

# Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





A contemporary dance performance at the Utarakan Festival in North Lampung, Indonesia, produced by Sanggar Cangget Budaya.

Dancers from the National Taiwan University of Sport performing Li-Chun Pan's "Hongu Utux (End of the Rainbow)" at the 2024 Singapore International Dance Conference and Festival, at LASALLE College of the Arts. Photo: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy



World Dance Alliance  
Asia-Pacific

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Cover: Wushiren Theatre (Singapore) performing "I Am Finally in Love with The World", choreographed by Ranice Tay, at the 2024 Singapore International Dance Conference and Festival, at LASALLE College of the Arts. Photo: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy

## Executive reports

The Executive Board of the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific (WDAAP) is elected by the membership every two years at the Annual General Meeting, which is held in a different country each year and is hosted by the local WDA chapter. The Executive Board consists of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and four regional Vice Presidents, who represent the interests of their regions: East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. Members with a specific interest in the affairs of one of these regions should contact the designated Vice President. If members wish to contribute to issues within their own countries, they should contact their Chapter heads.



## President's report

by Anna CY Chan

It is with profound respect and a deep sense of responsibility that I accept the role of President of the World Dance Alliance-Asia Pacific, effective September 2024, following my election at the WDAAP AGM in Singapore. My journey with WDA began in 2005, providing me with numerous opportunities to contribute to our shared mission. My previous role as Vice President for East Asia and co-chair of the Education & Training network allowed me to play a key role in supporting the development of WDA. I have had the honour of organising and supporting significant WDA events across Hong Kong, Taipei, Australia, and Singapore, and I have actively contributed to the Education & Training network for WAAE events.

### Vision for the Future

As I embark on this new leadership journey, my foremost goal is to reactivate and reinvigorate our network of chapters, networks, and partnerships that have faced challenges during the pandemic. I am committed to collaborating closely with the newly elected Executive Board members—Vice-Presidents Sarah Knox and Hong Jo Jun, Secretary Lynn Wang, and Treasurer Jefferson Chieh-hua Hsieh—to formulate a comprehensive three-year plan. I envision WDA as a unified global organization that fosters community engagement and actively recruits younger members, ensuring the vibrancy and sustainability of our dance ecosystem.

### Three Primary Goals for 2025-2027

- During our inaugural Executive Board meeting on September 16, 2024, we established three primary goals:
- Explore WDA as a Unified Global Organization.
  - Fortify Community Bonds.
  - Actively Recruit Younger Members.

We will prioritize key events, conferences, and exchange programs that enhance communication, collaboration, and artistic development among our members and stakeholders. Additionally, we aim to implement new registration processes and improve our communication strategies by providing regular updates on current projects and our social media initiatives.

### Commitment to Collaboration and Engagement

The new Executive Board is eager to work collaboratively with all chapter and network leaders. I believe a spirit of collective leadership will bring fresh insights and contributions as we navigate our shared future. Together, we can empower the next generation of dance leaders and cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters creative exploration and growth.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our immediate past president, Urmimala Sarkar Munsri, and all previous leaders. Their unwavering dedication and visionary guidance have laid a strong foundation for our future. To honor their legacy, I proposed the formation of an Honorary Advisor group during the last AGM, which will include past presidents Urmimala Sarkar Munsri, Yunyu Wang, Mohd Anis Md Nor, and long-serving past secretary Julie Dyson. This group will provide valuable advice as the new executive board advances our collective objectives.

### Conclusion

I look forward to providing strong, visionary leadership across WDA's core network areas and collaborating with all members to shape the future of dance in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The next WDA Dance Conference event will be in Hong Kong from 18-22 June 2025 as part of the SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival. Please reserve the dates. The detailed programme information will be announced soon. I look forward to welcoming you to the vibrant city of Hong Kong.

Once again, thank you for your continued support as we embark on this transformative journey together.



## Outgoing President's report

by Urmimala Sarkar

My tenure with WDAAP as its President started with a promise to the WDA community to continue and encourage international dance dialogues through practice and theory interface. Till 2019, we continued in a vibrant mode where new ventures in the form of memberships of new countries and institutions, including Bangladesh, Fiji and the Beijing Dance Academy, brought hope and new opportunities. The *Journal for Emerging Dance Scholarship* started and flourished, the WDAAP newsletter, *Asia Pacific Channels*, continued with its excellent reports, and the large global and country conferences / festivals / Annual General Meetings continued.

I look back in wonder at the time from 2020 – 2022 that saw nearly two and a half years of severe disruption because of COVID as one of the darkest periods many of us have ever imagined, alongside an overall lessening of funding and support from the arts in general, and dance in particular. We were trying to hold hands through smaller events, regular production of the *Channels* newsletter and the "Begin Again" venture of funding short Screendance films by young dancers/ filmmakers.

We resurfaced with the SWEAT Festival organized in Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in June 2022, and slowly fought our way through the sense of despondency.

Our journey through COVID has not lessened our determination to make a better world for, through and with dance. We have

begun a DANCE DIALOGUES series of online roundtable meetings. We started in March with a session on "First Steps Towards Publication for Emerging Dance Scholars", where dance scholars Sumedha Bhattacharyya (India), Shanny Rann Chuah (Malaysia) and Al Bernard Garcia (Philippines) contributed their perspectives.

The second online Dialogue was held in May and was centered around the Beijing Dance Academy (China) discussing "Beijing Dance Academy: What makes it so important?" moderated by Yunyu Wang. The third one was a South Asia Dialogue involving three young academics/ administrators/ practitioners, Zairiyah Mouli (Bangladesh), Chamanee Darshika (Sri Lanka), and Amritha Shruthi (India) who discussed "Dance Studies in University Spaces in South Asia." The fourth and the most recent one was in September, where five of the choreographers who participated in the recent International Young Choreographers' Program in Taiwan discussed "Why do we need international exchange programs?"

Post our restarted face-to-face Annual General Meeting in September in June 2024, in Singapore, the new WDAAP Board has been constituted. The new President Professor Anna Chan (Dean, School of Dance, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, Hong Kong) and her wonderful team bring new hope and a fragrance of rejuvenation to World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific.



## Vice President's report

by Jun Hong Jo

As one of the Vice Presidents of the International Dance Committee [IDC] hosted by the International Theatre Institute [ITI], as well as incoming Vice President of World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific, it is my pleasure to encourage greater interaction and mutual support between the two organisations.

I believe that now is an essential time to rejuvenate connections on both sides of this relationship. WDA and ITI signed a memorandum of understanding to be partner organisations in Shanghai in 2017. During the recent WDAAP General Meeting in Singapore on 1 September 2024, one of the issues of discussion was the need for WDA to develop as a global dance organisation, to fulfill its obligations to represent dance across the world to ITI as well as other global entities such as UNESCO.

The last meeting of the ITI-IDC occurred on 19 September, on the occasion of the ITI 37th World Congress in Amsterdam and Antwerp. One of the main issues raised by ITI-IDC president Alberto Garcia Castano, who is also President of the Alicia Alonso University Dance Institute, at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Spain, was the preservation of the archives of iconic Cuban ballerina Alicia Alonso, who passed away aged 98 in 2019. The archive contains more than 30,000 documents, photographs, programs, videos and press clippings.

ITI-IDC is also working with a network of art universities in Latin America, RED Universitaria des Artes [RUA], on an international research congress of performing arts. ITI-IDC has also previously participated in the Nature, Art and Tradition festival, at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

ITI-IDC and WDA are currently working on a two-year plan to create a rapprochement

between the two organisations, especially focused on the inclusion of Asian countries. ITI-IDC has proposed that the official celebration of International Dance Day in 2026 should take place in the Philippines, with the collaboration of WDAAP. ITI-IDC is currently confirming the location for the 2025 celebration of International Dance Day.



I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a recent co-production by ITI, featuring the work of ITI World Theatre Ambassador Lemi Ponifasio, who is a theatre director, choreographer and artist from Samoa and New Zealand. The production *Star Returning* is a new creation by Ponifasio in collaboration with dancers and singers from the Yi ethnic group in Daliangshan, China.

