

The
Human
Expression
Dance Company



contset
CONTEMPORARY DANCE FESTIVAL

Elusive—a double bill

by T.H.E Dance Company

28 June 2024, 8:30PM

29 June 2024, 8:30PM

30 June 2024, 7:30PM



FESTIVAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

KUIK SWEE BOON

It has been fifteen years since our first edition of cont·act Contemporary Dance Festival. Two years ago, we reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to supporting the development of contemporary dance in Singapore with the refreshed Festival name of cont·act in English, and reverting to the original name in Chinese. This year's edition in June, "On the cusp", signifies a year of transition for the Festival ahead of the celebration of our 15th edition next year with an announcement of our upcoming plans for the Festival ahead. (Due to the pandemic, the 12th edition of the Festival spanned 2 years.)

This year's programme highlights are a dual world premiere in the double bill, *Elusive*, with works by the talented German and Italian duo Panzetti/Ticconi, and South Korean Kim Jae Duk who has not been in Singapore for four years already, along with a series of works-in-progress by artists from home and abroad. This includes Taiwanese artist Chang Chien-Hao with a familiar German artist Jan Möllmer, Hong Kong's Ong Yong Lock, Israel's Ravid Abarbanel, and T.H.E's senior dance artist Klievert Jon Mendoza creating on T.H.E Second Company.

From our audience's enthusiastic responses to last year's Open Stage, I have reason to believe that many may feel disappointed by the absence of this platform this year. However, please be assured that cont·act's current transformation is to ensure that it can run more healthily and sustainably. While we take some time to reimagine the meaning and position of the Festival, one thing is certain: our efforts and determination to promote and explore how contemporary dance can foster mutual understanding remain unchanged. We have big dreams of continually bettering our community, society, and world, and we want to continue preserving space for artistic freedom and imagination. Enjoy this year's edition, and stay tuned for the exciting updates to come!



Chorales by Kim Jae Duk (South Korea/Singapore)
Original photo by Crispian Chan

CHORALES

by Kim Jae Duk (South Korea/Singapore)

CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE —

The soft movement in the deep sea.

Chorales is rather different from the works I have done thus far with T.H.E — it focuses on my perspective of the body and its beauty, and especially on temporality. With the transient nature of performance, the sense of time in the work is ever changing. Ultimately, the performers' instincts and sensibilities will shape every moment.

The body is valued, and important. To showcase the body, I never ascribe any societal texts or issues to it. Instead, to help the audience ground their experience of the work, I turned to nature in search of elements that I could incorporate. The image of the deep sea and what lies beneath seems to be the best metaphor.

Some considerations:

1. What is the audience's perception of beauty? Will they see the beauty in what I perceive as so?
2. How do I let the audience find beauty in what may seem unsightly?
3. In this work, music is just a space that the dance occupies. The movements and the rhythm of the music are out of sync. Would audiences still be able to see this work as a dance, or would it be just a series of actions...?
4. The intended concept of this work is the swaying, fluttering pressure of the deep sea.
5. What is the artist's and the audience's perception of "contemporary"?
6. In this work, the movement never stops — I use the word "sustain". Even in moments that seemed still, the movement never truly stopped.

Performers:

Billy Keohavong, Klievert Jon Mendoza,
Haruka Leilani Chan, Chang En, Jhou
Han-Wei, Carmelita Nuelle Buay

Composer: Kim Jae Duk

Rehearsal Assistant: Billy Keohavong

Costume Designer: Loo An Ni

Lighting Designer: Adrian Tan

MALEBRANCHE — HARLEKING MULTITUDE

by Ginevra Panzetti of Panzetti/Ticconi (Italy/Germany)

MALEBRANCHE — Harleking multitude is a choreography for 5 performers born from materials developed in *Harleking*, originally created by and for the duo Panzetti/Ticconi.

The character of Harleking, multiplied and transformed by the interpreters of T.H.E, draws its roots from the Arlecchino (Harlequin) of the *Commedia dell'arte* (comedy of the profession)¹. A devious, witty servant, he is moved by primal instincts, a desire to attain the power that he simultaneously mocks, and an insatiable hunger. The Arlecchino evoked here shares ancient demonic roots with his distant predecessor Alichino, a devil from the demon group Malebranche in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*².

Characteristics in the choreography reminiscent of ancient grotesques on buildings — extravagant, interlaced volutes of human and animal figures amidst curving foliage elements — support the construction of an ambiguous and mutable character. The language of the work possesses a hypnotic quality in which extreme and opposing contents merge into a system that confuses and surprises. In these persuasive transformations, the unsettling reveals itself unexpectedly, only to be veiled once more. This fluidity mirrors the slick force of communication, alongside which repetition and mutation are close companions. The figures, which although can evoke amusement, do not elicit any joy.

