

Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





'Frame Up', choreographed by Anna Makukhina, in *Roots/Routes*, performed by students of the School of Diploma in Dance, LASALLE College of the Arts, on 4-5 April 2025, at the Singapore Airlines Theatre. Photo: Eiffel Lee.



World Dance Alliance
Asia-Pacific

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Cover: Philippine ballerina Candice Adea, concluding an international career, which included Hong Kong Ballet, West Australian Ballet and Ballet Philippines, with a performance in the iconic title role of *Amada*, presented by Alice Reyes Dance Philippines, 4-5 April 2025 at the Maybank Performing Arts Theater, Manila. Photo: Erica Marquez-Jacinto.

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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.

A scene from the New Force in Motion Series, presented by Hong Kong Dance Alliance, 3-5 January 2025, at Kwai Tsing Theatre.





President's report

by Anna CY Chan

This report highlights the upcoming developments and achievements of the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific, particularly the first event in Hong Kong held by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), following the election of the new WDAAP board in Singapore in September 2024. The SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival, presented by HKAPA, took place from 18 to 22 June 2025. Co-presented with WDAAP, the festival included the dance conference and DanceTECH research showcase, building on the success of its inaugural edition in 2022, which brought together 640 arts practitioners from 23 countries.

The 2025 theme, 'Cultural Sequences: Asia Pacific Choreographic Discovery,' celebrated vibrant dance expressions that transcend geographic boundaries. The festival addressed contemporary issues such as migration, climate change and digital transformation, providing a platform for choreographers to redefine cultural narratives. It featured four main events, namely a workshop series for engaging hands-on sessions; a dance conference that served as a platform for young scholars and choreographers to present their research and practices, with 56 presenters for scholarly papers and 18 for lecture demonstrations; a DanceTECH research showcase featuring 8 groups exploring the intersection of dance and technology; and Choreographic Projects Open Studio Presentations tailored to enhance participants' practices. Special thanks to the selection panels, including Dr. Maria Salgado, Dr. Melina Scialom, and Anh Ngoc Nguyen from HKAPA, Prof. Urmimala Sarkar, Dr. Stephanie BurrIDGE, Professor Yunyu Wang, Dr. Jeff Hsieh Chieh-hua, and Dr. Lynn Wang of the WDAAP for selecting the papers and proposal submissions and curating the dance conference and DanceTECH research showcase.

We are honoured to welcome keynote speaker Tang Fu Kuen, a renowned festival director, producer, and dramaturg, to speak on the topic of 'Dance To Doubt: The Non-Standard,' along with special guests Aoi Nakamura and Esteban Lecoq, founders

of AΦE from the UK, who shared insights into innovative choreographic work in the digital dance world during the opening session. The closing event featured a co-choreographic sharing led by Tao Theatre with 15 HKAPA dancers and a lecture demonstration by veteran Hong Kong female choreographer Mui Check Yin on her journey of 'Searching for Identify.' The session concluded with remarks from Prof. Zhang Dong, dance scholar and chair of the Central Research Centre in Beijing, offering his responses and observations about the Festival. The WDAAP Annual General Meeting (AGM) coincided with SWEAT, where we discussed significant restructuring plans to establish WDA as a unified global organization. We are pleased to invite representatives from ITI to observe these discussions, aiming to explore future collaborations with ITI and UNESCO.

I would like to express my gratitude for the unwavering commitment and dedication of our executive board members, honorary advisors, and many other members. During our first year term, we have held bi-monthly meetings to ensure effective governance and communication. Key initiatives include updating our website and enhancing our social media presence across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WeChat, completing the registration process for our new board, and planning to restructure our membership payment system, including opening a new bank account in Hong Kong. We are also exploring various strategies to engage with our membership base meaningfully and connect with them in this digital world.

The five-day event was full of possibilities and positive vibes, and I am optimistic about the future of WDAAP as a vibrant and unified organization. Together, we will continue to foster artistic exchange and collaboration across the world, championing innovative dance practices as well as promoting cultural dialogue and understanding.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific. If you have any questions or need further details, please feel free to reach out.



Secretary's report

by Lynn Wang

Since taking office in September 2024, the new Executive Board has steadily advanced a number of initiatives through close collaboration among its members. With well-organized bi-monthly Executive Board meetings, we have successfully promoted the new registration process, which is expected to be implemented soon.


Over the past eight months, members of the Executive Board have worked in close coordination to jointly prepare for the WDAAP Annual General Meeting (AGM), to be held in June 2025 during the SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival in Hong Kong, and we look forward to gathering with representatives from across the region.

In parallel, the Executive Board has continued to strengthen WDAAP's regular operations. While board members have taken on specific roles to sustain and support ongoing programs with consistency and care, the board has also focused on enhancing the alliance's external communication strategies. We have officially established social media platforms and initiated regular content updates, aiming to attract more young dance practitioners and scholars from diverse cultural backgrounds to engage with WDAAP.

We look forward to the upcoming AGM in Hong Kong. We hope this occasion will not only provide a moment to reflect and review but also serve as a platform to envision the future and further deepen our connections within the broader regional dance ecology.

Saltlines for Sealion Women, choreographed by Dr Carol Brown, performed on St Clair Beach, Otepoti Dunedin, in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Photo: Bronwyn Kidd





Shradhanjali, performed by Kolpotoru, choreographed by Md. Hanif, on 19 February 2025 in Bangladesh, as a heartfelt tribute to kathak masters.

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.

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*.

Creation & Presentation report

by I-Fen Tung, co-chair

The post-pandemic era has fundamentally transformed the production and viewing modes of dance and performing arts, and the Asia-Pacific region is no exception. With physical spaces restricted, many artists and creative teams were compelled to shift their practices, actively exploring the possibilities of digital technologies. From the production of dance films and live interactive online performances to the applications of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), dance—an art form centered on the body—is being redefined and reimaged within virtual realms.

This digital transformation has undoubtedly opened new avenues for dance. However, it has also exposed stark global disparities in digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and cultural investment. In some countries, robust digital frameworks and policy support have enabled dance companies to swiftly pivot online, maintaining their connection with audiences. In contrast, resource-limited regions have faced shutdowns and even the threat of disbandment during the pandemic.

Equally worthy of attention is the growing influence of social media and algorithms, which now play a significant role in how dance works are disseminated and made visible. On one hand, these platforms have allowed small-scale creations to transcend geographic boundaries and gain international recognition. On the other hand, they have also contributed to a growing homogenization of style, as creators adapt their artistic language to suit algorithmic preferences—sometimes at the expense of their original creative intent.

In this context, I have observed an unprecedented urgency and desire for cultural exchange across borders. Projects

and collaborations once paused by the pandemic are now resuming with renewed vigor. Dance, a form so deeply rooted in presence and embodied experience, is undergoing a profound transformation through these new modes of interaction and experimentation.

The increased familiarity with digital tools has enabled creators to overcome spatial and temporal limitations, granting access to a wider range of international platforms and opportunities. Skills such as video editing for submissions, building content for online showcases, and long-term social media engagement have become essential for today's dancers and choreographers. Yet amidst this digital surge, we are also prompted to ask: Is the essence of creation itself being reshaped? While technology brings unprecedented freedom and opportunity, it also introduces new pressures and competition. Creators are no longer solely performers or choreographers—they have also become video editors, marketing strategists, and platform managers. As works become integrated into the digital content ecosystem, every publication, every algorithm-friendly headline becomes a calculated move that affects visibility and reception.

