part of WDAAP, DAI serves as a primary voice for dance and dancers in India.

The 2-day program saw a diverse showcase that included a wide range of performances with 600 attendees from across the globe along with 50 grassroots changemakers.

The program incorporated KS's philosophy of bringing people together and making dance accessible for all. Hence, 'Movement for All' was designed for the participation of all the audience members who attended the program. This incorporated 9 renowned choreographers, five of whom are also members of DAI, (Prof. Urmimala Sarkar Munsli, Debashree Bhattacharya, Angira Chakraborty Dasgupta, Sobha Pahari, Kakali Roy Ghatak, Tanvi Bajaj, Paramita Saha, Vikram Iyengar and Suman Sarawgii),

who took a workshop & created 3-minute performance pieces. That evening saw 9 spectacular choreographies that were created in that space. The choreographies did not attempt to achieve the aesthetic perfection of formal performance presentations but focused on the joy of dancing. Participants expressed their excitement about being on stage. Some shared that they performed on stage after over a decade or so.

On Day 2, the 45-minute work *Yatra*, started with 'Four Stories, One Tale', choreographed by Vikram Iyengar, which offered a tapestry of movement, weaving together the personal narratives of 4 dancers about their journeys with KS and responding to a chorus of rhythms and melodies that reflected both individual and collective voices and ways of being. In the second part of *Yatra*, choreographed by Prof. Urmimala



'Anandadhara', 27-28 April 2024, celebrating the 20th anniversary of Kolkata Sanved. Photos: Kolkata Sanved and The Story Jar
1. Audience members performing in 'Movement for All'.
2. Navtej Johar performing 'Tanashah'.



Sarkar Munsli, who is also a board member of KS and President of WDAAP and DAI, the work represented the journey of KS - its growth, dreams, passions and struggles, and the collective evolution of the team. By minimizing the distinction between the choreographer and dancers, and challenging traditional modes of viewing performance, this piece served as a powerful statement of the collective agency of all who have contributed to KS's history.

The concluding procession represented the inclusive journey that KS embodies, inviting the audience to join in shaping its future path. Navtej Johar, one of the significant members of Dance Alliance India, presented his celebrated performance 'Tanashah,' based on Bhagat Singh's 'Why I am an atheist,' a deeply immersive work where Navtej incorporated poetry, music and movement.

Taking a Chance on Dance

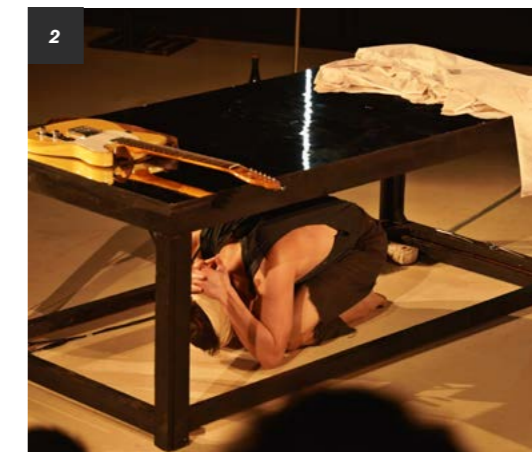
By Vikram Iyengar

Across 6 weeks in February-March 2024, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation, Calcutta, presented LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4. Leaping involves our entire selves, and propels us into movement, time and space – the basic components that make dance happen. The season invited audiences across the city to take a chance on dance, and find those moments of abandon and fun.

The season was structured over four week/ends. LEAP INTO invited audiences to engage closely with performances, workshops, talks and interactions in the compressed space of one weekend in one venue. LEAP THROUGH activated

and claimed a public community space with the joy and energy of movement: with site-specific work by dancers, platform performers and school students over three evenings. LEAP OUT presented a weekend showcase of new work from four emerging artists from across India. The weekend also created a discursive space to have deep and solution-centric conversations about taking our ecologies of dance sustainably and safely into the future. Both these weekends were in close collaboration with ArtsForward. LEAP ACROSS – the final section of the season - presented two internationally known artists and companies in a series of engagements that cut through cultures, forms and borders.

