

Hong Kong Dance Alliance – January to December 2014 Chairperson’s Report

OPENING REMARKS

After having been in the chair of the Alliance for three years (actually it is only 29 months as I took leave for seven months), I am now relieved that I can pass on the leadership to our next capable chairperson. Taking on the task as the Alliance’s chairperson is challenging for me as I have not been professionally trained in dance but had only been an arts administrator for many years. I am therefore grateful to the trust that the Executive Committee had bestowed on me and I am most grateful for their guidance and support during my tenure. For 2014, the Alliance has continued its objectives to develop a healthy environment and bring positive support to the dance community in Hong Kong. To accomplish this, we had carried out quite a number of projects which will be reported in the paragraphs to follow.

Executive Committee & Administration

At the Executive Committee, our vice-chairperson, Anna Chan, had resigned in March due to conflict of interest with her new position at the West Kowloon Cultural District. We have to reluctantly accept her resignation with her commitment that she will continue to support the Alliance work in her new position as Head of Artistic Development (Dance). The Alliance had invited Stella Lau to take on the vice-chairperson position until the next election at the AGM. The Alliance also welcomed new members, Yang Yuntao, Paul Tam, David Tsui and Kevin Wong joining us this year. They are a stream of new energy and we will look forward for their contribution with new initiatives and ideas.

At the Alliance’s office, I regret that we had a change of five Administrators during my tenure, such staff turnover scenario is most common in similar small scale office due to obvious reasons. This situation had adverse effect on the smooth operation of the Alliance’s work but I am most grateful to our core management team including Tom, Stella, Natasha and later Kevin who had provided their valuable time and effort to ensure that we accomplish our projects satisfactorily. At present, we have Administrator, Michelle Yeung, who have joined us for three months and we are pleased that she seemed to share the Alliance’s vision and passion. Other team members included Febby Chak, Assistant Administrator and Peggy Ma, Arts Administrator Management Trainee (supported by HKADC). Megan Lee, Assistant Administrator, had completed her contract with us on 5 December and she will continue to work with us on project basis until mid-February. I wish to take the opportunity to thank all of them for their dedication and hard work.

Grants

We are at present in the second year of the Three Year Grant scheme under the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). We have also received information that out of the three projects that we have applied for the Multi Project Grant (2015 - 2017), two projects had been approved. We also take this opportunity to thank Anne Chan and Tsui Ka Hing from HKADC who had patiently guided us through all the process of the grant period and had given us support whenever needed.

Activities Report (January – December 2014)

Hong Kong Dance Awards 2014

This year is the 16th year of Hong Kong Dance Awards. Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) continues to sponsor the venue (Kwai Tsing Theatre) for the gala performance. This year we have invited Jacky Yu to be the Artistic Director, and Cynthia Liu Chiu Fun, JP as our Guest of Honour. City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) continues to provide their technical support to the gala evening.

A total of ten Awards including the prestigious Distinguished Achievement Award were presented. The local Hong Kong film *The Way We Dance* was awarded the Outstanding Achievement in Presenting Dance in the Mass Media which was the first time in the Awards to acknowledge a film for its contribution towards dance.

The gala performance was held on 25 April 2014 and recorded an audience count of 504, or 80.6% of capacity in the stalls. The audience commented that it was a wonderful night with an energetic atmosphere and it demonstrated the multi-facets of HK dance. Apart from the award presentation, performances by the City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC), Hong Kong Dance Company (HKDC), The Hong Kong Ballet (HKB), School of Dance from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), independent dancers Ivan Chan and Henry Shum were also part of the event highlights. So Human, representatives from the awarded film *The Way We Dance* demonstrated an integration of beatboxing and popping, bringing the energy and excitement of street dance to the stage.

We continued to invite professional practitioners to be the Awards' judging panels.

Panel on Choreography, Performance, Production, Design for Dance

Led by Chair Emeritus Tom Brown and Secretary Natasha Rogai including Daisy Chu, Elizabeth Ferrell, Gary Gordon, David Liu, Carlo Pacis, Sheng Pei Qi, Cecil Sze, Wong Hang Fai and Daniel Yeung.

Panel on Outstanding Services to Dance, Dance Education, Youth Dance, Community Dance, Environmental Dance, Dance Sponsorship, and Other Recommendations Related to Dance

Led by Chair Emerita Anna CY Chan
Allen Lam and Virginia Lo

Mui Cheuk Yin will be the panelist on the Panel on Choreography, Performance, Production, Design for Dance for Dance Award 2015.

