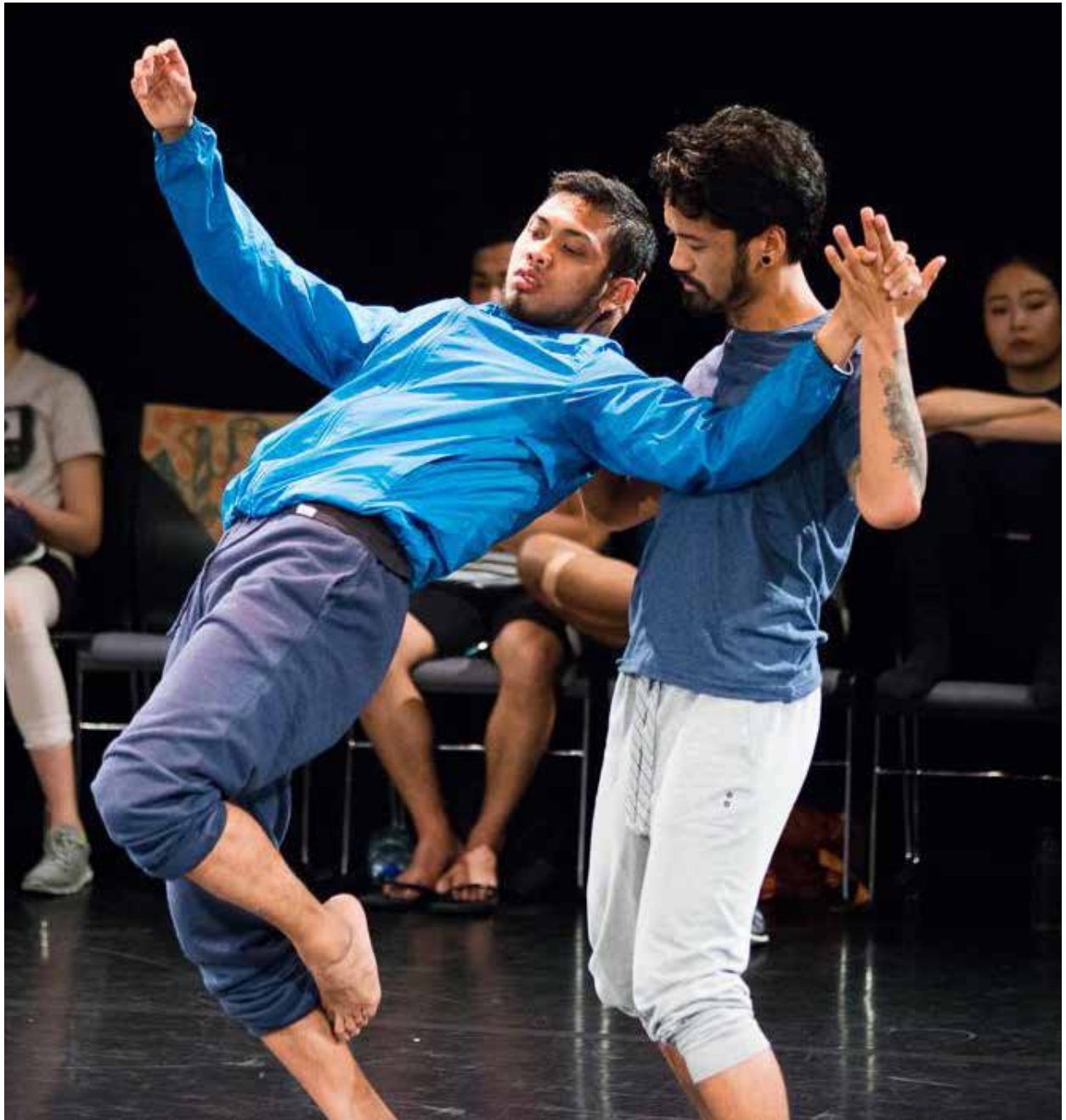


Asia-Pacific CHANNELS





Island, by Australian choreographer Lewis Major. International Young Choreographer Project 2015. Photo: Zen-hau Liu

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**World Dance Alliance
Asia-Pacific**

Channels, No. 2 December 2015
 Newsletter of the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific
 ISSN: 1328-2115
 Editor: Bilqis Hijjas (contact@mydancealliance.org)
 Publication: Rachael Jennings
 Publisher: Australian Dance Council—Ausdance Inc.
 Ausdance National, PO Box 45, Braddon ACT 2612, Australia
www.ausdance.org.au

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**Choreolab participants
Fauzi Amirudin and
Jonny Almarino during the
informal showcase on 16
October, in the LASALLE
Flexible Performance
Space. Photo: Jeff Low**

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.



The Poetics of Succession, by American choreographer Melissa Sanders. International Young Choreographer Project 2015. Photo: Zen-hau Liu



President's report

by Yunyu Wang

All of us board members are still feeling refreshed after returning from WDAAP's AGM in Singapore a mere three weeks ago. Singapore remains a great place to hold the event for WDAAP. It was not just the feelings of excitement brought forward by the event but also the sense of productivity that was developed. This conference in particular brought all of us together to discuss the projects that we have been involved in, allowed us to discuss how much we want to continue to do, and to consider what we hope to achieve in future years for WDAAP members around the region.

Immediately after Singapore, the core team members began working intensively for the announcement for the upcoming WDAAP AGM that will be held in Seoul, Korea, in July 2016. The theme has been determined and the event will be called 'Dance Routes – Danced Roots: Connecting the Local and the Global'. As stated by Urmimala Sarkar, "Dance Routes can be used to think about the routes that dance has traveled and is traveling in terms of space/geography, that is spatial/community, cultural diversities... and the concept of Danced Roots, to imply the temporal implications of dances that we dance today, and the many layered histories of dances that have brought us to the current times." The submission deadline for Symposium and Showcase will be on 10 January 2016, while the Choreolab deadline will be 15 January 2016. All three will have 28 February 2016 as the acceptance notification date.

The team leaders for the Choreolab are Nanette Hassall and Jin-wen Yu. The Symposium, including Pecha Kucha, will be led by Urmimala Sarkar. The Showcase will be led by Yunyu Wang and Hong Jo Jun. We are recruiting reviewers for these three categories and are looking forward for your assistance.

Thanks to Bilqis Hijjas, the WDAAP website manager, the calls for application are now available for viewing on our website:

www.wda-ap.org. Please join us in Seoul next year from 21 to 24 July!

In the past six months, WDAAP board members have developed a proposal to create a new student scholarship fund for the two most outstanding writers, or choreographers/performers. This was raised by WDAAP Vice President Urmimala Sarkar and with the support of Chinlin Foundation for Culture and Arts. The initial run of this scholarship will be applied at the 2016 WDAAP AGM event in Korea. Urmimala and Yunyu are forming the guidelines, which will be placed on our website and announced to all WDAAP country heads to encourage applications.

The WDA Global President Meeting was held on Monday 19 October in Singapore after the end of the conference. The following are some global events for you to know about and to join: WDA-Americas will hold their 2016 AGM in Mexico from 7 to 11 August 2016. The Global Presidents Meeting from all regions will run there as well. Our last two WDA Global Summits were held in Taiwan in 2012 and in Angers, France, in 2014. In alternating between the regions, the next one will be in 2017 and is tentatively planned to be in Newfoundland, Canada from 18 to 30 July 2017, which will be sponsored by WDA-Americas. This means the following one will be rotated back to Asia in 2020.

An additional event is the DaCi conference, co-sponsored by the WDA Global Education and Training Network, and led by Jeff Meiners. It will be held from 8 to 13 July 2018 in Adelaide, Australia. WDA Asia-Pacific is now looking for a country to sponsor the WDAAP AGM in 2017. Please let me know if you are interested.

We are also looking for new blood for the WDAAP board. Your enthusiasm is what we are looking for: we could not run WDAAP without you. Please join us as much as possible and work with us as much as you can for dance in the Asia Pacific region!



Vice President's report

by Urmimala Sarkar Munsri

Vibrancy and inclusivity/criticality and excellence—not necessarily crossroads for WDAAP

World Dance Alliance is growing – slowly but steadily. It is now a major networking organisation which facilitates intra and inter-regional connections between and within communities of scholars, educators, performers, critics, organisers and students, around different worlds of dance. It also is an important entity in terms of its sister organisations both specifically within the world of dance, and within the larger rubric of arts.

The recent event organized in Singapore by World Dance Alliance Singapore in October 2015, and the global summit of World Dance Alliance at Angers, France, in July 2014, have been great as signature events of this organisation which respect the past patterns that have left a deep impact on the world of dance, since WDA's inception.

At this point, many members in WDAAP feel that we seem to be standing at crossroads on several issues:

- Either being known for our strength in projecting and staging the vibrant traditional forms of dance, and innovations thereof, within each of the culture-specific environments of each member country within this region;
- Or accepting a template of the so-called 'contemporary dance' as a postcolonial identity for one and all – as are imbibed by many dancers who feel cornered into choosing either the traditional ("aging") dance forms of their own cultures, or the imitated grammar from the accepted vocabularies of contemporary dance.

And:

- Either being known for cutting-edge research and critical methodologies;
- Or making the occasion of the conference/ symposium an inclusive and non-judgemental one - focussing on diversity of research, rather than excellence, and new research as landmarks of scholarly advancements in dance research.

In my opinion, being faced with these choices are not about crossroads, in which we must choose one path to the exclusion of all others – they are a sign of growing as an organization. We must do what will actually be beneficial for the organization as well as its large medley of members from different languages, cultures, economic strata and institutions. In WDAAP, we need to keep discussions going about working simultaneously on a range of conscious choices – of foregrounding and facilitating young practitioners, researchers and entrepreneurs; of resisting hegemonic representations that make practitioners and researchers doubt their own cultural practices and their strength; of recognising the strengths of cutting-edge research and creative and innovative practice from within dance forms representing both tradition and transition. After all, aren't mediocre research and practice equally harmful for the organization's image?



Secretary General's report

by Cheryl Stock

As we farewell 2015 and usher in 2016 it is time for both reflection and for looking ahead.

Since the last *Channels* three key successful events have taken place and organisers of each of these events are now planning for the future. Congratulations to our international partner daCi and their wonderfully exuberant global congress, 'Twist & Twin: dancing identities', held in Copenhagen in early July. The multitude of daily performances and workshops with hundreds of young participants from all over the world was inspiring and energising, culminating in the exciting announcement that Adelaide would host the next daCi Congress in 2018 in partnership with WDA Education and Training network chaired by Jeff Meiners with Ralph Buck.

Those who were lucky enough to get to Honolulu in late July for the WDA-Americas event 'Places and Spaces' had the good fortune to explore dance and site in glorious surroundings. WDA-Americas president Mary Jane Warner was also thrilled with the new energy and support from young people that came out of that event. We look forward to their support and your participation at the next WDA-Americas event in Puebla, Mexico, in August 2016. At that meeting we will be able to confirm the next Global Summit whereabouts which is currently proposed to take place in St John's, Newfoundland, Canada in late July 2017.

Our most recent WDA event was of course the annual WDAAP conference and festival hosted by WDA Singapore entitled, 'Asia-Pacific Dance Bridge 2015: Connectivity through Dance', 16-19 October in a significant year for Singapore, celebrating its 50th year as an independent nation. You can read detailed reports of that enjoyable event in other parts of *Channels*. Suffice it to say that we were encouraged by the number of young scholars presenting and the inclusion of an Emerging Scholars Forum which was very fruitful and has

consolidated an informal network formed by Sarah Knox and Anja Ali-Haapala. As you will read elsewhere, WDAAP is very happy to welcome Korea back as a re-engaged chapter which will be hosting

the 2016 WDAAP event in Seoul in late July.

Renewal was high on the agenda of the WDA Global Executive meeting held on 19 October in Singapore. A report on the progress of a renewed WDA-Europe was tabled at the meeting by the Chair of the working group, Dr Fiona Bannon. Several preliminary meetings have been held in Angers, Lyon, and Copenhagen, with a proposed meeting in Europe in March with the goal to launch a reinvigorated WDA-Europe in 2016. This is an exciting development and builds on the strong participation by European delegates in Angers as well as our long-term European supporters of WDA.

Given the growth in cross-regional activity and international events, the committee voted to increase its membership by four people to include a global chair from each of our four networks who will be appointed from within the current regional network chairs. Indeed the networks are the driver of WDA both regionally and internationally, a wonderful example being the refereed journal *JEDS*, edited by our two Research and Documentation network Chairs, Professors Linda Caldwell and Urmimala Sarkar. Please check out the latest issue, hot off the on-line press, at www.jedsonline.net/. Other strategies discussed to promote cross-regional WDA communication were consolidation of the various Facebook pages into a one-stop shop and plans to link the WDA-Americas newsletter with the WDAAP *Channels* publication.

Another new initiative that came out of this meeting was the approval for a WDA Dr Maggi Phillip's Bursary to be awarded to the best paper to be submitted at a WDA conference by an emerging scholar. This bursary will be in the form of a small cash donation to be used towards the cost of travel to present and publish the chosen paper. Details of this will be finalised and reported on through WDA websites and Facebook as well as the next issues of *Channels*.

Whilst we all make plans for a vibrant WDA 2016 please do not forget to stay in touch via our Facebook page. We also encourage you to get involved in one (or more!) of our networks—contact details are at the back of this issue of *Channels*. And above all keep dancing!

The WDA Global Executive Meeting on 19 October 2015 in Singapore. L-R: Jin-wen Yu, Urmimala Sarkar, Ralph Buck, Mohd Anis Nor, Julie Dyson, Cheryl Stock, Mary Jane Warner, and Yunyu Wang. Photo courtesy Julie Dyson





South East Asia

Cambodia

Malaysia

Philippines

Indonesia

Singapore

Thailand



South East Asia report

by Vice President Joseph Gonzales

The highlight of the second half of the year was definitely the WDAAP Summit 'Connectivity through Dance' in Singapore organized by WDA Singapore that had an incredible number of activities. Kudos to the team, and I was especially excited to see the participation of many young artists in the tertiary showcase, choreolab, performative presentations, pecha kucha, workshops and Asia-Pacific Dance Bridge. It was great to connect with the rejuvenated WDA Indonesia chapter based at ISI Jogjakarta as well as meeting Anastasia Melati and team in person.

A point that is directly related to this matter is to call on existing national chapters to step up to play a more critical role in regional development. We sorely missed the presence of several Southeast Asian chapters at the Singapore event. Furthermore, alluding to our earlier discussions about constraints, but also about possible collaborative projects, new ways to connect and so on, I would urge artists to get in touch with each other in their own nations, and also to reach out to any one of the members on the executive committee. We encourage the use of social media and free-to-all public forums to have discussions and make valuable exchange. All members of the executive committee and I as Vice President of the region would love to assist in any way that we can. All our contact details are in the back of this copy, so please do not hesitate to make your enquiries or forward your suggestions.

A major regional project directly linked to the WDA was the second Southeast Asian Choreolab that took place in Rimbun Dahan in Malaysia from 30 May to 6 June 2015, organized and supported by MyDance Alliance. The laboratory received support from the Goethe-Institut Kuala Lumpur who funded choreographer Arco Renz to facilitate the workshops. Several of the young choreographers also participated in the

Singaporean choreolab that was part of the WDAAP Summit. This was a great learning experience for all. Details of the project are in the Support & Development network report.

Meanwhile, several Southeast Asian artists were involved in the Asia Dance Company project in Seoul and Gwangju in Korea from August, which culminated in performances in October 2015. This was organized by the Ministry of Sports and Culture, Korea, and was open to 16 member nations. A process of selection of the artists was conducted by the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company, and artists from 10 nations were selected to work with two choreographers from Korea and Japan.

Regional and international projects in Malaysia included the Borak Arts Series which saw many of our Southeast Asian neighbours, especially officers from the National Arts Council of Singapore, coming to participate for two days of talks and performances as well as to enjoy the arts of the Georgetown Festival 2015. Singapore was, as always, a hub of activity with the Singapore International Arts Festival which included international dance companies, as well as the smaller but meaningful da:ns festival. These were held at the Espanade. Thailand organized the Folk Performing Arts Festival in Bangkok from 4 to 6 October 2015 that featured several talks, seminars and performances at the Princess Mahachakri Sirithorn Centre, and was well attended by scholars from the Southeast Asian region.