Featuring a total of one hundred and four artists and guests (including thirty eight schoolchildren) from 6 countries – India, the UK, Finland, Germany, Austria and Denmark – the season presented 10 performances and eighteen other events across fourteen venues in the city.



LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4, from February to March 2024, in Kolkata, India. Photos: Adrija Samal
1. 'Rhythm and Intoxication' performed by cieLaroque, Austria.
2. 'Johnny got His Gun' by Essi Rossi, Pauli Riikonen and Johannes Holopainen, Finland.

Indonesia report

by Dina Triastuti,
Ela Mutiara,
Ferry C Nugroho
and Anastasia
Melati



This report delves into the realm of arts activism, where dance and movement are increasingly making their presence known in public spaces and challenging societal norms. Dance has evolved into a medium for addressing the social, political, and economic concerns of citizens, rendering its role particularly significant in Indonesia, especially during the first half of 2024. The observation concentrates on three key regions: Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Madura.

Gymnastics Emporium “Playing Sports, Making Sports Arts”

Gymnastik Emporium, a collective based in Yogyakarta, operates across various disciplines and comprises members such as Muhammad Abe, Irfanuddien Ghozali, Abdi Karya, Fajar Riyanto, and other multidisciplinary artists. Established in 2020, the project has expanded its scope beyond responding to the pandemic, offering fresh perspectives to the realm of dance by exploring movement in broader contexts. One of their projects draws inspiration from Physical Fitness Gymnastics (SKJ). Gymnastik Emporium revisits this historical memory by reintroducing the concept through an experimental lens. Initially showcased at Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, the project involved local residents and enlisted gymnastics instructors with backgrounds in zumba, aerobics, and SKJ, tasking them with creating movements that blend aesthetics and grace. This presentation earned acclaim and was featured at the Indonesia Dance Festival in Jakarta.

In another groundbreaking initiative, Gymnastik Emporium spearheaded a social

choreography as part of the Makassar Biennale, named *Songkabala Lae-Lae*. This ritual symbolizes the resistance of Lae-Lae Island residents against ongoing reclamation efforts encroaching upon their ancestral lands. Situated a mere 10 minutes from the heart of Makassar, Lae-Lae serves as a poignant backdrop for this struggle. Social choreography, in this context, serves as an artistic endeavor aimed at mobilizing citizens to engage with and respond to their surroundings through performance and interpretation.

Babad Lembana in Madura, East Java

Babad Lembana operates as a multidisciplinary mini-festival, featuring exhibitions, performances, lectures, film screenings, and local tours. The December 2023 edition serves as a historical and contemporary record of the region, undertaken collaboratively by Shohifur Ridho'l, Fikril Akbar, and Syamsul Arifin.

Lembana is a locale near a mosque in Pamekasan, Madura Island, East Java that is not yet state-recognized. It is composed of rice fields, a cliff, and a belief that a cliffside grave is the ancestral origin of Lembana



residents. Babad Lembana, initiated by Lembana Agroecosystem, offers a window into the community's life, functioning as a mobile laboratory where social dynamics and artistic expression intersect. It is a symbiotic learning process, enriching both performers and audiences, embodying the essence of festivals beyond mere entertainment. It is not just about spectacle, it is about integrating art into social activities.

Sampurasun in Bandung, West Java

"Sampurasun" serves as a customary warm greeting among Sundanese people, often met with the response, "Rampes." Looking at the broader cultural landscape, the city of Bandung boasts a rich array of dance art activations. As the capital of West Java province, Bandung is witnessing rapid growth in the fashion and entertainment industries. However, while there is significant emphasis on academic pursuits in contemporary dance, there remains a scarcity of off-campus presentations. Two dance collectives, Obah Dance Laboratory and Sasikirana KoreoLAB & Dancecamp, are striving to address this gap by providing platforms for emerging choreographers and

fostering creative growth within the city.

The evolution of dance in Bandung continues, fueled by the aspirations of dance academics for the emergence of a new generation of choreographers. Efforts to preserve traditional dance alongside its adaptation to the forces of globalization and technology are evident in the formation of dance groups in the city. Such endeavors are supported by regional and central governments through funding programs aimed at revitalizing and fostering equitable knowledge development.