In this visually driven, fast-paced era, can we still preserve our sensitivity and commitment to the purity of creation? Can we still carve out moments of reflection and embodiment—between the clicks of 'upload' and 'publish'? This is an era full of opportunities, but equally full of critical questions. As artists, we are being carried by the current of the times, while still striving to find our own rhythm. Perhaps true creativity is not lost in these transitions, but rather forged and refined within them.

Education & Training Network report

by Sarah Knox, co-chair

As co-chair of the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific's Education and Training Network, and as the WDA's representative on the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) executive forum, I am honoured to mark International Arts Education Week 2025. I reflect on the powerful global actions taking place under the leadership of the WAAE with which World Dance Alliance is a key member organisation.

The WAAE presented bold affirmations for the themes of International Arts Education week: "We arts educators, from all areas of arts, will not bow down!" and "Stand up and stand strong!" In a world increasingly marked by conflict, division, climate crisis, and social inequity, this declaration resonates deeply. Through arts education, we champion empathy and understanding. We confront injustice and polarization. And we advocate for peacebuilding, democratic citizenship, and inclusion—values that our global dance community carries forward through every movement, every rhythm, and every shared creative space.

The WAAE created a dynamic program of events throughout the week to spotlight the crucial role of arts education in today's world. The week opened with two open forums on 19 May, fostering vital dialogue about the role of arts education in reconciliation and inclusivity. These forums invited participants to reflect on the recently launched UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education and the WAAE Athens Declaration, born from the 2024 Global Arts Education Summit. Together, these documents offer a renewed vision and framework for how the arts can and must be central to education systems worldwide.

On Tuesday 20 May, WAAE hosted a special webinar, 'From Vision to Practice: UNESCO's Efforts to Implement the Framework for Culture and Arts Education.' The session featured Cristina Cusenza

from UNESCO's Culture and Education Intersectoral Programme, who provided valuable insights into how the new framework is being applied globally. As educators, this session reminded us that implementation is both a policy challenge and a creative opportunity—one that we must meet with collaboration, passion, and innovation.

Culminating the week's events was a final webinar on Saturday 24 May: 'Reflections of the Global Arts Education Summit – Athens 2024: Arts, Nature, Technology, Education – Harmony in Unity.' This session revisited the rich and inspiring exchanges of the Athens Summit, which brought together artists, educators, and researchers from around the world to imagine a future where the arts, the environment, and technology work in concert to shape meaningful education. Developing out of the summit is the WAAE Athens Declaration—a resounding commitment to supporting, advancing, and implementing the UNESCO Framework with creativity and integrity.

Within the World Dance Alliance, we echo these calls to action. Dance is more than technique or performance; it is a form of embodied knowledge, cultural memory, and resistance. In classrooms, communities, and on global stages, our members are using dance to open conversations, celebrate difference, and foster understanding across boundaries.

I look forward to discussing these activities and documents further with guests at the WDA conference at SWEAT Festival in Hong Kong in June.

To stay connected with these efforts and become part of the ongoing global dialogue, I encourage all WDA members to join the WAAE mailing list at www.waae.online.

This week, and every week, we reaffirm:

we will not bow down.



Support & Development Network report

by Sohini Chakraborty, chair

The fifth Biennial Summit on Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) for Change was organized by Kolkata Sanved in collaboration with Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), School of Social Work, and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, and held at Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Park, Lucknow, India, from 6 to 7 March 2025. With the theme, 'The Power of Collective Care and Well-being: Expanding the Horizons of Dance Movement Therapy and Creative Arts Therapy (CAT),' it served as a transformative platform that addressed individual and community well-being while exploring the intersections of collective care and environmental health. By incorporating diverse voices and innovative approaches, the summit paved the way for future collaborations and strategies to strengthen the role of DMT and CAT in building resilient and sustainable communities worldwide.

Focusing on collective health and wellness, the summit expanded the horizons of DMT and CAT, emphasizing the vital connection between individual, community, and planetary health. This approach positioned DMT and CAT as essential tools for nurturing a healthier, more just, and sustainable world.

Building on recommendations from previous summits, this edition also emphasized inclusivity and diversity. Recognizing the need for accessibility, it integrated multiple languages, movement styles, and non-binary vocabulary, ensuring participation for all, including individuals with disabilities. With 200 participants and 60 experts from five countries and 15 states across India, the summit provided opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaborative learning.

The three-day event began with an exclusive pre-summit dialogue, where a select group of practitioners engaged in discussions shaping the field's future direction. The first day, though by invitation only, was a carefully curated gathering of a select group of DMT / CAT practitioners exploring the future direction of DMT and CAT in India. This exclusive space served as an incubator for bold ideas, identifying key areas for collective research and evidence generation to strengthen the field.

The second and third days were structured around interactive sessions designed to deepen understanding and practice:

- 5 innovation labs – Spaces for exploring new frameworks, methodologies, and approaches.
- 10 experiential workshops – Engaging sessions that integrated dance, movement, music, storytelling, drama, and visual arts.
- 5 panel discussions – Thoughtful exchanges on the evolving landscape of DMT and CAT.
- 2 interactive conversations – Opportunities for deeper engagement and reflection.
- 2 collective creative arts experiences – Sessions that brought together movement, narrative, and artistic expression, including a special performance by Askari Naqvi (Soz Khawan) and a traditional Dastangoi storytelling experience from Lucknow.

The summit also brought together individuals with lived experience who have directly engaged with DMT and CAT, as knowledge experts in the field, including survivors, grassroots practitioners, and community leaders. Sign language interpretation and bilingual communication ensured that discussions remained accessible to all participants.

The summit prioritized sustainability by using 100% biodegradable packaging,

choosing an accessible eco-friendly park as venue, and minimizing its carbon footprint by avoiding LED screens, projectors, air conditioning, and digital presentations.

The summit was supported by the Human Capability Foundation, the Mariwala Health Initiative, the Global Fund for Children, GAATW, Breakthrough, and Sanatkada, with event and venue partnerships from Reperthwar Foundation and Lucknow Development Authority.

The fifth biennial summit reaffirmed the critical role of DMT and CAT in advancing personal, social, and ecological well-being through collaborative and interdisciplinary engagement. The insights generated from this gathering will inform future research, practice, and policy, strengthening the integration of creative arts therapies within diverse socio-cultural contexts. Moving forward, Kolkata Sanved will create a network of collaboration that deepens knowledge, develops inclusive methodologies, and establishes sustainable frameworks positioning DMT and CAT as essential instruments of transformative change. The full report will be published in one month, after which we will share it with WDA members. For more information or to explore international collaborations, please contact kolkatasanved@gmail.com.



Participants at the fifth Biennial Summit on Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) for Change, 6-7 March 2025 at Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Park, Lucknow, India.

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, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taipei and Thailand.

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

A performance in the Site-Specific Dance Series of 2025 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival, Taiwan: "Tell me your story", danced by Solar Site Dance Theater, choreographed by Lucy Lin, at Hong Kun-yuan Trading Company, Ikedaya, Liouguei, Kaohsiung City. Photo: Joanna Chen.

Aotearoa New Zealand report

by Sheryl Lowe



For Aotearoa New Zealand the first half of 2025 has seen the celebration of some significant dance sector milestones including several major company anniversaries, the staging of the largest ever traditional Māori performing arts festival, the launch of a new international hip hop dance crew competition and a strong succession of other professional, community, cultural, educational and recreational dance activities spotlighting past, current and next generation dance artists, makers and performers. Following are some highlights from around the country.

Opening in February, Footnote New Zealand Dance launched its 40th anniversary year with a national tour of *Modern God* by Jeremy Beck, a dance theatre work three years in the making and reflective of the company's enduring influence on the contemporary dance scene in New Zealand. The production probes the highly topical issue of global internet culture and the evolving complexity of the virtual world, from its absurdity and speed to its utility and potential dangers.