Once again before I close, I would like to reiterate the need to engage with all artists from the region through all means possible. Thank you.

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 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 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 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.

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.

Creation & Presentation Network report

by Nanette Hassall, co-chair

After the welcome opportunity to gather together and meet in Singapore, sharing performances, workshops and debate from across the region, we can all look forward to the next upcoming events scheduled for Seoul, Korea from 21 to 24 July 2016.

In relation to Creation and Presentation there will be both Showcase performances and a Choreolab conducted. It is important to note that the Choreolab will be held one week prior to the actual event, from 14 to 20 July. There are opportunities for four choreographers to be mentored by two established choreographers, one of them from Korea. They will be working with a number of dancers selected from across the region. For those selected as either dancers or mentored choreographers the registration fee for the event will be waived. At this point, there may be as many as thirty dancers involved.

The Choreolab will culminate in a showing of the work produced in the lab at the end. Showcase performances are also planned. The Showcase is open to professional choreographers and performers to apply as well as performances by pre-professional artists from dance institutions. Please note there are already application forms on the WDAAP website so check them out.



Support & Development Network report

by Bilqis Hijjas, co-chair

We were very pleased to welcome friends from around the world to the Support & Development network meeting on 18 October 2015 as part of the Asia Pacific Dance Bridge 2015 event in Singapore. At the meeting, we discussed further improvements for the WDAAP website and ongoing developments for the WDA Facebook page. I also reported on the last edition of *Channels* and the Southeast Asian Choreolab 2015. Network co-chair Joelle Jacinto tabled her plan for a directory of regional dance resources, which received many suggestions from the floor.

Finally, we discussed two exciting new projects organised by Philip Channells through his company Dance Integrated Australia, which have been endorsed by WDA: the Beyond Technique Residency and The Corner Dance Lab. The first of these events, the Beyond Technique Residency, has recently concluded, and you can read about the enchanting final performance at Bundanon Trust's Riversdale property on Philip's website: <http://philipchannells.com/2015/11/08/behind-the-facade/>. As I write this, the second event, The Corner Dance Lab which will take place near Byron Bay in January 2015, is calling for expressions of interest, closing on 20 December 2015. For more information, see <http://goo.gl/eGpXLI>.

WDA's endorsement, while it does not provide material support, formally recognises an activity for its demonstration of best practice in the industry, and its potential to

provide positive outcomes for the dance community across the Asia Pacific region. This endorsement of Philip Channells' projects represents a pilot case to see how similar endorsements of such projects will serve to strengthen WDA. It also lays the groundwork for standard operating procedures for future endorsements. Philip is keen for his work integrating dancers from different cultural backgrounds, age groups, and physical abilities to be accessible for communities beyond Australia, and he is excited to hear from any WDAAP members who would like to discuss workshops or other programs by Dance Integrated Australia in their home countries.

To close, I would like to share with you some images from the Southeast Asian Choreolab 2015, which was taking place as the last *Channels* was going to print. In May this year, we welcomed participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to this 9-day event at Rimbun Dahan, facilitated by choreographer Arco Renz, and supported by Goethe-Institut Malaysia. Once again, the highlight of the event was the level of deep personal connections forged between the 15 participating emerging choreographers. Because the focus is on getting to know each other better and building networks, the choreolab is situated within the Support & Development Network rather than Education & Training or Creation & Presentation, which might seem more appropriate. Feedback from the group emphasised words like 'inspiring',

'refreshing', 'peaceful', 'friends', 'challenging' and 'insightful'. The choreolab continues to represent a flagship event for Southeast Asia within the WDAAP network, and we look forward to yet another rewarding edition in 2016.

1. SEA Choreolab 2015 facilitator Arco Renz (second from left) introducing his own style of movement with breath control.

Photo: Joelle Jacinto

2. SEA Choreolab 2015 participants "Buddha" Thanh Nguyen Duy (Vietnam) and Chy Ratana (Cambodia) in the studio at Rimbun Dahan, while giving feedback on each other's solos.

Photo: Joelle Jacinto

3. SEA Choreolab 2015 participants sampling the Indian classical dance odissi at a workshop taught by Sumathi Chandra at the Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, on 4 June 2015.

Photo: Joelle Jacinto



Research & Documentation Network report

by Urmimala Sarkar and Stephanie Burrridge, co-chairs,
and Sarah Knox, emerging scholar

This report focuses on the events and discussions at the WDAAP 2015 conference, 'Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity through Dance', a vibrant, thought-provoking event where many ideas about performativity, education, cultural preservation, technology and the current state of dance across our region were put up for debate and dialogue. Scholars interested in presenting at the symposium were invited to submit abstracts addressing the conference theme 'Connectivity through Dance' in the following categories: scholarly papers, performative presentations and Pecha Kucha-style postgraduate presentations.

All participants were selected by 'double blind' referee review panels as per international academic conventions. Panellists included for scholarly papers (PhD required), performative presentations and Pecha Kucha sessions included Dr Kai Watkins, Dr Joseph Gonzales, Dr Urmimala Sarkar, Dr Caren Carino, Dr Siri Rama, Dr Alex Dea, Prof Yunyu Wang, Prof Ruth Berenson, Dr Chua Soo Pong, Michelle Loh Wen Han, Nirmala Seshadri, Anna Chan, Joelle Jacinto, Ricky Sim, David Mead, and Joey Chua. There were 74 papers submitted from 12 countries with over 50 being presented in 12 sessions over the two days of the conference; nine were from Singapore.

Satellite events included a Singapore book launch of *Dance Education around the World: Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change* edited by Charlotte Svendler Nielsen and Stephanie Burrridge with a foreword by Sir Ken Robinson, published by Routledge U.K. Resulting from a joint WDA and daCi initiative, the book was launched by WDAAP Education & Training Network co-chair Associate Professor Ralph Buck.

Research & Documentation Network Meeting

The meeting was jointly chaired by Dr Stephanie Burrridge (Singapore) and Dr Urmimala Sarkar (India) with around 25 people attending. The meeting raised and discussed several important issues mainly around the issues of publishing.

The emerging scholars meeting was discussed and deemed a success with some adjustments to the name of the event (Emerging Scholars rather than Young Scholars). It was recommended that a standalone day for emerging scholars become part of every WDA conference and we should suggest this for the 2016 Korean event.

Development of an Asian Critics Circle was also raised; the idea is of a mentorship programme for budding dance writers, as part of our commitment to nurturing the next generation of arts writers. Participants apply to be paired with an established dance reviewer and mentored to write reviews; commonly this process would be in tandem with a dance festival, including WDA conference performances. This concept was previously tried at the 2010 WDA Americas event and has been piloted in Singapore and some other regional countries (eg. Hong Kong). The biggest problem restricting an Asian critical review forum is a reputable review hosting site.

Over the couple of days of the meeting, symposium participants were surveyed about their thoughts on publishing their conference presentation paper. In the current situation whereby many presenters take the opportunity to share their papers, or a similar version, at a number of conferences, and submit to journals where they can achieve research points, the landscape for WDA publishing is rapidly changing. (We also have our own Journal for Emerging Dance Scholars (JEDS) www.jedsonline.net/ where we would encourage emerging scholars to submit).

Some options included:

- Selected papers to be edited by a panel and published on the Ausdance National website – this has been a past practice;
- A 'clearinghouse idea' – all papers published with style editing only;
- Peer editing on a one-to-one basis;
- Not publishing – instead encouraging presenters to submit to other journals including JEDS;
- Selecting papers by peer choice – by election, the favourite papers to be published;
- Have an annual year book with selected papers chosen by peer review panels;
- WDA Global papers only published.

After discussion of several of these options the meeting decided papers from this conference would not be published but presenters were strongly encouraged to seek appropriate journals to submit with the following note:

This paper was initially presented at the World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific conference 2015: 'Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity through Dance' (Singapore).



A symposium session on the topic of contemporaneity, part of 'Asia Pacific Dance Bridge', chaired by Alex Dea, with papers presented by Aastha Gandhi, Meghna Bhardwaj, Joelle Jacinto, and Rosa Muliati. Standing at the back: R&D network co-chair Stephanie Burrridge. Photo: Aastha Gandhi

Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship (JEDS)

Journal for Emerging Dance Scholarship, JEDS, the double-blind reviewed online journal, continues to be one of the most exciting spaces created by World Dance Alliance for publishing research by emerging scholars. It is in recognition of the importance of facilitating new research of academic excellence that this journal was started. The young scholars' contribution to the Singapore conference was significant and the next issue of JEDS hopes to publish some of the excellently-researched pieces in its next volume. This journal also foregrounds multidisciplinary methodologies of dance research to keep up with the emerging trends of scholarship on dance.

Visit www.jedsonline.net to read papers by our young scholars and see the application procedures. The deadline for submission for the next edition has been extended to 17 January 2016. Also note that Pecha Kucha presentations from the Global Summit are encouraged to submit their work for publication in JEDS.

Emerging Scholars

'Dance Bridge: Connectivity Through Dance' saw the first gathering of emerging scholars from the Asia Pacific region and the Americas. Sarah Knox as Secretariat for the WDA Singapore Symposium and Chair of the Emerging Scholars forum, and

we were joined by Dr Stephanie Burrridge, Dr Urmimala Sarkar Munsri, Dr Cheryl Stock and Dr Kie Watkins who generously shared their insights and experiences of life in research and teaching. An open forum centered around key challenges and questions young scholars might face within postgraduate study journeys and beyond, including publishing, mentoring, and career development. The meeting was a satisfying first step towards exploring avenues for support and creating connections between emerging scholars.

The future of this group was further discussed in an informal coffee date with Anja Ali-Haapala (Australia) and Sarah Foster Sproull (New Zealand), and we came up with a range of potential ongoing activities and events such as further development of the Facebook group (Dance Research District) and email list (both managed by Anja), online writing and feedback sessions, and a blog. Watch this space! We also welcome suggestions from other emerging practitioners, students and researchers. If you have any questions or suggestions or would like to be added to our mailing list please to Sarah Knox at sarah.knox@auckland.ac.nz

Education & Training Network report

by Ralph Buck, co-chair

Ideas for fostering the development of dance education and training within the Asia Pacific region provided the focus of our recent annual meeting in Singapore on 18 Oct 2015. Delegates from throughout the Asia Pacific region were invited to write suggestions in response to the following two questions:

1. What activity would you like to see more of in your local region/city/place?
2. How would you like that activity to be realised?

With approximately 25 members at the meeting, several ideas came forward, some of which were discussed during the meeting. Below is a compiled and edited list of the suggestions made on that day.

What

- Increase access and inclusivity to dance education.
- Better recognise and value training outside of tertiary institutions.
- Better recognise indigenous practices and pedagogies.
- WDA to provide opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduates to share practices and issues across the Asia Pacific region.
- WDA to provide more and better performance opportunities.
- Facilitate cross-cultural children's workshops and performance, eg. a group of children from Indonesia working with a group of children from Australia and then performing in respective countries.
- WDA to foster networking opportunities to meet and share within the network, both physically at events and online.
- WDA to host focused workshops on specific topics of interest such as somatics/technique, interdisciplinary workshops, open sharing of philosophies of dance, and community dance.
- Discussing the place and role of performing arts schools in secondary and primary school systems.
- How to lobby.
- Regional WDAAP members to better communicate with each other.
- Share approaches and methodologies for fostering community dance.
- Discuss careers and graduate profiles for students.

How

- Support the professional development of teachers and practitioners (emerging and established) in respect to access and inclusivity, by:
 - devising personalised programs
 - connecting artists and educators

- identifying models of success.
- Consider diverse cultural backgrounds (language, socio-economic, geographical, physical, sensory, ability, gender etc.).
- Future WDA events should make better provisions for a broader sense of inclusion and participation as a core aspect of the organisational and outcome goals.
- WDA to facilitate mentoring: emerging with experienced, peer with peer, tertiary with professional.
- WDA to utilise video conferencing and Skype technologies.
- Would like a meeting where respective Ministers of Education and /or their representatives attend a session to hear about the importance of dance education.
- Place name on the WDAAP Network mailing list.
- How do we gain government support for projects and events: sharing strategies and success.

I urge you to use this list as a springboard for your own activity. These ideas may be relevant in your country/place and you may be able to implement action now.

Further to the above expressions of ideas and interests, the delegates in the meeting were invited to participate as WDAAP Network committee members, who may serve as conduits for information and support in their local region. The meeting found that some people were interested in SERVING the networks. The persons who wrote down their expression of interest and provided their email is listed below. As a starting point this list represents the WDAAP Education and Training Network Committee. I accept that new names will be offered and these will be added. The main role of the committee is to facilitate the flow of information within the wider regional network.

Committee nominees include:

- Kim Stevens kim.stevens@qut.edu.au
- Avril Huddy a.huddy@qut.edu.au
- Dra Daruni daruni3@yahoo.com
- Anastasia Melati melatianastasia@gmail.com
- Caren Carino ccarino@nafa.edu.sg
- Joelle Jacinto joelle.jacinto@gmail.com

Our Singapore meeting also reported on the WDA/daCi Global Congress that will be held in Adelaide in 2018. We went on to report on the World Alliance for Arts Education partnership and the respect that the WDA Education and Training Network has gained for the larger WDA organisation. We noted that partnerships across education networks were vital in fulfilling our 'world' claims. We also noted that this was achievable with better involvement from local educators and better communication across the region.

Chapter reports

Countries or defined geographical areas within a regional centre may become Chapter members, 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, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. Countries with representatives but no formalised Chapters: East Timor and Papua New Guinea.

NAFA students in Jeffrey Tan's *Confluence* in Next Generation (Singapore Tertiary Showcase), Esplanade Recital Studio, in October 2015, part of the Singapore da:ns festival. Photo: Jeff Low



Aotearoa New Zealand report

by Anton Carter

Kia ora from Aotearoa.

Having taken over from Tania Kopytko who left DANZ in August after 11 years of serving the industry, I look forward to the challenge of leading one of New Zealand's premier arts service organisations. It is a privilege to have an opportunity to be a leader on the *waka* (a traditional Maori canoe).

There has been a whirlwind of dance energy over these last few months with our season of dance festivals. Culturally diverse and wide ranging performance styles in the programmes of Auckland's Tempo Dance Festival, The Body Festival in Christchurch and Nelson Arts Festival have created an incredibly vibrant atmosphere of dance throughout the country.

An explosion of New Zealand's finest hip hop dancers featured on the silver screen with the first ever hip hop dance film to come out of Australasia. Choreographed by internationally renowned dancer/choreographer and multiple world champion Parris Goebel, *Born to Dance* had its world premiere at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival before opening in New Zealand cinemas late September. This is a massive milestone for hip hop dance in New Zealand, transitioning it into a genuine career pathway for an ever increasing number of young dancers engaging in this popular genre. It highlights the growing talents in both New Zealand's dance and film sectors.

New Zealand dance has also been making its mark abroad with Okareka Dance Company who took *K' Rd Strip: A Place to Stand* to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. The show premiered in 2013 and is a celebration of Auckland's Karangahape Road (K' Rd), inspired by a mix of ideas from Maori mythology and true stories associated with this iconic street. The show was six years in the making in the mind of artistic director Taane Mete.

In July/August, Atamira Dance Collective toured *MOKO* to the Beijing Dance Festival,

(significantly it was the first time a dance work from New Zealand was included in this programme), and the Chang Mu Dance Festival in Seoul, South Korea. A multimedia, kinetic and sensory dance performance experience, *MOKO* contains mythological references to the ancient past and responses to the present world and is a journey of unfolding to find oneself. While in China, Atamira's artistic director Moss Patterson was invited to attend the Taipei Arts Festival and connected with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. This was an excellent opportunity to forge stronger links, and initiate cultural and artistic dialogues in dance between New Zealand and China.

DANZ continues to support the industry and find ways to develop capacity and build strength in the sector by providing targeted workshops and seminars. The role of dance as a means to foster creativity, education, and health within communities is powerful, and DANZ has partnered with the Caroline Plummer Fellowship (New Zealand's only dance fellowship), to develop a sector strategy and support framework focusing on community dance. The Caroline Plummer Fellowship marked its 10th anniversary with an international conference 'Moving Communities' held in Dunedin on 25-28 November. This conference brought together dance practitioners and researchers to participate in panels and plenary sessions to discuss and debate current practice and future trends in Community Dance. We hope to see a broader legacy emerge from this first community dance conference with development of a Community Dance Strategy that will provide strength for the sector.