An additional noteworthy development is the emergence of new knowledge production within Indonesia's dance scene. This includes the rise of dance collectives, projects, and scenes that contribute to the expansion of knowledge. Nowadays, dance in Indonesia is not confined to the stage; it is institutionalized within supporting communities and evolves organically within collectives amid the backdrop of social issues.

1. Ferry and Ela are deeply involved in various residencies, research endeavors, and interdisciplinary collaborations both locally and globally. Ela is actively immersed in research on Bajidoran, concentrating on the nuances of body movements and hip techniques. Ferry is a lecturer at ISBI Bandung, where he enriches the academic sphere with his expertise. Dina is a producer for a non-profit arts institution in Yogyakarta, involved in performing arts event production, festival planning and management. Anastasia Melati is pursuing a PhD in Dance Studies at Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan.

2. A popular phenomenon in the 1980s, Senam Kesegaran Jasmani (Physical Fitness Gymnastics) was a mandatory routine in schools, offices, and government institutions, typically conducted every Friday morning under the banner of "Promoting Community, Promoting Sports." During its heyday, SKJ served as a means of physical discipline closely associated with the New Order era.

1. Hartati's session at Sasikirana Dancecamp at Jatiwangi Art Factory, 16 November 2023. Sasikirana invites mentors such as Rianto, Hanafi and Adinda Luthvianti to give masterclass, attended by emerging dancers and choreographers. Photo: Inashifa.

2. The Songkabala Lae-Lae ritual, on 15 September 2023. The ritual leader conducts the prayer and delivers offerings. This ritual celebrates the lives of citizens and give thanks to the homeland they live in. Photo: Fajar Riyanto.

Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas



Although MyDance Alliance is not working on a MyDance Festival for this year, we are busy with our continuing commitments as well as some exciting new partnerships and opportunities.

Another edition of our performance platform Dancebox took place in March 2024, in partnership with The Actors Studio at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre. Once again it was a sold-out show, presenting 7 new dance works by both established and emerging choreographers, and produced by committee member Chai Vivan. The show featured performances by young studio dancers and university dance students, by both emerging and established choreographers. We look forward to the next edition of Dancebox in July this year, produced by Kenny Shim.

We are also delighted that MyDance Alliance has been selected as one of the recipients of inaugural grants from the Actors Studio Foundation. The grant will help to support our activities including administrative costs, operational costs, production and performance costs, overheads including salaries and statutory, purchasing of assets, education and research -- wherever we are working, whatever we are doing. We are grateful to The Actors Studio Foundation for their trust in MyDance Alliance as an organisation that works together with the community to create opportunities and outcomes for Malaysian dance. And we look forward to a spectacular 2024 with their

support!

MyDance also partners with Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre to present a number of dance-centric activities benefiting dance practitioners and the dance-loving public on that side of the Klang Valley. In 2024, the program began with two workshops led by MyDance committee member Lau Beh Chin. The workshop in January introduced macrobiotic-somatic practice and dance, merging somatics and a macrobiotic



Dancing in Place at 1 Utama Shopping Centre, 8-9 June 2024, produced by Rithaudin Abdul Kadir.

- Photos: Mohd Nor Azmil
1. Students of the Dance Department, Faculty of Creative Arts, Universiti Malaya, performing in Khairi Mokhtar's 'Urban Walking'.
 2. Olah Karma in his solo work 'Pomelo'.



perspective on life's energy. It explored diaphragmatic breathing and embodied embryology, to foster self-awareness, prevent injury, and connect individuals with their environment.

An introductory workshop to Innercise, exploring the mind-body connection and how your lifestyle choices affect your health, followed in March, for the general public as well as dance practitioners. During this workshop, participants explored techniques to improve breathing, and activating and balancing energy pathways in the body. Beh Chin will continue with her series of workshop at PJPAC throughout this year.

Back for the third installment at PJPAC is our popular Dancing in Place site-specific dance performance, once again produced by our vice president Rithaudin Abdul Kadir. Seven new works will be performed in different public sites across 1 Utama Shopping Centre in early June, guaranteed to delight regular dance fans as well as bemused shoppers.