New “REAL” Showcase – co-presented with CCDC Dance Center

New “REAL” Showcase Series aims to nurture local individuals by allowing them an opportunity to present their first-ever full-length production at CCDC Dance Center Jockey Club Dance Theatre. As co-presenter, the Alliance provides the selected candidates with a mentor and arrange for reviews to be written and published in *dance journal/hk*.

Two productions were presented in the report period :

- *Plastic Surgery* 《整容》. Choreographer: Wong Ka Yee. Mentor: Noel Pong. Review: “*Plastic Surgery* 《整容》” by 陳冠而, *dance journal/hk* Feb Issue 16-1, p.12-13.
- *...Mis...* 《錯落》. Choreographer: Michael Tong. Mentor: Bruce Wong. Review: “*Their First Times: A Review of Works of Two Young Choreographers, The Left Hand and Mis..* 兩位新晉編舞的第一次 - 談《左撇子》與《錯落》” by William Chan 陳瑋鑫, *dance journal/hk* Oct Issue 16-5, p.23-24.

Website Revamp

The Alliance is working on website revamp to meet the needs of the users and facilitate one of the projects of the Alliance – DanceHub. The new version was launched on 25 April 2014 . A new section named DanceHub had been added. With the new section, there are up-to-date archival information of local dance productions and cultural exchange opportunities in the system. On-going updates and fine tuning of interface will continue. In addition, we are going to add another new section for independent choreographers’ and dancers’ portfolios so as to offer assistance and a platform to independent choreographers and dancers to explore more opportunities and further develop their career.

We have also cooperated with art-mate, a theatre database and ticketing service provider, in connecting with their database of production calendar and the synchronization was completed in late September 2014. This will effectively share the production calendar for local dance shows between each parties and enable the extension of pool of up-to-date local dance productions information sharing among the field.

We hope that the website can benefit both local and overseas artistic and serve as an information sector for them to exchange their works.

DanceHub

The DanceHub is a new initiative by the Alliance to be implemented in the three-year plan. DanceHub is a combination of a Consultancy Desk on Arts Administration and Dance Information & Exchange Center.

The Consultancy services were planned to provide professional advice on the aspects of funding application, publicity and ticketing, and artist welfare to independent dance artists, with professional practitioners as consultants.

During the first half of the project, the Alliance’s publicity on this project was not successful in sending the message out. After reflection, the Alliance adopted a more active role in reaching out to the potential beneficiaries.

As a result, we have lined up with David Leung, chairperson of HKAPA Dance Alumni Association, to co-organize a talk for the Alumni, as well as having another session for the HKAPA graduating students in January 2015.

Emerging Choreographers

Emerging Choreographers was first introduced by the Alliance in 2007 and had received overwhelming support and positive feedback from young choreographers and dance artists. The Alliance resumes this meaningful project in 2015, so as to continue support and offers a platform for entry-level choreographers to create and present their works creating an environment conducive to their dance development and to identify and nurture budding choreographers and dance groups.

Open call for proposals will begin on 10 December 2014, applicants should be resident of Hong Kong with at least 2 years choreographic experience. We have also formed a team of selection panels, which includes Stella Lau, Yang Yuntao, Jaime Redfern and Ringo Chan to select 2 - 3 choreographers. Selected choreographers are obligated to choreograph a 20-30 minutes dance. The Alliance will support the participants with a lump-sum allowance for their production cost, as well as rehearsal and presenting venue.

Discussions are in progress with LCSD for venue and ticketing sponsorship. The final performance is proposed to be held in Kwai Tsing Theatre Black Box Theatre on 4-5 July, 2015. There will be a student matinee on the weekday in order to promote dance to reach different levels of public and nurture potential audiences.

Dance Enhance

A five-month training scheme that aims to provide foundation training on dance appreciation and criticism to aspiring dance writers. From September 2014 to January 2015, participants will attend a series of lectures and workshops to learn about the characteristics of different dance types from dance experts.

Participants meet one Monday each month to attend a 3-hour evening lecture on different dance types. Lecturers include Daniel Yeung, Stella Lau, Xing Liang, Dick Wong, and Pei Chang-qing. With support from CCDC, The HKB, Zuni Icosahedron, and HKDC, participants also attend four live performances presented by these companies.

