International Dance Day 2018

As part of the 70th Anniversary of ITI

29 April, 17h00 / Gran Teatro Alicia Alonso / Havana, Cuba
Address: Prado 458 entre San José y San Rafael, Centro Habana, Cuba

Event Report
International Dance Day Ceremony 2018
29 April, Havana / Cuba

The 2018 International Dance Day Ceremony was held in the Grand Theatre of Alicia Alonso in Havana, Cuba, on 29 April. It is the first time that the main ceremony of IDD has been held in Cuba, a land full of dance spirit. As usual, this great dance event received the patronage of UNESCO and a congratulatory message from the UNESCO DG Ms. Audrey Azoulay was delivered. The Ceremony was co-organized by the Cuban Centre of the International Theatre Institute ITI, Consejo Nacional Artes Escenicas of Cuba and the General Secretariat of ITI. 2018 IDD Ceremony was sponsored by Beijing Lv Dong Wu Xian Culture & Communication, which also supported the 2018 World Theatre Day Ceremony in Paris.

2018 marks the 70th Anniversary of ITI. The whole year of 2018 will be “the Year of ITI” and will be full of various cultural events, ceremonies, festivals, conferences and plenty of activities held by members of ITI family. The 2018 International Dance Day Ceremony in Havana was an important part of the whole year’s celebrations.

During the Ceremony on 29 April, the five messages authors for 2018 IDD were all present and read their messages on the stage. The ITI World Dance Ambassador Alicia Alonso was also present at the Ceremony; her message for the 2018 IDD event was delivered by Dani Hernandez, dancer of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Five top national level dance companies from Cuba presented five excellent dance programmes during the Ceremony, including ballet, contemporary dance, folk dance, etc. Three members of the General Secretariat team of ITI including the DG and Deputy DG of ITI, plus the leaders of Consejo Nacional Artes Escenicas, Cuban Centre of ITI, Cuban Commission of UNESCO and many figures of Cuban dance community were also present on the Ceremony. Around 800 audience members participated in the Ceremony.
UNESCO is pleased to convey its congratulations to the International Theatre Institute for the organization of this latest edition of International Dance Day. Established in 1948 by the first Director-General of UNESCO, the Institute is now the world's largest performing arts organization, with more than ninety Centres on every continent. Its vocation is to put the arts at the service of intercultural dialogue and peace: it thus fully resonates with the mandate of UNESCO.

Since 1982, the Institute has celebrated the International Dance Day every year, and with it, the values of this ancestral art. They are values of freedom: freedom of bodies, their movements, their inclinations. They are also values of sharing and communion: dance brings together, reunites, with the same rhythms, around the same choreographies, arousing common emotions. They are still values of universality: the language of dance is that of bodies, which dispenses with words, which is established beyond particular languages, social positions, national and political differences.

Though universal, dance, like all the arts, finds unique expression in many particular cultural expressions. For this reason, it is a wonderful introduction to cultural diversity. Havana is well aware of this, the host city of this International Dance Day, which welcomes visitors from all over the world, attracted by Cuban music and dance. A sign of this diversity: the messages sent for this day are by authors from Israel, Burkina Faso, Hong Kong, Cuba and Lebanon.

Dance is an immemorial art of innumerable forms, testimony to human creativity and inventiveness. This is why UNESCO is committed to its preservation and enhancement. Rare or endangered dances have thus been included in the Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Examples include the Isukuti dance of the Isukha and Idakho communities in western Kenya; the three kinds of traditional Bali dance in Indonesia; the music and dance of Yampara culture in Bolivia; or kopachkata, a community dance in the village of Dramche in the Republic of Macedonia.

The great American dancer and choreographer Martha Graham said: "The great dancers are not great thanks to their technique, but thanks to their passion". On this international day, UNESCO hopes that passion for dance will triumph, amateurs and professionals, and make this day, in Havana, city of dance par excellence, and in all the cities of the world, a day of exceptional art.
I remember a Cuban folk tale, in which two friends argue and one of them repeats in a resolute way: "Yes Sir, the Cuban people are a dancing people!"

How much truth that affirmation contains. Because dance has been, is and will be, for the Cuban people, a natural and spontaneous expression that springs from the depths of their spirit and their bodily reality.