A special partnership is blooming this year between MyDance Alliance and the George Town Festival in Penang, a flagship event in the Malaysian arts calendar. As part of the festival this July helmed by artistic director Ling Tang, MyDance will be presenting three programs. Committee member Nurulakmal Abdul Wahi will present an edition of Dancing in Place (our first for Penang), in the UNESCO World

Heritage area of George Town. Lau Beh Chin will present another session of her macro-biotic and somatic workshops.

And the Southeast Asian Choreolab returns for the first time since 2019, in its first new venue aside from its usual host at Rimbun Dahan, specially for the George Town Festival. The Taipei Economic & Cultural Council in Malaysia and the Ministry of Culture, Taiwan, are supporting established Taiwanese choreographer Hsiao-Mei Ho to facilitate this edition of the Choreolab. 15 emerging choreographers from 8 nations across the Southeast Asian region have been selected through a rigorous open call process to take part in the 2-week Choreolab at Hin Bus Depot, which will conclude with 2 sharing sessions with GTF audiences.

MyDance Alliance is delighted to continue its projects and to extend its activities beyond the Klang Valley. We look forward to working with the dance community in Penang and to experiencing beautiful George Town, and we cherish this opportunity to learn from new partners and new audiences.



1. A workshop in macrobiotic-somatic practice conducted by Lau Beh Chin, at Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre. Photo: Ethel Deidre Daniel.
2. 'Golden Hour', choreographed by Vicky Yap, performed in Dancebox March 2024, produced by Chai Vivan, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre on 9 March 2024. Photo: James Quah

Papua New Guinea report

by Naomi Faik-Simet

The celebration of International Dance Day at University of Papua New Guinea, featuring dancers of taibubu, and a recorded keynote presented by Prof. Urmimala Sarkar. Photo: Naomi Faik-Simet



There has been significant development for dance in Papua New Guinea over the last decade. In June 2022, the Papua New Guinea National Cultural Commission approved a government restructure for the entire organization of which included the establishment of a separate Dance Division within the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS). Following this, the function of dance research has expanded with the recruitment of new research staff. Given this important accomplishment, we have endeavored to raise the standard of dance studies to promote practice, research and publication.

This report focuses on the recent celebration of International Dance Day held this year on Monday 29 April 2024 at the University of Papua New Guinea. It was a collaborative activity between the IPNGS and the University of Papua New Guinea Creative Arts Student Association and Theatre Arts Strand. The event was supported by the National Cultural Commission and initiated by the Dance Division of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies. The Dance Day celebration coincided with the successful launching of the discussion research paper, 'Christianity and the Indigenization of Taibubu among the South Fly People of Papua New Guinea' by Emmanuel Daniel, IPNGS Senior Dance

Researcher.

Taibubu is an introduced dance genre that traveled across the Pacific from Rötuma to the Torres Strait, and to the Kiwai islands in Papua New Guinea through the early London Missionary Society movement. As an emerging dance scholar, Emmanuel critically reflected on his practice as a dancer and indigenous practitioner of his Taibubu culture. As we are experiencing a growing influence in technology and globalization, many of our dances have adapted new forms. The issue of what is "indigenous" versus "non-indigenous" remains an area of contention. The taibubu dance presents a case for exploration into the impact of colonization and Christianity among the people of South Fly in the Western province of Papua New Guinea. Learning and performing the taibubu was not only an act of adaptation, but of resistance and decolonization.

In preparation for Papua New Guinea to establish a WDAAP chapter, we were fortunate to have the participation of the WDAAP President, Professor Urmimala Sarkar, who delivered a recorded video of her keynote presentation on the important role of WDA in fostering growth for dance sharing, networking and scholarship in the region. We look forward to Papua New Guinea's participation in the upcoming



Singapore dance festival and WDA AGM to progress the formation of PNG Chapter.

Other positive developments for dance include the participation of 130 performers and exhibitors at the 13th Festival of Pacific Art and Culture in Hawai'i. Amongst other activities, the PNG delegation will be displaying our culture through selected groups of indigenous and contemporary dancers. In addition, we have other established dance artists in the country

who are participating in international dance competitions. Once such is the Wan Squad PNG contemporary and hip-hop dance troupe who has travelled around the world, representing their fascinating choreography and dance techniques.