The future is bright for dance in Aotearoa New Zealand as we focus on strengthening existing partnerships and forging new relationships to work together with the sector to create vibrant and thriving dance in Aotearoa.

1. *MOKO*, by Atamira Dance Company.

Photo: Dan Mace

2. *K' Rd Strip: A Place to Stand*, by Okareka Dance Company.

Photo: James Millar



Australia report

by Neil Roach

The Australian Dance Awards were presented by Ausdance on 12 September 2015 in Adelaide to celebrate and highlight achievements in 2014. The Awards honoured a number of notable contributors to the development of dance in Australia over many years. It was also a noteworthy occasion as it celebrated the 50th anniversary of Australia's longest contemporary company, Australian Dance Theatre.

Twelve awards were presented, accompanied by eight performance excerpts and a short film exploring contemporary dance in the landscape of central Australia. Two inductions were made to the Hall of Fame: Marilyn Jones OBE, former principal and then Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, and Dr Elizabeth Cameron Dalman OAM, the founder of Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) who now divides her time between the Mirramu Dance Company based outside Canberra and teaching overseas, including at the Taipei National University of the Arts.

Elizabeth first went to Taiwan more than 40 years ago and built connections with Madame Tsai and the Tsai Jui-Yueh Foundation as well as the Taipei National University of the Arts. The Australian Dance Awards featured a restaging of the early Australian Dance Theatre work *Moon Woman* from 1970, as well as an excerpt from *Birdbrain*, the first ADT work by current Artistic Director Garry Stewart.

The latter half of 2015 has been somewhat overshadowed for some of the smaller and more innovative dance companies by an unanticipated change in Government funding

policy that has the potential to undermine a number of years of progress. Despite this, innovative dance continues, with for example French choreographer and artist Xavier Le Roy and Hong Kong/Singapore-based Scarlet Yu's groundbreaking new work *Temporary Title, 2015* in Sydney with 18 performers, presented by Kaldor Public Art Projects in collaboration with Carriageworks.

Western Australia's new contemporary company Co3, formed from the amalgamation of Buzz Dance Theatre and STEPS Youth Dance Company in May 2014, is guided by the key programming principles curate, commission, and create. The 2015 launch season re:Loaded 2015 in November was a strong beginning and was well received.

The major dance companies continue to present the highest standard of work, with the Australian Ballet premiering a new and splendid *Sleeping Beauty* and three exciting works in *20:21*, and Sydney Dance Company presented *Triptych* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Bangarra Dance Theatre restaged their revelatory *Ochres* in November/December, a blend of traditional and contemporary dance which had a major artistic impact 21 years ago, and which continues to resonate and inspire today. Original cast member Djakapurra Munyarryun added to the richness of the performance, with a deep spiritual focus on tradition and the significance of country, in a revelatory contemporary work that expresses the complexity of indigenous life crossing between city and country.

Dr Elizabeth Cameron Dalman OAM with Australian Dance Theatre dancers
Photo: Chris Herzfeld
Camlight Productions



Bangladesh report

by Sharmila Banerjee

Nrityajog, Bangladesh's chapter of WDAAP, successfully conducted a dance workshop on the very graceful dance form Mayurbhanj chhau of Orissa, India, from 23 to 28 July 2015. The workshop was conducted by Santosh Nair, renowned Mayurbhanj chhau and contemporary dancer and choreographer from Delhi, India. This workshop was organised with the help of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, the national institution for the promotion of art and culture in Bangladesh. The workshop was divided into morning and evening sessions in which 63 participants from different dance institutions participated with great enthusiasm. It also included participants from other districts of Bangladesh, who do not usually get as much opportunity as those in Dhaka to come in contact with such dance styles or such renowned choreographers and dance teachers. The participants were overwhelmed and were very excited with this dance style as it helped them to open up their bodies and enhanced their ability to do various stretching and bold, vigorous and complicated movements.

Although Mayurbhanj chhau looks immensely graceful and fluid, it is extremely difficult and strenuous to do. However the participants gave it their best to get as much as they could from Santosh. We had a presentation of the workshop on 28 July at the Music and Dance Auditorium of the Shilpakala Academy, where the participants presented a glimpse of what they had learned in the few days. It also included a performance by Santosh Nair which was greatly appreciated by the audience and the media.

Besides being a fabulous dancer, Santosh proved to be a wonderful teacher, with his easy communication, explanatory and demonstrative skills, and his disciplined and uncompromising attitude when it comes to performance. The techniques taught by Santosh helped the workshop participants

to see dance from a broader perspective and to understand the necessity of building a proper body language for any kind of dance form they do. We truly appreciate and thank Santosh from the bottom of our hearts for being so nice and cooperative with us and were very much pleased to see his interaction with the students. The participants were equally fascinated by his way of teaching as well as his great skills and expertise. We would love to have him again for a longer period of time in Bangladesh in the future.

In the last few years Nrityajog has made its place in the cultural scene of Bangladesh, where everyone knows that the organisation has been working for the development of dancers and to create networks for Bangladeshi dancers with the other dancers of the world. The electronic and print media have been very cooperative and helpful in disseminating publicity and reviews of the activities of Nrityajog, and so have organisations such as Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. We hope to organize more workshops and other events like this for the further development of dancers. Through these types of works, we hope that the activities of Nrityajog will spread all over the cultural arena of the country and will help people to know more about this organisation.

1. Santosh Nair performing Mayurbhanj chhau on 28 July 2015 at the Music and Dance Auditorium of the Shilpakala Academy, along with Bangladeshi workshop participants.

Photo: Ibnul Asef Jawad

2-3. Workshop participants performing Mayurbhanj chhau on 28 July 2015 at the Music and Dance Auditorium of the Shilpakala Academy.

Photo: Ibnul Asef Jawad



Cambodia report

by Alicia Hamet

In October 2013, Amrita Performing Arts premiered the first ever contemporary choreographic showcase in Cambodia: the Contemporary Dance Platform. This year for the fifth edition of the Platform, we were able to showcase two evenings of performance on 13-14 November 2015 at the Department of Performing Arts in Phnom Penh. These two evenings premiered new works of original contemporary dance that have been created by three Amrita choreographers: Nam Narim, Phon Sopheap and Soy Chanborey. In addition to the post-show Q and A with the audience, Amrita also provided opportunities for our audience to engage further with our artists, with one pre-performance public talk at the Secondary School of Fine Arts on 5 November and a Conversation with the Artists at Java Café and Gallery on 17 November.

This unique program, an integral part of our Artist Development Program, characterizes Amrita's efforts to strengthen the emergence of contemporary dance in Cambodia and to develop our artists' choreographic skills. It is a bi-annual program in which we commission three of our artists to create new pieces of Cambodian choreography. After six weeks of mentorship, and a series of public talks given by our artists as they engage with a local audience, our artists perform these works to the general public. Following these performances, our artists continue to have workshops with invited dance practitioners from the region to discuss and reflect on for their future development.

For this platform, Amrita's artistic director, Chey Chankethya, decided to focus on the creation of new work from a different perspective. All three choreographers opted for translating someone else's story into a piece. In her piece *The Edge*, Narim picked the topic of her grandmother's life as an artist through the Pol Pot regime, choreographing a new piece in which her grandmother performs. Chanborey presents his father's life in 'The Real', and the challenges he faces on a daily basis. Sopheap, who is a teacher and trained in *lakhaon khaol* (male masked dance), created the work *Monkey's Mask II*, that speaks about the mask he lost and found again. In his piece, he gives life to the mask itself to the extent that it becomes its own character. The question facing all of them was how to put yourself in someone else's shoes and convey their story, whilst respecting your own artistic language and range of emotions?

Amrita supported its previous Contemporary Dance Platform from its own funds with additional support for invited dance experts from the Asian Cultural Council. This platform has been made possible with generous support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

As well as creating work in Cambodia, Amrita is committed to providing our artists with opportunities for international collaboration. We believe forging these regional connections not only mutually supports artistic development, but also further builds artistic networks for future collaborations. This year we have been delighted to be able to facilitate numerous opportunities regionally for our artists to join residencies and workshops. In June, our artist Chy Ratana joined the South East Asia Choreolab 2015 [see Support & Development report in this edition of Channels for more information]. Amrita was also thrilled to be represented by Yon Davy at the 2015 International Young Choreographers Projects (IYCP) held in Taiwan this July [see special report on the IYCP].

Amrita was honored to collaborate once again with Peter Sellars' *Persephone* for the Festival Lyrique d'Aix en Provence 2015 edition. Four Cambodian artists—Nam Narim, Sam Sathya, Kohn Chansithyka and Chumvan Sodhachiv (Belle)—were in France to rehearse and perform from May till July under his guidance, as part of the grand *lolanta/Persephone* show, considered one of the festival's highlights.

With generous support from the Asian Dance Company, our artist Rady Nget benefited from a six-week residency in Korea in September, under the supervision of Korean choreographer Hwan Soo Hyun. The concept was to question the dancers, push them to understand each other and experiment through the intercultural sharing process. The residency ended with a final performance by all the dancers, making them work together, incorporating their various experiences and influences.

And finally, Chey Chankethya was invited to perform her piece *My Mothers and I* at the Singapore International Arts Festival (SIFA) on 1 September 2015. She was also challenged to develop new choreography within 10 days as part of the Dance Marathon: 'Open with a Punk Spirit!' Archive Box project, with performances on 4 and September.

Hong Kong report

by Stella Lau



In the second half of 2015, Hong Kong Dance Alliance undertook a series of projects that aimed to nurture not just new generations of dance artists, but also dance audiences and dance writers. Each of these programs was the latest iteration of ongoing projects that Hong Kong Dance Alliance has produced over several years in an attempt to develop a dance ecology that can help promote the development of dance in Hong Kong.

On 3 and 4 July 2015 at the Black Box Theatre of Kwai Tsing Theatre, three dance works were premiered in the Hong Kong Dance Alliance *Emerging Choreographers 2015*. This was the fourth program since 2007 in a series that provides a platform for up-and-coming choreographers to create and present new work. This year, the Alliance selection panel chose three talented young choreographers – Li De, Joseph Lee Wai-nang, and Cliff Huen Tin-yeung – from amongst a field of 18 applicants. Mentored by Daniel Yeung, one of Hong Kong's most active choreographers, each artist created an original dance work for the program that showcased different dance styles and addressed a range of topics. Li, with a Chinese Dance background and inspired by a documentary about Shaolin kung fu, choreographed a trio 'Wonderful/Wild' that explores the meaning and value of traditional culture in today's world. In Lee's duet 'The Other End', two female dancers complete a journey with finely tuned, coordinated and

executed movements of mutual support and balance, consonance and dissonance, propulsion and resistance. Huen's trio 'Still Human' is an experimental work that uses the dancers' physical bodies to evoke a raw, innate awareness of the senses that Huen sees as lost in the modern world of technology.

Immediately following *Emerging Choreographers 2015* the Alliance produced another choreographic project, *REAL Showcase New Series*, co-presented with CCDC Dance Centre. The *Series* provides opportunities for new choreographers to present their debut full-length works. Since 2010, a total of 14 productions in the *Series* have been presented. On 4 and 5 July 2015, Fiona Zhou performed her solo work *Wall* at CCDC Dance Center Jockey Club Dance Theater. As an artist who grew up in Mainland China, Zhou shared with audiences her experience of living in Hong Kong, a city of high walls that exist not only in the physical sense, but also metaphorically in the inhabitants' minds, rendering them insignificant and voiceless.

Besides choreographic productions, the Alliance presented *Dance Enhance*, a dance appreciation and criticism writing project that has been offered since 2009. 35 participants enrolled in the sixth program of the project that was launched in October 2015 and will be completed in January 2016. Besides four lectures that cover a wide range of topics including history of dance, choreological

framework, relationship between dance reviews and dance development, dance appreciation/observation skills (the Lexicon of Dance), advice and tips from media experts on review writing, movement and creativity, and the narrative form in dance, the participants also attend four productions – Zuni Icosahedron's *The World According to Dance* choreographed by Dick Wong, Hong Kong Ballet's *Romeo & Juliet* choreographed by Rudi van Dantzig, Hong Kong Dance Company's *L'Amour Immortel* choreographed by Yang Yunyao, and City Contemporary Dance Company's *Soledad* choreographed by Helen Lai. For each of these productions, each participant writes a review for which a mentor provides comments.

Another event that helped to nurture Hong Kong dance artists and educators was the visit of internationally renowned British choreographer Wayne McGregor with his creative learning team in October. Invited by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, McGregor conducted workshops for professional dancers from Alliance members the Hong Kong Dance Company and the Hong Kong Ballet to explore the choreographer's unique movement vocabulary, exchange creative ideas, and gain insight into his choreographic style. McGregor's creative learning team also led workshops for professional dance students, dance educators, and dance teachers in local schools, based on the Mind and Movement methodologies created by Studio

Wayne McGregor. McGregor's four-day visit culminated with a public forum, *New Works Forum: Dance Dialogue with Wayne McGregor*, which was held on 17 October at the Hong Kong Jockey Club Amphitheatre of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. At the forum, McGregor shared some of the interdisciplinary collaborative research he has conducted with cognitive scientists and explained how this research contributes to choreographic creativity in making dance, in dance education, and in understanding bodies.

Together with numerous dance performances presented by various dance companies and organizations and other events such as the nine-day Hong Kong Tap Dance Festival 2015 in September presented by dance company R & T, and sixteen-day i-Dance (HK) 2015 in November by dance company Y-Space, the Hong Kong dance scene in the second half of 2015 continues to be vibrant and eventful.



1. *Wonderful/Wild*, choreographed by Li De, part of the Emerging Choreographer 2015 event performed at Kwai Sing Theatre, 4–5 July 2015.

Photo: Mark Lam

2. *Still Human*, choreographed by Cliff Huen Tin-yeung, part of the Emerging Choreographer 2015 event performed at Kwai Sing Theatre, 4–5 July 2015. Photo: Mark Lam

India report

by Aastha Gandhi

Several members of the India chapter attended the 'Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity through Dance' event in Singapore, connecting bridges through bodies of dance, cultures and areas of research with fellow WDAAP members over the three days. The India Chapter saw active participation with Dr. Urmimala Sarkar (Vice-President of WDAAP and co-chair of the Research and Documentation network) leading the contingent. Dr. Urmimala Sarkar, Debanjali Biswas, Aastha Gandhi and Meghna Bhardwaj all presented papers in the symposium, while Meghna Bhardwaj was a choreolab participant, Aastha Gandhi conducted a masterclass, and Suman Sarawgi attended as a general participant.

Dance Alliance Kolkata report by Vanessa Mirza

The Dance Bridges Festival is a new initiative for dance and the performing arts in Kolkata by Dance Alliance Kolkata. The theme 'Talking Points in Choreography; Dialogues Across Cultures' emerged from a personal curiosity as a choreographer to know more about the creative process of different artists and how cultural influences affect choreographic works. In curating performances for the Festival, I selected works that highlight this individuality and specificity, sometimes in subtle ways, and in others more overtly. Artists for the festival included Van Huynh Company (UK), Anarchy Dance Theatre (Taiwan), I-Fen Tung (Taiwan), Sydney Skov (USA), Janet Reed (USA), Tomas Danielis (Austria), Rocio Berenguer (France), Prasanna Saikia & Buoyant Performing Arts (Kolkata, India). There were also special presentations and workshops by Waleth & Bardon (Sweden) and Meghna Bhardwaj (New Delhi).

Every artist and piece carried a different flavour that is a result of a personal history of dance training, choreographic style, and creative decisions, but also a reflection of

cultural perceptions, thinking and infiltrations. It has been a great pleasure to network with different artists and provide for their needs, creating an international experience for performing arts right here in Kolkata.

A very special part of the Dance Bridges Festival was a three-week residency with Van Huynh Company in Kolkata with local dancers. Choreographer Dam Van Huynh created a beautiful work titled 'Resonance' with a company of five local artists and dancer Ieva Navickaite for the festival. The twenty-minute piece has original music accompaniment by Martyna Poznanska created from environmental sounds she recorded live in Kolkata.

Along with performances, the festival included a section of film screenings with twenty dance films from over fourteen countries. The dance films were curated in collaboration with Screendance Festival Sweden, Goethe-Institut Kolkata, Gati Dance Forum and other independent artists. This was a truly unique part of the festival and brought audiences insights into choreographic developments in dance as an art in the medium of film from across the world. During the festival there were also several workshops in Eastern and Western styles of dance at different studios in the city providing another platform for sharing knowledge, connection and exchange.