According to the program text, "At the heart of *Star Returning* are critical aspects of Yi heritage, such as the Book of Origins, which recounts creation stories, and the spiritual chants of the Bimo, which are integral to rituals honouring the community's connection to its ancestors. The Torch Festival emphasises unity and marks the arrival of summer, reinforcing themes of creation, morality, and the essence of existence."

I was privileged to witness the premiere of this production in November this year at Daliangshan Theatre Festival in Xichang, China. I found that Lemi Ponifasio tries to deeply connect with emotions and the messages that the original material conveys, and I felt it was a most restrained performance.



1. The 37th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute in September 2024, in Amsterdam and Antwerp. Photo: Jun Hong Jo.  
2. Samoan-New Zealand theatre director and choreographer Lemi Ponifasio, who has recently premiered a new work produced in collaboration with ITI. Photo courtesy of ITI.



## Secretary's report

by Lynn Wang

The 2024 World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific (WDAAP) Annual General Meeting (AGM), held in Singapore in September 2024, focused on the future direction of WDAAP, particularly on how to maintain connections with the global community in the post-pandemic era, while promoting the sustainable development of the global dance industry.

In the election of the new executive board, we declared Anna CY Chan as President (Hong Kong), Jun Hong Jo (Korea) and Sarah Knox (New Zealand) as Vice Presidents, and Lynn (Lin) Wang (Beijing) as Secretary.

The immediate past president Urmimala Sarkar Munsri and the outgoing executive board expressed their congratulations to the new Board and encouraged them to continue working together to drive WDAAP's progress in the future. Anna CY Chan thanked the previous Board for their work and proposed the formation of an advisory board for a one-year term to support the smooth transition for the new Executive Board members.

The meeting also passed several motions related to registration and finances, including assigning the Hong Kong Chapter to handle future registration and updates. Anna CY Chan also pointed out that the 2025 WDAAP AGM will be held in Hong Kong, and the new Executive Board will work closely in the first year to propose a new structure for the 2025 Hong Kong AGM. This structure will require in-depth discussion and will be gradually advanced in collaboration with key partners. The meeting also confirmed that the 2026 AGM will be held in Taiwan.

In the report from the previous Executive

Board, WDAAP's past successful collaborations with other organizations were acknowledged. Urmimala highlighted that, through online meetings and dialogues, especially the 2024 Dance Dialogue series, WDAAP has been able to stay connected with a wider audience and raise awareness of social welfare. The report also mentioned the success of the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* (JEDS), demonstrating that the journal serves as a good model for the future.

In the Network Reports, Sarah Knox, Chair of the Education and Training Network, shared the report from WAAE President Ralph Buck and WAAE's work, particularly exploring the implementation of the 2024 UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education. In the Support and Development Network, Stephanie Burrige expressed special thanks for the contributions of *Asia-Pacific Channels* over the years, noting that it has documented WDAAP's rich historical legacy, which is crucial for the younger generation. In the Creation and Presentation Network, Su-Ling Chou and Yunyu Wang provided an overview of the International Young Choreographers' Project (IYCP), highlighting that since its launch in 1999, the project has attracted over 60 young choreographers worldwide, with more than 300 dancers gathered in Taiwan and around 70 dances created. They expressed their gratitude to the Chin-Lin Foundation for its long-standing support of the IYCP project.

This AGM not only marked the birth of the new Executive Board but also sought to inject new energy and direction into the future of the global dance community. Through in-depth discussions on collaborative models in the digital age and the sustainable development of the global dance industry, the meeting demonstrated a strong sense of innovation and a global vision.

With Hong Kong and Taiwan hosting the next two AGMs, WDAAP will continue to promote cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, advancing the global reach and prosperity of dance arts. Looking ahead, with the formation of the new executive committee, WDAAP will further solidify its ambition to promote the global dance community, leveraging its rich legacy and innovative strategic planning.

WDAAP office holders at the 2024 Annual General Meeting on 1 September 2024 in Singapore. Standing L-R: Szuching Chang, Jefferson Chieh-hua Hsieh, Stella Lau, Yijung Wu, Yunyu Wang, Su-Ling Chou, Stephanie Burrige, Julie Dyson, Xenres Kirishima, Jun Hong Jo, Md. Anis Md. Nor; front row L-R Lynn Wang, Anna CY Tan, Urmimala Sarkar, Sarah Knox, Bilqis Hijjas, Allen Lam.





A scene from Anandita Khan's 'Innocence Lost', at the International Young Choreographer's Project, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024. Photo: Su-Ling Chou

## 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.

## Creation & Presentation report

by Palmer Mathews

The recent WDAAP Dance Dialogue, entitled *Why Do We Need International Dance Exchange Programs?*, brought five emerging choreographers together on Zoom to share their experiences participating in the International Young Choreographer Project (YICP) in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The talk on 20 September highlighted each artist's experience with their rehearsal process, choreographic goals, and cultural exchange during their time in Taiwan. The participants — Yuchi Chen (Taiwan), Maybelle Lek (Singapore), Alice Ma (Hong Kong), Tung-Chun Hsu (Taiwan), and Mohd Nuriqram (Malaysia) — represented a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives, and the wide appeal this project had to emerging choreographers from around the world. Over the course of the discussion, they reflected on the personal and professional growth they gained from this project, as well as the impact that exchange programs like these have on their artistic development. This report will briefly introduce the main themes explored during the discussion, offering insights into how such projects shape the next generation of choreographers.

Each choreographer faced unique challenges in developing their work, from translating their artistic concepts into movement to new choreographic experiences. For example, Yuchi Chen spoke about how after many years of professional experience in a European dance company, this was his first time choreographing on a group of dancers. He encountered a few unexpected difficulties throughout the rehearsal process but was still able to create a strong dance piece. Mohd Nuriqram shared his experience struggling with the initial stages of developing the narrative for his dance and translating these ideas to a group dance piece. These challenges ultimately led to creative breakthroughs, as they all found ways to express their choreographic vision.

The international aspect of the project encouraged a rich cultural exchange, which was transformative for many of the

choreographers. Working with peers from diverse backgrounds allowed them to expand their perspectives on dance and creativity. Just from listening to the way they all interacted on the Zoom meeting, it was clear all five choreographers had become close friends. Undergoing this project together undoubtedly built strong connections between the participants. They all agreed that engaging with different students, working in a cultural context, and sharing movement vocabularies challenged and inspired them to explore new choreographic ideas.

Finally, the project fostered significant personal and professional growth. The choreographers all mentioned how they gained confidence and learned valuable skills in leadership, collaboration, and adaptation. Maybelle Lek spoke about how this experience helped her to refine their artistic style, explaining how this project was a turning point for her. She felt more connected to her work and became confident in her creative choices. Collectively, the choreographers highlighted how this experience broadened their professional networks and may be a perfect stepping stone for future global collaborations.

In reflecting on their experiences with the International Young Choreographer Project, these five emerging choreographers highlighted the influence of cultural exchange, creative challenges, and collaboration on their artistic development. The project not only expanded their understanding of dance and dance choreography, but also strengthened their professional skills and resilience. As they look toward future projects, each choreographer is sure to apply these lessons, bringing a fresh, globally informed perspective to their new works. This experience underscores the value of international dance exchange programs in nurturing the next generation of dance artists.

## Education & Training Network report

by Sarah Knox, co-chair

It is my pleasure to report on the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) global summit held in Athens, Greece, in October. Members of the World Dance Alliance (WDA), International Society for Music Education (ISME), International Society for Education Through Art (INESA), and International Drama Education Association (IDEA) gathered to share around the summit theme 'Arts, Nature, Technology, Education: Harmony in Unity.'