In February-March New Plymouth hosted Te Matatini o Te Kāhui Maunga 2025, the largest iteration to date of this biennial festival often referred to as the "Olympics" of traditional Māori performing arts. Launched in 1972, the event continues to expand, reaching record participation this year of 55 elite level groups from across New Zealand and Australia. Performed over five days to an audience of approximately 70,000 and over 2.5 million television and online viewers, the festival plays a key role in ensuring that kapa haka remains a thriving and evolving artform. The National Champion title was awarded to Te Kapa Haka o Ngāti Whakaue (Te Arawa region). Their winning performance included

a poignant tribute to Sir Robert (Bom) Gillies - the last surviving member of the 28th Māori Battalion who passed away in 2024, and featured a song inspired by a love letter from World War II. View Te Kapa Haka o Ngāti Whakaue's moving Poi performance [here](#).

The annual Auckland Arts Festival in March included high impact dance experiences both international and homegrown. The spellbinding *Belle - A Performance of Air* by leading New Zealand choreographer/director Malia Johnston and aerial designer/choreographer Jenny Ritchie, harnessed the skills of an all-female cast of dance and aerial artists to deliver "a visual and aural spectacle for the senses". A futurist approach to the inhabitation of aerial apparatus and choreography is explored through high-tech fusion of multimedia, dance, aerial performance, light architecture, set design and live music. View video extract [here](#) and review of earlier Wellington premiere [here](#).

Providing a fitting close to the Festival was acclaimed dance company Black Grace with their action packed *This Is Not A Retrospective* 30th Anniversary dance celebration supported by a suite of notable New Zealand artists and entertainers from a



1. *Modern God*, performed by Footnote New Zealand Dance, choreographed by Jeremy Beck. Photo: Andrew Turner

2. Te Kapa Haka o Ngāti Whakaue performing Poi dance. Photo: Te Matatini Enterprises



range of other genres.

At the Southern end of the country, the annual Wānaka Festival of Colour in April is a flagship arts event for the Southern Lakes region. Dance works this year included BalletCollective Aotearoa's triple bill work *Subtle Dances* with cutting edge choreography by Loughlan Prior, Cameron McMillan and Sarah Knox, in collaboration with contemporary music ensemble NZTrio. See video excerpts [here](#) and an earlier review [here](#).

New Zealand launched and hosted the inaugural World Dance Crew Championship (WDCC) Finals from 13-19 April in Auckland. International dancers were welcomed from across the globe after qualifying in regional championships for The Pacific, Asia, Europe, North and South America. Local and global audiences viewed, in person and via livestream, riveting battles of choreography, athleticism, passion and energy. The Open Super Crew top title was awarded to The Royal Family from New Zealand's Palace Dance Studios, marking a significant comeback for them following a five-year break from competition. View video of one of their winning routines [here](#). The College Dance Crew Championship (GDCC) was staged concurrently offering a unique platform for emerging talent across the country. Workshops also provided opportunities for learning from top



1. *Belle - A Performance of Air*, choreographed by Malia Johnston & Jenny Ritchie. Photo: John Rata

2. 2025 Inaugural World Dance Crew Championships hosted by Aotearoa New Zealand.

international dancers and crews.

A beautifully photogenic site-specific dance performance on St Clair Beach, Otepoti Dunedin was staged by Dr Carol Brown as part of her Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance project based at University of Otago. Presented by local performers, *Saltlines for Sealion Women* represented a response to climate breakdown and rising tides of global violence drawing courage and inspiration from the return of the sealion community. At the turn of the tide the audience witnessed a movement chorus of dynamic interplay with nature. The performance aptly coincided with the April opening of the Wild Dunedin New Zealand Festival of Nature.

Connections to the natural world also featured strongly in other works over the same period such as *100 Winds Taupō Hau Rau* - a collaboration between New Zealand Dance Company, New Zealand String Quartet and Chamber Music New Zealand staged in three cities. Choreographer Moss Patterson drew from the historical and symbolic significance of the winds of Lake Taupō to represent the diverse and often turbulent forces that shape lives, examining how individuals and society can remain centred and hold onto core values during times of significant change.

The environment was once more the central theme, in the Royal New Zealand Ballet's latest return season of *The Firebird* set in a dystopian world. Choreographer Loughlan Prior's modern reimagining of the classic tale seamlessly links the escapism of ballet with wider contemporary issues. Prior's Firebird is both a symbol of the natural world and an elemental deity, combining ecology and mythology to express the urgency of climate breakdown. State of the art projection technology is employed in the production to breathtakingly dramatic effect in conveying the Firebird's embodiment of humanity's hope as well as its fury.

Australia report

by Julie Dyson



This year Ausdance will usher in a new way of managing its federated model (i.e. a national organisation with independent State and Territory member organisations). It will once again enable the voices of those jurisdictions to be heard in a way that hasn't been possible since Ausdance National lost its federal funding in 2016.

With representatives from the States and Territories on the Ausdance National Council, it is hoped that this will help improve communication between the various Ausdance organisations, and raise the profile of issues that impact on the country's diverse dance communities.

This was the intention of the founders who, in 1977, met to consider how best to raise the profile of dance in an environment where the art form was seen to be invisible to governments, decision makers (e.g. in schools and communities) and the media.

The founders had come together in a series of workshops and seminars throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and had

identified a disconnected and siloed dance community whose members were often unaware of what was going on outside their specialised practice.

The 1977 Melbourne conference speakers encouraged those present to create a vision for dance that encapsulated the dance ecosystems that already existed, and called for a national voice for dance that would emphasise the value of dance in school and higher education, in creation, performance and in communities. The vision would value dance in all cultures and at all levels, and decision-makers would be provided with the necessary resources to make dance education the right of every young person.

In the 48 years since, Ausdance has achieved much of this agenda. We facilitated First Nations choreographers, performers and producers to come together over several years, eventually leading to the formation of *BlakDance*, now federally funded; dance is now a compulsory subject in all Australian schools from Foundation to

Year 10; the research into injury prevention and management — Safe Dance — has revolutionised dance teaching and creation, and politicians are beginning to include dance in their arts policy documents (although there is still a long way to go as governments change).

These milestones were achieved by strategically profiling dance through projects such as the Australian Dance Awards and partnerships with organisations such as the National Library of Australia and the Australian Sports Commission.

Although no longer receiving federal funding, Ausdance National — in collaboration with the Ausdance network — continues to provide a profile and a voice for dance across the country, and is currently working on a range of issues nationally:

- Resourcing and implementing dance in *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts in every school*.
- Working with the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) to provide research and advocacy for arts education.
- Maintaining connections in the tertiary dance sector through facilitating meetings of the Tertiary Dance Council of Australia (TDCA).
- Providing international opportunities through membership and representation at World Dance Alliance events.
- Continuing to work with federal Departments of Arts and Education (and their Ministers) on policy development.

- Developing Safe Dance protocols for children that include emotional and physical protection from abuse.

The National Office for Child Safety has proposed a child safety annual reporting framework to encourage and support organisations to implement best practice child safety policies and processes, and to embed cultures that prioritise the best interests of all children.

The national Ausdance network (led by Ausdance Queensland) has made a landmark submission for Dance to the National Office for Child Safety in response to its consultation paper.

The Ausdance network notes that, "It is not possible to overstate the urgency expressed by Ausdance members to comprehensively address the issue of child safety. The overwhelming response of the dance sector — following substantial consultation over more than four years — is that it should be better regulated so the safety of children in organisations is improved."