As the artistic director and producer for the festival, it has been a long process of connecting with sponsors and partners. The festival was possible due to the support and collaboration of Swar Sangam, ITC Ltd., Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, the Austrian Embassy & Austrian Cultural Forum New Delhi, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee (Konstnärsnämnden), Alliance Française du Bengale, British Council, Screendance Festival (Sweden), t2 Telegraph, 91.9 Friends FM, Soni Power, Add Life Caring Minds, Rhythmosaic Dance Company, Buoyant Performing Arts Centre, Sparsh Studio for Performing Arts, the Calcutta School of Music and Hotel Nest International, Chaitown Creatives and Berger Paints. It is our intention to host this festival as a biennial event and the next edition is due to take place in 2017. We hope the Dance Bridges Festival grows from this first edition to continue in building artistic bridges and cultural exchanges within dance and creative communities across the world.

Strange Display by Van Huynh Company (UK) at Dance Bridges Festival, Kolkata.

Photo courtesy:
The Telegraph t2



Indonesia report

by Anastasia Melati

Some participants in WDA Indonesia's monthly discussion series on 6 November 2015. Photo: Paul Amron



Warmest greetings to friends in WDA Asia Pacific from WDA Indonesia!

Attending the meeting of all members of WDAAP in Singapore from 15 to 19 October 2015 was a significant step for WDA Indonesia to rejoin the network after being inactive for about 10 years, according to Yunyu Wang, WDAAP President, speaking at the Annual General Meeting. At the Singapore event, WDA Indonesia Chapter was represented by Anastasia Melati, Secretary, and other members of WDA Indonesia, namely Martinus Miroto (lecturer in the Dance Department at Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Creation dan Choreography division of WDA Indonesia), Daruni (lecturer in the Dance Department, ISI Yogyakarta), Silvia Purba (lecturer in the Theater Department, ISI Yogyakarta), Darlane Litaay (lecturer at Institut Seni dan Budaya Indonesia Papua), and Roza Muliati (lecturer in the Dance Department, ISI Padang).

How has WDA Indonesia begun its activities in its first year in WDAAP? The first activity has been to introduce WDAAP to the dancing environment, both to artists and to academics. This socialization is needed in order that the vision and mission of WDAAP can be instilled into WDA Indonesia. Emails informing of the existence of WDA Indonesia as a member of WDAAP were sent to several arts institutes in Indonesia. Working with universities and institutes across Java, Sumatra, and Papua, WDA Indonesia still has only a few members, 40 people in total,

but expects to grow.

WDA Indonesia has started to run programs, starting with regular discussions on the development of dance works and critical discourse of performing arts. These discussions are called *ngobrol sore* or 'evening chats', because we want to have this event in a relaxing atmosphere and we usually begin the discussion at 4pm and end at 6pm in the evening. Some friends who are interested in the performing arts, with various backgrounds other than dance, such as sociology, anthropology, music, theater, history, painting, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies, also take part.

A regular forum in which dance is discussed and performed is another idea which has been included in the agenda of WDA Indonesia's monthly activity. Several young choreographers have demonstrated their works at these forums, usually solo choreography for about 10-15 minutes, followed by a warm discussion of the works performed. This discussion is part of an event organized by Senrepita community, a community focusing on performing arts in Yogyakarta initiated by Sal Murgiyanto, assisted by Anastasia Melati and other friends. The name Senrepita is Sal Murgiyanto's home address (Jalan Sentonorejo 7A), the place where we usually hold the meetings, but the name could also refer to 'seni pertunjukan pilihan kita' or 'the performing arts of our choice.'

The various cultures of Indonesia have

1. After the discussion of the reconstruction of the Wiwoho Girisapto dance, on 21 March 2015.

Photo: Ni Nyoman Sudewi

2. Mila Rosinta in performance

on 10 June 2015.

Photo: Ni Nyoman Sudewi

3. Retno Sulistyorini in her work *Penantian*, on 12 August 2015 in the house of Dr. Sal Murgiyanto.

Photo: Ni Nyoman Sudewi

4. Dr. Sal Murgiyanto and dancers of the reconstruction of the Wiwoho Girisapto dance on 21 March 2015.

Photo: Ni Nyoman Sudewi



sustained their traditional arts through either their supporting communities or their local governments. In such an environment, particularly in Yogyakarta as a city with a royal legacy in which tradition is still strongly upheld in the community, contemporary dance initiated by the youth needs to be supported. For this reason, in cooperation with ISI Yogyakarta, WDA Indonesia and Senrepita created a contemporary dance forum entitled 'Yang Muda Yang Mencipta Tari Kontemporer Indonesia' (The Young Who Create Indonesian Contemporary Dance), performed for two days in the auditorium of the Dance Department, ISI Yogyakarta. Students of ISI Yogyakarta and dance artists from Jakarta, Solo, and Yogyakarta participated in this event. This event received a lot of support from ISI Yogyakarta and our friends, the young choreographers.

We hope that the cooperation between WDA Indonesia, Senrepita, and other institutions not only in Indonesia but also abroad will promote contemporary dance in Indonesia among the traditional dances to support young generations in order to reinterpret, revalue, and recreate their traditions.



Malaysia report

by Bilqis Hijjas,
with Mohd Anis
Mohd Nor

It's either drought or flood in the Malaysian dance community, and you can never tell what will happen next! The second half of the year was dominated by the DiverseCity Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival from 3 September to 4 October, of which the dance segment was curated by Indian classical dance doyen Ramli Ibrahim of Sutra Dance Theatre. Many major local dance companies created new full-length works for the festival, and MyDance Alliance was invited to co-curate and produce *Tepak Tari*, a showcase of 12 short contemporary dance works by Malaysian dancers.

This should have been a year for our biennial MyDance Festival, but due to lack of funding we put our festival on hold and focused our energies on *Tepak Tari*, which opened the DiverseCity festival. Similarly to the MyDance Festival, *Tepak Tari* featured both established companies and independent choreographers, committee members of MyDance Alliance contributed their volunteer labour to the production process, and the resulting showcase was a valuable opportunity for performers in the often siloed local dance community to get to know each other, both on stage and off. Although the 650-seat venue at Kuala Lumpur City Council was somewhat beyond the capacity of our audience, what audience there was was enchanted, and the quality of works was splendid.

The Malaysian arts scene, mostly because of lack of sustainable funding models from local government, suffers from great lack of continuity. A generously-funded festival one year may completely disappear the next. So although DiverseCity was a good lift-off for a major festival in our capital city, only time will tell whether it will be able to maintain its momentum, and become a reputed regular event akin to George Town Festival in Penang in the north.

On a smaller scale, MyDance Alliance continues with its series of irregular activities spearheaded by our committee and other active members. In July, member Lau Beh Chin organised Kongsu-Kongsu 2, another opportunity for Malaysian dancers who have gone abroad either for performance or training to share their experiences with their peers. Committee member JS Wong from Damansara Performing Arts Centre hosted technique workshops by Adriane Fang, a visiting dancer of Malaysian heritage currently lecturing at the University of Maryland. MyDance Alliance also partnered with Japan Foundation Kuala

Lumpur to promote a project by Japanese choreographer Un Yamada, in which five male Malaysian contemporary dancers will restage her work *one◆piece* in Kuala Lumpur in January 2016, after intensive rehearsals in Japan. The audition for Un's work was attended by 25 dancers, and their high levels of technique, creativity and character made the selection very difficult!

Committee member David Lim continues to be very active, although his work on *Langkah*, the biannual online publication by and for Malaysian contemporary dancers, was temporarily suspended due to his Asia Pacific Impro 2 project, also supported by the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, a week of workshops in dance improvisation at Rimbun Dahan with teachers and participants from Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia, culminating in an informal showcase. This took place at private arts centre Rimbun Dahan in October, and demonstrates a growing interest in dance improvisation in the region, both as a method for generating choreography, and a means to create more sensitive thoughtful dancers.

David's next dance event is a week-long workshop by Daniel 'Bear' Davis, a performer based in San Francisco, in Axis Syllabus and other somatic techniques, in a site-specific context at Rimbun Dahan in January [see Announcements]. This event will complement Dancing in Place, a weekend of free site-specific performances, which will also take place at Rimbun Dahan in January, supported by many of our committee members as well as visiting performers from our friends in WDAAP!

Rithaudin Abdul Kadir, another member of our committee, is now one of the managers of new arts space InspiRaasi, in an underground space beneath Dataran Merdeka, the city's independence square. As part of its opening events in September, Rithaudin curated and organised the Young Emerging Choreographer Series, a platform for 12 young dancers, some of them making their very first works. InspiRaasi joins the large number of small theatre spaces recently opened in Kuala Lumpur, including Space.Toccata and Now Theatre, to cope with demand from the grassroots arts community.

Finally, it's the end of an era, and the beginning of another, for MyDance Alliance co-founder and WDAAP leader Prof Mohd Anis Mohd Nor. In his own words:

I have now retired from my professorial position at the University of Malaya after

working for more than 35 years as a university academic. Retirement at age 60 is mandatory in Malaysia civil service. However, I will continue to teach as Adjunct Professor at several universities within the greater Kuala Lumpur area and conduct my research activities from my own research institution, Nusantara Performing Arts Research Center (NusPARC; www.nusparc.com) which has been in operation for the last six years. NusPARC is a non-profit organization which awards grants to individual scholars for research and documentation in the traditional and contemporary performing arts of Southeast Asia, and grants for publications, especially for the final publishing processes of peer-reviewed

manuscripts. NusPARC Books, the publishing branch of this Research Center, may sponsor or co-sponsor the publication of written or audio/visual materials on the Southeast Asian performing arts.

As an extension to the above, NusParc offers traditional and modern dance classes to schools and communities within the neighbourhood of Damansara and northern Petaling Jaya, within the leafy and exciting suburbs of Kuala Lumpur. NusParc provides a modest studio space for rehearsals and meetings when the need arises. I look forward to a great collaborative future between NusParc and MyDance Alliance as I continue to serve the dance communities in Malaysia.

1–4 Works from Tepak Tari, produced by MyDance Alliance for the DiverseCity Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival, 3–5 September 2015. All photos: Huneid Tyeb

1. Rathimalar Govindarajoo in *return*, choreographed by Rathimalar Govindarajoo and January Low.

2. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Amy Len, performed by Kwang Tung Dance Company.

3. *Dikir* by Raziman Sarbini, performed by ASWARA Dance Company.

4. Rachel Chew Xi Zin in Wong Jyh Shyong's 'After Dark', performed by DPAC Dance Company.

5. Prof Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor surrounded by his students and graduates from the Dance Department at University of Malaya, at his birthday celebration on 7 November 2015. Photo: Mohd Nordin Abdolatip

6. David Lim leading audience members at the informal showing of Asia Pacific Impro 2, organised by David Lim, at Rimbun Dahan, 21–25 October 2015. Photo: Elma Hache



Papua New Guinea report

by Naomi Faik-Simet



1



2

Papua New Guinea began the second part of the year as the host to the 2015 South Pacific Games. As in many such occasions, the most memorable part of the two-week event, from 4 to 18 July, was the opening ceremony which showcased a great variety of exotic traditional and contemporary dance performances. The opening ceremony was held on 4 July at the Port Moresby Sir John Guise Stadium and was described by many as one of the best shows the country has ever staged. Traditional dances performed during the occasion were set against the historical culture of the Motuan people who are the inhabitants of the Southern coastline. Performances were based on the *hiri* trade between the Motuan and Gulf people which took place during the early nineteenth century.

Known for its cultural diversity, many of Papua New Guinea's traditional dance repertoires are derived from ceremonies that no longer exist. However, a good number of these performances are now being staged for modern shows and festivals. Being host to over 2000 participants from the Pacific region, Papua New Guinea took the opportunity to not only promote sports but also shared its culture through the various dance performances by both traditional and contemporary dance artists.

Another event that attracted many visitors and tourists was the 21st National Mask and Warwagira Festival held this year in East New Britain province. The festival is an annual event and is focused on mask performances. Amongst other cultural items, Papua New Guinea has unique and special mask dances associated with various rituals and ceremonies. The highlight of the Mask Festival was the performance of the *tubuan* mask which is part of the *kinavai* (*tubuan* dance performance in canoes performed over water) ritual performance. It is strictly performed and governed by the Tolai men of the East New Britain province. In July, about 400 boys, young, and elderly men were initiated into the *nidok*, a week-long initiation ceremony

for males to acquire the skills and knowledge of the *tubuan*. Such rituals continue to be practiced and strengthened among the Tolai with the aim to pass on the knowledge to the younger generation.

Another significant mask performance was the Baining fire dance known locally as the *atut* which is only performed at night. The dance is performed by men and involves the dancing on and around the glowing embers of a fire. It is one of Papua New Guinea's draw-card performances that attract visitors and outsiders to the Mask Festival.

Amongst other highlights was the celebration of Papua New Guinea's 40th Independence anniversary staged in Port Moresby on 16 September. Various cultural dance groups participated with a range of dance performances to commemorate the occasion. Other positive developments include the staging of a dance extravaganza by Port Moresby Grammar School students to coincide with the independence celebrations. The 30-minute dance production was the first to be staged at the school and involved the participation of over 100 students. The production's theme was on climate change and gave students the creative opportunity to explore dance movements, costume and story line, which was projected well throughout the performance. Awards were given to the best choreographer and director of the show, which was encouraging. The school has confirmed to make the dance production an annual event and is in the process of recruiting more dance teachers.

As the year draws to the end, many dance projects are yet to be undertaken including a dance curriculum workshop which targets teachers to enhance capacity building in teaching dance in schools. We are hoping to have the workshop in 2016 and will be in dialogue with WDAAP for further assistance and collaboration. Wishing you all and your families happy holidays and we look forward to sharing more positive stories for dance in 2016!

1. A Baining fire dancer at the National Mask Festival on 17 July 2015 in East New Britain province.
2. Tolai Tubuan dancers at the National Mask Festival on 17 July 2015 in East New Britain province.

Photos: Gedisa Jacob, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies

Philippines report

by Joelle Jacinto
and Basilio
Esteban Villaruz

The 1st C-MAP Choreographers Showcase International was held from 14 to 15 August 2015 at the University of St. La Salle Coliseum in Bacolod City, Philippines. Borne from the Composition and Movement Analysis Program (C-MAP), these progressive workshops were spread over 2014, with an intensive week in March, and again in September. These were held in Bacolod and were naturally attended mostly by regional dance artists, though there were participants from Manila as well. By popular demand, a condensed introduction to the workshop was brought to Manila. As a WDA Philippines initiative and project, all participating choreographers and dancers were required to be active WDA Ph members to be considered for the C-MAP workshops.

All these participants were invited to present work at the culminating festival in 2015, but due to scheduling and prior commitments, only a handful were able to complete work. Highlighted at the festival were Razel Ann "Xiao" Mitchao, Jed Amihan, Faith Javellana, Penelop Ong, Johanna Mangubat, Marius Centino, Rean Tirol and Isaiah Joel Villamater. These choreographers also cheerfully performed festival crew duties, such as running rehearsals, mobilising participants, taking over the sound and light booth, and general stage management.

Applications are already being accepted by the facilitators for the next series of C-MAP workshops, which begins in 27 March 2016, again in Bacolod City.

Dwight Rodrigazo, WDA Ph Projects committee member, Dance Pull Project artistic director, and C-MAP Festival director, also took this opportunity to thank his mentors by presenting them with the Negrense award for enriching Negros, a rural region of the Philippines, with the gift of dance. These were presented posthumously to Lydia Madarang Gaston, and to Janette Garcia-Sanchez and Annabelle Martinez-Cudilla. The Babaylanes awards were also given out to still-active giants in the Philippine dance scene: Denisa Reyes, Edna Vida-Froilan, Agnes Locsin, Myra Beltran and our chapter head, Basilio Esteban Villaruz, whom you may know as Steve. Steve and Denisa were also recipients of the Gawad CCP Para Sa Sining (The Cultural Center of the Philippines Recognition for Arts), on 17 September. The Gawad CCP is the highest award conferred by the CCP for outstanding contribution to arts and culture in the



Philippines and is given out every three years to artists and cultural workers across several art forms.

