

# Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





A backstage moment during the cultural program directed by Amit Chowdhury, on 17 September 2025, at Kaya Ashram, Bangladesh.



World Dance Alliance  
Asia-Pacific

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Cover: Chao Tingting (Taipei) performing KINGDOM at the DanceTECH Research Showcase: 'Phygital Movement': Fusing Technology and Dance, part of SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival 2025. Dance & Technology Lab, TML Artist Block, 16 June 2025. Photo provided by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

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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.

Mofassal Alif (Bangladesh) performing at New York City's Battery Dance Festival 2025; see Bangladesh report. Photo: Claudio Rodriguez.







## President's report

by Anna CY Chan

As we reflect on our recent activities and achievements, it is evident that the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific (WDAAP) has made significant strides in enhancing global dance education, encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations, and enriching the cultural landscape of the Asia-Pacific region. My report highlights key projects, celebrates our successes, and lays the foundation for future initiatives.

### Project Highlights

#### 1. SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival and World Dance Alliance Conference

In June 2025, in partnership with The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, we successfully participated in the second edition of the SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival and hosted the World Dance Alliance Conference in collaboration with the Hong Kong Dance Alliance in Hong Kong. This event brought together over 500 arts practitioners and scholars from 15 regions, including Australia, Bangladesh, the Mainland, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, the UK, and the USA, creating a vibrant platform for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration. With the theme 'Cultural Sequences: Asia Pacific Choreographic Discovery,' SWEAT 2025 served as a hub for innovation and artistic exchange. The festival's activities not only addressed core project questions but also laid the foundation for ongoing research and future partnerships. Notable highlights included inspiring keynote speeches by leading figures in the dance community – Tang Fu-kuen, Festival-maker, curator, producer, and dramaturg; Estaban Lecoq and Aoi Nakamura, co-founders & Co-Artistic Directors of AΦE; Mui Cheuk-yin, veteran Hong Kong choreographer; Tao Ye and Duan Ni, artistic director and founder of TAO Dance Theater; and Professor Jiang Dong, Chinese dance academic and critic, engaging in panel discussions addressing transcultural creativity and the future of dance education. An open call for research proposals resulted in 81 presenting groups showcasing cutting-edge projects like interactive digital presentations and motion capture experiments.

The festival featured:

**23 Conference Sessions:** Keynotes, paper presentations, and dance lecture-demonstrations.  
**8 DanceTECH Research Showcases**  
**4 Choreographic Project Open Studio Presentations**  
**67 Masterclasses**

#### 2. Establishment of the WDA Archive

The establishment of the WDA Archive at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts' library provides a permanent home for the rich history and invaluable resources collected from WDAAP, allowing us to celebrate the diversity of dance worldwide. This repository consolidates a wealth of materials, including annual events, publications, global meeting minutes, and newsletters, preserving the richness of our community's contributions. The archive is not merely a repository; it is a living testament to our collective journey, capturing the voices and experiences of those who have taken part in our events and initiatives, fostering ongoing exploration within the dance community.

Visit the link here - <https://libguides.hkapa.edu/wdaaparchives>

#### 3. Nrityajog Seminar in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh chapter, Nrityajog, exemplified our commitment to fostering new perspectives through a recent successful seminar titled "Contemporary Dance: Concept and Possibilities," which involved local artists and educators on 27 August 2025. With support from the Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, this event sparked meaningful discussions on the development of contemporary dance in Bangladesh and the chances for emerging artists to explore their distinct choreographic voices. About 35 participants shared valuable insights and inspiration, highlighting the importance of such initiatives in fostering artistic growth and innovation.

#### 4. Upcoming WDA-AP International Conference

We are excited to announce the upcoming WDA-AP International Conference, which will be held at the National Taiwan University of Sport from 25 to 28 June 2026 in Taichung. The theme, 'Symbiotic



Relations and the Sustainable Future of Dance: Bodies, Nature, and Creations in Motion,' reflects our commitment to addressing the evolving dynamics of dance in relation to environmental sustainability, social awareness, community well-being, and artistic expression. We look forward to engaging discussions and workshops that will inspire practical strategies for the future.

#### Ongoing Developments

Following our last AGM in Hong Kong, the WDAA executive board continues to explore the best ways for this network to grow. We are currently resolving the bank registration issues in Hong Kong, and once they are resolved, we will consider the potential merger of all WDA regions into a single unified entity. Despite these challenges, the World Dance Alliance remains committed to its mission of promoting dance as a vital form of expression and communication.

We take pride in recognising the diverse

and vibrant contributions from each of our chapters across the Asia-Pacific region, which significantly enrich the global landscape of dance. Each chapter brings unique cultural expressions, artistic traditions, and innovative practices, creating a rich tapestry that advances our collective mission. The insights shared in this channel are not merely a collection of styles; they embody the stories, struggles, and triumphs of communities, making our network deeply resonant and relevant.

I hope you enjoy reading about our chapters' efforts and discover the true dynamism of dance. As each chapter works tirelessly to promote local practices and engage with the global dance community, we nurture an inclusive dialogue that bridges cultural differences.

Let us continue to celebrate our successes and leverage them for future growth, ensuring the vitality and sustainability of dance worldwide.



**SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival, 8-22 June 2025, at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.** All photos provided by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

1. The book launch in the lobby for two new volumes in the Celebrating Dance in Asia and the Pacific series (Routledge, India), edited by Stephanie Burridge: *Reflections of Dance along the Brahmaputra: Celebrating Dance in North East India* by Debarshi Prasad Nath, Ralph Buck & Barbara Snook (2023), and *Lives in Motion: Celebrating Dance in Thailand* by Pornrat Damrhung & Lowell Skar (2024).
2. The Opening Ceremony on Day 1 of the event.





**SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival, 8-22 June 2025, at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.** All photos provided by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

1. Masterclass by Niu Sixuan.
2. Masterclass by Jennifer Fleenor-O'Brien.
3. The CollabAsia Projects, with students from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU, Korea) in a new work by Leila McMillan and Na-ye Kim.

**SWEAT International Dance Workshop Festival, 8-22 June 2025, at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.** All photos provided by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

1. LILITH.AI Lecture Performance by AΦE.
2. Anna CY Chan in conversation with TAO Dance Theatre.
3. Conference presentation by Sarah Knox.



## 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.



K-Arts Dance Company performing Shahar Binyamini's 'Bolero' at the Rise Dance Festival in Seoul, 19-24 August 2025 at the National Theater's Daloreum Theater. See Korea report. Photo: Hanfilm.



## Creation & Presentation network report

by I-Fen Tung, co-chair

### Contemporary Dance Competitions and Open-Call Platforms on the Rise: Observing the Asian Dance Ecology

In the past decade, contemporary dance competitions and open-call platforms have blossomed across Asia. From government-led youth dance contests and curatorial open calls to independent initiatives and artist residencies, these developments reveal an increasingly open and decentralized dance ecology. This flourishing trend signifies, on the one hand, the expansion of artistic opportunities and the diversification of cultural policies; on the other hand, it exposes the structural anxieties artists face within systems of competition and evaluation.

The rise of these platforms is closely tied to policy shifts that have made competitions and open calls the primary means of resource allocation. Meanwhile, the ubiquity of social media has accelerated the circulation of dance imagery, making “visibility” a key measure of success. For young creators, such platforms are both gateways into the professional field and an arena of evaluation, selection, and labeling.

## Research & Documentation network report

by A.P. Rajaram, chair

We are glad to inform everyone that the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2024, Vol XI, is successfully published with the theme: ‘Reimagining the Terrain: Futures of Dance Scholarship’ and is available on our website.