With the recent return of the Australian Labor Party at the May federal election, it is understood that the Government will now focus on a new version of its cultural policy, *Revive*. This will give Ausdance and its affiliate organisations, including the TDCA and NAAE, opportunities to make strong and informed policy recommendations for Dance, which was largely neglected in version 1.0.

Bangladesh report
by Lubna Marium and Zuairiyah Mouli



Ancient village life and society was known to have an inherently festive atmosphere, with rituals necessarily involving different movements that were initially spontaneous and only meant to express emotions. Our ancient peoples in Bangladesh were rich in the practice of different customs, superstitions and religious rituals that they slowly adapted into the festivals that we see and celebrate today, now part of our cultural heritage.

Since November 2025, WDA-Bangladesh member Shadhona, along with a few other cultural organizations in Bangladesh, has launched a significant initiative to promote and celebrate the country's indigenous festivals, many of which embody the rich cultural heritage of various communities through striking dances and rituals. Among these, two festivals have gained particular

prominence: the Baha (Spring festival) of the Santhal community and Lai Haraoba of the Meitei Manipuris.

The Baha Festival is a vibrant spring festival marked by dances that embody the community's connection with nature and their deep spiritual traditions. The festival, which has been celebrated for generations, features mesmerizing group dances accompanied by traditional Santhal music. The Baha dance is a form of ritual performance that serves as an expression of communal identity, joy, and ecological consciousness. Scholars have highlighted the significance of this festival as a marker of the Santhal community's intangible cultural heritage.

This year, the Lai Haraoba (The Festival of Divine Joy) of the Meitei Manipuris received a considerable boost through a cultural



exchange program facilitated by Shadhona. Renowned mentors, dance, and music teachers from Manipur, India, were invited for two months to train young Bangladeshi Meitei Manipuris. This training included sessions on the sacred Maibi Jagoi (Dance of the Priestess), Khamba-Thoibi Jagoi (Dance of the Legendary Lovers), and other ritual dances of Lai Haraoba.

After an unfortunate situation of civil unrest took place in Bangladesh in August 2024, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has taken many initiatives to create platforms for artists of all sectors. In this series, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy arranged a dance festival in 50 different districts of Bangladesh at the end of January 2025. More than 1,000 dancers participated in this festival, not only from dance companies from Dhaka but regional dance troupes as well. In February 2025, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy also arranged a four-day long Classical Dance and Music Festival. More than 50 classical dance artists performed at this festival.

On 14 February 2025, Shadhona premiered a new dance drama titled *Dilnawaz*, an innovative production blending the Sufi dance of mugham, performed by the Whirling Dervishes of Konya, Turkey, with movements derived from the Indian classical dance form of kathak. Meanwhile, Shadhona's sister organization, Kolpotoru, under the guidance of Mohammed Hanif, presented *Shradhanjali*, on 19 February 2025, as a heartfelt tribute to kathak masters. This production featured impeccable performances by the students of Kolpotoru's kathak class, who showcased

their skills through choreographed sequences that paid homage to the legacy of kathak gurus.

On the occasion of International Dance Day, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organized a two-day event to celebrate at the National Theatre, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. The event started with a grand rally with the participation of dance artists and officials of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. 50 reputed dance troupes performed in this event. Bangladesh Nrittoshilpi Songstha, Bangladesh Nrittoshilpi Federation and Nrittanchal also held different events to celebrate International Dance Day.

Bangladeshi dance artist Anandita Khan's project *Neel Akash* has been selected as a 2024/25 recipient of the Connections Through Culture grant. It is a prestigious initiative supported by the British Council. This project is a collaboration between Anandita and Sampad Arts South Asian Arts & Heritage (UK).

These initiatives taken by the organizations are helping to create a culture-friendly environment, enhance community engagement and foster cross-cultural exchanges. The more platforms for performances are created, the more it inspires the next generation of dancers to learn and create dance.

1. Premiere show of Shadhona's production *Dilnawaz*.
2. Team Anshi performing the work *Refugee*, choreographed by Anandita Khan. Photo: Asif Musaddeque

1. The Baha Festival, featuring dancers from the indigenous Santhal community of Bangladesh.
2. 'Kaya Ashrom' performing at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, choreographed by Amit Chowdhury. Photo: Asif Musaddeque.



Hong Kong report

by Allen Lam & dance journal/hk



Recent months have seen a number of important moments for the Hong Kong performing arts industry.

To begin with, 2024 marked the 40th anniversary of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), an institution which has nurtured some of Hong Kong's most prominent performing arts talents. Over the years, the academy has provided high quality education, guided by a vision to nurture young artists and enable them to thrive in various disciplines. To celebrate this anniversary, HKAPA held a series of events honouring its legacy and contributions to the

arts.

These celebratory events included an Honorary Awards Ceremony last December, at which the Dance Department awarded an Honorary Fellowship to world famous choreographer Akram Khan. This honour not only recognised Khan's outstanding contributions to the world of dance but his presence in Hong Kong also provided HKAPA students with a valuable opportunity to engage with him directly. He shared insights into his creative process and experiences as a dancer and choreographer, offering students an in-depth perspective on navigating themes of identity and the evolving relationship between artists and dance in current times.

In March 2025, Professor Anna CY Chan was appointed as the new Director of HKAPA with her tenure starting from 18 April. Professor Chan is a leader equipped with a wealth of artistic achievement, exceptional management skills and a global network of connections. With more than 35 years of experience, she has made major contributions to promoting performing arts and arts education both locally and internationally. From 2014 to 2018, she served as Head of Dance at the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and from 2006 to 2011 she was Chairperson of Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA). She has already had a profound impact on the growth of Hong Kong's dance industry and we look forward to seeing her leadership at HKAPA bring dance in Hong Kong to even greater heights.



1. Choreographer Akram Khan at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts where he received an Honorary Fellowship in December 2024.
2. Professor Anna CY Chan has been appointed as the new Director of HKAPA starting from 18 April 2025.



This year the World Dance Alliance (WDA) also celebrates a memorable milestone with its 35th anniversary. There is a special connection between WDA and HKAPA. Both organizations were guided early on by the late Carl Wolz, whose contributions to dance as performer, choreographer and educator won him the utmost respect. Wolz was one of the international advisers for the creation of HKAPA and served as the academy's first Dean of Dance. His dedication to bringing together dance artists from East and West was instrumental in the establishment of WDA. This year the theme of the Hong Kong Dance Awards presented by HKDA is "Legacy and Heritage" and the Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to honour the memory of Carl Wolz and recognize his contributions to the development of dance in Hong Kong. The awards ceremony which takes place on 19 May will serve as a tribute to his vision and a reminder of the impact of his work.

In other news of HKDA, we are pleased to welcome Ian Leung as our Senior Programme and Administration Manager. With 15 years of experience in the arts and cultural sector, Ian is a seasoned leader, producer, and educator. His innovative work spans performing arts, public art initiatives, and audience development. At HKDA, he will focus on the strategic alignment of core programmes, expanding interdisciplinary collaborations, and

strengthening the Alliance's role as a key hub for local and international partnerships.

The 2024/2025 edition of the New Force In Motion Series was a resounding success, with three talented choreographers presenting their works to enthusiastic audiences. The growth of this platform marks its importance in nurturing emerging choreographers in Hong Kong.

Upcoming events include the SWEAT 2025 organized in partnership with HKAPA and WDA, which will showcase the global diversity of contemporary dance.

Lastly, we are thrilled to share the news that Hong Kong choreographer Chloe Wong's work, *Maybe Tomorrow*, has been selected to be presented at World Stage Design 2025 - Scenofest (Performances) in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, this October. Wong's environmental dance theatre work responds to the post-pandemic era which explores themes of global reset. We look forward to seeing more Hong Kong artists thrive both locally and internationally.