A particular highlight was hearing keynote speaker Mr Ke Leng, Programme Coordinator at the Cultural Policies and Development Entity, Culture Sector, UNESCO. Mr Leng is currently the co-lead for the implementation of the UNESCO Intersectoral Programme on strengthening the synergies between culture and education, including overseeing the development of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education and its implementation. Within the keynote, Mr Leng provided the following questions for discussion among the four organisations members:

- How can we ensure equitable access to culture and arts education?
- How can we integrate diverse knowledge systems? (especially indigenous knowledge systems)
- How can we leverage digital technologies and AI responsibly?
- How can we enhance professional development for educators and cultural practitioners?
- How can we promote lifelong and lifewide learning?

Each organisation was able to spend time exploring these questions with regard to our arts forms and contexts. We are currently working on collating discussion reports to share with the WAAE community.

Further, the WAAE Executive committee and summit hosts, the Department of Music Studies and the Department of Theatre Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), are undertaking the writing of the 'Athens Manifesto' which aims to provide direction for our organisations to fervently enact the aims for the Framework, and I hope to be able to share this document at the WDA Dance Conference in Hong Kong this year. It is important we all continue to raise the profile of dance education in our local contexts and to consider how we each may play our part in providing relevant and meaningful lifewide and lifelong dance and cultural experiences for our communities.

In addition, I am grateful to take on the role of Co-Vice President of World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific, along with Jun Hong Jo. With the new leadership of WDA President Anna CY Chan and alongside Secretary Lin Wang I look forward to supporting the World Dance Alliance into the future.

## Research & Documentation Network report

by A.P. Rajaram, chair

We are glad to inform everyone that the articles selected for the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2023, Vol X have been published and are available on our website.

The recent call for papers for the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship* 2023, Vol XI, with the theme: 'Complexities and Challenges in Dance/ Dance Studies' also had a good response. Among many submissions, the team is now working on selecting the papers and processing it further. Of the topics of the articles that we are reviewing for selection for this volume, keywords such as 'dance bodies on stage,' 'decontextualized bodies in the imaginary worlds,' 'intangible authenticity from body to body,' and 'renegotiating aesthetic citizenship through the dancing body,' are the most common. The papers that we have received focused mainly on dance genres from South Asia and Southeast Asia.

This volume is expected to be published in April 2025. The new team of editors is comprised of Debanjali Biswas, A.P. Rajaram and Akhila C. Vimal, and have worked on reviewing and advising the scholars in incorporating the advised changes in their articles.

The other volumes can be accessed from the following link. <https://jedsonline.in/home>



Audience at paper presentations during the Singapore International Dance Conference Festival, 2-4 September 2024, at 30 Bencoolen Hotel, Singapore.

## 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, Beijing Dance Academy, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Taipei.

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

A performance of Lai Haraoba by Manipuri dancers, at the inaugural 'Anondo Boibhob - Festivals of Bangladesh' event at Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka, on 8 November 2024.



## Australia report

by Julie Dyson



It was very special to be part of the WDA's Asia Pacific Annual General meeting and conference in September, and to have the privilege of handing over the Secretary's position after more than two decades at the helm, and in the process to have been able to support successive AP Presidents.

The new Secretary is Lynn Wang, a dance scholar based in Beijing and at Leeds University in the UK where she is a PhD candidate. Her first report as Secretary

appears in this edition of *Channels*.

In the meantime I have been sharing archival documents with new President, Anna CY Chan in Hong Kong, where the library of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts has undertaken to house the WDA-AP archives.

The bulk of the paper archives are currently housed in the National Library of Australia (1989-2021), but the electronic records will, as far as possible, be housed in Hong Kong from now on. This is also where WDA-AP is legally registered as an organisation.

It has been a great privilege to have worked with a succession of Presidents and Secretaries-General. Cheryl Stock (Australia) was the inaugural Secretary-General, followed by Anis Mohd Nor (Malaysia). The inaugural President and founder of WDA-AP was the visionary Carl Wolz (US and HK), followed by Basilio Esteban Villaruz (Philippines), Anis Mohd Nor (Malaysia), Yunyu Wang (Taiwan) and Urmimala Sarkar Munsri (India).

The new team of President Anna CY Chan (Hong Kong), Vice-President Sarah Knox (New Zealand), Secretary Lynn Wang and ongoing Treasurer Jeff Hsieh (Taiwan) will be a powerhouse of new ideas and



commitment, and I look forward to remaining as part of an informal advisory group of immediate past office bearers.

In Australia we have been fortunate to have seen many dance artists participate in WDA festivals and conferences, and this year in Singapore was no exception.

We are always privileged to be included in the International Young Choreographers Program administered by WDA Taiwan and enabled by the Chin Lin Foundation. In 2024, after a competitive application process, Victorian choreographer Callum Mooney was chosen to participate over a

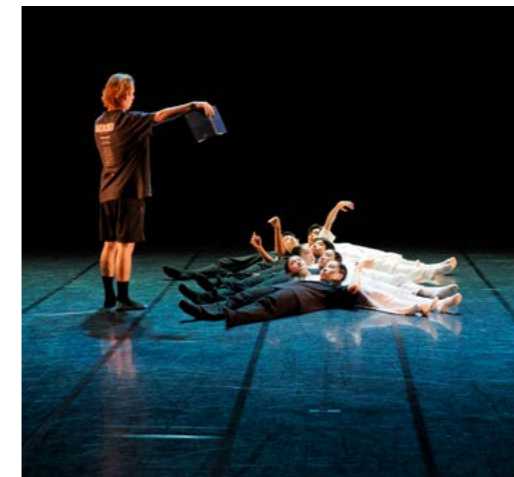
4-week period in July in Tsoying, Taiwan. Ausdance Victoria was able to assist Callum with a small grant, and the Chin Lin Foundation supported his stay in Tsoying.

Callum has reflected on his experience:

'IYCP was an incredible opportunity for creative growth and cultural exchange. The dancers I had for my development were very special movers and people, and I have made long-term connections with them. There was a performance outcome of my short work 'equilibrium' that was presented for IYCP in Kaohsiung.

'The cultural exchange of the different choreographers from different parts of the Asia-Pacific region was beautiful. I learned a lot and shared many amazing moments. I have luckily been asked by the organisers to come back to Taiwan to create and teach for the school in the coming years.'

To read more about previous IYCP Australian participants' experiences, go to the [Ausdance National website](#).



1. Dancers performing Callum Mooney's 'equilibrium', at the International Young Choreographer's Project, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024. Photo: Su-Ling Chou

2. Incoming WDAAP secretary Lynn Wang and outgoing secretary Julie Dyson, at the WDAAP AGM in Singapore on 1 September 2024. Photo: Yunyu Wang.

Dancers performing Callum Mooney's 'equilibrium', at the International Young Choreographer's Project,

Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024. Photo left: Tsun-Yang Tsui; photo above: Ching-Tsung Yeh.



## Bangladesh report

by Zuairiyah Mouli



Bangladesh witnessed a major shift on 5 August 2024, with the downfall of the previous government after days of civil unrest. In the aftermath, the Bangladeshi people are seeking a reformation that promotes their socio-economic rights. Major changes are taking place in the performing arts industry as well. Not many dance programs are happening, but dancers are resolutely planning and preparing themselves for upcoming projects. Many organizations are working on creating platforms to patronize dance artists.

Nrittoshilpi Songstha is planning a project to organize Dance festivals at district levels while Chhayanaut organized a bharatnatyam dance recital to encourage and motivate dance students. At a Dhaka event organized by the Bangladesh National Museum, four books authored by Lubna Marium, co-Vice President for South Asia of the World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific, were launched.

These books - *Terracotta Tales from Somapura*, *Ras Mela: Atonement by the Sea*, *Of Myths, Monsoons and Manasa*, and *Lathikhela: Dance or Defence?* - highlight Bangladesh's intangible cultural heritage and were published by Shadhona. The event concluded with a cultural presentation showcasing festival traditions, all replete with dance and music, such as the Baha of the Santal, Sangrai of the Marma, Lai Haraoba of the Manipuri, Shaoner Dala of Nachari, and the Rash Mela of the Motua.