The research papers selected for the journal include an article by Dahye Lee, who explores the transmission of traditional Korean dance as ethereal material from body to the frame of “corporeal translation.” Paavni Dhanjal’s research article explores the concept of aesthetic citizenship and questions which challenge traditional norms and accepted identities in Bangladesh, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and India. Kristina Luna Dolinina examines the realm of neoclassical North Indian Kathak dance

On the positive side, this phenomenon has enhanced the visibility and diversity of dance while fostering cross-cultural exchange and the blending of vocabularies across Asia. Competitions and open calls provide emerging artists with opportunities to voice and present their work, enabling dance institutions from different countries to build new curatorial and collaborative connections. However, the logic of competition and selection has also led to the quantification of artistic value and constrained the rhythm of creation within the cycles of application and assessment. Many works lack continuity after being showcased or selected, forcing creators to oscillate between short-term outcomes and long-term development.

Although developments vary across Asian regions—some emphasizing cultural export, others creative freedom, some pursuing a balance between policy and market forces, and still others thriving on flexible curation and open-call mechanisms—they collectively exhibit a shared trend of decentralization. To transform this platform-driven wave into a sustainable creative ecosystem, the longevity and reciprocity of support structures must be reconsidered. Only when competitions and open calls become platforms for dialogue rather than arenas of rivalry can the current prosperity of Asian contemporary dance evolve into genuine cultural maturity.

in India, Lithuania, and internationally, while striving to maintain authenticity amidst evolving practices and choreography. Yukina Sato discusses the choreography and collaborative embodiment research that considers the challenges of depicting the Japanese female body on stage in the USA. Masoom Parmar discusses on Sufi mystics and storytellers whose practices have both inspired and obscured the history of Kathak.

This volume, and other previous, volumes can be accessed from the following link: <https://jedsonline.in/home>

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.

We will soon announce the succeeding call for papers for the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2025, Vol XII, with the theme ‘co-evolve · co-habit · collaborate’, which will be available on the website.

## Education & Training network report

by Sarah Knox, co-chair

2025 has been a fruitful year with the World Dance Alliance, fostering our broader connections in the area of dance education. Our relationship with the World Alliance for Arts Education continues. Developing out of the 2025 Arts Education Week activities is a Special Edition of the journal INVISIBILIDADES, the Ibero-American Journal of Research in Education, Culture and Arts, bringing together articles of arts education projects and activities that were presented in the week of webinars and open forums. The Special Edition includes prologues written by the representatives of the four member organisations (WDA, ISME, IDEA and InSEA). It will be available online in late December 2025.

The World Alliance for Arts Education was also present at UNESCO’s MONDIACULT 2025 (the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development). Interestingly, there was little mention of arts education at this event, indicating there is still work for us all to do in connecting, advocating for and promoting our local activities to global broader objectives.

Relevant to this, I am pleased to share that I have been accepted to participate in the inaugural UNESCO Youth for Peace: Intercultural Leadership Programme 2025-2026. This is a new five year initiative in collaboration with Kingold Group, with a cohort of 50 young leaders selected from

around the world (this year from 8250 applications) each year. Participants engage in an eight-month leadership programme learning from global leaders, scholars, and NGO founders about aspects of intercultural leadership, peace building, project management. With 50 countries represented, and nearly as many disciplines, I am the only dance practitioner within the programme and proud to represent the World Dance Alliance and World Alliance for Arts Education. In addition, the Young Leaders are provided with a grant to undertake a project in their local context with a focus on developing collaborative and intercultural skills with their local community. My project brings 250 high school students together across four cities to make large-scale public choreographies engaging with themes of communication, conflict, and community. Outcomes of the project alongside the choreography are a website with choreographic resources for teachers, a short documentary, and a scholarly journal article. Within the project I am excited to also engage further with UNESCO’s Framework for Culture and Arts Education and prepare a contribution for the 2026 WAAE/UNESCO Culture and Arts Education week (18-24 May 2026). Our projects will be presented at a Youth Leaders conference in Guangzhou, China in April 2026. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of this experience and leveraging this learning within my work with WDA and WAAE.

I wish you all a restful holiday season from 2025. 2026 will need our energy and attention to continue to advocate for the transformative powers of dance education.



Rehearsal process of 'Body Project' with Yujie Chen, published in the article by Yukina Sato in the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2024 Vol. XI, entitled "Challenge the Act of “Seeing” Technology and the East Asian Woman’s Body on Stage.”

## Support & Development Network report

by Sohini Chakraborty, chair

### Connection Through Dance: FEAL Festival 2026

As Chair of the Support and Development Network of the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific (WDAAP), I am delighted to introduce an upcoming initiative that resonates deeply with WDA's core values of community, wellbeing, cultural exchange, and artistic advocacy.

On 14 February 2026, Kolkata Sanved, in collaboration with Arthshila Santiniketan and with Dance Alliance India as creative partner, will host the next edition of FEAL: Festival of Empowerment and Art for Life 2026—an arts-based hybrid (both in-person and digital) festival focusing on mental health, creative expression, and holistic wellbeing. Importantly, this hybrid format ensures that WDA members across the Asia-Pacific region can participate, whether they join us at Santiniketan (in-person) or through the festival's online platform.

### Origins and Vision of FEAL

The FEAL Festival emerged in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as a creative response to isolation, anxiety, and deep ruptures experienced across communities. Initiated by Kolkata Sanved and the British Council, FEAL was envisioned as a compassionate space where dance and the creative arts could hold, restore, and re-energize people in moments of uncertainty.

Carried out from 2020 to 2025, in digital and in-person editions at Arthshila Santiniketan, FEAL has grown into a multidisciplinary platform where dance intersects with social change, community resilience, and mental wellbeing. Across its editions since 2020, the festival has consistently demonstrated its transformative power—participants have reported emotional grounding, renewed self-connection, and the ability to integrate creativity into everyday life.

Hosting FEAL on 14 February carries special significance—it is a day globally associated with love through Valentine's Day,

and with solidarity and resistance through the One Billion Rising movement, making it a unique moment to celebrate connection, healing, and collective strength.

### Theme 2026: “*Bendhe Bendhe Thaki – Feel Your Connection*”

This edition invites us to gather, move, reflect, and heal collectively, while encouraging participants to reimagine how we come together in a world shaped by both visible and invisible fractures. Connection—through movement, music, visual art, storytelling, or collective ritual—becomes both the method and the message.

The festival's structure reflects this ethos of interconnectedness:

- A process-based Dance Movement connection and performance: A choreographic offering that embodies the ache of disconnection and the human desire to reach across barriers.
- Curated panel: What Holds Us: A dialogue bringing together a dancer, a folk music archivist, a theatre installation artist, a sociologist, and an environmentalist. Each speaker will explore the tools that build connection—earth, sound, ritual, stories, and everyday solidarities.
- Visual art collective activity: Participants will create posters on the theme of connection, transforming the Arthshila as well as digital space into a living, evolving gallery of shared imagination.
- A culminating multidisciplinary offering: Featuring artists along with the Kolkata Sanved DMT practitioner ensemble, this closing ritual of movement, spoken word, and music invites the group to breathe, sense, move, and create presence in unison.

### Why This Matters for Dance, Community, and WDAAP

For the WDAAP community, FEAL reflects our shared commitment to using dance and the arts as vehicles for healing,



empowerment, and collective care. The festival foregrounds:

- Embodied dialogue: understanding the body as a site of memory, resilience, and community.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration: bridging movement with visual art, sound, environment, and social sciences.
- Social justice and wellbeing: uplifting voices of communities often excluded from elitist dance and art spaces.

### Invitation to WDA Members

I warmly invite WDA Asia-Pacific members—artists, scholars, creative arts therapists, students, and community practitioners—to join us for the FEAL Festival 2026, either in person at Arthshila Santiniketan, West Bengal, India, or through the digital platform. Please look out for updates via email and the Kolkata Sanved, Arthshila website and social media; we will share detailed information with all of you in January 2026.

You are welcome to attend, observe, participate, or collaborate. We also welcome proposals for future co-learning,

documentation, and cross-border exchanges emerging from FEAL.

Dance Alliance India will serve as a key collaborator, ensuring deeper engagement from the national dance and movement community.