From 31 July to 2 August 2015, the reboot of Denisa Reyes' Neo-Filipino series was staged at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, featuring today's established choreographers who got their start with the experimental series: Paul Alexander Morales, Alden Lugnasin, Dwight Rodrigazo, and Christine Crame, as well as Agnes Locsin, Myra Beltran, Max Luna III, Alvin Erasga Tolentino and, of course, Reyes herself, all of whom have had work premiered in the Neo-Filipino series. While formerly a Ballet Philippines production from when Reyes was the company's artistic director, the current series stands under the umbrella of the CCP, and will be part of complementary activities organised collaboratively between the CCP and the Contemporary Dance Network Manila, an affiliate organisation of the Creation and Presentation network of WDA Ph. For 2016, the New Choreographers Competition will stand on its own outside the now-defunct Wifi Body Festival, slated for the CCP in August, while a Koryolab (Choreolab) that functions as a mentoring program for the competition will be held prior.

UP Dance Company paid tribute to the Wifi Body Festival at the College of Music's Dance program's 35th anniversary presentation at their studio in the University of the Philippines [UP], from 23 to 24



October. The performance consisted of winners and placers from the Wifi Body Festival's New Choreographers Competition who had come from the program and also gave a view of the state of training of the current crop of dance majors and those who have graduated from the program: Mark Robles and Alexa Torte performed JM Cabling's winning 'Bent', which was the last winner of the NCC, while Ava Maureen Villanueva's now infamous 'In Side', the very first NCC winner, was performed by brilliant technician Angela Sebastian; Herbert Alvarez's 'Lamentations', originally performed by choreographer Elena Laniog, was performed by Sarah Maria Samaniego, herself a finalist with her 'Na Laroan (Played)', performed by Gebbvelle Selva and Minette Maza. Sarah had lost in 2012 to Al Bernard Garcia, who reprised his winning 'Entry No. ____'. The performance was inspiring to dancers and budding choreographers, some of whom will hopefully be trying their luck at the next NCC in August 2016.

The professional association Performance Studies International held a component of its decentralised conference PSI #21 Fluid States at De La Salle University and UP in Manila from 5 to 8 November. The theme was 'On Tilted Earth', and focused on global environmental disasters, including the Fukushima tsunami in Japan and the Hainan/Yolanda typhoon in the Philippines.

The conference reported on earlier RoRo journeys (named after the "roll-on, roll-off" transportation system that connects the major islands of the archipelago) in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao by local and international performance studies scholars and artists. The main coordinator, with local and overseas representatives, was Jazmin Llana of De La Salle. Among those presenting were Maaïke Bleeker, PSI president, from the Netherlands, Paul Rae, Mick Douglas and Merlinda Bobis from Australia, Datu Migkitay Victorine Saway (whose Talaandig Living Tradition School



was earlier awarded the Gawad CCP), Hayato Kasuge of Japan, Catherine Diamond of Taiwan, Marin Blazeovic of Croatia by video-talk, Cecilia de la Paz, Basilio Esteban Villaruz, and many others from Asia and the Philippines. Steve Villaruz's presentation for the conference focused on dance as a balance-imbalance practice, and the question of inscribing movement in a score to freeze or fix it. (The previous week, Villaruz conducted a three-day seminar on Benesh movement notation for the Royal Academy of Dancers teachers in Kuala Lumpur.)

The conference included performances by Dulaang UP, UP Dance Company, and Daloy Dance Company. The UP College of Mass Communication also hosted several paper presentations. Everyone was also welcomed to the CCP's Performatura events. The conference closed with a kind of ritual walk with a plastic rope that bound together participants in UP's Abelardo Hall Auditorium.

Concurrent with the event was the conference of the Asian Composers League [ACL] in UP and De La Salle-College of St. Benilde. Dance majors of the UP College of Music and members of UP Dance Company performed in the ACL event, to new music by participating composers.

1. C-MAP Festival director Dwight Rodrigazo, WDA Philippines President and Babaylanes awardee Basilio Esteban Villaruz, and Babaylanes and Negrense awards designer Moreen Austria, at the 2015 C-MAP Choreographers Festival International, at University of St La Salle Coliseum, Bacolod City, Philippines, 15 August 2015.

Photo: Regie R. Placido

2. *Transit* by Xiao Mitchao, performed by Xiao Mitchao, Andre Mabaquiao and Jonee Rodriguez of Dance Pull Project, at the 2015 C-MAP Choreographers Festival International, at University of St La Salle Coliseum, Bacolod City, Philippines, 15 August 2015.

Photo: Regie R. Placido

3. *Via Mien* by Jed Amihan, performed by Anna Agawa Senase and Jeiel Hernandez of Airdance, at the 2015 C-MAP Choreographers Festival International, at University of St La Salle Coliseum, Bacolod City, Philippines, 15 August 2015.

Photo: Regie R. Placido

Singapore report

by Siri Rama

Dr. Chua Soo Pong's *The Nightingale*, pictured here with the Prince, which performed in Malaysia and China.



WDAS members have had a phenomenal year what with Singapore celebrating its 50th year and hosting Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity Through Dance (www.wdas2015.com). Even with celebrations and special events happening in Singapore throughout the year, WDAS members stayed committed to their own artistic journeys. We begin with veteran member and former WDAS President Dr. Chua Soo Pong, who was supported by Singapore International Foundation to collaborate with Nanning City People's Arts House, China, to produce children's dance drama *The Nightingale*, adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's story. The work premiered at George Town Festival in August, and subsequently performed in Nanning, China, in September. With music composed by Zhao Jing, a graduate of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, *The Nightingale* was co-choreographed with Jin Qing Shan, Lv Li and Lin Fan Kai.

Students of WDAS secretary Jyoti Unni showcased Indian classical dance odissi for K'NOW Dance, a community showcase at National Library Plaza for Asia Pacific Dance Bridge. For Navratri, a nine-day celebration in the Indian calendar, her students gave performances at various temples in Singapore. Indu Vijay's Taal School of Odissi, who also performed for K'NOW, staged 'Gatha Odissi - the Odyssey of Odissi', a collaboration of exponents from

India and local talent, in April at Jubilee Hall, supported by NAC and the Lee Foundation. Taal also embarked on a series of lecture demonstrations at Parkway Centre in August and Marine Parade Public Library in September.

New member Grace Chiu-Yi Chiang, who recently graduated from Taipei National University of the Arts, performed in Beijing Dance Festival, received favorable reviews from David Mead for the work 'Essence-Bounce-Disruptive' and also participated in the WDAS Choreolab 2015. Fellow Choreolab participant Sonoko Prow (Thailand) performed and conducted a workshop in The 1st International Solo Dance Festival in Thailand. She also participated in ACCO Fringe Festival in Israel and the Southeast Asian Choreolab in Malaysia. She was shortlisted for Caroline Plummer fellowship New Zealand and felicitated for her BLUEMOON Meditation & Wellness Retreat. In recent months, she has conducted self-transformation workshops through dance-theatre meditations in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Singapore's School of The Arts (SOTA) reports that in August, the Year 4 students put on two evenings of their own choreographic works in their annual Indelible showcase, exploring themes from the whimsical and to the pensive. SOTA dancers and guests from Scottish Ballet Youth Associates performed at the Asian Grand Prix in Hong Kong. August

also saw SOTA dance students involved in the school's SG50 showcase season, presenting collaborations across art forms and year levels. The November showcases of Just Becoming and Becoming exhibited the coming of age of the SOTA Dance students, from the debut of the Year 1 students to older dancers gracefully meeting the demands of well-loved ballet *Coppelia*, and pieces by Jeffrey Tan and Silvia Yong.

Peter Gn (Arts Education Branch, Ministry of Education) continued his Dance Connect Series 'Dancing with a Strategy: Clarity and Purpose in Holistic Dance Education through Co-Curricular Activities [CCAs]' in May and August. Participants drew inspiration from dance professionals as they shared how dance has shaped their values and attitudes, defined their mission, and above all, changed their lives. They also shared practical insights and perspectives on the management of dance CCAs. Presenters at the sessions included Peter Gn, Christina Chan, John Mead and Zaini Tahir, with Frontier Danceland and Dance Ensemble Singapore showcasing their work.

Maya Dance Theatre [MDT] premiered *Random Chapters* at Penang Performing Arts Centre in Malaysia in August. This touring production will continue to London in November. MDT performed *Letters from Home* at La MaMa, New York City, in September, part of the 'Something to Write Home About' festival in conjunction with SG 50's festivities. The work featured MDT performers Shahrin Johry, Bernice Lee, Eva Tey and Kavitha Krishnan with musicians Kailin Yong (violin), Raghavendran (flute) and New York-based Singaporean dancer Yun-Chun Chua. MDT returned with *We Are All Hypocrites*, as part of its annual CReations choreographers' series, in October at Goodman Arts Centre, with five new choreographies considering the theme of hypocrisy from Singaporeans Peter Gn, Foo Yun Ying, and Jerh Leong, as well as Danang Pamungkas and Rianto from Indonesia.

Supported by NAC's Noise Movement grant, MDT presented Project [MOVE], a dance showcase featuring young dancemakers and dancers from the [MOVE] dance initiative, a 6-month intensive mentorship programme for young dancemakers to enhance their choreographic skills in dance, facilitated by experienced dancemakers and industry professionals. The showcase included a photographic exhibition of the process by



1. Siri Rama's ensemble Kanaka Sabha performing 'Rasika Mohini' in Mumbai, India, in August 2015.

Photo Karnataka Sangha

2. 'Gatha Odissi—the Odyssey of Odissi' by Indu Vijay's Taal School of Odissi, at Jubilee Hall in April 2015.



Grisha Parikh.

Melissa Quek (Programme Leader, BA(Hons) Dance and Diploma in Dance, LASALLE College of the Arts) has been putting additional emphasis on community outreach, starting with a student-choreographed work for Esplanade's Y-Fest in June, participation in the inaugural 'Got To Move', aimed at making dance more accessible, and an interactive light and dance performance installation at The Deck as part of the National Heritage Board's Night Festival's Nightlights. LASALLE's Diploma in Dance students worked with The Arts Fission Company to befriend and perform with senior citizens in *The Mazu Chronicle* at the Esplanade Concert Hall. LASALLE also teamed up with WDAS to host and present a Choreolab as part of Asia Pacific Dance Bridge, and presented new works in the da:ns festival 2016.

Dr Siri Rama choreographed and performed 'Rasika Mohini' with her Kanaka Sabha dance ensemble in Mumbai in August for the Kalabharati series at Karnataka Sangha, in a collaboration between Marathi musical theatre pieces by vocalist Minal Bhide and Kuchipudi classical dance focusing on women characters. Siri's twin students in Singapore presented bharatanatyam performance 'Kala Prerna' in August at Tan Cheng Siong Drama Theatre, supported by NAC, inspired by sculpture, architecture and visual arts of the Indian diaspora in Singapore.

Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and LASALLE came together as part of da:ns festival's 10th anniversary and Asia Pacific Dance Bridge conference. This is the first time that the two institutions have shared the stage, an ideal opportunity marking their tenth year of participation in the da:ns festival's The Next Generation program, at the Esplanade Recital Studio in October. The programme included a premiere by Albert Tiong featuring students from both institutions. NAFA presented 'In Place', an all-male work by Aaron Khek and Ix Wong, with live accompaniment on the pipa by Dr. Samuel Wong of The TENG Quartet. 'Confluence', a new work by Jeffrey Tan, displayed fluid partnering as well as NAFA's distinctive East-West posture and conservatoire training. LASALLE contributed works by Italian Simona Cieri and Foo Yun Ying.

NUS Arts Festival is National University of Singapore's flagship arts event held annually in March.

This year's tenth edition celebrated pioneers and prodigies through its theme 'Spirit of the Times'. Following the success of last year's Overdrive, NUS Arts Festival brought two international choreographers – Ricky Hu Songwei from The Hong Kong Ballet, and award-winning Taiwanese choreographer Chen Wu-Kang – together with the creative team of HORSE to take talented young dancers from NUS to examine and reinterpret collectively constructed history, and its impact on our aspirations as modern citizens.

Organized by NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA), the ExxonMobil Campus Concert offers a platform to nurture homegrown talents and showcase professional artists, in a free-admission concert series from August to October and January to March. Re:Dance Theatre returned to the series with a restaging of Dapheny Chen's *A Box Full Of .This*, showcasing interpretations of home. Drawing inspiration from the Zhao-

Wei movie *So Young*, artistic director Albert Tiong teamed up with lighting designer Adrian Tan to create *The Steps*, bringing to life the personal stories of dancers. NUS Dance Ensemble and NUS Indian Dance (Bollywood) presented an eclectic blend of dance in *Evocation 2015: Shamiyaana*, with artistic direction by Zaini Mohd Tahir and jointly choreographed by Akasha Abhishek.

Six of NUS's CFA dance groups staged their annual dance productions this year. *Senses* by NUS Chinese Dance explored how human emotions can be evoked through physical senses. *Blast!: Out Of Bounce 2015 – Headlines* by NUS Dance Blast! reported the news as seen through the eyes of dancers. *Bisikan Alam* by NUS Ilsa Tari contrasted the hues of nature with the bustle of human life. *Pratidhan* by NUS Indian Dance evoked eternal gratefulness. *City Impressions* by NUS Chinese Dance and NUS Dance Synergy reflected the thoughts and personal stories of college students in a multi-ethnic cosmopolitan city. Moved by films which have had personal impact on their lives, choreographers Albert Tiong and Chiew Pei Shan delved into the complexities of love, longing and the transience of time and memory in NUS Dance Synergy's production 2: *A Dance Double Bill*. Tiong reworked 'The Steps', while Chiew's 'Traces of Tears' responded to Wong Kar Wai's 2046 evocation of memories held dear.

Finally, dance training events conducted by CFA at NUS included contemporary dance classes by Lee Mun Wai, and a Persian dance workshop by Padideh Pourmir.

On behalf of the excom in Singapore and the organising committees, we would like to thank everyone who came to Singapore to participate in the Asia Pacific Dance Bridge 2015 and made it a very meaningful event for all.

1. The *Guiding Words* performance for the SG50 celebrations on the steps of the School of the Arts, August 2015.
2. A workshop in the Dance Connect Series conducted by Peter Gn for the Ministry of Education, Singapore.