In August 2024, flash floods in Bangladesh devastated communities across 11 districts, affecting 5.8 million people and more than 500,000 were displaced in evacuation shelters. People from many corners of Bangladesh gathered funds to help the flood-affected communities. From the dance industry initiatives were also taken to help the flood victims.

Students of Jahangirnagar University



organized a charity dance event, *Tol Pathorer Chirka*, and collected more than 50,000 BDT, which they distributed among flood victims. Many reputed dance troupes, such as Katthakiya, Ongshi, Alifia Dance Squad, along with students of Jahangirnagar University performed at the event. Some dance companies came under the banner of 'Shocheton Nrittoshilpi Shomaj,' and organized a dance event at the premises of the Shaheed Minar to also collect funds for the flood victims, while the Dance department of Tagore University of Creative Arts made their separate fundraising efforts.

In this crisis period, some dance artists proudly represented Bangladesh on international platforms. Anandita Khan, a dance artist from Bangladesh, was selected for the International Young Choreographers project in Taiwan. She was the first Bangladeshi dance artist who represented Bangladesh on this platform. At the project, Anandita collaborated with six Taiwanese dancers - Leo, Angel, Jemmy, Jona, Louis, Mina - from which she created 'Innocence Lost', exploring the devastating effects of war on innocent lives. Anandita Khan shared her experience, "The piece poignantly highlights the plight of Palestinian children, exiled and oppressed, and critiques the world's silence in the face of such suffering. This project provided a valuable opportunity for young choreographers to work in an unfamiliar environment, pushing their skills and creativity to new heights." The piece was scripted by Ishak Khan and directed with sensitivity by Asif Muhammed Musaddeque. Later this year, Anandita was also offered a three-week artistic internship with a contemporary dance company at Theatre

Bremen in Germany, working on "Unusual Symptoms," under the guidance of Samir Akika.

Meanwhile, a nine-member troupe from Dhaka's Kolpotoru dance school, a sister organization of Shadhona, represented Bangladesh at the prestigious Bali Yatra Festival 2024 in Cuttack, Odisha, at the invitation of the Indian government. This seven-day cultural fair, held from 15-22 November 2024, featured groups from Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Slovakia, highlighting South and Southeast Asian cultural exchanges. The Bangladeshi troupe, warmly welcomed in Bhubaneswar with traditional floral showers, performed vibrant dances inspired by Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Their showcase included traditional martial arts-based performances lathikhela and raibeshe, reflecting Bangladesh's rich cultural heritage.

Every crisis has its social consequences. The vast majority of dancers enter the world with unrealistic expectations driven by their passion but end up in a life of economic and financial uncertainty. Sometimes dancers are asked to commit to a project with no specific end date and the remuneration does not ever cover their transportation cost to the rehearsals. In one way, dancing can always be a way to escape the pressure of the world, on the other hand, every social crisis reminds dancers about the economic uncertainty of being a professional dance artist. It is high time that we, the dance artists of Bangladesh, ask ourselves where we belong in the economy and where we want to see ourselves moving forward.

1. Dancers performing Anandita Khan's 'Innocence Lost', at the International Young Choreographer's Project, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024. Photo: Su-Ling Chou  
2. The book launch of four new volumes by Lubna Marium, organized by the Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka, on 4 November 2024.



1. Kolpotoru Dance School performing at Bali Yatra Festival 2024, in Cuttack, Odisha, India, in November 2024.  
2. Bangladesh choreographer Anandita Khan taking a bow at the International Young Choreographer's Project in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in July 2024.



**Hong Kong report**  
by Momoko To



As we continue to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Dance Alliance (HKDA), we are excited to announce a series of activities aimed at fostering international dance exchange.

One of the highlights is *Together We Dance! 30-Year Journey: Dance Film Nights*, scheduled for late November. This milestone event featured the world premiere of 'Universal Bodies, Universal Souls,' directed by Maurice Lai and choreographed by Sharon Vazanna; Hong Kong premieres of *Those Who Dance*, directed by Huang Lo-yao; and *Huang Bian*, directed by Zhang Lu, with a concept by Ergao for

the first evening showcase. Following the performances, a post-show talk with the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts encouraged deeper engagement with the artists, exploring the transformative power of screen dance.

The second evening spotlighted emerging choreographers and film directors such as Blue Ka Wing, Ziv Chun, Terry Tsang, Wong Tan-ki, and Kitty Yeung, concluding with an engaging discussion session. A key feature of this event is the International Dance Exchange, which promotes collaboration and innovative practices across borders in the world of dance.

Additionally, HKDA is gearing up for the *New Force in Motion Series 2024 – 2025*, themed 'Break Through: Dynamic, Beyond Boundaries, Vibrant.' After a thorough selection process, we are thrilled to announce three chosen standout choreographers: Holmes Cheung, Carmen Yu, and Tsang Wing-fai. They will present their unique works under the guidance of our Production Advisor Karen Cheung and Dance Advisor Anh Nguyen on a captivating journey of movement exploration. This series will take place at the Black Box Theatre, Kwai Tsing Theatre in January 2025.

In addition to HKDA's event, Hong Kong is bustling with various local dance activities. *Freespace Dance 2024* was presented by West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), explored and reimagined the concepts of time and space through innovative choreography.

Highlights included the *FIRST Creation Platform – Presentations by Independent*



Artists featuring work-in-progress presentations by TS Crew (HK) x contact Gonzo (Osaka) and Hong Kong artist Zelia ZZ Tan. Additionally, there were sharing sessions with local dance artists and their collaborators, such as Scarlet Yu, Woo Yat-hei, Chan Wai-lok (with Larry Shuen), and Wayson Poon (with Kong Chan).

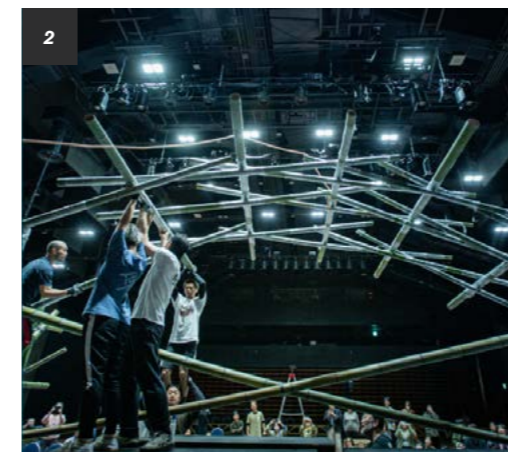
The inaugural Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo (HKPAX), sponsored by the Culture, Sports, and Tourism Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and organized by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, concluded successfully. Over 1,600 arts leaders and practitioners from more than 60 regions attended, with a notable presence from representatives of the Mainland, the Middle East, Canada, and Australia. The international showcase, exhibition and forum were the highlights of HKPAX.

The Tai Po Arts Centre became a vibrant hub for the Performing Arts in Community event, featuring captivating performances in theater, dance, exhibitions, and music

on 16 October 2024. This event offered a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Hong Kong's performing arts. Industry professionals from around the globe and the public were invited to experience the boundless creativity emanating from this engaging venue. Local dance organisations, including Studio 301 and CCDC Dance Centre, presented unique works encompassing education, performance, and outreach. As a partner in this event, HKDA proudly invited three emerging choreographers—Holmes Cheung, Ho Ming-yan, and Pang Chun—to showcase their recent artistic efforts. This initiative aimed to facilitate meaningful exchanges between the audience and artists, promoting the development and collaboration in both local and international dance, as well as community arts.

The success of the HKPAX can be attributed to the dedicated support of the HKSAR Government, the active involvement of the local arts and cultural community, and the generous contributions from various organizations.