### A Space to Breathe, Belong, and Become

With thematic inspiration taken from the poet Shankha Ghosh, “*Bendhe Bendhe Thaki*” carries a gentle yet profound message: in being together, and in nurturing a sense of belonging through collective care, we learn how to truly belong. Connection becomes both sanctuary and spark. Through creative movement, voice, touch, silence, and art-making, we rediscover our shared humanity.

As we prepare for this gathering, I look forward to welcoming the WDA community into this festival of wellbeing. May we continue building bridges—between cultures, practices, bodies, histories, and futures—through the simple, powerful act of coming together.



## 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.

An outdoor performance at the Australian Youth Dance Festival 2012; see Australia report for details.



Australia report  
by Julie Dyson



As the only dance support organisation in Australia, Ausdance has created a model of collaboration and partnerships that has embraced diversity and inclusion across the sector, with a focus on practice at all levels. These include performers, choreographers, film makers, studio and school teachers, administrators and students. Although Ausdance National and several State and Territory offices no longer receive government funding, the national projects and alliances that have been maintained on a voluntary basis include:

**National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)**  
As a founding member of NAAE in 1989, Ausdance chaired the organisation for almost two decades, until 2020. The organisation's Constitution embraces each of the five art forms in The Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Currently Ausdance's two reps are Sue Fox (Queensland) and Lesley Graham (Tasmania). NAAE advocates for arts education at federal level, and succeeded in 2009 in having Dance included in the national curriculum. NAAE's latest research shows an alarming drop in creative arts courses across all Australian universities, and this data has become central to lobbying efforts across the arts sector.

An outdoor performance at the Australian Youth Dance Festival 2012.

**Tertiary Dance Council of Australia (TDCA)**  
Several universities and higher education institutions offer dance as a major or minor course of study. Those offering majors include NAISDA Dance College, The Australian Ballet School, the University of Melbourne (Victorian College of the Arts), Edith Cowan University (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts—WAAPA), Adelaide College of the Arts, and the Academy of Music and Performing Arts (AMPA). Also offering dance courses are the Australian College of Physical Education, Queensland University of Technology, Deakin University, Monash University, the University of South Australia, and the University of Southern Queensland. The New Zealand School of Dance and the University of Auckland are observers. The TDCA meets twice annually and members share issues such as curriculum updates, assessment strategies, research and advocacy. They have also contributed to the development of the national cultural policy *Revive*, and share strategies for lobbying on behalf of shrinking creative arts courses across the country.



**World Dance Alliance (WDA)**  
Ausdance provided WDAAP with the Secretary's position until 2024, and still maintains a close relationship with the current Board. Ausdance publicises and manages the Australian selection process for the International Young Choreographers Program (IYCP) residency program offered by WDA Taiwan. It also provides a biannual dance report for *Asia-Pacific Channels*, and has recently digitised and handed all of WDA's archival material to the HKAPA Library where it is now available to members online.

**Dance insurance for the dance sector**  
In 2025 Ausdance National has partnered with new providers Austbrokers Countrywide, offering comprehensive insurance coverage for teachers, performers and independent artists at competitive prices.

**Research publications**  
The Ausdance National website hosts a range of peer-reviewed dance research papers from national and international conferences, notably those from successive World Dance Alliance gatherings, including from the 2018 Panpapanalya joint daCi/ WDA congress in Adelaide. Fact sheets & guides have been developed over the last three decades, notably for studio and school teachers to support their practice through its Safe Dance research. Fact sheets are about to be updated with a grant from Creative Australia, and will be available in the coming year.

- Summary of past partnerships & projects**
- First Nations collaborations: Facilitated gatherings Creating Pathways and Treading the Pathways, leading to the formation of BlakDance. Arranged for Welcome to Country ceremony at the opening of the 42nd Parliament in Canberra.
  - National Library of Australia and National Film and Sound Archive: Development of an Australian dance archive, and deposit of the Ausdance National archive 1977–2020.
  - Australian Institute of Sport: Development of skills development programs for retiring performers.
  - Creative Australia: Presentation of the National Dance Forum and a national dance strategy.
  - Australian Dance Awards: Presentation of annual awards (currently under review).
  - Biennial national conferences: Presented between 1977–1992, replaced by the annual Greenmail Dance events, 1993–1997.
  - Australian Youth Dance Festival: Inaugurated by Ausdance National in 1997, and currently presented by Ausdance Victoria.



1. Performers at the 42nd Parliament opening in Canberra, performing a Welcome to Country ceremony.  
2. A banner image from a Safe Dance® fact sheet.



## Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli



The period from July to November, spanning monsoon to late autumn, traditionally hosts a rich sequence of festivals, institutional showcases, and independent productions. In 2025, the dance landscape is shaped by a renewed emphasis on youth participation and the expansion of independent work.

During this time, national cultural institutions and academies intensify their performance calendars, often aligning with major cultural observances such as Durga Puja, Victory Day preparations, and various seasonal festivals. Dance organizations increasingly collaborate with theatre and music groups, reflecting the broader trend toward cross-genre praxis and digital media integration. The post-pandemic shift toward hybrid programming continues to influence practice in 2025, with many events combining live stages with online streaming, enabling broader audience reach.

Diksha, a dance organization headed by

Sweety Das Chowdhury, organized a four day long summer intensive dance course in July, featuring four dance exponents, Dr. Shoma Mumtaz, Amit Chowdhury, Zuairiyah Mouli and Anandita Khan. This intensive course aimed to emphasize the importance of both theory and practice of dance to become a dance artist.

Nrityajog (Bangladesh Chapter of World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific) organized a seminar titled Contemporary Dance: Concept and Possibilities at the Goethe-Institute Bangladesh in August 2025, attended by 35 participants. The seminar featured two distinguished speakers, Amit Chowdhury and Zuairiyah Mouli; renowned dance educators and performers with rich and distinctive artistic journeys. Moderated by Anandita Khan, Chair of Nrityajog, the discussion shed light on the current state of contemporary dance in Bangladesh, addressing both its progress and the

gaps that remain in knowledge and practice compared to contemporary dance practice around the world. Drawing on their own experiences, the keynote speakers emphasized the need for younger generations to read, explore, question, and develop their own choreographic



1. *Ghonoghot* presented by Arthy Ahmed dance academy, on 8 August 2025, at Bokultola, University of Dhaka. Photo: Arafat Sarkar.  
2. Kaya Ashram in a dance workshop, 8-11 September 2025, conducted by Amit Chowdhury with Sweety Das.



voices by which they can develop a vocabulary of Bangladeshi contemporary dance. Participants expressed that such initiatives provide valuable guidance and inspiration, offering clarity for their artistic journeys ahead.

On 8 August 2025, the Arthy Ahmed dance academy presented *Ghonoghot* at Bokultola, University of Dhaka. The performance featured over 110 adult beginner students, aged from 18 to ~70, many performing for the first time. The theme was 'The Monsoon, Rain, Renewal — Moving Beyond Spectacle Toward Raw Emotion and Community.' The director emphasized that the real point is to enjoy dancing beyond mistakes. In November, they performed *Navapallava II*, a Bharatanatyam showcase celebrating a year of growth.

From 8-11 September 2025, Kaya Ashram organised a dance workshop conducted by Kaya Ashram director Amit Chowdhury, a Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher, along with Manipuri dancer and researcher, Sweety Das. On 17 September, an enjoyable cultural program was arranged with the participation of the members of Kaya Ashram.

Bangladesh's dance presence has also become more visible on the international stage. Katthakiya's production *Ontoheen* was selected, after a rigorous process, to participate in the 2025 Next-Generation Asian Artists Community Initiative – Beyond Borders: Asia's New Wave organized by the Asian Culture Center on 3 October 2025. The team, headed by founder and director S. M. Hasan Ishtiaque Imran, and including three distinguished independent artists - Anandita Khan, Asif Muhammed Musaddeque, and Annessha Biswas Agni - also had the opportunity to take part in

two mentoring sessions: a ganggangsullae dance workshop and a music workshop. This amazing opportunity ended with a brief tour of Korean culture.