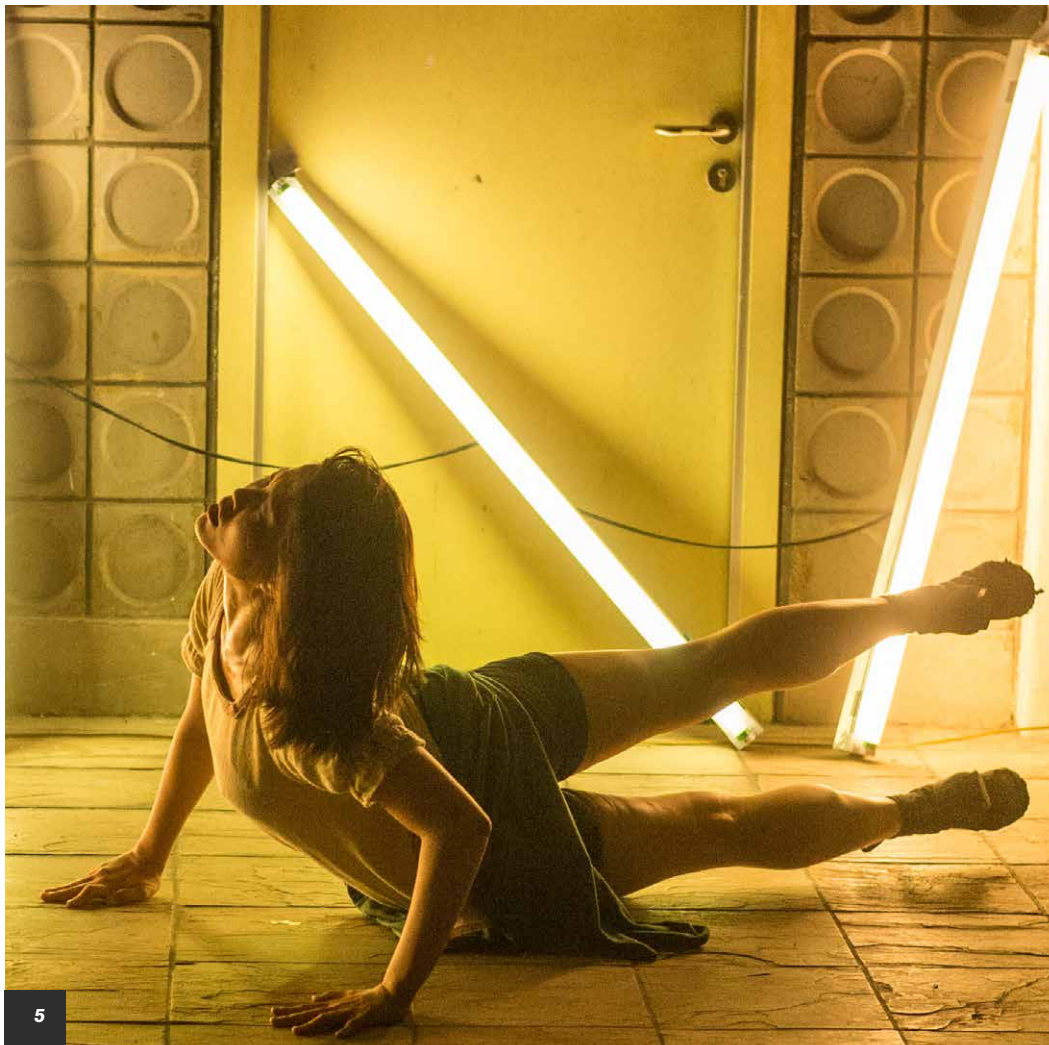


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3. WDAS member Sonoko Prow in a butoh performance.
4. Backstage in the Esplanade dressing rooms during *The Mazu Chronicle*, in which Diploma in Dance students of LASALLE College of the Arts performed with senior citizens. Photo: Koh Beng Chye, courtesy of The Arts Fission Company
5. *Haze* choreographed by Danang Pamungkas, performed by Bernice Lee of Maya Dance Theatre.
 Photo: Joseph Nair



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Taiwan report

by Su-Ling Chou



Two main arts activities happened this fall in Kaohsiung, Taiwan's southern city. One was the Wei Wu Ying Arts Festival held by National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts from 8 October to 11 December. Themed 'Coming Together for the Arts!', this festival gathered a superb cast, classic scripts, best-selling plays as well as a replay of highly acclaimed Taiwanese performances from this year's Festival d'Avignon and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, to showcase fascinating multiple aspects of the performing arts. There was also a wide range of events such as open-air performances, demonstration performances, arts installations, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, a film festival, and a marketplace. Over 170 events helped bridge the gap between our daily lives and the performing arts.

The other exciting event was CTBC Arts Festival moving to Kaohsiung Da Dong Arts Center, having been located in the Novel Hall for Performing Arts in Taipei's Xinyi District for a long time. After the removal of the old Hall and before the inauguration of the new Novel Hall takes place, the CTBC Arts Festival launched its pilot season in Kaohsiung. A series of programs, including music, theater, dance and puppet shows from local and international artists presented various styles of arts in October and November, making it a fruitful autumn for Kaohsiung.

In 2015, the International Young Choreographer Project (IYCP) hosted by WDA-AP Taiwan was held from 5 to 26 July. This project received more applications from talented young applicants from the WDA regions and local dancers than ever. It concluded successfully with two extraordinarily well-received performances and a question and answer forum between the choreographers and audience at Tsoying Dance Theater from 25 to 26 July. The programs highlighted diversity in both style and cultures, and how local and international choreographers perceive their daily lives and the world. Three of the eight selected choreographers are Taiwanese (Hung-chung Lai, I-han Cheng, and Ko-yin Yen) while another four are from countries in the Asia-Pacific area: Yon Davy of Cambodia, Lewis Major of Australia, Jed J. Amihan of Philippines, and Jeong Yun Lee of Korea. Melissa Sanderson from the USA represented WDA-Americas.

WDA-AP Taiwan continues its expansion, with members mainly consisting of university and graduate dance students, dance instructors, and professional dancers. It is expected that dance in Taiwan will continue growing into a new era through all of these dance events.



1. *Birdmen* choreographed by Hsin-yu Kao, performed by Tsoying Dance Group at the 2015 World Dance Alliance Americas conference and festival held by World Dance Alliance Americas, 27–31 July 2015, at the University of Hawai'i Manoa.

2. *Coloration* choreographed by Hung-chung Lai, performed by Tsoying Dance Group at the 2015 World Dance Alliance Americas conference and festival held by World Dance Alliance Americas, 27–31 July 2015, at the University of Hawai'i Manoa.

3. All the dancers and choreographers who participated in the 2015 IYCP.

All photos: Su-ling Chou

WDA-AP Taiwan Members Activities, July – December 2015

Performances

Tso's Dance Association

- 2015 International Young Choreographer Project, 5–26 July at Tsoying Dance Theater and Tsoying Senior High School
- 2015 WDA-Americas Conference & Festival Assembly, 26–31 July at the University of Hawaii, USA
- 2015 Tsoying Dance Troupe Performance, 30 November, 1–5 December at Tsoying Dance Theater, 8 December at Jhihde Hall of Kaohsiung City Arts Center, 10 December at Yuanlin Performance Hall
- 2015 *Dance Connection—A Cooperative Dance Performance between Taiwan and Singapore*, 18–19 December at Kaohsiung City Dadong Arts Center

Chang Dance Theater

- *Beat*, 10–11 October at Yuanlin Performance Hall, 28–29 November at Wen-Shan Theater

Body Expression Dance Theater

- *Mr.R 2.0-UTOPIA*, 14–16 August at Experimental Theater of National Theater & Concert Hall
- *Documentary – Cross Border @ Taipei (Japan x Singapore x Taiwan)*, 15–18, 22–25 October at Guling Street Avant-Garde Theatre

Somatic Theater Company

- *Cross Life*, 30–31 October and 1 November at Kaohsiung Experimental Theater

T.T.C. Dance

- *Body Platform: Persistence of Memory*, 21–23 August at Experimental Theater of National Theater & Concert Hall, 26–27 September at Kaohsiung Experimental Theater
- 2015 Asia Pacific Dance Bridge, 18 October at Esplanade Theatre On The Bay, Singapore
- 12th Guangdong Dance Festival, 9 November at Guangdong Modern Dance Company-Small Theater

Wally Dance Company

- 2015 WDA-Americas Conference & Festival Assembly, 26–31 July at the University of Hawaii, USA
- 2015 *Young Stars, New Vision*, 20–22 November at Creative Lab of Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, 5 December at Yuanlin Performance Hall, 12 December at Kaohsiung

Experimental Theater

B. Dance

- *Floating Flowers*, 25–27 December at Wellspring Theater

Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company

- *Milky*, 25–29 November at Tainan Cultural and Creative Park

Jade & Artists Dance Troupe

- *Eggs of Blessing*, 30 August at Harbourfront Centre, Westjet Stage, 6 September at Vancouver Playhouse
- JDT 2015 Dancing Dreams Series, 6–8 November at Guling Street Avant-Garde Theatre

Kaohsiung City Ballet

- *The Nutcracker*, 23–24 October at Jhihde Hall of Kaohsiung City Arts Center, 31 October at Pingtung Arts Hall

Conferences

- Neo-Classic Performing Arts Foundation 2015 Dance Culture Anthropology Conference, 21 November at International Lecture Room, National Taiwan Normal University
- 2015 Dance Culture Anthropology Conference Presentation, 21 November at Showing Hall, National Taiwan Normal University
- Chinese Culture University & Taiwan Dance Research 2015 CCU International Dance Conference 'The Tradition, Reconstruction and New Aspect of Dance Arts', 18–19 December at Chinese Culture University
- Taipei National University of the Arts Second in the 2015 Asia Pacific Forum Series 'Beyond Tradition: Finding New Voices in Old Spirits', 22–23 November at Taipei National University of the Arts

Scholarships

- The Development of Young Artists Grant by Chinlin Foundation for Culture and Arts [CLFCA]

Sponsorships

- 2015 Annual Plan of Tso's Dance Association by CLFCA and its memberships
- 2015 WDA-AP Taiwan Annual Planning by CLFCA
- 2015 International Young Choreographer Project by CLFCA

Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity through Dance



Symposium Participant Reflections

Symposium participants
meeting at the opening
cocktail party at Ibis
Hotel on 15 October.
L-R: Wen Wen Wang
and Kendall Jones.

Photo: Jeff Low



By Kendall Jones, University of Auckland, New Zealand

As a third year Dance Studies student, this opportunity proved to be rich in movement, culture and inspirational dance peers.

At the welcoming cocktail party, the room was full, and the atmosphere encouraged interaction without any sense of intimidation. As a student, meeting established choreographers, scholars and esteemed members of the global dance industry in this casual environment was fantastic. There was a shared and genuine interest in hearing the stories of people and their research or dance practice. Something I will really value from this night was a discussion with

a student from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore, about the similarities and differences of contemporary dance between New Zealand and Singapore. This conversation continued throughout the weekend as I became more informed about contemporary dance in Singapore, which has informed my perspectives and will shape future practice.

A highlight of the conference was the workshop led by Chung Fu Cheng: a choreographic exploration derived from food that reminded us of home. This workshop clearly demonstrated connectivity through dance. Sharing our personal stories through movement created a sincere understanding between all of the students in the class, even when the words spoken were in languages that not everyone understood.

The research presentations offered another opportunity for learning and understanding. I was pleasantly surprised by the nature of the responses to presentations. The conference created an environment that was open to peers challenging ideas in a respectful way. Further ideas and discussions were prompted as a result of conference attendees being comfortable with debating the ideas that were presented.

The efficiency and friendliness of Singapore as a country was matched by the conference and its organisers. I appreciated the freedom as a student to choose which presentations, workshops and classes to

attend. There was always a helpful student or conference volunteer to help navigate or answer any questions, and this enhanced my enjoyment of the whole conference. I hope to attend another WDA conference in the future and have further opportunity to discuss, share and learn with my peers from across the world.

**By Lucinda Coleman & Min Zhu,
Western Australian Academy of
Performing Arts, Edith Cowan
University, Australia**



**Symposium participants
Lucinda Coleman and
Min Zhu at NAFA.**
Photo: Julie Dyson

Clean streets, haze and heat offered a setting for dancers, makers, thinkers, dreamers to gather together. As PhD students, we spend much time focused on our own research, so the opportunity to convene at a gathering of artists from the Asia-Pacific region was great to connect, share and exchange ideas with others. Over three days, we absorbed the stories of creative practice in formats ranging from performative and scholarly presentations, to workshops and performance events. The small gathering of innovative artists revealed the beauty of both individual creative practitioners and of current contemporary dance practices.

We were invited to listen to the challenges and difficulties of making dance work, and in connecting with stories, were inspired by the work of dance, and of dancers. Akram Khan, the keynote speaker, spoke through recorded projection, an empty chair centre stage as we listened to his voice telling stories of childhood and of practice. Seasoned academics chaired sessions in which individuals talked of dance 'DNA', collaboration across continents, projects and passions; sharing insights concerning issues such as attribution, presence, authorship, collaborative choreographies, solo improvisations, temporality, disability, education, women in dance and corporeal knowledge. This year a new session

was held especially for emerging dance researchers to help eliminate confusion about publication and supervision, as well as to find ways to support each other. There were also some thoughtful performances by emerging artists and students, as well as an engaging choreolab showing that offered fresh perspectives on choreographic approaches to making new work collaboratively, in a short time frame.

The spaces between sessions were also places of connectivity: the smiles on faces beautiful, the noodles at morning tea time, the snatched conversations with experienced dance makers and the conversations over impromptu meals. Taking time to meet with others, share a Singapore Sling, watch a show together at the Esplanade Theatre or marvel at the view from the CÉ LA VI boat in the sky allowed for the fostering of connections that will shape artistic collaborations in the future.

We left longing for the endless immensity and beauty of dance, to paraphrase Saint-Exupéry, but more significantly, aware of the incredibly quiet yet wondrous explorations of dance practice that so many delegates have been and will continue to be engaged in pursuing.

**By Aastha Gandhi, independent
performance researcher & dancer,
India**

The various sessions of this event were soaked in the spirit of multiculturalism, echoed in the by-lanes of Singapore. The WDAAP meet, with participation from all across Asia and the Pacific, celebrated this spirit in its true sense. The School of the Arts, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and LASALLE College of the Arts where most of these sessions were held, reverberated with the young, passionate energy of dance enthusiasts. The highlight of the opening ceremony was the keynote address by renowned dancer Akram Khan who stimulated us with his talk on the search for human identity that led him to dance and how dance led him to a further search for self-identity.

Over the three days, there were thought-provoking symposium sessions, pecha kucha presentations hinting at the developing concerns of emerging dance scholars, engaging work by choreolab dancers followed by enthralling dance presentations in the evenings at the Esplanade. The meet also provided young dancers with a platform

to learn different skills in the master classes and the young dance scholars to hone their writing skills for the purpose of publication through guidance and sharing sessions on research and academic publication with Dr Urmimala Sarkar, Professor Cheryl Stock and Dr Stephanie Burridge. Network meetings were held on the last day where past work was discussed and the future course of each of the networks was channelled by valuable suggestions from all the members present.

The Symposium itself concluded with a session on contemporaneity in dance, raising crucial issues of what is tradition and how we define contemporary. Is contemporary necessarily that which breaks away from the tradition or that which engages with the tradition with a new thought process? Questions which we are jostling with as dancers and dance scholars in India are equally pertinent to other South and Southeast Asian countries. To evolve methodologies to study evolving dance vocabularies in these societies we do need to 'connect through bridges' and the World Dance Alliance, its annual festival, networks and publications creates an important space in this regard.

Annual General Meeting, Singapore, 18 October 2015

by Julie Dyson

The WDAAP Annual General Meeting (AGM) provided a unique opportunity for members to share their ideas for the future of the organisation, to clarify WDA's role in the region, and to express concerns about its operations.

AGM formalities included noting apologies, receiving reports from the Executive Board and regional chapter heads (all published in the June edition of *Asia Pacific Channels*), and noting the Treasurer's report. Full minutes of the meeting will be circulated before the end of this year.

There followed a fascinating discussion from the floor, chaired by President Yunyu Wang, and prompted by Vice-President Urmimala Sarkar's observations in her June report to members. These included:

Cost of participation in WDA events

While many young artists and scholars participated in the Global Summit in 2014 in France, and many are returning now to WDA events, it was acknowledged that there are still many in the Asia Pacific region who find it difficult to fund their attendance at annual



Symposium participant Min Zhu at Singapore's 'big durian', the Esplanade Theatre.
Photo: Lucinda Coleman

conferences and festivals. Yunyu noted that the Chinlin Foundation is supporting dance, dance makers and scholars across the region, and is now setting up a fund to assist young people to attend WDAAP events, as they definitely see the value of being seen and heard in the region. Nannette Hassall suggested that WDAAP consider developing a commercial arm to provide a tier of support for the organisation and young artists that would be recognised at a government level.

Membership

Mentoring of young people is needed to encourage their membership and point to its relevance to their practice and careers. Several young people spoke of discovering WDA and realising the potential of its events that increased networks and gave them opportunities for scholarly learning and presenting experience. Students love coming to WDA events, but there is a gap when they become young artists – there needs to be a new strategy to assist them to continue their connections with WDA and build membership, and to cultivate them to gradually take on leadership roles. We need answers to the problem of people asking ‘What are we getting?’ rather than thinking about what they can give back.

Conference structure

It was noted that sessions such as Pecha Kucha engage a lot of young people, but in Singapore the young scholars’ forums hardly had any senior scholars there to hear them, as current conference structures preclude them from being there because of parallel sessions. Attracting dance scholars to WDA events is as important as having eminent scholars as members of WDAAP. This area needs attention for future growth as well as for keeping the specificity of WDAAP alive. The scholars are the people who have funding to travel to distant and expensive places, and they make it possible

for the student community to participate. As is felt by many, WDAAP seems strongest within the regional network of tertiary dance institutions.

Communication

It’s very important for country chapter heads to make a serious effort to reach out by having communication nodes in place. Chapter heads were encouraged to have a committee to work with, and to delegate responsibility and ownership of the chapter to other people if it isn’t possible to maintain the levels of communication required. As an example, Bilqis Hijjas noted that communication with members is done well in Malaysia, with WDA adding value in terms of what others provide. There are tools to help with email lists, and regular newsletters and Facebook pages also help to promote opportunities. The WDA Facebook page exists for promoting such opportunities, and Bilqis will develop criteria for members’ posting in future. (Note: It was agreed the following day at the Global Executive Meeting to maintain a single WDA Facebook page, rather than separate regional pages.)