1. Dance works in the International Showcase at the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo. Photo provided by HKPAX.  
2. The poster for the program *Together We Dance! 30-Year Journey: Dance Film Nights*. Provided by HKDA



1. *New Force in Motion 2024-2025* promotional image. Photo provided by HKDA  
2. *Freespace Dance 2024: FIRST Creation Platform* presented a work-in-progress presentation of 'Building a bridge' (working title) by TS Crew (HK) and contact Gonzo (Osaka). Photo provided by WKCD  
3. [L-R] Choreographers Ho Ming-yan, Pang Chun and Holmes Cheung, presenters in the Performing Arts in Community program of HKPAX. Photo provided by HKDA

## India report

by Urmimala Sarkar



This year, besides the vibrant year-round activities of Dance Alliance - India chapter members, one of the very important collaborative and continuing projects has been the invitation of one of the WDA member countries to one of the very significant yearly festivals at the India International Centre, Delhi. IIC Experience was conceived in 2004 to encapsulate six decades of the centre as a space for diversity, freedom, innovation, creativity, learning and entertainment. Planned as an annual feature, the festival brings together a wide array of talents in the visual and performing arts. The entire gamut of activities - dance, music, theatre, installation, art and photography exhibitions, and film screenings - takes place at various indoor and outdoor spaces within the centre. Cuisine is also an integral part of the IIC Experience.

Entry to all the programmes of the festival (except cuisine) is open to the public and without tickets, passes or invitations. This carefully curated festival is now reaching a large community in and around Delhi NCR, and is well-publicised.

True to the tradition of WDAAP, we – Hong Jo Jun, honorary president of WDA Korea and the new Vice President

of WDAAP; Yunyu Wang, professor emerita at Taipei National University of the Arts, distinguished professor at Beijing Dance Academy and WDAAP past president; and I, Urmimala Sarkar, remaining as coordinator for India as the Vice President of Dance Alliance - India and the immediate past president of WDAAP – coordinated with the India International Centre to make this possible.

A most notable performance at the festival featured Jung-a Kim, dancer and artistic director of MUTDANCE company from Korea. She has been the artistic director of MUTDANCE since 2019, though her career in the discipline started with her debut in 1998 with her work *Repeat*. For the festival in India, Nam Young Lee, also a member of MUTDANCE, led the team of dancers. She performed her choreography entitled *Didida*, created with 2 other dancers, Haein Lee and Siul Choi, both of whom are also choreographers. The hour-and-a-half long piece explored mythological texts that contain archetypes and common memories of the collective subconscious of Koreans. It is a work that analyses and deconstructs the movement patterns of the mythical human being who stands on the ground and connects the heavens and earth, containing the vitality of the earth, and rearranges these movement patterns in a contemporary sense. The performance was hugely appreciated.

The India chapter looks forward to many such collaborative works in future.



*Didida*, choreographed and performed by Nam Young Lee, Haein Lee and Siul Choi of MUTDANCE from Korea, at the IIC Experience festival at India International Centre, Delhi, in October 2024.



Pintu Das (India) performing his work 'Unfold - Shape in Time' at the Singapore International Dance Conference Festival 2024, on 2 September, at LASALLE College of the Arts. Photos: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy

## Indonesia report

by Nabilla Kurnia Adzan



Talking about dance cannot be separated from how it is transmitted. In Indonesia, dance education is carried out through various methods, both formally in schools, within community settings, and even within families. This report outlines how dance is preserved through an educational perspective to ensure its continued existence as part of efforts to sustain the dance ecosystem in Indonesia. Furthermore, it highlights how dance can enhance the kinesthetic intelligence of the younger generation, and explores how discussion spaces have emerged in society, serving as platforms for dance education today.

### The Utarakan Festival, North Lampung

Sanggar Cangget Budaya is a dance studio in North Lampung that has been providing non-formal dance education since 1996. It focuses on traditional Lampung dance, Nusantara (Indonesian archipelago) dance, and even contemporary dance. Recognizing its position as the oldest dance studio in North Lampung, Sanggar Cangget Budaya has, for the past two years, provided a performance platform for local dancers, especially

Sanggar Cangget Budaya students, through the Utarakan Festival. The name 'Utarakan' is derived from 'Utara' (North), embodying Sanggar Cangget Budaya's spirit to empower dance education in the region.

Students who have completed training in specific dance forms are given the chance to perform on stage, dressed in costumes and makeup, in front of a crowd and captured by camera lenses. While this might be a common occurrence in large cities, for dancers in North Lampung, far from the reach of major dance festivals, this opportunity is truly remarkable.

In 2024, the Utarakan Festival was held for the second time with the theme 'Returning Home to Reflect.' This theme created a space for dancers, choreographers, and Sanggar Cangget Budaya to reflect on themselves and their work—a space to take a break and get ready for what comes next. Utarakan Festival 2024 provided an opportunity for three dance studios in North Lampung to showcase their creations: Sanggar Cangget Budaya, Sanggar Bumi Bettahbuh, and the North Lampung Arts Council Dance Studio. Additionally, two young choreographers debuted at the festival: Eka Setiawati from North Lampung and Ahmad Faizal Ofai from West Tulang Bawang.

Something particularly captivating about the Utarakan Festival is not the stage filled with acrobatic techniques that amaze the audience, but rather the presence of several traditional Lampung dances that brings a different depth to the festival. These traditional dances, forms that are rarely seen on stage today, offer a learning opportunity for the Gen Z audience that fills most of the

This page: Performances at the Utarakan Festival in North Lampung, produced by Sanggar Cangget Budaya, featuring contemporary works by young choreographers as well as traditional expressions.



seats at the Utarakan Festival. It also serves as a medium for dancers to reconnect with the traditional expressions of their bodies.

### Yogyakarta Dance Community "MASTARYO" Symposium

On 8 October 2024, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, in collaboration with the World Dance Alliance-Asia Pacific Indonesia Chapter, held a dance symposium titled 'Unfolding Sensuality and the Arena of Body Power in Dance.' The event featured speakers Heni Siswantari, a dance lecturer at Elementary School Teacher Education Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (PGSD); Indiah Wahyu Andari, director of the Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center; Galih Prakasiwi, a dance researcher and academic; and Putu Arista Dewi. This symposium served as a response to discussions on the power of the body in dance and its relationship to sensuality.

In dance, the body is not only the primary medium for meaningful symbolic interaction but also a meeting ground for individual expression, identity, and social relations. Across various dance forms and in performance arenas, the body often faces issues ranging from authority impositions to dogmatic objectification. This condition then



leads dancers to the question: to whom do their bodies truly belong?

The symposium held at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta discussed whether dancers still have control over their own bodies. This conversation explored the ambivalence between bodily autonomy and the vulnerability of the body as an object of sensuality on stage. The symposium attracted significant interest from dancers, choreographers, and students, initiating discussions on where a dancer's safe space truly lies.

Heni Siswantari sparked the discussion by addressing the role of bodily autonomy in dance education. For dancers, especially students, the body is not only a space for individual expression but also a medium for identity formation. Dance teaches how the body shapes cultural and social identity through interaction, collaboration, and bodily communication. She followed this with a critical statement on how the dance curriculum in schools essentially fails to contribute to identity formation, as it is overly structured, focusing mainly on technique and limiting students' opportunities to explore based on their personal interpretations.

The discussion became more dynamic with data presented on sexual harassment experienced by dancers in Indonesia. This data reinforced the symposium's premise on the question: where is a safe space for a dancer's body if the stage becomes an arena for those seeking sensual gratification? The discussion then continued with both questions and statements, exploring who the real antagonists and protagonists are in this context—is it the choreographers with their intentions, the dancers through their expressions, or the audience with their interpretations?

This page: Speakers and participants at the Yogyakarta Dance Community MASTARYO Symposium on 8 October 2024 in Taman Budaya Yogyakarta.

## Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas



The end of the year may be a quieter time for MyDance Alliance, but it is a bustling performance season in Kuala Lumpur! A number of different festivals are taking place, featuring international as well as local arts makers, in addition to regular academic performances like *Jamu* at the National Academy of Arts and Heritage (ASWARA), and other events like Short+Sweet Festival at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (klpac).

Most independent dance companies are producing a major show this season, including Kwang Tung Dance Company's dance theatre production *Laluan Amaryllis*. Still, KL Dance Works' classical ballet *A Dance Memoir*, and Dua Space Dance Theatre's *Purnama*, while ASK Dance Company took their traditional dance production *Menempa Tari Tradisi* to Kuching, in the East Malaysian state of Sarawak.