S.M. Hasan Ishtiaque Imran also performed at the Classical Festival organized by Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts in New York in November 2025 and has been awarded for his dedication to dance. Imran took a three week long Kathak workshop and directed students of BIPA in a performance.

Dancer and choreographer Mofassal Alif was the first Bangladeshi artist to perform at New York City's prestigious Battery Dance Festival, making history for Bangladesh in 2025. He performed his solo piece, 'Moner Manus (In Search of You),' a work inspired by the spiritual songs of Lalon, alongside other international and American artists.

In recognition of their remarkable contributions to Manipuri dance in Bangladesh, Sharmila Banerjee, Tamanna Rahman, Warda Rihab, and Shantana Devi were recently honored. The felicitation ceremony was held at the Tetoigaon Manipuri Cultural Complex in the Adampur Union of Kamalganj as part of the 50th Golden Jubilee celebration of the Bangladesh Manipuri Sahitya Sangsad. The event not only inspired the younger generation to stay connected with Manipuri dance but also played an important role in preserving the cultural heritage of the country.

The growing movement in Bangladesh toward inclusive, community-oriented events shows a democratization of dance. These events reflect Bangladeshi dance evolving with global influences while retaining its local rhythm and emotional depth.

Diksha's Summer Intensive Course in July 2025. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Sabbir.



# Hong Kong report

by Allen Lam



After wrapping up the first half of 2025 with our annual Hong Kong Dance Awards, we continue to celebrate new achievements and explore the cutting-edge discoveries in the dance world.

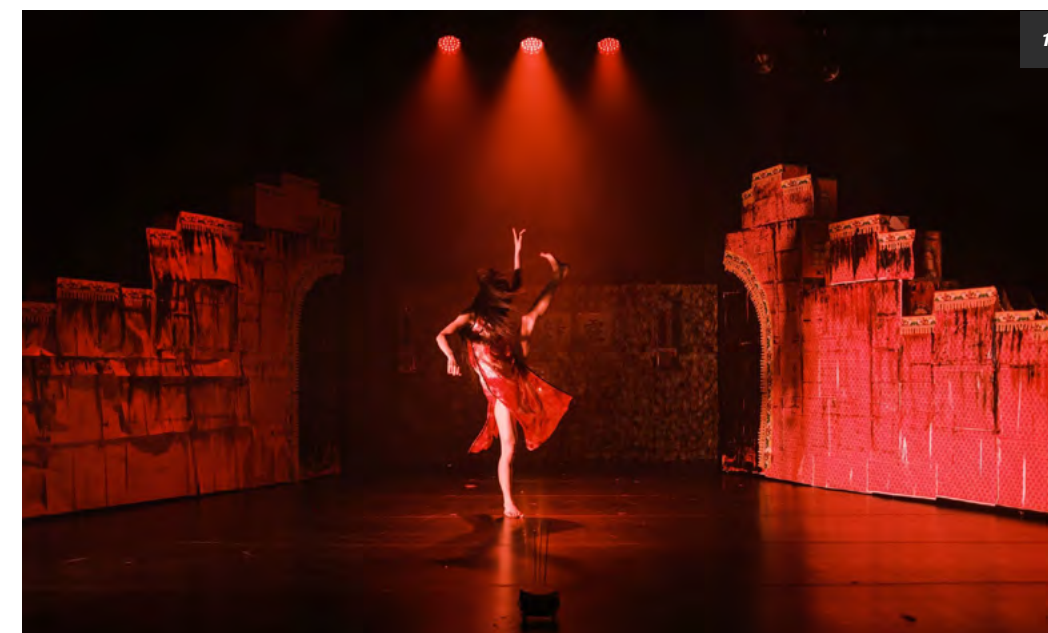
The SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival 2025 (SWEAT festival), organized by Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), took place from 8-25 June 2025 and concluded successfully. A key highlight of the Festival was the inaugural DanceTECH Research Showcase, focusing on the integration of technology, i.e. generative AI, motion capture, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in dance. As an add-on program of the Showcase, the DanceHub series of Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA) co-presented with HKAPA, titled 'From Notion to Motion: Creative Play between Dance Makers and Creative Technologists,' was held from 9-11 June 2025. Led by Dr. Jeff Hsieh and Nguyen Anh; the workshop brought together dance choreographers and creative technologists from different backgrounds to explore the limitless potential of technology in the performance arts.

Another highlight for Hong Kong's dance scene is the Hong Kong Week 2025@ Seoul, successfully held in Seoul, Korea from 26 September to 25 October 2025. Participating dance companies included the Hong Kong Ballet, Hong Kong Dance Company, City Contemporary Dance

Company and independent dance artist, Terry Tsang, the founder of Labora Terry Arts. The event also featured CollabAsia, a meaningful cross-cultural collaboration between the HKAPA and Sungkyunkwan University in Korea, showcasing an enriching exchange between dance students from both regions.

In mid-July, HKDA launched Momentum: Wellness through Dance Festival, a 5-day event aimed at promoting both dance for health and health for dancers. Through the format of workshops and forums as well as a retreat, we engaged both local and overseas professional dancers and health practitioners to share expertise and raise awareness of the strong connection between dance and wellness. This initiative sought to educate dance practitioners of ways to care for their own well-being as well as facilitate dialogue between health and dance practitioners to inspire further discussion on the potential of the developments and incorporation of dance in health practices. Although many of the programs were designed for dance practitioners and students, the festival also welcomed public participation.

November 2025, HKDA launched a series of DanceHub wellness workshops and classes, continuing to explore the dance-and-health theme established earlier in the year. HKDA has partnered with a local venue to organize a range of wellness programs targeted to educate and engage the public



on the practical and enriching role dance can play in daily life.

We are also pleased to welcome new members to the HKDA team, the backbone of the HKDA. Under the leadership of Sonia Szeto as new Company Manager, the team now includes Thomas Tse, Content Strategy Manager, along with Tse Wai Sum, Administrative Officer and Sara Ip, Editorial Coordinator.

This year has also marked a significant transformation for HKDA. In addition to revamping our official website, we also

relocated to a new office in pursuit of more collaboration opportunities with local venues. Our long-running publication, dancejournal/hk, is also evolving - transitioning to a fully digital platform to reach a broader audience and expand its impact.

Looking ahead to 2026, we eagerly anticipate the HKPAX and other upcoming dance projects. As we welcome this new chapter, we remain committed to our mission of promoting, connecting, and advancing of the dance arts in Hong Kong and beyond.

'From Notion to Motion: Creative Play between Dance Makers and Creative Technologists,' 9-11 June 2025, led by Dr. Jeff Hsieh and Nguyen Anh, part of the DanceHub series. Photo courtesy of HKDA.



1. Labora Terry Arts performing 'Travel of the Soul: Echoes After Time' at Hong Kong Dance Week, 26 September to 25 October 2025, at Arko Arts Theatre, Seoul, Korea. Photo courtesy of Labora Terry Arts.

2. Participants in the Momentum: Wellness through Dance Festival, July 2025. Photo courtesy of HKDA.



India report  
by Urmimala  
Sarkar



Dance Alliance - India members have been very active in different parts of India. Apart from having varied experimental and classical repertoires, the members have traveled to different parts of the world with their performances.

The Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship continues its publication – currently with three guest editors for one more year. The recent volume has been edited by Dr. A.P. Rajaram, Dr. Debanjali Biswas and Dr. Akhila Vimal and has gone online this month.

Dance Alliance - India organized and facilitated the participation of the ASK Dance Company from Malaysia at the India International Centre (IIC) at the IIC

Experience, the Annual Festival that Delhi looks forward to every year in the festive season of October - November.

ASK Dance Company (ADC) is a full-time dance company composed of a professional dance collective. They specialize in providing training, workshops, master classes, performances and choreography, as well as undertaking collaborative projects in traditional and contemporary genres of dance. They presented *The Splendour of Malay Dance* and *Eclectic Shift* on the evening of 12 October 2025 at IIC. The troupe consisted of Mohd Zulkarnain bin Zuber, Jackson anak Janda, Fatin Nadhirah binti Rahmat, Wong Shan Tie, Sera Nina Sumbin, and Ng Yu Jun.