WDA event timelines

There was discussion about the long lead times required if students and other performance groups are to participate, and it was noted that one year’s notice is not enough to raise funds and organise travel documents etc. for large groups.

2016 AGM

WDA Korea presented ideas for hosting the 2016 AGM and events. See the 2016 WDA events page at the end of this edition of *Channels*.



2. Masterclass participants at the class of Chung-fu Chang on 17 October at the School of the Arts. Photo courtesy Amelia Chong
3. Jyoti Unni's students performing odissi at National Library Plaza for the K'NOW Dance community showcase.



An overview of the Choreolab at Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Connectivity through Dance

by Melissa Quek, chair of Choreolab committee

When the committee members for this choreolab, made up of Michele Lim, Neo Kim Seng, Susan Yeung and me, first came together, the one thing that was very clear in all of our minds was that we wanted to design a choreolab structure that would promote the theme of 'Connectivity through Dance'. We acknowledged that there were many benefits to having a mentor but felt that the hierarchy implicit in the presence of a mentor would be counter to our aims because a design based around a mentor had the potential to be divisive or isolating. We felt that doing away with the usual practice of having a mentor would promote a shift away from prevailing hierarchies in the collaboration and creation of dance to create the bonding and level of comfort necessary for a free flow of ideas.

The call was put out for emerging choreographer-dancers from diverse cultural backgrounds within the Asia-Pacific region for what we deemed a focused time of Experiencing, Exploring and Expressing. We would not assign fixed roles but looked for participants who were interested in expanding their tools and vocabulary in the creation and performance of dance. As the

success of the choreolab was dependent on peer sharing and respect, the committee chose to keep the participants to an intimate group of carefully selected artists.

To facilitate the building of bridges across cultures or genres, the residency was built around ideas of Play and Place to deliberately put the participants out of their comfort zones through a series of curated activities. These activities included breaking the participants into smaller groups of two and three for a self-directed MRT (train) based tour of various parts of Singapore, where they would travel on the lines and surface at various stations to explore, a visit to a trampoline park, working with people with Parkinson's, learning to play Ultimate Frisbee and teaching each other games that they enjoy. The experience of these unfamiliar activities was then processed together in a studio environment through negotiated tasks and discussion. Over time the participants drove the exploration and process more and more, even requesting to break away from the original schedule to get more studio time in which they conducted their own workshops to introduce one another to their individual physical and creative practices.

1. Facing page: Meghna Bhardwaj (left) during the informal showcase on 16 October, in the LASALLE Flexible Performance Space. Photo: Jeff Low

2. Choreolab participants deep in discussion in the studio. Photo: Jeff Low

The structure and design of the final sharing was open to be interpreted by the participants, but in the end they chose to perform their journey. In the Flexible Performing Space of LASALLE College of the Arts, the participants seated their audience along the four sides of the stage and gave a “gift” to each other. The participant receiving the gift sat among the audience while the others presented a performance based on the receiver’s workshop, games and what they perceived would be the kind of work the receiver would create. In this way the sharing summarized the entire choreolab experience. Here the participants were able to consider their own practices and what they learnt from each other.



Excerpts of Choreolab Participant Reflections

By Meghna Bhardwaj

I feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction on having participated in this residency and having acquired new learnings that are sure to benefit me both as a dance scholar and practitioner. I am glad that the WDA Choreolab selection panel found me worthy. I have to admit that amongst the residencies I have done so far, I found this to be quite unique, in terms of how it redefined for me the ‘process’ of making dance/performance.

The most fascinating aspect of the residency for me was the way it conflated the idea of ‘playing’ with dance making. By introducing the residents to sports such as frisbee, or the visit to a trampoline park, or arranging for finding ‘games’ in or out of the studio space, the residency brought forth for me the understanding of how sports/games can be used as effective choreographic tools to generate ideas and movement material.

Getting to know the other residents outside of the studio space first, by means of small city tours, or through eating meals together, came to reflect for me how my relationship with my fellow artists would have a lasting impact on my practice, in terms of how I move, what I think, and how I feel. The friendships came to design not only what we finally presented together at the end of the residency, but also the tangibility of what is ‘left’ off or after the performance is over: friendships, relationships, and bonding.

Spending time with the other residents, more than dancing with them, made me reflect on where dance begins and ends, in terms of physicality, time, and space. Questions like what kind of ‘connections’, bodily or emotional, with other dancers, lead to a certain kind of dance, how ‘dance’ is being made outside of any performance space, how one can locate ‘dance’ in regular conversations, etc. started to appear for me. I observed how transfusing daily life – walking, eating, talking etc. – and dance-making into each other can bring to dance a human element, while also aesthetically refining routine life.

While in the beginning I missed the presence of mentors in the residency, by the end, I was happy not to have had any mentors, and having, instead, worked in a team-setting. In order to come up with ways to organise ‘choreographing’, we came up with small workshops for each other, which made the entire process very rich and creative. What I truly bring back from this residency is, henceforth, a rich amalgam of curiosities, playful ideas, and friendships.

By Wiing Liu

First of all, I am extremely grateful to be part of the Choreolab at Asia Pacific Dance Bridge 2015. If I were to summarize my entire experience in two words, they would be ‘freedom’ and ‘choices’.

At the beginning of this journey, I had a mixed feeling of excitement, curiosity and a huge degree of confusion. Unlike the typical structure of most choreolabs, where a theme, instruction, or mentor is given to guide our working process, this choreolab equipped us with none of that. After the first meeting, I wasn’t quite sure how this would incubate my creative process. I guess a part of me was expecting a week of working enthusiastically in the studio with newfound friends, and not the preplanned picnic and tour activities.

But with freedom come choices. Within the structure of what was planned, we were able to make our choices on what to do. These choices denoted our experiences of this lab, as you can see from the following example:

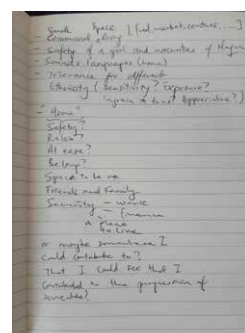
Day 2—Grace, Jonny and I teamed up to travel around different MRT stations in Singapore. It was a strange experience for me to move around familiar places with people I am unfamiliar with. Being a local, I can't help but to act as a tour guide. I wonder, what did I gain from introducing Singapore to my foreign friends?

My heart ached when Meghna shared about how she fears for her safety in her home country. Then it hit me how I have taken safety for granted in Singapore. We talked about what constitutes home. I wondered, could I call Singapore my home? Is there space for me to grow? Apart from feeling safe, I also see a home as somewhere to which I could contribute. Maybe the younger generation finds it difficult to belong in Singapore, as they can't see how they can make significant contributions to the already striving country? How can I contribute to my country with the skills that I have?

During the lab, we took on different roles voluntarily. Sometimes we were tourguides, performers, leaders, or followers. This made me ponder how my expectations of myself, others' expectations of me, my experiences and my preferences have influenced these roles.

This process is very similar to that of art making. We have the freedom to make anything we want. Our choices are influenced by 'expectations' and our 'preferences'. Are we able to marry these two together? And if we can't, then which do we favour? In the midst of developing oneself, it is easy to get caught up with challenges like maintaining financial stability, getting recognition to aid one's chances in getting grants and funding, and the struggle of making works to please clients or making works for ourselves. This lab reminds me of the importance and the power of 'freedom' and 'preference' in art making.

I am sure the insights and experiences gained from this lab are specific to each of us. But one thing that's stuck is friendship. The nature of this lab has encouraged a lot of communication between the participants, hence fostering friendship amongst one another. The team played a huge part in this journey: together we braved our doubts and



insecurities. We presented ourselves as who we were at that very moment in time: having fun with one another, critically trying to make things work, compromising and giving generously to the team. We were each others' support, guidance and reflections. I am glad this time I don't only take home a title of a work but the names of six amazing people whom I will remember for life: Fauzi, Kai, Grace, Sonoko, Meghna and Jonny.

By Eng Kai Er

For me the Choreolab was an intensive experience in self-organising.

Melissa and Michele, who were in the organising committee of the Choreolab, provided logistical support throughout the eight-day lab, but actively refrained from participating in our discussions. Together we participants negotiated both the schedule given to us, and the task of presenting something (anything) at the showcase on the final day.

For me, it was an interesting moment when, as a group, we decided to request things that had not been scheduled: extra studio time, instead of a picnic in a park (and Melissa said yes to our request). We had come to a group consciousness that we were ready to work in the studio, after some days of activities outside. And we had come to a point where we were very curious about each other's dancing life. It felt that when we overrode the schedule that had been given

Clockwise from top left: Choreolab participants Fauzi Amirudin and Jonny Almario during the informal showcase on 16 October, in the LASALLE Flexible Performance Space. Photo: Jeff Low

All the notebooks of the Choreolab participants, during group discussions in the studio. Choreolab participant

Wiing Liu's notebook from one of the group discussions.

All the Choreolab participants in the studio. L-r: Grace Chiu Yi Chiang, Sonoko Prow, Jonny Almario, Fauzi Amirudin, Wiing Liu, Meghna Bhardwaj, and Eng Kai Er.



Grace Chiu Yi Chiang (left) during the informal showcase on 16 October, in the LASALLE Flexible Performance Space. Photo: Jeff Low

to us, we became a more independent group that could make decisions together.

From that point on, we spent much more time in the studio. We designed a simple system for us to share our art practice: everybody had 50 minutes to lead a session in the studio. After that, we discussed what we would do during the showcase. It was difficult at first to try to link everything together into one showcase, but we soon came to a consensus: we would make a 5-minute performance “fragment” for each of the participants, based on what each participant had shared during their 50-minute session. These fragments were not choreography done by individual participants; rather they were collaboratively made by the group, as a response to each individual. In this way, the Choreolab showcased a series of fragments that were not choreographed by any one participant, but, rather, choreographed by the whole group. Choreolab became a showcase of collaborative works. In an environment where emerging artists are constantly expected to write Artist Statements expressing their own artistic voice and individualism, it was a breath of fresh air for me that instead of seven choreographers showing seven of their own individual voices, we ended up making seven collaborative fragments that served as reflections for each of the participants.

Seeing what the group had created for me, I was struck by how closely they had

come to becoming me, in their imitation of me. I guess it felt like having my own Artist Statement read back to me. And I was struck by how non-unique I was, how easy it was for these six other people to make a piece that looked exactly like what I might have made by myself. Through this cloning, I felt that I had been understood by the group, and at the same time I felt disturbed because I was reminded of things I did not like about my own work. At different times, I felt excited and proud, or disgusted and embarrassed. Generally, I felt quite self-conscious.

Like several others, I alternated between completely disowning the fragment (“It is not my choreography!”) and feeling happy that it was something inspired by me.

After running the whole showcase through a few times, I became less self-conscious, and more appreciative of the different artistic paths the participants have taken so far. I thought that the final showcase was quite beautiful because the seven fragments were diverse and co-existing, and, we had all tried each other’s artistic voices out. We had role-played each other and let ourselves be role-played by others. In the role-playing of others we tried out things we would not have done by ourselves. And in allowing others to role-play us, we had made ourselves vulnerable and generous.

Looking back, I’m surprised that we were able to work as smoothly together as we did. I later spoke with several people who expressed scepticism at the idea of seven people collaborating together without a leader. I myself still think it is risky, but at least through my experience in this Choreolab I know that it is possible, and it can be extremely rewarding.

By Jonny Almario

I tried to remove myself from the tourist mindset, finding a temporary sense of home in Little India and letting the prospect of delicious hawker food and great coffee at Nylon Coffee Roasters enforce feelings of groundedness. I'm not restricted by locality or family - I just needed daily rituals to make me feel happy and to experience a feeling of content and peacefulness. I wanted to replicate as best as I could how it might feel to actually live in Singapore. I wanted to blend in, do what the locals did and even if I didn't always fit in I tried to gain some sense of understanding. I wanted to learn as much as I could, why things are the way they are, what dance might mean for Singaporeans and if possible how I could interface myself in its current context.

I think these feelings were generated in part due to how the choreolab was structured, which was a bit scary at first, but I believe it was the best course of action. I enjoyed meeting, exploring and talking with everyone before we actually started moving in the studio. I feel like sometimes starting in the studio from the get-go can affect the dynamics and relationships between the participants, as first impressions seem to be generated from observation of movement and gauging each other's ability. The structure of this residency felt more human (for lack of a better word) and provided an interesting and useful departure point for the remainder of the choreolab to unfold.

While developing the material for the showcase, the inclination and desire to ask for refinement and to change what was presented to us provided a challenge in which one had to distance oneself from one's initial provocations and intentions - saying, "It may have initially been my idea or concept, but now it has morphed and changed into something else and that's okay." It was a good exercise to see things from another perspective and to try not to get too precious with our ideas. During the Q&A, Joseph Gonzales raised the question about our strengths and weaknesses becoming quite apparent during each section - our individual commitment and movement output was telling if we actually understood the task at hand or were struggling with it. It's definitely a valid point and I did find myself struggling during certain sections.

Yet I did want to stress it was a process showing, though by proxy it was a performance in itself. I wonder if you



can actually transpose or transplant the environment of process from a studio into a theatre space - I feel there are connotations that come with a black box or an event with tickets and limited seating that enforces, or lends itself to, a performance outcome. Even using the word 'showing' still denoted some sense of refinement or pathway to completion. I now have this curious drive to want to ask these questions, generate discussions and perhaps find ways to alter or shift my own practice.

Too often I hear my peers talking about how they want to travel Europe and see what dance has to offer for them. Rarely do I ever hear of someone talking about Southeast Asia. I want to let people know that perhaps there might be something of interest and value in that part of the world. The strong roots in traditional forms of dance create different forms of 'contemporary dance', and I feel that learning, experiencing and talking to these forms may be a very enlightening experience. To my peers back home, if you get the chance visit Southeast Asia, hear their stories, see their forms and see where you fit in the puzzle. I'm not saying reject your training of our Westerns form, but let the experiences from a region that has so much diversity a chance to interact with your curiosity.

Choreolab participants taking a bow at the end of the informal showcase on 16 October, in the LASALLE Flexible Performance Space. L-r (visible): Sonoko Prow, Fauzi Amirudin, Eng Kai Er, Grace Chiu Yi Chiang. Photo: Jeff Low

International Young Choreographer Project 2015

July 2015, Tsoying High School, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

All the participants wish to thank Tsoying Dance Association, ChinLin Foundation for Culture & Arts, Su-Ling Chou, Fang-Hua Lee, and everyone at Tsoying High School for this valuable opportunity.





I-Han Cheng (Taiwan)

In my past dance experiences, I presented myself mostly as a dancer. I feel greatly honored to be chosen as a choreographer in this project, and believe this is a great opportunity to stimulate my view of choreographing. After the audition and the negotiation with the other seven choreographers, luckily I got seven dancers who matched the dance, thus the Chinese title 'A Seven-Person Room'.

During three weeks of rehearsal, we worked three hours every day on weekdays. This long hardworking period was a brainstorming time for both the choreographer and dancers. Since my working time was from 9 to 12 in the morning, it was pleasant to see the dancers' high spirits every day. From my own experience as a dancer, I had some uncertainty about the dance, but through each rehearsal and thinking about it afterwards, I got sparks of inspiration. The dancers' spirits and rich body languages helped to inspire me. Being a choreographer, I felt a lot of pressure. As the dancers were eager to give, I hoped to give them more and richer in return.

During the two performances, I have never felt so nervous, especially hearing the applause for the dance before mine. At that moment, I understood the feelings of those choreographers whose pieces I had danced in. I made up my mind to perform as well as possible in the future. Thanks to my dancers excellently presenting the cooperative work, 'Looking for a Space to Stay', some audience even came to tell me their feelings on this dance.

I cherish this wonderful experience. This beginning promotes me to continue creation and to develop more beautiful things to share with people around me.



Hung-chung Lai (Taiwan)

I was looking forward to having the chance to find new mutual body languages with different dancers. During the audition, I was excited to find many dancers had their own special talents and abilities. Finally, I got seven dancers to start my creation.

This dance originated from loneliness and desire. Arthur Schopenhauer, a famous German philosopher, said, "Loneliness is the destiny of distinguished souls." For me, there is no good or bad on being lonely; it is an essential part of being an adult. If you can think about yourself alone, you can establish your uniqueness and cooperate with others. Dance is the same. We all need to have our own styles, but we can also cooperate with others.