Independent choreographers are busy with new full-length works like Raziman Sarbini's *Echoes of the Hornbill's Cry*, MyDance committee member Lau Beh Chin's *Beyond Moving with Artisans: Rattan Weaving x Contemporary Dance*, and Hwa Wei-An's *A Reason for Falling*. And we are looking forward to touring performances by Eko Supriyanto, as well as Singapore Ballet and T.H.E. Dance Company from Singapore.

Into this busy Klang Valley arts ecosystem, we also acknowledge the return of reopened theatres at The Campus, Ampang, and Panggung Bandaraya (an inner-city heritage

theatre belonging to Kuala Lumpur City Hall), which will be a boon for local dance producers, as well as rumours of a new performing arts centre in development for Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown area. The Klang Valley arts scene has never seemed so alive!

However, elsewhere in Malaysia the state of the arts does not seem so plentiful. The city of George Town in Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage area, once held the reputation as the most vibrant arts hub in this country. In the past few years, the Penang State Government has reduced its support for George Town Festival – the most prominent, well-known and oldest major mixed arts festival in Malaysia – and its sister festivals and arts programs, including the celebrated George Town Literary Festival.

As reported in our last update to Channels, we were delighted to be invited by festival artistic director Ling Tang to contribute three programs to George Town Festival this



1. '2ibu 6bekas', choreographed by Mohd Nur Faillul bin Adam, performed at Dancing in Place for George Town Festival 2024, on 27 and 28 July. Photo courtesy of George Town Festival.  
2. A workshop in dance and theatre therapy, organised by Mohd Nur Faillul bin Adam, with MyWIPHealing, at Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre.



year: an edition of our site-specific program *Dancing in Place*, a macro-biotic and somatic workshop, and the Southeast Asian Choreolab. All the programs were carried out successfully in July, with the help of the friendly and supportive festival team and the George Town arts community.

While we were looking forward to a second year of partnership with Ling Tang, unfortunately it has been announced that GTF is searching for another artistic director for next year. However, MyDance Alliance truly treasured the opportunity to bring some of our signature projects to Penang, and we do hope that the Penang State Government reconsiders its dwindling support for the arts, and returns George Town to a position of strong cultural leadership in the region.

Back in Kuala Lumpur, MyDance hosted the second and final Dancebox for this year in July, produced by local choreographer Kenny Shim. Once again, it presented a range of short works by different emerging and more established choreographers,



proving to be a valuable platform for presenting dance of all genres on a professional stage. We look forward to the continuation of the Dancebox program in collaboration with klpac and The Actors Studio Teater Rakyat in 2025, which will be klpac's 20th anniversary year.

Our partnership with Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre (PJPAC) will also continue in 2025. Recently, MyDance committee member Faillul Adam followed up his Art of Healing workshop last year with another workshop at PJPAC introducing dance and theatre therapy, organised with the Creative Arts Foundation Study Center at ASWARA and MyWIPHealing. The workshop involved 25 participants including students and alumni as well as members of the public, and included an introduction to stress management techniques, as well as physical and creative activities that can help people deal with stress in daily life, with sessions on self-reflection and mindfulness.

The MyDance committee is currently planning our activities for 2025. In addition to continuing our partnerships with klpac and PJPAC, we are diving into new editions of *Dancing in Place* in more venues, and exploring a possible role with Damansara

Performing Arts Centre in next year's d'Motion Festival. We are excited that MyDance continues to play a vital role of support for dance in Malaysia, even as our committee members also carry out full-time commitments for their various dance institutions.

**Works from Dancebox July 2024, on 30 July at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre.**

1. 'Chair-ish', choreographed and performed by Vincent Tan. Photo: Alex Kong.
2. 'Under the Line', choreographed by Raziman Sarbini. Photo: Goh Bong Hiang.
3. 'Rhythm of Samba', choreographed by Lee Yin Ying and performed by Alchemy Dance Studio. Photo: Goh Bong Hiang.
4. An Innercise workshop conducted by Lau Beh Chin in the Penang Harmony Centre on 27 July, for George Town Festival. Photo courtesy of George Town Festival.

## Philippines report

by Nicole Primero



1. Basilio Esteban "Steve" Villaruz at the launch of his memoir *The Picaro of Philippine Dance*, on 17 October 2024, at the University of the Philippines Diliman. Photo: Rolando Tolentino  
2. The official poster for the event.

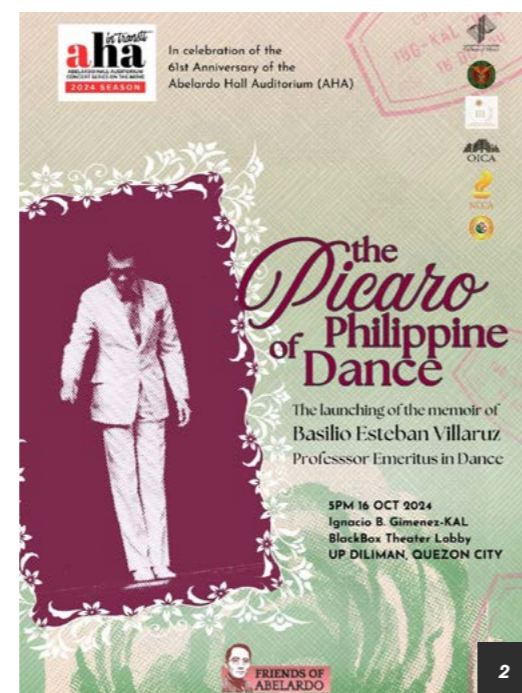
### A Tribute to Steve Villaruz

On 17 October 2024, the Ignacio B. Gimenez-KAL\* Blackbox Theater at the University of the Philippines Diliman transformed into a space for Basilio ATBP, a celebration of the extraordinary legacy of Basilio Esteban "Steve" Villaruz. This tribute also marked the launch of his book, *The Picaro of Philippine Dance*.

Sir Steve, as he is fondly called by his students, is a pioneering force in the field of dance, dedicating his career to the preservation and promotion of Philippine dance. After dancing for the earliest dance companies in the Philippines, including Dance Theater Philippines, which was later absorbed by Philippine Ballet Theatre, and Alice Reyes Modern Dance Company, which transformed into Ballet Philippines and the current Alice Reyes Dance Philippines, Steve became a choreographer, using the stage name, Basilio, producing iconic works such as "Misa Filipina (Philippine Mass)," "Paeon to Pavlova," and the collaborative "Pahinugod (Offering)." The latter two were presented at that evening's concert following the book launch.

As a dance historian and critic, Basilio Esteban Villaruz wrote prolifically on the evolution of dance in the Philippines, ensuring that the stories of our immediate past and the contemporary times are not lost to time. This passion is matched by his

commitment to education; as a pedagogue, he motivated generations of dance majors to explore the scholarship and pursue dance careers. He was actively involved in the global discourses on ideas and practices, connecting Filipino artists with the international community, through his position as the President of the World Dance Alliance-Philippines and one-time President



of WDAAP.

As attendees gathered to celebrate the launch of his memoir, *The Picaro of Philippine Dance*, they were reminded of Basilio's impact and testament to his life-long dedication to the field. These ranged from esteemed colleagues, such as Prof. Dr. Elena Rivera-Mirano, Prof. Corazon Generoso-Iñigo, and National Artist for Music, Prof. Dr. Ramon Santos, and several graduates and students of the UP College of Music's Dance program, which Sir Steve established in 1980.

UP Dance Company hosted the concert that presented his own choreographies and select performances that echoed his vision for the UP dance program, curated and produced by Angela Lawenko-Baguiat, herself a graduate of the program and currently the head of the CMu's Voice, Musical Theater and Dance department, and co-artistic director, Sarah Samaniego. The production featured guests musicians Tony Mague on flute, Michelle Nicolosora and April Misa on piano, and Kathleen Anne Sarreal on violin; alongside Mari and the UP Dance Company Alumni. Together, they honored Basilio's contributions to Philippine dance, with each piece a nostalgic trip down the lane for the alumni present — and a reflection of his hard-earned but well-deserved successful dance program.