1. Carl Wolz and the graduating class of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 1988.
2. Chloe Wong's work *Maybe Tomorrow* which will be presented at World Stage Design 2025 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, in October 2025.

India report

by Urmimala
Sarkar

Greetings, everyone. I am writing this report from a space which has gone through a lot of recent turmoil. India has unfortunately experienced a series of internal and external problems. The world seems unstable as well with war, genocide, and terrorism-related crises. At such a time, dance is something that has always been taken as unnecessary, and funding – already decreasing over the years – becomes less and less. Under these circumstances, all dancers in India have been finding it very difficult to get funding, get audiences and get patronage. Of course, the situation is different for different dance forms. All of India's classical dances, for which there is comparatively stable funding from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, are more secure than the regional, folk, contemporary/creative and experimental dances.

The members and friends of Dance Alliance India have been very actively engaging with auto-ethnographic as well as narrative-based anti-war and progressive dance dialogues for educational purposes and for generating a discourse around peace, social justice and awareness.

One of the very important persons who stands out among the younger generation of dance artists who engages constantly with the everyday realities of India is Surjit Nongmeikapam from the north-eastern border state of India named Manipur. His choreographies/interartistic creations involve audio-visual projections, films, dance theatre and extremely challenging body movements. His themes are often auto-ethnographic, and include critical commentaries on ongoing ethnic violence in his own state and other places, environmental destruction, and many more issues, usually bringing in solo, collaborative, community narratives, using his own signature style that is influenced by his

constant search for an embodied practice where “less is more”. He is trained in many Indian styles of dance and martial arts. He has travelled extensively internationally and was in Malaysia recently as a choreographer for ASK Dance Company, Kuala Lumpur. His latest work is *Fountain*, an embodied installation where he remains bound in ropes and suspended – forcing the audience to re-orient themselves and notice the sight, soundscape and video installation with deeper engagement. His programme note for a work-in-progress dance sharing at Oddbird Theatre in Delhi, mentions:

“.... a man from Manipur hovered in mid-air. Suspended in time and space, he invited us into a world that feels both deeply personal and strangely universal. *Fountain* wasn't just about defying gravity - it was about memory, survival, and quiet rebellion. With sound and movement, it created a space for reflection, for stories, for what's left unsaid.” (Oddbird, 5th April, 2025)

Such exceptional works of Surjit and other talented dance and movement artists are mostly being funded through foreign, national or private collaborative grants – and those are very few. It is strange that just as we notice the funding crunch for performance practice, Dance Studies has begun emerging as an academic subject that now is taught in many new Arts and Humanities departments in India. I hope that the dance, the dancers and the dance studies will survive these dystopian times, and that dance practice and teaching will become a viable profession once again.

The following special report shares an experience about sustainability in artistic practice, by dancer-choreographer Suanya Burman, from the Indian diaspora in the US.



Surjit Nongmeikapam
performing his work
Fountain. Photo: Urmimala
Sarkar

Special report

by Sukanya Burman



Community dancers at Sukanya Burman Dance preparing for their first Kathak recital.

What Does Sustainability Really Mean for Small Artist-Led Organizations, Especially in Rural America?

Like many in the nonprofit world, we're asked to do a lot with very little. I have deep respect for my peers across sectors who are navigating complex community needs with integrity and care. We are all, in different ways, working to fill gaps that should not exist, gaps left by disinvestment, erasure, and systemic inequity.

Philanthropy says art is a common good, something that should nourish all of us. But in practice, we're still asked to prove our worth in ways that align with commercial logic: audience growth, measurable outcomes, marketability. The pressure to scale, perform, and produce can slowly chip away at the deeper purpose of the work.

And increasingly, funders want to know: "Are you fundraising?" "Do you have corporate sponsorships?" "How are you making your work profitable?" These questions are rooted in a capitalist framework that misunderstands the nature of many small, artist-led organizations, especially those working outside of urban centers, or within culturally specific or experimental practices. We are not startups. We are not building products. Our work often defies commodification, and yet we are constantly asked to bend it into something marketable, fundable, saleable.

In rural communities, the landscape is even more complex. Corporate sponsors are few and far between. Philanthropic infrastructure is limited. Many donors and businesses have never been exposed to our art forms before, and the idea of dance as a serious, professional, or transformative pursuit can feel unfamiliar. So we're not just fundraising,

we're also educating, translating, justifying. Again and again. Dance, especially in rural communities, is still struggling to be seen as essential. Too often, "arts" is equated with "arts education for kids." And while that work matters deeply, it shouldn't be the ceiling of our imagination. What about adults who want to heal through movement? What about immigrant artists preserving cultural memory through the body? What about dance that challenges, questions, and unsettles?

Would we have asked Michelangelo to spend most of his time teaching kids how to paint apples? Would we have wanted Martha Graham to only choreograph recitals for after-school programs? Would Van Gogh have ever picked up a brush if every grant application required proof of community outreach?

As an artist and nonprofit leader, I often find myself walking a tightrope, between being of service to my community and staying true to my artistic vision. Between building long-term cultural infrastructure and filling out short-term funding reports. Between creating work that is authentic, complex, and necessary, and having to answer, again, how it will "reach new audiences" or "drive revenue."

I know I'm not alone in this. Many of us, especially BIPOC, queer, rural, disabled, and immigrant artists, are holding both the dreams and the burdens of change. We are building new ecosystems from the ground up, often without safety nets. We are creating spaces where none existed before, often out of necessity,



urgency, and deep love for our practices. Mentorship is also a vital part of this work, something that rarely fits neatly into grant deliverables. Small artist-led organizations are often where younger or emerging artists and administrators receive their first real opportunities, where cultural knowledge is shared and nurtured, where leadership is modeled in ways that are relational and rooted. But mentorship requires time. It requires resources. It requires a slower pace than the nonprofit treadmill often allows.

And that's why multi-year support matters. Real sustainability means we are not reinventing ourselves every fiscal year to fit the contours of shifting guidelines. It means we can plan, build, revise, and return. It means relationships, not just with funders, but with our communities, collaborators, and co-dreamers, can deepen and grow.

So here's what I hope for:

- That funders and supporters see beyond metrics.
- That dance is valued not just as entertainment, but as cultural infrastructure, especially now, as national arts funding is slashed and creative expression is increasingly politicized.
- That mentorship and long-term relationship-building are honored as critical, not optional.
- That community engagement is not used as a catch-all expectation, but resourced meaningfully and respectfully.
- That we make space for risk, experimentation, and rest, not just output.



In this current political moment, where entire arts programs are being dismantled, where censorship is rising, and where the voices of BIPOC artists are still fighting to be heard, we need more than survival tactics. We don't need more extraction in the name of equity. We need care, trust, and long-term commitment.

To all the small nonprofits out there doing the slow, deep work, thank you. To my fellow artist-organizers, keep going. Your work is building something bigger than what the grant cycle can measure.

About the Author

Sukanya Burman is a dancer, choreographer, and arts activist based in Jamestown, NY, originally from Kolkata, India. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Sukanya Burman Dance and the curator of the Jamestown Dance Festival, a growing platform that brings diverse global artists together in a rural setting. Her work blends classical Indian and contemporary movement forms to explore stories that speak to the complexities of our current times. A member of the New York State DanceForce, Sukanya collaborates with organizations locally and internationally to expand access to the arts, particularly in underrepresented communities. Her choreography and cultural work have been supported by NYSCA and she continues to mentor emerging artists while advocating for sustainable development of dance practices.