More positive dance outcomes will be shared in the next Channel as Papua New Guinea enters a new season in generating new dance and cultural expressions, and at the same, maintaining past traditions.



The celebration of International Dance Day at University of Papua New Guinea. Photos: Naomi Faik-Simet
1. Emmanuel Daniel, IPNGS Senior Dance Researcher, with taibubu dancers.
2. Steven Enomb Kilanda, Executive Director of the National Cultural Commission, with Emmanuel Daniel.

Philippines report

by Nicole Primero

Hiraya Contemporary Dance Company in Richard Galang's "Excerpts from Lucid", at the celebration of International Dance Day at the Samsung Performing Arts Theatre. Photo: Cesar Morales



The Philippine ballet community continued its steady run, ending each season with expected major performances at the grand stage. Ballet Manila closed its 24th season with Gerard Francisco's *Ibong Adarna* and began its 25th with familiar ballets. In addition to *Le Corsaire* and *Giselle*, the Filipino audience welcomed the perennial favorite, *Tatlong Kuwento ni Lola Basyang*, a rechoreographed retelling of Filipino writer Severino Reyes's stories in three ballets.

Simultaneously, the Philippine Ballet Theater was kept busy towards the end of their 34th season. Awarded the Outstanding Dance Company: Classical Ballet for the second year in a row by the Philippine Leaf Awards, the company expanded their tours outside the Philippines. *Dance on the Wings of Song* with music by Jose Mari Chan was performed in New York last September 2023, while California was presented with *Music in Motion* last 21 October 2023. Ballet Philippines on the other hand centered on cultural narratives and bravely mounted the full-length *Limang Daan*. Originally debuting online during the pandemic, the envisioned feminist ballet opened at The Theatre at Solaire on International Women's Day early in March 2024. The storytelling of the Filipina's heritage and legacy was a grand choreographic collaboration of a historical piece combined with literary interpretations and magic.

Outside the resident and mainstream companies, the Cultural Center of the Philippines Choreographers Series (CCPCS) ended its own season with its annual component, *NeoFilipino: In Transit*. Dedicated to established Filipino choreographers, the 20-22 October 2023 production featured Al Garcia's *LaoWaiLao*, Christine Crame's *Bicol Train Express*, and Jose Jay Cruz's *Beautiful Budol: The Hidden Cost of Mounting a Dance Project*. The overarching theme of NeoFilipino programmed different conceptions of being "in transit", with varying perspectives on identity, diaspora, and pilgrimages, in its continuation of independent dance advocacies.

In an unprecedented move, Ayala Land brought together the "crème de la crème of Filipino dance talent" to celebrate International Dance Day at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater. The celebration lasted from 25 to 28 April 2024, spotlighting individual galas of folk dance, street dance, ballet, and contemporary dance, along with a full day workshop on dance in film under Madge Reyes's Fifth Wall Fest. The 'Dance For All' as a celebratory theme seems the ideal summing up of all the initiatives, putting previous pandemic problems in the rear-view mirror now.

Rhosam Prudenciado Jr., WDAAP member from the Rhosam-Mia duo, completed a



written contemporary dance syllabus, which culminated through his thesis recital, *Linear Fluidity*, on 14 June 2024 at the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies. Nikka Melissa Anne Bola-Ferrer, from the same graduating batch, directed *Tatarin* for 20 June 2024. Her research on Philippine rituals and feminism imagined through dance align with the

current sentiments of the active generation working towards a cohesive performance-making. The engagement and involvement in several disciplines and approaches are a testament that artists and spectators alike share anticipation of an exciting future of the Philippine dance landscape.



The celebration of International Dance Day at the Samsung Performing Arts Theatre. Photos: Cesar Morales
1. Daloy Dance Company in Ea Torrado's "We're Humans".
2. Curtain call.

Tso's Dance Association (Taiwan) report

by Su-Ling Chou



Spring is the time when the Taiwanese members of WDA-AP present their achievements after half a year's work on dance, especially the senior dancers from universities and high schools. These young dance artists challenged themselves and produced many dance concerts with various styles on the main stage in formal theaters throughout the island.