This is why we managed to consolidate a scenic dance movement that occupies an exceptional place in our national culture and reaches an undeniable recognition on a world scale.

This explains the special importance that it has for us that the International Theatre Institute (ITI), with the decisive support of UNESCO, has chosen the Cuban capital this year to celebrate its central act for the International Dance Day, a celebration that for years has exalted all those who live and fight for this expression of art and life.

The meeting that we celebrate today in Havana, brings together the enthusiasm and creative impulse of personalities from all over the world, for the glory of dance, an expression that has its roots in tradition, expands throughout the ages and transits through a wide diversity of creative paths.

We should also add the coincidence of anniversaries, which this year 2018 brings us to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the emergence of ITI, and also the 70th anniversary of the founding of the National Ballet of Cuba.

May the coincidental celebrations, of profound significance for all, mark the consolidation and development of new paths of collaboration, to the glory of performing arts throughout the world.

Alicia Alonso
Ambassador of Good Will of UNESCO
World Dance Ambassador
World Theatre Day Message Authors 2018

To underline the cross-cultural and international aspect of this common language – Dance – the Executive Council and the International Dance Committee of ITI selected five message authors – one from each of the five UNESCO Regions: Africa, the Americas, Arab Countries, Asia Pacific and Europe.

All the message authors of 2018 IDD delivered their messages on the stage during the Ceremony with translation in either English or Spanish. The authors of the Messages of International Dance Day 2018 were:

Africa

Salia SANOU, Burkina Faso

Arab Countries

Georgette GEBARA, Lebanon

Asia Pacific

Willy TSAO, Hong Kong, China

Europe

Ohad NAHARIN, Israel

The Americas

Marianela BOAN, Cuba
More than 800 audience members were present at the Ceremony. The VIP guests included Alicia Alonso, the World Dance Ambassador, the five message authors of 2018 IDD, Heads of the Consejo Nacional Artes Escenicas, Carlos Celdran, President of Cuban Centre of ITI, Alberto Garcia Castano and Marcia de la Garza, President and Vice-President of the Dance Committee of ITI, and many important dance figures of Cuba.

The Ceremony started with a passionate opening dance *Don Quixote (Suite)* by Ballet Nacional de Cuba, of which Alicia Alonso was the Artistic Director. Tobias Biancone, the Director General of ITI, delivered his welcoming speech after the opening dance. He expressed that ITI is extremely glad and thankful to celebrate the IDD event in Cuba, because with this event, a bridge can be created between the artists and people of Cuba, and in extension, all over the world.

The UNESCO DG Ms. Audrey Azoulay sent the message for this event. The message was read during the Ceremony by the representative of the Cuban Commission of UNESCO. In her message, she pointed out "that Dance expresses the values of freedom, of sharing and communication. Dance is a wonderful introduction to cultural diversity, and Havana is well aware of this, the host city of this International Dance Day, which welcomes visitors from all over the world, attracted by Cuban music and dance".

Five top quality dance programmes in a diversity of genres performed by five national level dance companies in Cuba were presented during the Ceremony on 29 April. They were *Don Quixote (suite)* by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, choreographed by Alicia Alonso; *Ella y él... siempre* by the Lize Alfonso Dance Cuba, *Coil* by Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, whose artistic director Miguel Iglesias just won the Cuban Premio Nacional de Danza 2018, the top dance award in the country; *Twelve* by Acosta Danza; and *Dahomeño* by Folklorico Nacional de Cuba.

The Ceremony ended with a great final applause. All the dancers, message authors, VIP guests and the President of Beijing Lv Dong Wu Xian, Mr. SHANG Xuefeng, were invited on the stage. The Ceremony was well received by all the participants.

As usual, the artists and VIP guests were invited to a reception in a beautiful hall in the Grand Theatre of Alicia Alonso.
The Gala

Alicia Alonso, World Dance Ambassador

Tobias BIANCONE, Director General of ITI

Representing the Director General of UNESCO
Performances

Opening Dance: Don Quixote (Suite) by Ballet Nacional de Cuba
Performances

Ella y él... siempre by the Lize Alfonso Dance Cuba
Performances

Coil by Danza Contemporanea de Cuba
Performances

Twelve by Acosta Danza
Performances

Dahomeño by Folklorico Nacional de Cuba
### Opening Performance
- Don Quixote - Suite - Ballet Nacional de Cuba