After the performances, they will write articles on at least 3 performances that are reviewed by professional dance criticism mentors including Kuh Fei, Daisy Chu, Maggie Chung, Tom Brown and Natasha Rogai. Outstanding works may have a chance to be published in *dance journal/hk* or Hong Kong Dance Alliance website.

Two additional "Coffee with Mentors" sessions were held to allow both the mentors and participants to meet each other and share their thoughts. One session was conducted in English with English mentors and the other session in Cantonese with Chinese mentors.

The project has 24 participants from different backgrounds including students, arts administrators, professionals and others. It is an enthusiastic group and they are very active in asking questions during the sessions. The attendance for lectures has been around 20 in average and half for the workshops/rehearsals. The number of articles submitted is low and some participants find it hard to start writing without much knowledge of dance criticism. To encourage more submissions, website references on different dance

types and tips for writing dance criticism were sent to the participants to provide writing assistance

dance journal/hk

Continuing the new face with 15-6 (Dec 2013 issue), the revolutionary new face with new featured columns such as "Coffee with Yuri" and "People" have received very positive feedback from the readers.

"Coffee with Yuri" is a new column which regularly invites people from different backgrounds to view dance performances and talk about them, with a veteran dance artist such as Yuri Ng, in a casual setting (e.g. cafe). With this new column, it is hoped that a better mutual understanding can be developed - how dance practitioners better understand the audience from non-dance background and how people from all walks of life can better understand and appreciate dance as an art form.

"People" is another new feature sharing stories of dancers and choreographers that reveal their diversity of experiences in dance as well as their shared aspirations, hoping to inspire people who are interested in joining and/or continuing their life as dancing professionals.

The new changes has also attracted a number of new writers joining the team, including a few IATC members and academics, expanding the writer base.

Currently, the circulation of the journal is 4,000 (300 to HKAPA, 3,000 to LCSD venues and 700 to HKDA for further distribution at CCDC Dance Centre and to members of the Alliance).

Creative Space

Creative Space: Residency for Mid-career Choreographers ("the Residency") is a five-month residency program targeting mid-career choreographers, comprised of 44 technical and choreographic master-classes taught by 15 international and local masters, as well as rehearsal hours for the selected choreographers to create new works, throughout December 2013 and May 2014. A local showcase *Springboard Showcase*, two performance tours at WDA Global Summit 2014 and Tari'14 - Building Bridges International Dance Festival were also part of the program.

Three artists, Chen Kai, Lau Wai Shan DoDo and Yang Hao, along with five dancers, Li Long Hin, Wu Cheng-fang, Shum Chi Yee Henry, Chan Chun Wai Ivan and Lin Yu-Chien Tatrck, were selected for the program.

After five months of preparation, three works by the three selected artists were presented to the 708 public and dance lovers at the *Springboard Showcase: Line II* by Chen Kai, *Meet* by DoDo Lau, and *Nothing... But Something* by Yang Hao, during 16 - 18 May 2014 at Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre Auditorium; both *Meet* and *Nothing... But Something* were also presented at WDA Global Summit 2014 held in Angers, France, in which all three artists were arranged 30 minutes each to meet with the European programmer Anita Mathiew and presented their work; *Line II* was later presented internationally at Tari'14 - Building Bridges International Dance Festival held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as the starting piece of Main Performance nights and Closing Ceremony of the Festival. All three works were very well received locally and internationally.

Generally speaking, the Residency and the produced works received encouraging and positive feedback from both the participants, the masters, the audiences and the students of the three selected artists.

FUTURE EVENTS AND DIRECTONS

Celebration of Hong Kong Dance

Hong Kong Dance Award 2015 will be held on 17th April, 2015 at Kwai Tsing Theatre. Guest of Honour will be Michelle Li, Director, LCSD. Distinguished Achievement Award will be presented to Tom Brown. Artistic Director is David Liu.

OTHER PROJECTS

- Dance Hub (a) Consultancy Desk on Arts Administration (ongoing)
- Dance Hub (b) Dance Information and exchange Center (ongoing)
- Dance Enhance 2015-2016
- REAL Showcase 2015
- Creative Space 2015

CONCLUSION

Stepping down from my position as chairperson, I hope I have achieved what is expected of me. I am proud to say that we have accomplished a lot in the past year with all the support and assistance mentioned above. I send my best wishes to the new Chairperson and the Executive Committee and I am sure they will continue to bring the Alliance to higher accomplishment.

Helen Ng

9 Decemeber 2014