Sir Steve's role as a mentor and visionary

is revealed throughout the evening — through personal heartfelt tributes and teary-eyed exchanges from colleagues, students, and friends. Basilio Esteban Villaruz's legacy is not just found in the pages of his book or the performances of his students; it lives on in the grateful hearts of all those he has inspired and continues to inspire.

\*KAL - Kolehiyo ng Arte at Literatura/College of Arts and Letters



The launch of *The Picaro of Philippine Dance*, on 17 October 2024, at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

1. Past and present Dance majors and members of the UP Dance Company take a photo with their mentor onstage after the performance. Photo courtesy of Vie Lising-Velasco.  
2. Steve Villaruz greeting Joelle Jacinto, Dean of School of Heritage Education at Asian Institute of Maritime Studies, and a devoted fan. Photo: Nicole Primero

## Singapore report

by Xenres Kirishima Jonah Chi Ji-Hong



### Singapore International Dance Conference Festival 2024

The Singapore International Dance Conference Festival (SIDCF) 2024 was a landmark event that brought together nearly 150 participants from across the globe, united by the universal language of dance. This monumental festival was organized by the Singapore chapter of the World Dance Alliance (WDA), in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the World Dance Alliance-Asia Pacific (WDAAP)—the first in-person gathering since the disruptions of COVID-19.

#### Celebrating Tradition and Modernity

With the theme 'Tradition and Modernity,' SIDCF highlighted the harmonious coexistence of heritage and innovation in the realm of dance. The Singapore chapter's commitment to intergenerational guidance and collaboration was evident, as the festival emphasized the nurturing of new ideas while honoring the wisdom of the past. Special appreciation was extended to senior

mentors, including Prof. Dr. Urmimala Sarkar, Prof. Wang Yunyu, and Prof. Dr. Mohd Nor Anis, whose unwavering support was instrumental in the event's success.

The three-day festival unfolded in three key segments: masterclasses, paper presentations, and performances. Each segment offered a platform for dancers, scholars, and artists to exchange knowledge and ideas. Master classes showcased diverse methodologies unique to each presenter's culture and country, while paper presentations delved into critical studies and innovations shaping the dance industry.

The festival was graced by international institutions, namely Beijing Dance Academy (China), Korea National University of the Arts (Korea), ASWARA Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan (Malaysia), National Taiwan University of the Arts (Taiwan), National Taiwan University of Sports (Taiwan), Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Singapore), LASALLE College of the Arts (Singapore), Tsoying High School (Taiwan) and groups such as Wu Juan (Singapore), WUSHIREN Theatre



**1. Beijing Dance Academy performing 'Dancing Cloudgate', choreographed by Jiayu Xue and Junzhe Wang, in the Blackbox Theatre at LASALLE College of the Arts, on the final night of performance at SIDCF.** Photo: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy  
**2. Organisers and choreographer participants of SIDCF on the final night of performance, with Prof. Steve Dixon, President of LASALLE College of the Arts.** Photo: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy



(Singapore), Lei Dance Theatre (Taiwan), Tsoying Dance Group (Taiwan), UNLID Dance Theatre (Australia), D\_Antidote Productions (Taiwan), MUTDANCE (Korea), EWHA Womans University (Korea), DancePROject PointLineFace (Korea) and Ombak-Ombak ARTstudio (Malaysia).

SIDCF commenced on 1 September 2024 with the WDA-AP AGM at 30 Bencoolen Hotel. The meeting marked a poignant moment as outgoing President Dr. Urmimala Sarkar passed the mantle to incoming President Prof. Anna CY Chan, symbolizing a generational shift in leadership.

The festival's vibrant opening ceremony at LASALLE College of the Arts set the tone for the days ahead. Festival director Xenres Kirishima and key leaders, Dr. Urmimala and previous president Wang Yunyu, each welcomed participants with an inspiring address. Over the course of the three intensive days, attendees immersed themselves in discussions, workshops, and breathtaking performances across venues of City Ballet Academy, 30 Bencoolen Hotel and LASALLE College of the Arts.



#### A Triumphant Finale

The festival concluded on a high note with a heartfelt closing ceremony, where the symbolic "passing of the torch" underscored SIDCF's vision for a progressive and inclusive dance community with the announcement of handover to incoming President Professor Anna CY Chan. The master of ceremonies, Fairul Zahid, extended gratitude to all contributors, acknowledging the collective effort that made this event a resounding success.

World Dance Alliance Singapore takes immense pride in hosting this prestigious event, reaffirming its commitment to fostering a dynamic and holistic global dance community. SIDCF 2024 was more than just a festival; it was a testament to the power of collaboration and the enduring legacy of dance.

The journey continues as WDAS pledges to innovate and inspire, bridging tradition and modernity to shape the future of dance.



**1. The opening ceremony of SIDCF, officiated by WDAAP Outgoing President Urmimala Sarkar, at City Ballet Academy.** Photo: Bilqis Hijjas  
**2. Sarah Knox in paper presentations for SIDCF, at 30 Bencoolen Hotel.** Photo: Yunyu Wang  
**3. Felicitations at the opening night performances of SIDCF. L-R: festival producer Xenres Kirishima, WDAAP Outgoing President Urmimala Sarkar, WDAAP Former President Yunyu Wang.** Photo: Gnanesh Bhaskar Tilagavathy

## Tso's Dance Association (Taiwan) report

by Su-Ling Chou



Taiwan remains active with many performances especially by the members of WDAAP-Taiwan, and the dance performances in the second half of 2024 are very plentiful. First of all, 2024 Taiwan Dance Platform hosted by National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts(NKCA)/Weiuying in Fung-shan Kaohsiung site, was open to the public from 2 November to 1 December 2024. The theme of the platform is "Body, the History of Dance. Dance, the History of Body." The curator, Shu-yi Chou, also an artist-in residence at NKCA since 2020, aims to serve the event as a point of connection for contemporary dance in Asia. Using dance as a language to communicate with the world, Mr. Chou focuses on the relationships between humans and society. In his creations, he harnesses the power of cross-disciplinary collaborations to express the public, sharing the nature and the beauty of the arts. There are five performances in the playhouse, five shows on the open stage, two workshops and a film exhibition with 20 films presented by artists from Sweden, Hong Kong, Macau/Beijing, Switzerland, and Taiwan.

Additionally, the 2024 Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival presented three programs in Kaohsiung Experimental Theatre in the Fall season, including Solar Site Dance Theater, Olive Leaf Theater, and Bean Theater/Accupass. Organized by Ministry of

Culture and Kaohsiung City Government, and implemented by Culture Bureau of Kaohsiung City Government, the Taiwan Technology x Culture Expo 2024 (TTXC) sought to deepen Taiwan's core cultural values through technology, broadening cultural content, fostering cross-disciplinary integration, sparking mutual inspiration, and pioneering a new map for cultural technology. There were also music, films, exhibitions, international forums, Innovations and XR Dreamland held on 12-27 October 2024 around the Kaohsiung harbour area.

Besides these performances hosted by the government offices, dance groups from universities to high schools present their annual dance concerts throughout the island in this fall season. At the same time, professional dance companies are also presenting their achievements for the public to enjoy their plentiful and various creations. In addition, Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) is performing "The Rite of Spring," choreographed by Pina Bausch from December 2024 to January 2025 in the



1. 'Wu', choreographed by Alica Ma (Hong Kong), at the International Young Choreographer Project (IYCP) in Kaohsiung in June-July 2024. Photo: Su-Ling Chou.

2. Participants of the IYCP. Photo: Tsun-Yang Tsui and Chih-Tsung Yeh.



theaters of Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung. Corresponding to these performances, TNUA and the Taiwan Dance Research Society, held the 2024 International Conference: "The Rite of Spring, Translation, Transcultural Contemporaneity" from 19-20 October 2024 in the International Conference Hall at TNUA.