Small non-profit arts organisations are being asked to fulfil multiple social roles:

1. Company dancers at Sukanya Burman Dance participating in World Refugee Day celebrations hosted by New Neighbors Coalition.
2. Community outreach sessions with Chautauqua Boys and Girls Club.
3. Sukanya Burman, as Artistic Director and curator of Jamestown Dance Festival, talking to the host of Erie News Now about the next edition of the festival.
4. Sukanya leading a workshop in the physicality of emotions, with Jamestown High School's 'Justice for All' class.

Indonesia
report

by Sulistiani and
Dina Triastuti



Gladhen as Classical Dance Training in the Javanese Palace

Two of the various kingdoms that still exist on the island of Java are the Kraton Yogyakarta and the Pura Mangkunegaran. They are two of four original kingdoms that were part of the earlier Mataram Islamic Kingdom. As symbols of Javanese culture, both share similarities in their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage through dance.

These two kingdoms have a dance learning system known as *gladhen*. In Javanese this term can be interpreted as 'practicing'. This training is open to the public who have learned basic Javanese dance techniques.

Not all Javanese classical dances are the same. There are various different techniques that are considered to represent certain royal symbols, such as hand positions, sitting positions, and body positions when dancing. However, the dances from the Pura Mangkunegaran and the Kraton Yogyakarta are considered to have many similarities.

Although both use the term *gladhen*, there are fundamental differences in *gladhen* activities at the Yogyakarta Palace and the Mangkunegaran Palace. *Gladhen* activities at the Kraton Yogyakarta are routinely held every Sunday morning at Bangsal Ksatriyan. The participants are some of the courtiers of the Kraton Yogyakarta and the general public who already have basic skills in classical female dance in the Yogyakarta style. Participants are required to dress as courtiers, which for females means black kebaya, Yogyakarta batik sarong cloth, complete with a *sanggul tekuk* (hairdo) and

suweng (earrings).

At the Pura Mangkunegaran, *gladhen beksan* is one of a series of workshops carried out for the Eid holiday. There is no obligation for participants to have basic dance skills; in fact, many of the participants have never learned classical Javanese dance. There are also no special requirements for clothing because batik cloth, scarves, and other equipment are prepared by the event committee for use by fee-paying participants. If there are participants who want to master the Mangkunegaran style of Javanese dance further, the trainers offer regular practice every Thursday afternoon.

These dance training efforts carried out by the Kraton Yogyakarta and the Pura Mangkunegaran through the *gladhen* tradition are proof that classical Javanese dance today is an inclusive practice, while continuing to preserve the refined standards of royal classical dance in Java.

A glimpse of PaR in Indonesia

On 23 April 2025, Mastaryo (Society of Dance Yogyakarta), in collaboration with the World Dance Alliance Indonesia Chapter, held a discussion at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta entitled 'Revealing Dancer Practice or Practice as Research (PaR)'. This discussion presented two choreographers: Dani S. Budiman who has a background in Ebeg traditional dance which is very popular in Cilacap, Central Java, and Siska Aprisia, with a background in Pariaman dance from West Sumatra. The presence of Dr. Bambang Pudjasworo, a lecturer and dance academic, was an important



marker regarding the discussion of PaR and was also able to bridge the gap between practitioners and academics.

At the beginning of the discussion, Dr. Bambang conveyed that Practice as Research is different from Practice Based Research. PaR in Indonesia has not been widely used as a method. Dr. Bambang even asked a question: are there any choreographers who have used this method? Generally, choreographers use an artistic, aesthetic approach and are not yet familiar with seeing their own practice as a working research method.

Other recent key activities in dance in Indonesia include the celebrations of World Dance Day which took place in the city of Solo on 29 April 2025. In addition to the

24-hour dance activity there was a coaching clinic session on writing performing arts, guided by Sal Murgiyanto and Dr. Fawarti Gendra Nata Utami. The coaching clinic took place in Indonesia Institute of Arts Surakarta, with participation by dance academics, choreographers, independent artists and published writers.

Finally, we close with some exciting news for the Indonesian dance world. Throughout June and July 2025, Indonesian choreographers Otniel Tasman, Leu Wijie, Ayu Permata, Wayan Sumahardika and other artists from Lampung, Bali, Makassar, and Bandung will stage their latest works, with support by Kelola Foundation. This is part of an art creation grant which is also supported by the Ministry of Culture of Indonesia.



Gladhen conducted in Pura Mangkunegaran, Kota Surakarta. Photo: Sulistiani.

1. Participants of the coaching clinic on writing performing arts, on 29 April 2025, at Indonesian Institute of Arts Surakarta. Photo: Maharani.
2. Gladhen conducted in the Pura Mangkunegaran, Kota Surakarta. Photo: Sulistiani.

Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas



Although the beginning of the year was quiet, due to an early Chinese New Year and the rapid onset of Ramadhan and Eid, the dance scene in Malaysia began to pick up from April onwards.

MyDance Alliance hosted its first Dancebox event on 12 April, produced by committee member Chai Vivan, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre. It enjoyed another sold out show, with a program of seven stellar works, acclaimed as Dancebox's most solid line-up yet. It featured choreography by Fione Chia, an experienced dance teacher who is a Dancebox stalwart, as well as emerging choreographers Winnie Xuan, Nurul Sofia, Lina Nabilah, Haizam Azman, and Alexter Tingang Anickson. Shu-May Dance Company from Penang presented a duet, and trance practitioner Kien Faye brought out his whip!

As always, Dancebox is an opportunity for emerging production workers to hone their craft behind the scenes, as well as a platform for choreographers and dancers. In this edition, committee member Foo Chiwei served as stage manager, in preparation for taking up the reins as producer for the next edition in September 2025.

Training of dancers is also a key mission for MyDance Alliance. Our president JS Wong coordinated a call for applicants for the T.H.E. Mid-Year Intensive in Singapore, which will take place from 18 to 21 June 2025. We were delighted to select Winnie Xuan, now a veteran of several editions of Dancebox and Dancing in Place, to participate in this intensive training

opportunity with Company 605 from Vancouver, thanks to sponsorship by T.H.E. Dance Company, Singapore.

MyDance Alliance has another exciting collaboration this year with a series of performances at Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival. The biennial arts festival, which used to take place at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, will now appear in three separate editions at different residential property hubs developed by corporate giant Sime Darby Property. MyDance Alliance vice-president Rithaudin Abdul Kadir will be helming a Dancing in Place program at each venue, from June until August. He has selected a broad collection of local dancers and dance companies to explore the different sites, which range from galleries to lakeside parks and shopping areas.

Rithaudin will be producing another Dancing in Place at 1 Utama Shopping Centre, with the support of our ongoing partnership with Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre (PJPAC). This is the fourth



year of this site-specific collaboration in Malaysia's largest shopping mall, and will feature 8 works by 10 choreographers on 21 and 22 June.

PJPAC will also host our next Annual General Meeting for MyDance Alliance on Sunday 31 August. The AGM is an opportunity for members to renew their membership, catch up with all the MyDance activities, approve the accounts, vote for the volunteer committee for the next two years, and discuss vital topics of interest.

Other key activities in the local dance scene recently include Gelombang Baru, the student choreography showcase of the Faculty of Dance of the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA). This year, the show included invited guests: student choreography from the other main university dance departments of Universiti Malaya, Sultan Idris Education University, and UiTM. The event in the Experimental Theatre at ASWARA was an energetic and diverse showcase of student work, with a spirit of supportive camaraderie.