ASK Dance Company (Malaysia) performing at the India International Centre, Delhi, on 12 October 2025. All performance photos: Daljeet, courtesy of the IIC.

1. Poster for 'The Splendour of Malay Dance'.

2. ASK Dance Company members with chief guest Dr. Mahesh Verma, Trustee of the IIC. Photo: Urmimala Sarkar.



This August in Kolkata, Artsforward presented the 7th Act of At the Still Point (ATSP).

ATSP is India's first and only completely community-financed formal arts platform and has been presenting, curating, creating and incubating important performance work over the last 7 years in Kolkata, taking the community along as a crucial stakeholder.

The 7th Act of ATSP was curated by Paramita Saha, Vice President of Dance Alliance India, around the idea of memory – To Remember Again. Memory is only a reconstruction of pieces of remembered reality, often leaving out more than it includes. In the current context of systematic erasure of so much of our shared cultural histories, how should we remember? How should we bear witness? Where should we archive? How should memory stay alive and responsive, how do stories continue to be told, how can experience be embodied?

ATSP Act VII featured performances of 'C.Tactile' by Shruti Maria Datar (Mumbai), 'To Forget is to Remember is to Forget' by Nimi Ravindran (Bangalore), 'Firefly Women' by Manjari Kaul (Delhi) and 'Suraiya is a Country' by Diya Naidu (Bangalore), at Goethe-Institut's Max Mueller Bhavan and The Red Bari.

A conversation among all the ATSP artists with Dr Urmimala Sarkar, entitled 'New Memories, New Solidarities, New Hierarchies', took place on 31 August at The Urban Theatre Project.



At The Still Point Act VII, in August 2025 in Kolkata, presented by ArtsForward.

1. Curator Paramita Saha.

2. Audience members.



Indonesia  
report  
by Denny E.  
Wibowo and  
Dina Triastuti



“Lifting the Submerged Stem” to  
Support the Creative Sources of Living  
Performing Arts

In 23-25 September 2025, Tanjungpinang held the event titled Makyong Warisan Dunia, initiated by Badan Pelestarian Kebudayaan (BPK) Wilayah IV - the institution concerned with conserving the culture and local wisdom in Riau and the Riau Archipelago. For three days, the events held in the yard and building of Lembaga Adat Melayu Kepulauan Riau include performances, a workshop and a seminar for Makyong enthusiasts.

In reference to Indonesian performing arts, Makyong is one of the traditional theatre forms that emerged and developed in the Riau Archipelago region. Like other traditional theatre in Indonesia, Makyong is ‘total theatre,’ consisting of drama, music and dance. In 2008, Malaysia proposed Makyong to UNESCO to be a representative of Intangible World Heritage of Humanity. This achievement strengthened

the cultural connection and relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia. Since Makyong has a long history journeying from Thailand, then flourishing in Malaysia and Indonesia, this year, Indonesia plans to propose to UNESCO to extend the Heritage representative of Indonesia and Thailand, as well. Geo-politically, the three nations are different but geo-culturally related. This also serves to strengthen the existence of Makyong as a Intangible Cultural Heritage across the region.

The Indonesian Makyong emerged and continues to be developed in Mantang Island, Keke Island, Batam and Tanjungpinang. The Makyong of Mantang Island, Keke Island and Batam are preserved by families of practitioners, while the transfer of Makyong knowledge in Tanjungpinang is to students and common society.

In general, the structure of Makyong between Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia is similar, but there are differing details in



The poster for Anastasia Melati's lecture organised by WDA Indonesia.

the mode of presentation. The main element that stands out for Makyong Indonesia is the use of masks for the characters except the main character, Cikwang. Furthermore, the character of Cikwang in Makyong Indonesia is played by a female, but in Malaysia the same character but called Pakyong is now sometimes played by a male. This is the uniqueness of gender existence in Makyong.

The best value of Makyong is that the end of the story depends on the audience's perspectives. The quote from the ancestors of Mantang Island that is maintained by Parman and Pudentia, is “Itulah Makyong (That is Makyong).” The message is not straight and passive, but flexible and fluid, and the reflection on societal identity adds value to the Makyong, as spectators realize together the harmony of life.

In Indonesian there is a phrase, “membangkit batang tarandam,” which literally translates as “to lift the submerged

stem.” It is a metaphor for the work required to bring a long-neglected cause or leader back into prominence. This is the work that must be done now to restore the stature of the practice of Makyong in the Riau Archipelago of Indonesia, and to ensure its sustainable existence for the future.

This year, the WDA Indonesia chapter launched a lecture series with specific themes. The first was presented by Anastasia Melati in September. Melati is a doctoral candidate at Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA). Her research focuses on dance, migrant workers in Taiwan, migration, and transnational identity. The discussion titled Dance and Activism explores dance, performance, and textual issues. Themes for upcoming lectures are Dance and Industrialization, Dance and Gender, Dance and Education, Body and Training, and Dramaturgy.



## Korea report

by GeungSoo Kim



2025 Rise Dance Festival in Seoul took place over six days from 19-24 August 2025 at the National Theater's Daloreum Theater, co-hosted by World Dance Alliance Korea and the National Theater. The name "Rise" was chosen because it refers to both established stars and rising stars, signifying the festival's participation of both star dancers and promising new talents.

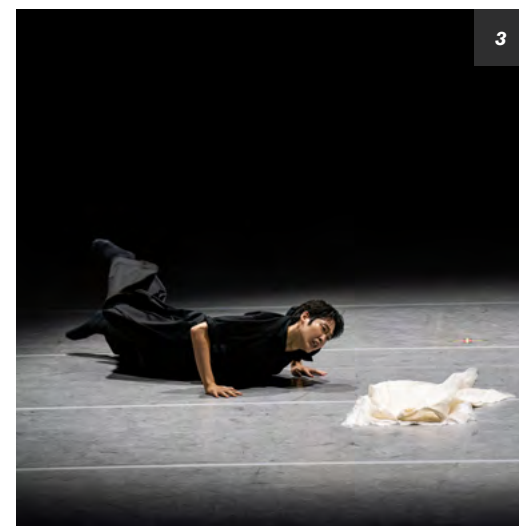
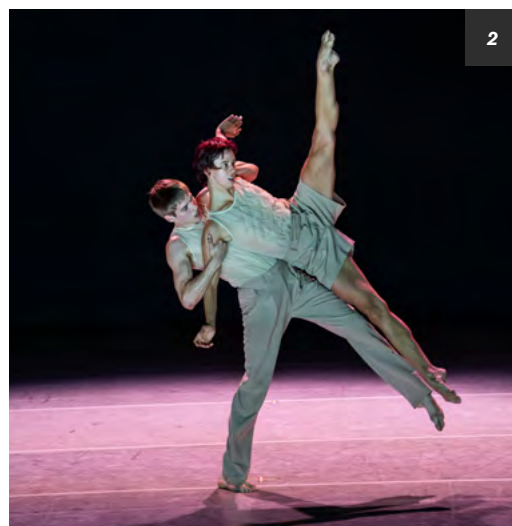
The Best Contemporary Dance Collection on 20-21 August, featured six former NDT2 members, Eve-Marie Dalcourt, Toon Lobach, Adam Russell, Alexander Anderson, Fay van Baar and Aya Misaki, alongside Korean dancers Ki Moo-gan, Kim Kyu-nyeon, Kim Hye-hyun, and Lee Hyun-seop, with 50 members of the Korean National University of Arts' contemporary dance team. The NDT members performed masterpieces of

contemporary dance by world-renowned choreographers: Juliano Nunes, Marco Goecke, Edward Clug, and Marne van Oostal. They also performed Ki Moo-gan's (Korean dance) 'The One Who Finally Walks', Kim Hye-hyun and Lee Hyun-seop's 'uncomfortable?', Kim Kyu-nyeon's 'Illusion', and the K-arts Contemporary Dance team performed Shahr Binyamini's 'Bolero'.