### Speech
- Tobias Biancone, Director General of ITI

### Speech
- Message by UNESCO DG

### Speech
- Speech of Alicia Alonso, read by Dani Hernández

### Message
- Message by **Georgette Gebara**, Message Author for the Arab Countries

### Performance
- Ella y él... siempre - Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba

### Message
- Message by **Salia Sanou**, Message Author for Africa

### Performance
- Twelve - Acosta Danza

### Message
- Message by **Ohad Naharin**, Message Author for Europe

### Message
- Message by **Willy Tsao**, Message Author for Asia-Pacific

### Performance
- Coil - Danza Contemporánea de Cuba

### Message
- Message by **Marianela Boán**, Message Author for the Americas

### Performance
- Dahomeño - Conjunto Folklórico Nacional

### Final
- All Message Authors, Dancers, musicians and leaders on stage
International Dance Day 2018 Promotion and Media

Brochures and programmes for the 2018 IDD Ceremony in Havana, Cuba, were designed and printed. In order to convey a full image of ITI, 9 panel boards were made and shown in the theatre during the press conference.

In the morning of the 29 April, a press conference organized by the Cuban Centre of ITI and Consejo Nacional Artes Escenicas was held in Grand Theatre of Alicia Alonso. The important local art magazine "arte por excelencias" plus other media outlets were at the press conference and reported the event.
International Dance Day 2018 Reception
International Dance Day 2018 Promotion and Media

Festeje Cuba Día Internacional de la Danza
Cinco relevantes agrupaciones cubanas confluirán en el espectáculo previsto para realizarse en el Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso, el Teatro Nacional de Cuba, Danza Contemporánea de Cuba, el Folclorico Nacional y las compañías Lois Almonro y Acosta Danza.

Con una gran variedad de artistas cubanos se conmemorará el Día Internacional de la Danza, con la participación de los artistas y líderes culturales de varios países.

El director de CNC, Miguel Iglesias, recibió el Premio Nacional de Danza 2018 en reconocimiento a su labor en la creación de una compañía de danza en ese país.

La agrupación de danza contemporánea en la obra interpretada por el director, Julio César Iglesias, recibió el Premio Nacional de Danza 2018 en reconocimiento a su labor en la creación de una compañía de danza en ese país.

El Folclorico Nacional animará el espectáculo con danzas representativas de las raíces africanas de la cultura cubana, acercando la danza con la presentación del folclor clásico de los artistas y las danzas tradicionales de los artistas cubanos.
El baile fue en La Habana

Cuba acaba de tener una de las experiencias más sobresalientes en el mundo para artistas internacionales. La danza y los artistas no están solo en el escenario. Hasta en la Habana se realizan representaciones y autorizadas de la danza a nivel mundial, para asistir a estos festivales se deben contratar los servicios de profesionales cualificados en Cuba y uno de sus bailarines más reconocidos en el mundo. Los bailarines cubanos danza tienen las mejores cualidades del mundo. Según el director del Instituto de Cultura, Cuba fue seleccionada por su altura de calidad de sus bailarines y su desarrollo en el mundo de la danza a través de la historia.

En sus palacios de apertura, Tobias Biscione recordó que el ITI fue creado por la UNESCO, para contrastar puestos entre artistas y personas adscritos a todo el mundo. Por eso, sus más de 90 centros están ubicados en las geografías más diversas del mundo. Según el director general del ITI, Cuba fue seleccionada por la altura de calidad de sus bailarines y su desarrollo en el mundo de la danza a través de la historia.

El baile fue en La Habana
Below are part of the media coverages on the Internet in Spanish.

http://cubaescena.cult.cu/2950-2/
International Dance Day 2018 Sponsor

This event was possible thanks to the support of Beijing Lv Dong Wu Xian Culture & Communication.

Lv Dong Wu Xian is a Chinese phrase meaning “infinite rhythm”.

The Company focuses on the development and production of film and TV projects, educating talents for the film and TV industry, promoting cultural exchange between China and the world, and offers consultations on the culture industry. Beijing Lv Dong Wu Xian Culture & Communication Co. also has a training centre at the Central Academy of Drama, Beijing, offering training in the performing arts for professionals, children and those who wish to participate in the entrance examination of performing arts academies in China.
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www.international-dance-day.org

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