After a five-year suspension of the International Young Choreographer Project (IYCP) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2024 IYCP restarted from 30 June to 21 July 2024. Like in the past, it was hosted by WDAAP-Taiwan chapter. This project received more talented young applicants from the WDA regions and local dancers than ever, under the sponsorship of the Culture Bureau of Kaohsiung City Government and World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific as well as the funding from Chinlin Foundation for Culture & Arts and National Culture and Arts Foundation. There were two successful performances on 20-21 July 2024 at Tsoying Dance Theater, with an after-show forum that opened the conversation between the choreographers

and audience on the final performance on 21 July.

The program showcased the diversity of styles and cultures, illuminating how local dancers and international choreographers successfully mixed and worked together, joined as a community through their daily lives during the three-week rehearsals. Three out of eight choreographers were Taiwanese (Hsiang-Yu Chan, Tung-Chun Hsu and Yu-Chi Chen) while the other five were from the countries in Asia-Pacific area: Maybelle Lek Shue-Qi of Singapore, Ma Sze Nga Alice of Hong Kong, Callum Mooney of Australia, Anandita Khan of Bangladesh, and Mohd Nuriqram Bin Azhar of Malaysia. Unfortunately, this year we missed the representatives of WDA-Europe and WDA-America. The programs presented various styles displaying their rich cultural backgrounds as performed by 23 local dancers. The performances received high praises from the audience, as well as those ten visitors from the ArtsCross Project held in Taipei. The ArtsCross Project includes scholars, choreographers and dancers from

Hong Kong, Taipei and London and was sponsored by Chinlin Foundation for Culture and Arts.

After COVID, Taiwan, fortunately, is able to return to their normal life and can join the public performances. We would like to welcome those from abroad to join us as in the past for the coming year. It is our hope that dance in Taiwan will continue growing into a new era through all these dance events and that we can join all WDA events around the Asia-Pacific area yearly.



1. 'Who Are You?', choreographed by Mohd Nuriqram bin Azhar (Malaysia), at the International Young Choreographer Project (IYCP) in Kaohsiung in June-July 2024. Photo: Su-Ling Chou.

2. Participating choreographers and organisers of the IYCP, L-R: Yunyu Wang, Yu-Chi Chen, Nuriqram bin Azhar, Anandita Khan, Alice Ma, Callum Mooney, Tung-Chun Hsu, Maybelle Lek, Hsiang-Yu Chan and Su-Ling Chou. Photo: Tsun-Yang Tsui and Chih-Tsung Yeh.



## Upcoming Events

### **SWEAT: Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival 2025**

18-22 June 2025, Hong Kong

SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival (SWEAT) is set to return in 2025, building on the success of its inaugural edition in 2022. Launched by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first festival provided a vital digital platform for artists to connect, share best practices, and engage in meaningful dialogue. Over two weeks, SWEAT brought together 640 arts practitioners from 23 countries through research labs, workshops, masterclasses, dance video screenings, and open discussions, establishing itself as a hub for innovation and artistic exchange.

In 2025, SWEAT will focus on the theme “Cultural Sequences: Asia Pacific Choreographic Discovery,” to celebrate vibrant dance expressions that transcend geographic boundaries. reimagine cultural narratives and articulate ingenuity, creativity, and cultural identity. Through the reinterpretation of traditional forms and the exploration of contemporary issues—such as migration, climate change, and digital transformation—Asia-Pacific choreographers are redefining cultural embodiment and expression within a global yet localized context.

The festival will feature four key events:

1. Workshops Series
2. Dance Conference
3. DanceTECH Research Showcase
4. Choreographic Projects Open Studio Presentations

These events will enable participants to tailor their experiences and enhance their practices and research ideas. In our increasingly interconnected world, understanding cultural expressions through dance is essential for celebrating diversity and fostering meaningful collaborations.

Join us at the HKAPA campus in Hong Kong as we continue to innovate, inspire, and connect within the global dance community.

The Annual General Meeting of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific for 2025 will take place in Hong Kong, in conjunction with SWEAT.

#### **Call for Proposals**

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) & World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific (WDAAP) are calling for proposals for the following programs of the Dance Conference and DanceTECH Research Showcase to take place during SWEAT, that respond to the event theme:

1. Academic paper presentation
2. Dance lecture demonstration (for artist-scholars practice-based research exploring choreographic practices in the Asia-Pacific)
3. Emerging Scholars Presentation
4. DanceTECH Research Showcase

Deadline for submission of proposals: 21 February 2025

Results notification: 14 March 2025

For more detailed submission guidelines, please go to the website: <https://www.hkapa.edu/dance/SWEAT2025-call-for-proposals>

#### **Membership Requirement**

Individuals or groups interested in presenting at the Dance Conference and DanceTECH Research Showcase at the SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Workshop Festival and Conference 2025 must become members of the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific (WDAAP) before submitting a proposal. Submissions will only be reviewed after confirming membership status.

For details about WDA Asia Pacific membership, please visit: <https://www.wda-ap.org/membership/>



# In Memoriam: Fred Frumberg (1960 - 2024)

**In memory of Fred Frumberg, founder of Amrita Performing Arts, and longtime co-representative of Cambodia to World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific.**

We have witnessed such a fantastic and selfless journey in which he managed to sensitively but positively contribute to the contemporary movement expressions in Southeast Asia. With love and gratitude for having known him as a friend.

- Urmimala Sarkar

This is indeed heart-breaking news for all of us. Fred was so tied up with the early days of WDA and such a joyful, optimistic personality. He inspired us all! Such a special person in my life... Beautiful memories.

- Stephanie Burridge

I may be one of the youngest individuals here to have known Fred, but every time we met, his passion, commitment, and unwavering contribution to dance, in particular to Cambodia, left a strong impression on me and motivated me to step beyond my comfort zone.

- Anna CY Chan

Fred meant a lot to me in many ways. Our sweet and beautiful relationship started when we were in York University running our WDA Global event. There were many projects we ran together since then. So much laughter and so many funny times we had together.

- Yunyu Wang

I take solace in the firm belief that Amrita's legacy lives on in the dancers and artists that Fred nurtured with such love and generosity and who have forged a new and different path for Cambodian artists. Fred's contribution to Amrita, WDA and dance is immeasurable - a warm, effective yet humble, sensitive, generous and inspiring cultural leader.

- Cheryl Stock

Let's remember a remarkable artist, mentor, facilitator and friend - Fred meant so much to so many.

- Julie Dyson



Fred Frumberg attending World Dance Alliance events across the globe:  
1-2. Kuala Lumpur, 2005  
3-6. Brisbane, 2008  
7. Phnom Penh, 2006  
8. Delhi, 2009  
9. Delhi, 2009, with Cambodian dancers [L-R] Chumvan Sodhachivy (Belle), Phon Sopheap, Chey Chankethya, and Sam Sathya.  
10. Hong Kong, 2010. L-R, standing: Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, Urmimala Sarkar, Sunil Kothari, Ralph Buck, Jeff Meiners, Fred Frumberg, Sachiko Soro, Steve Villaruz. L-R, seated: Bilqis Hijjas, Julie Dyson, Gui-In Chung, Yunyu Wang, Alex Dea.

All photos courtesy of Julie Dyson, except #7, courtesy of Cheryl Stock.

Fred was such an approachable, warm and intelligent supporter of WDA. I always enjoyed my interactions with him so much.

- Nanette Hassall

Fred was more than a friend, he was a confidante and a brother whose passion for dance advocacy led us to imagine ways to engage younger dancers and dance advocates in the Asia Pacific to pursue dreams and ideals beyond mundane conventions. His legacy with Amrita Performing Arts is a testimony of his passion, bridging his Cambodian brothers and sisters from Amrita into the folds of WDA, showcasing resilience and ownership in the midst of political and economic uncertainties. He never gave up, always imagining and creating new niches and opportunities. A fighter, friend and a believer that there are no impossibles in enlivening our dreams.

- Mohd. Anis Md. Nor

# 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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