An interesting international collaboration took place at the interdisciplinary arts collective Five Arts Centre in April, produced

by June Tan and Hoe Hui Ting. Straddle #2025 invited three solo dance artists from Canada – Dana Michel, Kim-Sanh Châu and Louise Michel Jackson – to perform in the FAC black box studio at GMBB shopping centre in Kuala Lumpur. They were joined by Malaysian dancers January Low, who presented a performative insight into her practice of classical Odissi, and Lee Ren Xin, who gave an open studio sharing which ended up taking over the whole shopping centre atrium. It was a valuable opportunity to see cutting-edge solo dance works by women choreographers from very different cultural backgrounds, in an intimate environment that encouraged safe sharing and making personal connections.

Festival Tari Malaysia, the national festival for traditional dance, also took place in April. Following the state heats from August to October last year, the Festival concluded with 8 groups going head to head at the Malaysian Tourism Centre. The three winning teams hailed from the states of Sabah, Kelantan and Kuala Lumpur, showing that traditional dance talent and dedication is well spread across the country.

1. Lee Ren Xin's open studio sharing 'My Body is a Kampung' in Straddle #2025 at Five Arts Centre, GMBB Mall, Kuala Lumpur.
Photo, courtesy of Five Arts Centre, by Meshalini Muniandy.

2. Dancer Winnie Xuan, selected for the T.H.E. Mid-Year Intensive in Singapore, sponsored by T.H.E. Dance Company.
Photo: Goh Bong Hiang.

3. Kim-Sanh Châu from Montreal, Canada, performing her solo work *Bleu Neon* in Straddle #2025 at Five Arts Centre, GMBB Mall, Kuala Lumpur.
Photo, courtesy of Five Arts Centre, by Meshalini Muniandy.

Philippines report

by Angela Baguilat



After a vibrant and productive 2024 for Philippine dance, 2025 began on a high note as professional, national, and independent dance groups took part in the annual Pasinaya festival of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) in early February. With the CCP undergoing renovations, Pasinaya was held in multiple venues across Metro Manila and the cities of Batangas, Tagum, Himamaylan, Iloilo, and Sorsogon. The festival also marked the beginning of National Arts Month.

Ballet Philippines closed its 55th season with the premiere of *Ang Panaginip* (The Dream), a new ballet telling the story of princesses who escape the constraints of royalty to reclaim their destinies. Choreographed by artistic director Mikhail Martinyuk, with libretto by Maritess “Mawi” Fojas De Ocampo, music by Glenn Aquias, and costumes by Jor-el Espina, the production was staged at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater from 28 February to 2 March 2025.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Ballet Manila opened its milestone season with *The Pearl Gala* on 7 to 8 March 2025 at the Aliw Theater. The program featured three works: *Paquita*, highlighting the company's Vaganova roots and referencing their 1995 debut; *Bloom*, a contemporary work by Annabelle Lopez-Ochoa that has

toured internationally; and *Pearls*, a new work by artistic director Lisa Macuja-Elizalde and British choreographer Martin Lawrance, inspired by Balanchine's *Jewels* and reflecting the company's journey from its beginnings toward its future. Their second major offering for the year was the full-length *Swan Lake* in June, featuring guest artists from San Francisco Ballet, Nathaniel Remez, who partnered local ballerina Abigail Oliveira, and Esteban Hernandez and Katherine Barkman, who is a Ballet Manila alumna.

Philippine Ballet Theatre (PBT) began its season with *The Merry Widow* on 5 to 6 April at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater. Inspired by Franz Lehár's operetta, the ballet was choreographed by Artistic Director Ronilo Jaynario. The performance paid tribute to PBT's visionary founders, who shaped the company into a national institution known for staging ballets that reflect Philippine themes and stories. Their mission has earned PBT recognition as the National Performing Arts Company for Ballet and Contemporary Dance.

Coinciding with PBT's season opener, Alice Reyes Dance Philippines (ARDP) staged *Pagdiriwang: Sayaw Alay sa Sining* on 4 to 5 April at the Maybank Performing Arts Theater, featuring works by Norman Walker, Denisa Reyes, Carlo Pacis, Kun-



Yang Lin and a premiere, *C'est La Vie*, by Augustus “Bam” Damian III. Alice Reyes' iconic *Amada* was performed by renowned ballerina Candice Adea, marking her final bow after a celebrated international career with Ballet Philippines, Hong Kong Ballet, and West Australian Ballet.

A major highlight of the first half of the year was the five-day celebration of International Dance Day from 23 to 27 April 2025, also held at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater. The event brought together a wide spectrum of dance communities from Metro Manila and various provinces with

participation of groups from General Santos City, Bacolod City, Province of Rizal as well as international guests from the USA and Hong Kong. It opened with a performance by guest artists from Company Wayne McGregor, followed by a Folk Dance Gala on the 24th, a Street Dance Gala on the 25th, a Ballet Gala on the 26th, and a Contemporary Dance Gala on the 27th. This landmark gathering united professional, student, and university dance groups on one stage—showcasing the diversity of Philippine dance while fostering collaboration across styles, generations, and regions.

Philippine Ballet Theatre's *The Merry Widow*, 5-6 April 2025, at the Samsung Performing Arts Centre. Photo: Erica Marquez-Jacinto.



1. UP Dance Company in the International Dance Day Contemporary Dance Gala on 27 April 2025 at the Samsung Performing Arts Theatre. Photo: Jaypee Maristaza.

2. Philippine Ballet Theater Founders being honored during the production of *The Merry Widow*. Photo: Emmanuel Flavier.

Singapore report

by Fairul Zahid & Li Ruimin



ROOTS/ROUTES

The LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore (UAS), School of Diploma in Dance students' graduation performance, *Roots/Routes*, took place on 4-5 April 2025, at the Singapore Airlines Theatre. This captivating production invited audiences to reflect on their journey, exploring the intersection of past experiences and future aspirations. Through an intensive rehearsal process, the performers and choreographers drew upon their pasts to inform their creative paths. The showcase featured a diverse range of works, each offering a unique perspective.

Chiew Peishan's "Let the hands have heart" showcased a redevelopment of a 2023 duet, expanded for the graduating cohort, featuring innovative use of repurposed props. This piece demonstrated Chiew's creativity and attention to detail, transforming everyday objects into meaningful elements. The redevelopment added depth and complexity to the choreography, highlighting the dancers' ability to convey emotion and narrative through movement.

Shahrin Johry and Shahizman Sulaiman's "SHAKHAH" presented a compelling reinterpretation of bharatanatyam and street dance, blending traditional and contemporary elements in a dynamic fusion that added depth and complexity to the choreography, highlighting the dancers' versatility and artistry. This innovative piece showcased the duo's creativity and technical skill, pushing the boundaries of dance.

Fairul Zahid's work in "KECOMBRANG"

revisited memories to explore human connection and community, injecting humour and verve into the performance. This work showcased Fairul's ability to craft engaging narratives that resonate with audiences. Through "KECOMBRANG," Fairul explored the intersection of tradition into contemporary perspective, creating a unique blend of styles that added diversity and interest to the performance. By bridging cultural heritage and modern expression, this choreography highlighted the richness of dance as a universal language. "KECOMBRANG" was a testament to Fairul's creativity and artistry, showcasing his contribution to the vibrant landscape of Singaporean dance. Meanwhile, graduating student Anna Makukhina's piece, "Frame Up," probed the concept of rebirth, showcasing her technical skill and artistic expression.

Roots/Routes served as a testament to the students' growth, creativity, and dedication, underscoring the Diploma in Dance programme's commitment to nurturing talented artists. As a proud member of World



Roots/Routes, performed by students of the School of Diploma in Dance, LASALLE College of the Arts, on 4-5 April 2025, at the Singapore Airlines Theatre.

1. 'SHAKHAH', choreographed by Shahrin Johry & Shahizman Sulaiman.