The subsequent master classes featured participation from local dance teachers, NDT2 members, Kenny Wang from Taiwan, and Jeffrey Tan from Singapore. They provided one-point lessons for skill improvement and offered career advice to participating students. It was also a valuable opportunity for students to experience diverse international teaching methods within Korea.

Performances at the 2025 Rise Dance Festival in Seoul, 19-24 August 2025 at the National Theater's Daloreum Theater. All photos by Hanfilm.

1. Fay van Barr and Toon Lobach in Marco Goecke's 'Wir Sagen Uns Dunkels'.
2. Ève-Marie Dalcourt and Toon Lobach in 'Dear Friend', by Marne van Opstal.
3. Kim Kyu-nyeon in her work 'Illusion'.



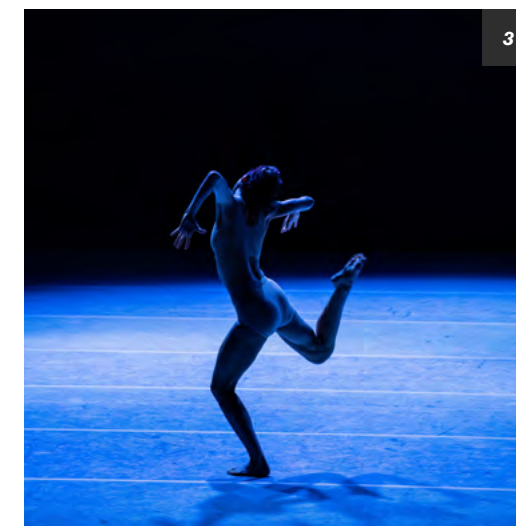
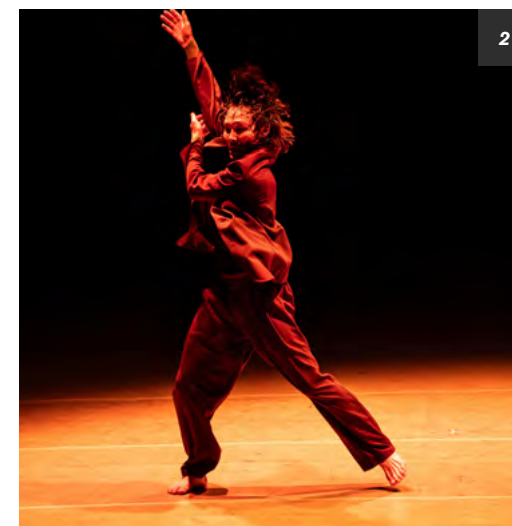
On the 22-23 August, the Tanzolymp Asia International Dance Competition served as a platform for dance majors to evaluate and enhance their skills. It also functions as a gateway to scholarships for admission to overseas dance schools and auditions for joining international dance companies. The final day, the 24th, featured an awards ceremony and gala performance showcasing innovative, acclaimed works and rising stars. Performances included the duet 'In Company' by former NDT members Eve Marie Dalcourt and Fay van Baar, the 'Black Swan Grand Pas de Deux' by National Ballet soloists Kim Byeol and Kim Yoon, alongside last year's Berlin Competition gold medalists and this year's Tanzolymp Asia award winners, who graced the stage with dazzling performances.

The highlight of the 2025 Rise Dance Festival was the announcement of this year's New Wave Award winner, given to the most

outstanding new dancer. This award was presented to Kim Hye-hyun of Kookmin University, recognized for her most active and artistic contributions in Korea this year.

Kim Geung-soo, President of World Dance Alliance Korea stated, "The significance of this event lies in providing students majoring in dance across various eras with abundant experience and cultivating an international perspective, thereby paving the way for their future activities and careers."

Tanzolympia Asia has made significant contributions to the dance world through its many achievements. Next year, it plans to expand further, aiming to encourage participation from all 22 member countries of the World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, it seeks to highlight that the World Dance Alliance Korea and the Baekrim Art Foundation are at the forefront of establishing Seoul as a global city of culture and arts.



Performances at the 2025 Rise Dance Festival in Seoul, 19-24 August 2025 at the National Theater's Daloreum Theater. All photos by Hanfilm.

1. Alexander Anderson, Adam Russell-Jones and Fay van Barr in 'Mutual Comfort', by Edouard Clug.
2. Ki Moo-gan in his work 'The One Who Finally Walks'.
3. Ève-Marie Dalcourt in Jacopo Godani's 'Postgenoma'.



# Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas



The Annual General Meeting of MyDance Alliance on 31 August witnessed a transfer of responsibility to a new generation of dance leaders. President JS Wong stepped down to make way for Rithaudin Abdul Kadir, formerly Vice President. We also welcomed several new faces to the committee: Hafzal Aziz, Kenny Shim, Wong Shan Tie, Zhafir Muzani, and Len Xin Yuan in the position of Treasurer.

We express our utmost thanks to the outgoing committee members who steered the organization through many challenges: Lau Beh Chin, Faillul Adam, Joyce Chan, and Leng Poh Gee, who has been a member of the committee since 2006. We look forward to our former committee members continuing to support MyDance through their ongoing professional roles in the community, and as advisors for our current committee.

The new committee members face a steep learning curve in how to balance their MyDance responsibilities alongside their other careers. New President Rithaudin has led the way with multiple editions of Dancing in Place, our signature site-specific weekend event of short dance works. After wrapping up three editions for Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival in August, Rithaudin continued with Dancing in Place at Klang River Festival in October. He also supervised four student interns from Universiti Malaya and Sultan Idris Education University, who experienced the challenges of outdoor festival organizing.

Foo Chiwei, who has replaced Rithaudin in the position of Vice President, directed his first edition of our popular performance

platform Dancebox, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, in September this year. Foo curated a lineup of local women choreographers: Vivan Chia, Ethel Daniel, Sangametra Lam, Lau Beh Chin, Fara Ling, Hannah Moujing and Murni Omar. The diverse worldviews on stage and the appreciative crowd cements the importance of Dancebox as a place where Malaysian dancers can cut their teeth, both in stage management and in artistic production.

Beyond MyDance, the Malaysian dance community continues to buzz with activity. JS Wong brought the D'Motion International Dance Festival back to the stage at Damansara Performing Arts Centre, after a gap of 10 years. The program included an international gala of five terrific duet works, as well as a novel program of solos by well-known local dance icons, many of whom now seldom perform. It also featured a Dancing in Place, in partnership with MyDance Alliance, starring young dancers



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and choreographers from the dance departments of local universities.

In November 2025, Temple of Fine Arts, a local community hub for Indian classical arts, hosted the Shantanand Festival of Arts, bringing dancers from abroad together with Malaysian professionals for performances, workshops and talks. ASWARA, the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage, also hosted its Tari dance festival in November, with a focus on traditional dance forms. And Ballet Theatre Malaysia, an effort to create professional-level opportunities for Malaysian classical ballet dancers, launched its new incarnation in a new venue at Hextar World, Empire City.

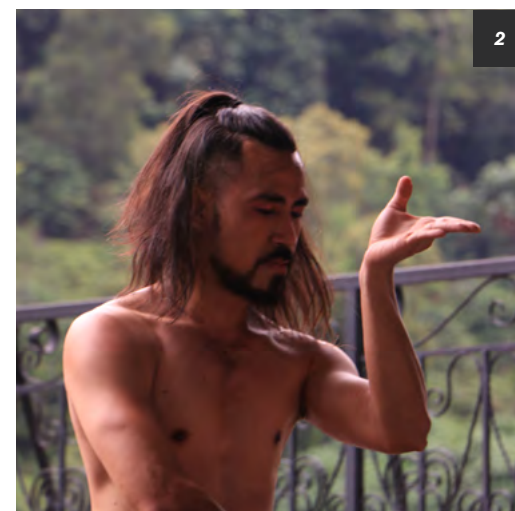
Malaysian dance pioneers are being recognized for their contributions to the industry. Dr Joseph Gonzales, recently returned from his term at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and now focusing on directing ASK Dance Company in Kuala Lumpur, was awarded the State Arts

Award for the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory this year, for his work on dance both at home and abroad.