I spent a lot of time letting the dancers get along with each other and developing everyone's unique body style around the idea of desires. In modern societies, people's desires can be fulfilled faster because of science and technology. However, we lack the satisfaction of experiencing the process. Like loneliness, all people have desire, without exception. Human beings have to face these essences to make their lives richer and more meaningful.

However, generating actual movement from this was not easy. I tried to guide my dancers in the simplest way to make them more involved in this dance. I also saw different styles and thoughts presented by the other choreographers from different countries. They inspired me with some ideas to reflect in my next creations. Thanks to the choreographers I-han Chen and Jeong Yun Lee; their opinions helped me a lot.



Jed Amihan (Philippines)

During the audition, I was delighted to see the dancers in their toughest form. During the long process, each of the eight choreographers led the dancers one after the other. It was a test of endurance, yet the dancers were able to deal with the procedure and persistently finished in good condition. It was an impression one can never forget. Seeing them at that level of technique and physicality was exemplary.

We had an intense period to execute our choreography and set our pieces on our chosen dancers. The combination of my eight dancers from the youngest aged 14 to the most senior at 24 caught me in different modes of working. It was a challenge as far as my piece was concerned, to really push the physicality, vocabulary, character, gender and aesthetic it required. But truly my dancers amazed me in many respects. They absorbed information quickly and adapted to my style intelligently. They were all efficient which made our rehearsals spontaneous. These dancers are remarkably beautiful, equipped with great facilities and talent, and most of all are hardworking and diligent—a revelation of the good training and eminent education they acquired from the strong foundation of the school.

The high school offered excellent facilities and resources including the well-equipped studios. I commend the service-oriented and very approachable proficient technical team and staff who made the production work smoothly from the day we started until the day of our performances. This project opened an opportunity for me to work with the art and the active dance community in Kaohsiung. This also made me appreciate the rich and diverse culture of Taiwan.



Melissa Sanders (USA)

Being part of this project was a very exciting opportunity for me as it was the first time I have been able to create a piece with so many excellent resources available. Coming into this project, I was eager to engage with the other choreographers to expand my artistic perspective. The administrative and technical staff at Tsoying High School were very professional and helpful. It seemed that every logistical detail was already organized, making the whole process very smooth.

In my piece, *The Poetics of Succession*, I was interested in the visual appeal of the thin line that separates unity and succession between bodies in motion. During the process, this focus expanded to include energy and its state of constant transformation. I consider this piece to be a continuation of the choreographic research I focused on during my MFA studies at Texas Woman's University. My methods heavily depend on improvisation throughout the progression of generating choreographic material in rehearsal. Rehearsing five days a week was at times intense for me since I work more comfortably having a few days to process and think about my piece between rehearsals. Nevertheless, I had a fantastic cast of ten dancers; they were creative and diligent, and approached each rehearsal with an open mind.

Another meaningful aspect of this project was simply how much fun it was to interact with all the dancers and choreographers. Many lovely friendships were made. I also really enjoyed feeling like I temporarily 'lived' in Kaohsiung; I had a routine, a commute, a community, a social life. Experiencing the warm hospitality of Taiwanese culture made my experience quite special.



Ko-yin Yen (Taiwan)

It was a really a special experience for me to attend 2015 IYCP. I met many artists from countries like South Korea, USA, Australia, and Cambodia. Everyone shared their choreographies which were so fantastic; you could see their qualities in their movements, their views of dance and their strong passion in life. We talked about that and had a nice time.

The refreshed thinking and new methods between me and my dancers were reflected during the process. I needed to find some balance between us, about the thinking of dance and the way of moving the body. I tried to find a way to make them perform more details in the choreography. I wanted to replace teaching with sharing with them about how to really use the body, not just doing dance movement. In this process, I also learned a lot.



Davy Yon (Cambodia)

Being part of this program helped to develop my concepts and ideas for choreography. I also explored the foundation and technique of each dancer's body, such as breathing, and balance of movement. I had a chance to work with artists with different skills. Being in this program helped to build my confidence as a young international choreographer.

In terms of impact, some of the dancers were so young, it was hard to explain what I wanted. If one dancer was dancing in two pieces it made them tired and affected their performance. In terms of selecting dancers, I don't think a dancer needs to follow a choreographer's style exactly. And the best way to make dancers understand a movement style is by using the technique during the warm-up sessions. Although I had only a short time, I learned and understood new things from my dancers and this experience.



Jeong Yun Lee (Korea)

Among the young choreographers from around the world in the IYCP, I may have seemed the strangest because of my Korean background. All sorts of 'contemporary dance' are accepted at this time, and Korea is a base of creative activity with a dance style in vogue throughout the world. Since I retired from the National Dance Company, it has been a new challenge for me to develop a plan to reach a global market through dance.

The dancers from Tsoying High School are in the lead compared to the average level of young dancers in Korea in terms of technique and experience. At the arts high school, dancers are not divided into ballet, modern dance, traditional dance, improvisation or choreography; all courses related to a full dance education are taught at the same rate. Year after year, the school sends Taiwanese dancers to companies in Europe and the United States, where they do not have much more to learn. The dancers have no fear to work with foreign choreographers, thanks to a lot of international experience at a young age. It was impressive to see their adaptability. Once I selected my eight dancers, our effort began to become one with their emphasis on 'If you do not move up, move it out.' It was a pure treat to work with these dancers.

On weekends, we were guided from place to place in Taiwan as an introduction to local culture and customs; our hosts went to a lot of effort to give us good memories of Taiwan. Everywhere we went, the simplicity and sincerity of the people gave a good impression. I came back to Korea without tears, in the faith that we shall all meet again.



Lewis Major (Australia)

As an emerging choreographer it is not easy find your voice. You are usually given limited time and resources, with a strict deadline. Marketing needs to start immediately, you are expected to know exactly what the work is about before you have even started rehearsals, and more time seems to be spent on administration and production than on growing yourself as an artist. There is limited space or time for deep investigation or innovation. This leads to artists falling back on what they know is safe. It doesn't encourage us to take risks or to challenge ourselves. Under these conditions one is not encouraged to follow one's instinct, or to be open to the magical things that might occur during the rehearsal process.

Taking part in the IYCP 2015 was a very rare opportunity—a place where I was given the liberty to experiment with my art and grow a seed idea, about people and their interconnectedness, into an eventual work that conveyed a physical narrative. I am fascinated by the ways in which we interact with each other. The resulting work, *Island*, looked at the fragility of interactions and the instability of continually shifting roles in our globalized world.

The precise and exact manner in which the dancers replicated my movement qualities and artistic intent demonstrates the prodigious talents, precision and technical training of these young dancers. The Taiwanese are an incredibly generous, friendly and accommodating people. There was a genuine feeling of warmth and support that pervaded my entire time in Taiwan.

2016 WDA events

2016 WDAAP Annual General Meeting

Dance Routes—Danced Roots: Connecting the Local and the Global
Seoul, Korea, 21-24 July 2016

In 2016, the Korean chapter of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific will host the WDAAP Annual General Meeting and surrounding activities as the event *Dance Routes—Danced Roots: Connecting the Local and the Global*, from 21 to 24 July 2016.

Applications are now open for participation in the following events:

Showcase Performance

Submission Deadline: 10 January 2016

Acceptance Notification: 28 February 2016

The Showcase provides a concert platform for professional choreographers and performers, and pre-professional artists training in dance academies. The performances will take place in the theaters located in the ShangShin University or Arko Theater and will be open to registered participants of the WDAAP event and the general public.

An international panel will consider and evaluate all submissions based on criteria in relation to the quality of the work submitted and accompanying documentation. Dance works presented may not exceed 10 minutes in length. For more information about submitting a proposal, see the WDAAP website: <http://www.wda-ap.org/>

International Choreolab

Submission deadline: 15 January 2016

The International Choreolab is designed for four emerging and mid-career choreographers to work intensively for almost one week under the mentorship of one Korean established dance artist and one internationally known choreographer (to be announced) resulting in a public showing of works in progress. Several dancers with various dance backgrounds and skills will work with each choreographer.

Please note that the event registration fee for all successful choreographers and dancers selected will be waived. All other costs, including travel, are the

responsibility of the recipient. WDAAP-Korea will provide lodging for the four choreographers. The dancers are responsible for the costs of their accommodation. Also, the project is quite intensive in effort and time. Please note the Choreolab will run from 14 to 20 July 2016, one week prior to the main *Dance Routes—Danced Roots* event which is planned to be 21–24 July 2016.

Applications are now open for both choreographers and dancers to participate in the Choreolab. For more information about submitting a proposal, see the WDAAP website: <http://www.wda-ap.org/>

Symposium

Abstract submission deadline: 10 January 2016

Acceptance notification: 28 February 2016

The Symposium theme focuses on the idea of global and local connectivity through dance, looking at roots as well as routes that dance and dancers negotiate in different cultures of the contemporary world. While the rootedness of the dance traditions remain as important an area in dance research, the emerging and ever-changing routes like migration and diaspora, interculturalism, technology, media, and expanding scope for dance as a tool for wellness and somatic well-being are becoming essential focuses in dance research. As a result danced and dance-generated dialogues in social, cultural and political milieus has expanded the current research in dance studies in the contemporary times.

Abstracts/proposals addressing the theme of the symposium *Dance Routes—Danced Roots: Connecting the Local and the Global* will be considered for the following presentation modes:

- Scholarly presentations
- Performative presentations
- Pecha kucha style presentations (for students doing their Masters degree, MPhil, PhD or emerging scholars)

All submissions will be peer reviewed by an international WDA committee. For more information about submitting a proposal, see the WDAAP website: <http://www.wda-ap.org/>

Southeast Asian Choreolab 2016



Application deadline: end of January 2016

Emerging contemporary dance choreographers from Southeast Asia are invited to apply to attend an international facilitated choreographic laboratory at Rimbun Dahan, outside Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in May 2016.

14 chosen choreographers will live, work and explore together in the arts community of Rimbun Dahan for 9 days, with thoughtful and supportive guidance from our international facilitator (details to be confirmed). The program will consist of 7 studio work days with 2 days of study-tour.

We are looking for emerging artists, aged 35 or under, or who began creating contemporary dance, physical theatre or performance art within the last five years. Applicants should be a citizen of and resident in an ASEAN country (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) or Papua New Guinea or East Timor. Applicants must be able to communicate functionally in English, and be excited to increase your knowledge base, share your practice and establish networks with your international peers. This project provides accommodation, meals, local transportation and participation in all project activities. Successful applicants are responsible for their own international airfare to Kuala Lumpur.

For more information with updated Choreolab dates, facilitator details and application format, see <http://www.rimbundahan.org>

SEA Choreolab 2014 participants in the dance studio at Rimbun Dahan. Photo: Bilqis Hijjas
SEA Choreolab 2014 participants enjoying lunch together at Rimbun Dahan.

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 <www.wdaamericas.org>.

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 Organisational (to be advised)
- Associate Individual US\$ 20

To join

Contact your Chapter Head (contact list on back of this issue) for details on how to join the local chapter.

Visit our websites

www.worlddancealliance.org
www.wda-ap.org

World Dance Alliance key contacts

WDA Presidents

WDA Asia Pacific President

Yunyu Wang
The School of Dance,
Taipei National University of the Arts
#1 Hsueh-yuan Road, Pei-to,
Taipei, Taiwan 112
yunyuge@gmail.com

WDA Americas President

Mary Jane Warner
1611- 1 Market Street
Toronto ON
Canada, M5E 0A2
mjwarner@yorku.ca

Secretary General

Cheryl Stock , AM
c.stock@qut.edu.au

Asia-Pacific Executive

President

Yunyu Wang
(see above for address)

Vice President

Urmimala Sarkar Munsri
urmimala.sarkar@gmail.com

Secretary

Julie Dyson
julie.dyson@home.netspeed.com.au

Treasurer

Jefferson Chieh-hua Hsieh
performerxie@gmail.com

Vice President South East Asia

Joseph Gonzales
senitari@gmail.com

Vice President East Asia

Anna Chan
anna.chan@wkcd.hk

Vice President South Asia

Lubna Marium
kanchendzonga@gmail.com

Asia-Pacific Network Chairs

Education & Training

Ralph Buck (New Zealand)
r.buck@auckland.ac.nz
Jeff Meiners (Australia)
jeff.meiners@unisa.edu.au

Research & Documentation

Urmimala Sarkar Munsri (India)
urmimala.sarkar@gmail.com
Stephanie Burridge (Singapore)
stephanieanneburridge@gmail.com

Support & Development

Bilqis Hijjas (Malaysia)
contact@mydancealliance.org
Joelle Jacinto (Philippines)
joelle.jacinto@gmail.com

Creation & Presentation

Nanette Hassall (Australia)
n.hassall@ecu.edu.au

Asia-Pacific Chapters

Aotearoa New Zealand

Anton Carter
Dance Aotearoa New Zealand
(DANZ)
PO Box 9885
Wellington New Zealand
T +64-4-8019885
F +64-4-8019883
execdirector@danzt.org.nz
www.danz.org.nz

Australia

Ausdance National
PO Box 45
Braddon ACT 2612 Australia
T +61 2 6248 8992
ceo@ausdance.org.au
www.ausdance.org.au

Bangladesh

Lubna Marium
General Secretary, Shadhona
A Center for Advancement of
Southasian Dance & Music
House 69, Road 5, DOHS (old),
Dhaka 1213
T +88029889426
M +8801713040814
kanchendzonga@gmail.com

Cambodia

Kang Rithisal
Amrita Performing Arts
#128 G9, Sothea Road Blvd. Sangkat
Tonlé Bassa, Khan Chamcarmon
PO Box 1140
Phnom Penh 12301, Cambodia
T +855 2322 0424
info@amritaperformingarts.org
www.amritaperformingarts.org

East Timor representative

Colleen Coy
Dili Wellness
T +670 7746 3733
diliwellness@gmail.com

Fiji

Sachiko Soro
PO Box 228
Suva, FIJI
T +679 3362 408
F +679 3303 160
sachikosoro@gmail.com

Hong Kong

Stella Lau
Chair of Hong Kong Dance Alliance
G/F, 110 Shatin Pass Road
Wong Tai Sin
Kowloon, Hong Kong.
T +852 22676663
F +852 22676733
stellau@hkapa.edu

India

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan
Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts
New Delhi 110 001 India
F +91 1 1338 1139
asiaproject@gmail.com

Karnataka chapter

Veena Murthy Vijay
wdakarnatakachapter@gmail.com

Maharashtra chapter

Smt. Darshana Jhaveri
sandhya_purecha@yahoo.com

West Bengal chapter

Alokananda Roy
suman.sarawgi@gmail.com

Indonesia

Anastasia Melati
Secretary WDA Indonesia
Puri Sewon Asri F8 Sewon,
Bantul, Yogyakarta 55188T
+6281 2277 3595
melatianastasia@gmail.com
comwdaindonesia@gmail.com

Korea

Hong Jo Jun
World Dance Alliance Korea
Department of Dance Art
Sungshin Women's University
Seoul, Korea
jhj57@sungshin.ac.kr

Malaysia

Bilqis Hijjas
MyDance Alliance
P.O. Box 12409, 50776
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
T +6017 310 3769
contact@mydancealliance.org
www.mydancealliance.org

Nepal

Rajendra Shrestha
Nritya Sahakarya Nepal
(Nepal Dance Alliance).
Home No. 98 Kopundol,
Lalitpur-10, Nepal
T +97 98 4133 7147
rajen60np@yahoo.com

Papua New Guinea representative

Naomi Faik-Simet
Institute of Papua New Guinea
Studies
Box 1432, Boroko 111, NCD,
Papua New Guinea
simet_naomifaik@yahoo.com.au

Philippines

Basilio Esteban Villaruz
College of Music
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City 1101
Philippines
T +63 2 428 7772
besvillaruz@gmail.com

Singapore

Dr Siri Rama
sirirama@hotmail.com
Jyoti Unni
Jyoti_unni@rediffmail.com

Taiwan

Su-ling Chou
Dance Division, Tsoying High School
#55 Hai-Kung Road
Tsoying, Kaohsiung, Taiwan 81326
T/F +886 7 585 3083
dance@mail.tyhs.edu.tw

Thailand

Dr Surapone Virunrak
wda.thailand@gmail.com
obb_on_earth@yahoo.com