Photo: Eiffel Lee.

2. 'Let the hands have heart', choreographed by Chiew Peishan.

Photo: Eiffel Lee.



Dance Alliance, LASALLE's commitment to fostering young talent is evident. The success of *Roots/Routes* will undoubtedly shape the dance landscape, and it's a pleasure to support the growth of young artists in Singapore.

Nodal Point

On 25-26 April 2025, Under The Bridge Collective (UTB) marked a significant milestone with its inaugural evening of contemporary dance performance, *Nodal Point*, at Goodman Arts Centre. This showcase highlighted the collective's growth and dedication to pushing the boundaries of dance, bringing together diverse choreographers and styles, blending the intricate movements of contemporary dance with the high-energy beats of street dance. This production was made possible through the support of the National Arts Council Singapore and Arts Fund.

Nodal Point brought together seven talented choreographers: Muhammad Hirzi, Shahizman Sulaiman, Shruthi Nair, Terrence Kwan/Zoey Ching, Sufri Juwahir, Gianti Giadi



(Gigi), and Shahrin Johry. This diverse group of artists not only showcased their work with UTB but also collaborated with guest groups Bonsai from Singapore and Gigi Art of Dance from Indonesia, highlighting the collective's ability to bring together artists from different backgrounds and styles, and showcasing the versatility and creativity of UTB's dancers.

As a testament to its growing influence, UTB has been a part of World Dance Alliance Singapore (WDAS) since 2022. This year, guest artist Gianti Giadi (Gigi) was elected as Vice President of WDAS, further solidifying UTB's connections within the global dance community. *Nodal Point* was more than just a showcase of technicality and artistic expression; it was a celebration of UTB's journey and passion for dance. Since its humble beginnings 'under the bridge', UTB has grown into a prominent force in Singapore's dance scene, and this production marked a new chapter in its history.

Through *Nodal Point*, UTB demonstrated its commitment to interdisciplinary approaches, innovative works, and artistic excellence. The collective's dedication to pushing the boundaries of dance was evident in every aspect of the production, from the choreography to the set design. As UTB continues to contribute to Singapore's vibrant arts landscape, its impact will undoubtedly be felt for years to come. With its innovative approach to dance and commitment to artistic excellence, UTB is poised to remain a leading force in the Singaporean dance scene.

Nodal Point, on 25-26 April 2025, by Under the Bridge Collective, at Goodman Arts Centre.

1. 'Implication of Values' by Shahizman Sulaiman. Photo: Jingkai.

2. ALIH Series by Gianti Giadi (Gigi). Photo: Jingkai.

Tso's Dance Association (Taiwan) report

by Su-Ling Chou



The spring is a good time for dance practitioners to present their works, especially the senior dancers from universities and high schools in Taiwan. After three or four years' training, these young choreographers are honored to present their work in theaters throughout the island, having challenged themselves and showed innovative ideas with various styles.

The Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Kaohsiung City Government continued to host the 2025 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival (KSAF) this year. The Site-Specific Dance Series was held in March and April. Three dance companies were selected from an open-call process — Blooming Grass Cooperative, Hsi Dance Company and Wei Dance Company — while Solar Site Dance Theatre and Autumn Cedar Sóo-Tsāi were specially invited to join.

This year, the Bureau wanted to cultivate dance in the designated countryside and focused on connecting the local

communities to promote the art. The dance companies selected five historic sites which were newly restored for the performances.

The first performance, 'Closest to the Sky, They Toil' was by Autumn Cedar Sóo-Tsāi on 22 and 23 March 2025. The choreographer, Ting-

syu Lin chose the Baosing Temple of Dashu District, which was a place where he had spent his childhood. The work was about the story of glazed tile workers, which was the occupation of Ting-syu's father. Glazed tiles are used on the roofs of temples for showing their splendid and gorgeous beauty like palaces. Tile laborers need to work on the roof the whole day, either under scorching sunlight or in bitter wind and rain. Moreover, laborers have to overcome the fear of heights and the "height" is also a compulsion for survival in the job. From Ting-syu's view, dancers are also laborers who use their bodies intensively. Through this dance, Ting-syu recorded his father's story. His choreography reflected social phenomena and issues that are rarely given attention in the society. The dancers used their bodies to describe the colors and smells of this story.

On the following weekend, Hsi Dance and Wei Dance gave the next presentations. Hsi Dance chose the Taiwan Pineapple



Performances in the Site-Specific Dance Series of 2025 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival.

1. 'Closest to the Sky, They Toil', performed by Autumn Cedar Sóo-Tsāi, choreographed by Ting-syu Lin, at Baosing Temple of Dashu District, Kaohsiung City. Photo: Zen-hau Liu.
2. 'The Golden Journey', danced by Hsi Dance Company, choreographed by Jessie Chiang, at Taiwan Pineapple Museum, Dashu, Kaohsiung City. Photo: Zen-hau Liu.



Museum in the Dashu District to present the work 'The Golden Journey.' Dashu District is famous for growing pineapples and the pineapple canning industry was prosperous in this area during the Japanese colonial period; however, the industry has since declined. Factories were abandoned; only one remains, recently restored to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Choreographer Jessie Chiang, who is also the artistic director of Hsi Dance, designed the piece with storytelling, singing, and dancing to embody the golden era of the factory, preserving memories for new generations to experience.

Meanwhile, Wei Dance selected the platform of Takao Railway Museum in the downtown area to show 'Way Takao.' *Takao* is the old name of Kaohsiung, and the Takao Railway, the first train station in Kaohsiung



was an important network in promoting Kaohsiung's economy.

Choreographer Cheng-wei Huang wanted the audience to see the passage of time and culture of the railway in the dance, where performers were jumping, leaping, tumbling and rolling in the carriage of a slowly moving train, accompanied by the train whistling and the rattling of the carriage on the

tracks. It signified that Kaohsiung keeps moving forward.

The final two performances were 'Namu Police Bodhisattva! Travelling through the Time' by Blooming Grass Cooperative and 'Tell Me Your Story' by Solar Site Dance Theatre. The former chose the former Dinglinzhibian police station in Lingyuan District as the performance site to symbolize absolute authority, as the piece was set during the Japanese colonial period. The choreographer tried to explore the gaps between contemporary and historical contexts while exploring the architecture of the station. In contrast, 'Tell Me Your Story' showed joyful stories of the youth. Set at the distant historic sites of Hong Kun-yuan Trading Company and Ikedaya in Liugui District at the foot of Da Wu Mountain, the dance invited local and urban high school students to dance together with two company dancers. Choreographer Lucy Lin chose to break free from the boundaries of location, identity, and age, and exchange life experiences and childhood memories by way of dancing together.

We are happy to see the arts being emphasized by the government in spreading it throughout the island and not just in the metropolitan city of Taipei. The Ministry of Culture, Taiwan, continued to select performing groups to join Taiwan Season-2025 Edinburgh Fringe and 2025 Festival d'Avignon OFF. It is hoped that the arts development can be extended beyond the current population. More and more young dance artists are eager to present their creativity with various styles as well as individual characteristics.

Performances in the Site-Specific Dance Series of 2025 Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival.

1. 'Namu Police Bodhisattva! Travelling through the time' danced by Blooming-Grass Cooperative, choreographed by Zhi-lei Chen, at Former Dinglinzhibian Police Station, Lingyuan District, Kaohsiung City. Photo: Zen-hau Liu.
2. 'Way Takao' danced by Wei Dance Company, choreographed by Chen-wei Huang, on the platform of Takao Railway Museum/ Hamasen Railway Cultural Park, Gusan District, Kaohsiung City. Photo: Joanna Chen.

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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