Arts activists in Malaysia also continue to call for systemic change. The ReformARTsi coalition launched the petition campaign 'Seni Untuk Semua' (Arts for All), calling on the government to address issues like inadequate arts education, restrictions on artistic expression, fragmented governance, and lack of financing in the arts and culture sector. A new effort called Arts First Association is also advocating for stronger policies and structures to support the arts in the long term.

In the midst of hard work in the studio and the flurry of performances on stage, the Malaysian dance community has also experienced great loss. Earlier in the year, performer Arifwaran Shaharuddin died of leukemia. His death spurred members of the community to come together to create the two-week event You Are Not Alone, with performances, exhibition and talks emphasizing mental health awareness and the importance of creating a culture of care.

In November, we experienced the loss of Pat Gui, a stage manager whose firm backstage manner was a rite of passage for generations of local dancers. And in August this year, Mohd Nurulazmie bin Zanal Abdden — a dancer, teacher and choreographer, graduate of ASWARA, and beloved figure in the community — suffered a heart attack during rehearsal and passed away, at the age of 38. His sudden death was devastating for many, and reminds us of how fleeting a dancer's life on stage can be. We must take time to cherish the memories, as well as looking forward to the next performance.



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1. 'My Rootopia: The Journey', choreographed by Lau Beh Chin, performed by Dau Lum, Ho Ai Ling, Ja Nu Awng and Sut Jat Aung, who are refugees from Myanmar, at Dancebox, on 20 September 2025, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, produced by Foo Chiwei. Photo: Mohd Nor Azmil
2. New MyDance Alliance President Rithaudin Abdul Kadir (far left) with interns from University Malaya and Sultan Idris Education University wrapping up at the Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival.

1. Attendees of the 14th Annual General Meeting of MyDance Alliance, at Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre, Bandar Utama, on 31 August 2025. Photo: Rosalinda Saing.
2. The late Mohd Nurulazmie bin Zanal Abdden, at a performance of his work in Dancing in Place: City Site, produced by MyDance Alliance, at Damansara Performing Arts Centre in 2017.



## Philippines report

by Angela Lawenko-Baguilat



The second half of 2025 was an exceptional period for the Philippine dance community, marking a clear commitment to global visibility, the creation of significant national works, and the intense cultivation of future talent. The activities of the nation's premier companies, coupled with the rising contemporary and university groups, made a mark in both the local and international scenes.

Nicole Primero joined our WDAAP colleagues at the SWEAT: Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival 2025 with a lecture demo on her practice-based research, 'Dis-Location Series: Performing History, Performance as Historiography.' To aid in demonstration, she brought with her Dance and Theater majors of the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies, where she is engaged as Dance Coordinator.

Ballet Philippines traveled to Japan with their production of *Weaving Looms and Threads*, which ran from 2-15 June at the Expo 2025 in Osaka. Staged on the façade of the Philippine Pavilion, it blended dance with architectural technology, serving as a powerful statement of Filipino cultural innovation.

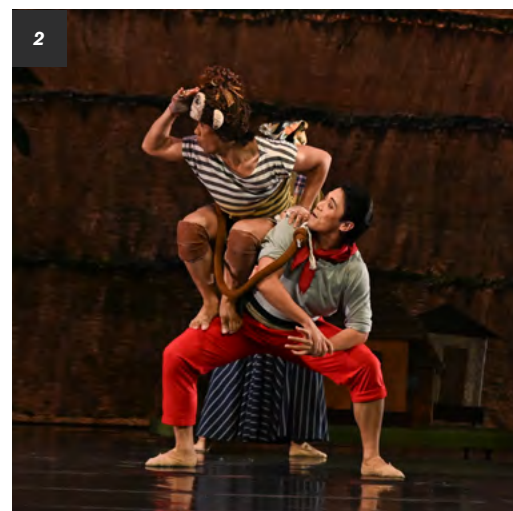
International engagement continued into September with a significant representation of the country at the Sibu International Dance Festival in Sarawak, Malaysia, from 16-20 September 2025. This included the contemporary and cultural showcases of the UP Dance Company, the La Salle Dance Company, and the Mindanao-based Hugis Dance Company from Butuan, showcasing the regional diversity of Philippine dance.

The last quarter of the year saw the major dance companies touring other countries. Philippine Ballet Theatre toured the United

States in October, introducing original Filipino ballet *Sarimanok* to American audiences. This was followed by Ballet Manila's Asian tour of the full-length original ballet *Snow White* in Taoyuan, Taiwan, on 1-2 November 2025 as part of the Iron Rose Festival, followed by *Cinderella* in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 15-16 November 2025, showcasing Ballet Manila's commitment to storytelling and technique under the direction of Lisa Macuja-Elizalde.

Back home, local audiences were treated to selected repertoire of classical ballets of Filipino narratives, staged in theaters around Manila.

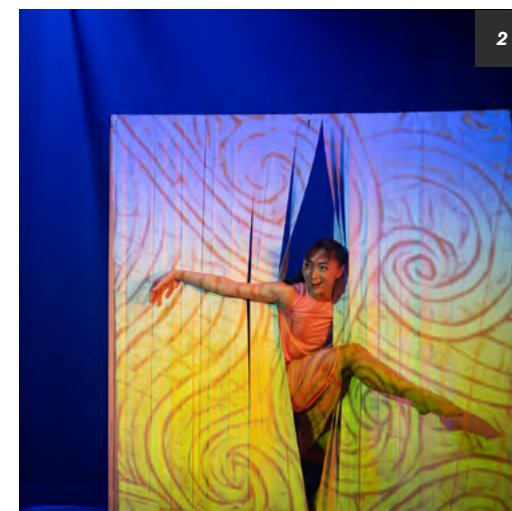
Philippine Ballet Theatre premiered *Maria Makiling* on 5-6 July 2025 at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater. This new full-length ballet, choreographed by Ronilo Jaynario to an original score by Paulo Zarate, reimagined the beloved *diwata* (deity), exploring themes of love, loss, and environmental preservation, a creation deeply emotional for Jaynario



having been a graduate of Philippine High School for the Arts, a school located in Mt. Makiling.

August featured classical shows. Ballet Philippines opened its 56th season with *Peter & the Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood*, from 1-3 August 2025 at The Theatre at Solaire, collaborating with the Manila Symphony Orchestra and Repertory Philippines. Later, Ballet Manila presented *Don Quixote* from 22-24 August at the Aliw Theater. This is their last offering in the series of shows for their Pearl Anniversary.

September highlighted modern dance through Alice Reyes Dance Philippines' staging of *Juan Tamad and Other Ballets* from 12-14 September 2025. Held at the Hyundai Hall, Areté, the mixed bill featured original choreography by Erl Sorilla based on classic Filipino story of Juan Tamad (John the Lazy). The other ballets include 'Nocturne'



by Carlo Pacis, 'C'est la Cie' by Augustus Damian, and 'Moon' by Kun-Yang Lin.

Ballet Manila revived its acclaimed original Filipino work *Florante at Laura* from 3-5 October, based on the epic poem by Francisco Balagtas, continuing the company's tradition of adapting national literature to the stage.

In recent years the Philippine dance scene saw the emergence of national and international competitions: ABAP International Dance Competition on 20-21 June, the Philippine Challenge Cup Dance Competition on 5 July, the MNL Dance Prix on 23 August, and the Youth Grand Prix from 27-29 September 2025. These competitions provided young dancers with stage experience, mentorship, and international exposure, contributing to the development of the technical standards of ballet and contemporary dance across the country.

The commitment to innovative contemporary work was embodied by the launching of Mari Dance PH, which presented its debut production, *A Dance in a Day in a Dance*, over two weekends in October at the Doreen Black Box Theater, Areté. Choreographed by the multi-awarded JM Cabling, this production offered a raw, introspective look at the demanding and often unseen realities faced by dance artists. Mari Dance PH is a bold initiative of five former dance majors: JM Cabling, Sarah Samaniego, Michael Barry Que, Angela Bettina Carlos and Regina Bautista.