It is with great honor that Tso's Dance Association, the WDAAP chapter in Taiwan, was invited again by the Ministry of Culture to perform at the 1624-Taiwanese Opera Musical for the 2024 Taiwan Lantern Festival, which is held in February each year. Thirteen well-known Taiwanese Opera Troupes participated in the event organized by the National Center of Traditional Arts and produced by Kaohsiung Philharmonic Cultural & Arts

Foundation, with more than five hundred performers joining the production. The musical was meaningful as it centered on the life of General Zheng Cheng-gong, a well-known Koxinga known for his achievements in taking back Taiwan from the occupation of the Dutch in 1661.

'Dance a Dance From My Yellow Skin', performed in Weiwuying National Center for the Arts, choreographed by Su-yi Chou.

Photos: Bernie Ng

The Bureau of Cultural Affairs of the Kaohsiung City Government continued to host the Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival (KSAF) this year, with the Site-Specific Dance Series held in April. Performances included the Blooming Grass Cooperative's "Shoyoen Japanese Garden," 01 Dance Production's "Noah's Amusement Haven," Solar Site Dance Theatre's "The Disappearing Daily Life," Hsi Dance's "Reminiscent Story," and Solar Site Dance Theatre's "The Story of the Ancient Kiln." Three of these groups selected three Kaohsiung heritage sites as their performance venues: the Solar Site Dance Theatre performed in Zhongdu Tangrong Brick Kiln Factory, the Hsi Dance Company chose The British Consulate at Kakow, and the Blooming Grass Cooperative selected



Shoyoen Japanese Garden which were newly restored in 2020. Meanwhile, 01 Dance Production performed in the outdoor space of Performance Hall, Kaohsiung City Dadong Arts Center. The choreographers made good use of the environments to feature a unique presence by way of contemporary dance, whilst also utilizing existing modern media.

Another event of KSAF was a series of experimental theater performances. Four productions were selected to perform in the Pier 2 Experimental Theater. One was "Kidult" by Hsu Chen Wei Dance Company, a member of Tso's Dance Association and WDAAP Taiwan. Another was "Dance a Dance From My Yellow Skin," choreographed by Su-yi Chou, as a collaboration between Weiwuying National Center for the Arts and Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, Singapore, performed by dancers from Taiwan and Singapore.

Hung Dance, a member of WDAAP Taiwan, was invited to bring his well-known piece "Birdy" back to his hometown, Kaohsiung. The duet received many prizes in international choreography competitions and has toured around the world since its premiere in 2017. In 2023, recreated as an eight-dancer piece, it received the first prize in the 2023 Clare C. & Friends Fellowship. Supported by the National Culture and Arts Foundation and Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Kaohsiung City Government, the production

was chosen to perform in Weiwuying, the national theater in south Taiwan.

Dance Forum Taipei (DFT), led by Heng Ping, a former chapter head of WDAAP Taiwan, worked with Dance Theatre Heidelberg (DTH), Germany. They performed in *Firebird & Rite of Spring*, which was choreographed by DTH artistic director Iván Pérez, who combined the two already powerful narratives to introduce a new layer to the work. The production, a celebration of the 35th anniversary of DFT, was performed live with Evergreen Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the renowned conductor Wen-pin Chine. Pérez had collaborated twice before with DFT.

After the spreading of COVID-19 in the past three years, Taiwan is happy to restart the International Young Choreographer Project this year. Eight choreographers are selected including five from WDA-Asian Pacific area and three from Taiwan. The total activity will be from 30 June to 21 July. The audition for selecting dancers is on 30 June, and the rehearsals will start immediately after, ending with the performances are on 20 and 21 July. The venue of the three-week rehearsal in the campus and the final performances are in the Experimental Theater at the Tsoying High School, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. It is a great pleasure that the door of the dance can be open to the international world, and we can meet together on the stage again soon.

***Firebird & Rite of Spring*, choreographed by Iván Pérez, performed by Dance Forum Taipei and Dance Theatre Heidelberg. Photo: Susanne Reichardt.**

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 Individual US\$ 20

To join

Contact your local Chapter Head (contact list on back of this issue) or go to our website <http://www.wda-ap.org/membership/> for details on how to join.

Visit our websites

www.wda-ap.org

www.facebook.com/WorldDanceAlliance/

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