The sustained vitality across classical, modern, competitive, and innovative platforms clearly signaled a thriving and ambitious future for Filipino dance.

1. Ballet Manila's *Florante at Laura*, 3-5 October, at the Aliw Theatre. Photo: Erica Marquez-Jacinto.

2. Katrine San Miguel in 'Lihim Ni Lea', in *A Dance in a Day in a Dance* by Mari Dance PH, choreographed by JM Cabling, at the Doreen Black Box Theatre, Areté. Photo courtesy of Mari Dance PH.



# Tso's Dance Association (Taiwan) report

by Su-Ling Chou



Interestingly, in the second half of 2025, dance in Taiwan was more active than the past few years. As if every dance artist in Taiwan is waking up ready to move, there are plenty of activities especially festivals and performances happening throughout the island. For example, there are two festivals held in two cities of southern Taiwan, Kaohsiung and Tainan, in October and November.

The FOCASA Circus Festival was held in Kaohsiung on two weekends of October, organized by FOCASA Circus, which was founded in 2011 with the goal to develop the various facets of contemporary circus arts in Taiwan, mixing them with special styles of performance including traditional forms, acrobatics, street culture and theatre arts. This year, the company invited Lin Hwai-min, the well-known choreographer and founder of Cloud Gate Dance Theater, to create his first-ever circus production, *One to One Hundred: A Brave Journey*. Inspired by Jimmy Liao's illustrations, Lin Hwai-min took a risk to enter the realm of circus art and choreograph this work, which blended contemporary circus, dance and theatrical storytelling to narrate the transformative journey of a courageous boy.

The 2025 Tainan

Arts Festival happened in Tainan City featuring four dance productions, two by international groups, namely *Body Concert* by Korean Ambiguous Dance Company and *Dancing with Marya* by Bali Mulawali Institute. The remaining two are by local companies, *Café: Dance to 40+* by 50 Arts Theatre, and *Scattered Pages of the Days* by Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company.

The 2025 Kaohsiung Military Dependents' Village Carnival was held by the Culture Bureau of Kaohsiung City Government from 25 October to 9 November 2025, spread out in three districts of Kaohsiung City. Military families had come from all over Mainland China to stay in Taiwan since the 1949 civil war era. In Kaohsiung, there are military veteran villages of navy, army and air force, located in Zuoying Jian Ye Village, Fengshan Huang Pu Village and Gang Shan Village, whose area is the widest one among all the cities in Taiwan. As time went



This page: *One to One Hundred: A Brave Journey*, choreographed by Lin Hwai-min, at FOCASA Circus Festival, Kaohsiung. Photos: Chia-yeh Lee..



by, people who used to live in these military veteran villages formed a specific culture and atmosphere. To preserve the lifestyle and culture of these villages, the Carnival was designed to bring back the memory of the old days.

We are proud to announce that the former WDAAP president, Yunyu Wang, is honored with the Taiwan Dance Contribution Award, given by the Taiwan Dance Research Society. This is the first time the award is given and will be selected every five years. The ceremony will be held on 6 December 2025 during its annual conference.

WDAAP Taiwan members Yu-Jing Chen and Huai-po He received gold and bronze prizes at the Taiwan Creative Dance Competition 2025. The national dance

competition has been held since 1996. After more than 20 years, this competition has become the most important stage for young Taiwanese choreographers to challenge themselves and each other. The gold award was bestowed on Yu-Jing Chen for 'Savage Daughter,' describing the growth of a girl to motherhood. The bronze prize was awarded to Huai-po He, who choreographed 'Interstice.' He used fans to build up a space full of possibility. It is hoped that this young generation can move forward to the international stage with their courage and bright creativity.

The 2026 International Young Choreographers Project (IYCP) hosted by WDAAP in Taiwan, will be held on 29 June to 17 July 2026. The call for choreographers can be seen in this edition. There will be eight choreographers (one from WDA Americas, one from WDA Europe, three from WDA-AP and three from Taiwan) selected to gather in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. This event provides young and talented choreographers with an opportunity to work together and with selected local dancers to produce a final performance at the end of the three week residency in Kaohsiung. Despite a limited budget, WDAAP Taiwan has diligently continued to support and organize the event.

It is our hope that dance in Taiwan will continue growing into a new era through all these dance events and for members from Taiwan, as in the past, will continue joining WDA events around the Asia-Pacific region. We look forward to seeing you at the WDA Annual Conference on 24-27 June 2026 in Taichung city in Taiwan.



Winners of the Taiwan Creative Dance Competition 2025.

1. The gold prize was awarded to Yu-Jing Chen for her work 'Savage Daughter'.

Photo: Yen-tun Wang.

2. The bronze prize was awarded to Huai-po He for the work 'Interstice'.

Photo: Chai-hao Chang



## Upcoming Events

### 2026 International Young Choreographer Project

A Choreographic Opportunity in Taiwan

#### Working with eight choreographers in July 2026 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Registration Form to be sent to your chapter head

There will be eight choreographers (one from WDA Europe, three from WDA-AP and three to four from Taiwan) selected and gathering in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. An additional three to four Taiwanese choreographers will also be selected to join the event. The funding is supported by National Culture and Arts Foundation, Bureau Culture Affairs of Kaohsiung City Government, and the Chin-Lin Foundation for Culture and Arts in Taiwan. The project will be held in the city of Kaohsiung, south of Taiwan. The tentative dates for the 2026 event are from 29 June to 17 July 2026, with two performances taking place on the main stage of the theatre in the campus of Tsoying High School from 18-19 July 2026.

Choreographers will be recommended by the WDA Asia-Pacific, America or Europe chapter heads. The deadline for the recommendation from each chapter head is 30 January 2026 with all documents required sent to Taiwan. The final eight choreographers will be provided with housing, local transportation, dancers, studios, publicity, production and office assistance. In addition, an honorarium will be provided: US\$ 800 for four choreographers from the Asia-Pacific region and US\$ 1200 for the choreographer from Europe. Participants are responsible for international airfare and local transportation between the airport and the site.

The selected choreographers will set their dances on dancers auditioned in Taiwan. It is recommended that only young choreographers who feel they can meet the challenges of producing a work under unfamiliar circumstances and with unfamiliar dancers should apply.

Each WDA region office in Asia-Pacific or Europe will facilitate the selection process in its own chapter and send only one candidate from each chapter or country to the IYCP office in Taiwan. You need to be a member in

order to apply to your chapter. Expressions of interest should address the following points and approach to your area chapter (<http://www.wda-ap.org/chapters/>):

- A. What would you gain from a professional experience such as this?
- B. Why would you like to work in Asia / or Taiwan, if you live in Asia?
- C. A brief concept of your work
- D. A 200-word autobiography and a resume/CV

If you are shortlisted in the final list in your chapter, you will be required to submit to WDA (Asia-Pacific or Europe) a link to an online video (YouTube or Vimeo) of a work sample of your recent choreography, either with a single dance piece or several excerpts (less than 20 minutes). You may also be invited to send up to three photos of your work, which is not compulsory, but will give the WDA selection board more ideas about your choreography.

Download Registration Form

Expressions of interest should be sent to your chapter head for their evaluation, then forwarded by EMAIL to the WDA Asia-Pacific or Europe offices of each chapter by 10 January 2026.

The name and documents of each choreographer recommended by the WDA chapters should be sent to the Taiwan office by 30 January 2026. The Taiwan office will announce the result of the final eight selections for the 2026 IYCP by 2 March 2026 on the WDAAP website at <http://www.wda-ap.org>. A letter of confirmation to each choreographer will be emailed from the office in Taiwan.

For information or any enquiry about the International Young Choreography Project, please visit <http://www.wda-ap.org/projects> or contact the Project Office at Tsoying High School (email: [dance30@tyhs.kh.edu.tw](mailto:dance30@tyhs.kh.edu.tw)).

Mailing address:

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

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



# World Dance Alliance key contacts

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