¹Commedia dell'arte (comedy of the profession) was an early form of professional theatre. It was an exclusively Italian phenomenon until it was popularised and spread throughout Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries.

²Dante Alighieri (c. 1265—14 September 1321), often referred to as Dante, was an Italian poet, writer and philosopher. *Inferno* is the first part of his 14th century epic poem *Divine Comedy*; the subsequent parts are *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*.

Performers:

Klievert Jon Mendoza, Haruka Leilani
Chan, Chang En, Jhou Han-Wei,
Carmelita Nuelle Buay

Sound Designer: Demetrio Castellucci

Rehearsal Assistant: Fiona Thng

Costume Coordinator: Loo An Ni

Lighting Designer: Adrian Tan



MALEBRANCHE — *Harleking multitude* by Ginevra Panzetti (Italy/Germany)
Original photo by Crispian Chan

CHOREOGRAPHERS



Choreographer:
Chorales

Jae Duk has been T.H.E Dance Company's Resident Choreographer since 2010.

As Founder, Artistic Director and Principal Choreographer of Modern Table Dance Company (est. 2013), his works are known for their unique dynamic curves, rapid movements, and modern reinterpretation of traditional Korean forms, making him a highly sought-after choreographer beyond Korea. *Lub Dub*, choreographed for Bale Teatro Castro Alves, was selected by the Brazilian magazine BRAVO as one of the 10 best shows of 2017. Another notable work, *Darkness Poomba*, has been invited to The Place in London in 2016, Chekhov International Theatre Festival in 2017, Yokohama Dance Collection 2021 as a masterpiece selection, and to LG Arts Center in Seoul. Jae Duk's talents also extend to music; he composes the original music for almost all of his choreographies.

CHOREOGRAPHERS

Ginevra Panzetti and Enrico Ticconi, based in Berlin and Torino, have been working as a duo since 2008. Their artistic research interlaces dance, performance, and visual art, with deepening themes relating to the historical union between communication, violence and power. They draw on ancient imaginaries, creating hybrid figures or images between history and contemporaneity. Both graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and attended Stoà, School for rhythmic movement and philosophy in Cesena, led by Claudia Castellucci.



Choreographer:
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

In 2010, the duo moved to Germany and delved into mutually complementary paths: Ginevra studied Media Art at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (HGB); Enrico Dance, Context, Choreography at the Inter-University Centre for Dance (HZT). They gained international recognition with their choreographic work *Harleking* (2018), presented at the European platform Aerowaves Twenty 19, New Italian Dance (NID) Platform and Tanzplattform Deutschland 2020. In 2019 they won the 13th Arte Laguna Prize for the site-specific performance *Jardin/ Arsenale*, received the Danza&Danza Prize as emerging choreographers and were nominees for the Promising Talent of the Year accolade by the Jahrbuch Tanz.

Their latest artistic research investigates the symbolic power of the flag and took shape through the realisation of a dyptic composed by the choreographic works *AeReA* (2019) and *Ara! Ara!* (2021), concluded by a filmic work *Silver Veiled* (2021).

INSEL, their most recent choreographic work for 4 performers, premiered in 2023 at Tanz Im August Festival in Berlin.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

The Human Expression (T.H.E) Dance Company was founded in 2008 by Artistic Director Kuik Swee Boon. Rooted firmly in Singapore yet universal in its perspective, T.H.E's contemporary dance works reveal the body as a medium for exploring and celebrating the human condition.

Dance artists at T.H.E are immersed in the Company's signature methodology, HollowBody™, which guides them to access their deeper instincts and impulses through movement. The Company's movement vocabulary is distinct in its intensely personal aesthetics, yet thrilling in its diversity. Driven by a sincere desire to uncover the intricate, complex and oft-times overlooked dimensions of human existence, the Company's incisive observations on the human condition and its original creations are an essential mirror to the issues and rhythms of contemporary life.

As one of Singapore's seminal contemporary dance companies, T.H.E has performed and toured at many major and prestigious festivals in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, India, France, Italy, Poland, Denmark, Latvia, United Arab Emirates, Australia, and New Zealand.

Based on its vision of contemporary dance as a medium for nurturing human potential, T.H.E has also actively initiated numerous platforms to engage young artists and the wider public. Since it was founded, the Company also started its semi-professional wing, T.H.E Second Company, which identifies and mentors dance artists who aspire to reach a professional standard of contemporary dance. In 2010, T.H.E also founded the cont·act Contemporary Dance Festival (previously known as the M1 Contact Contemporary Dance Festival) – the country's first annual contemporary dance festival to showcase local and international artists. The Company also regularly runs public classes, workshops, and customised programmes for schools and the community.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

FIONA THNG (SINGAPORE)

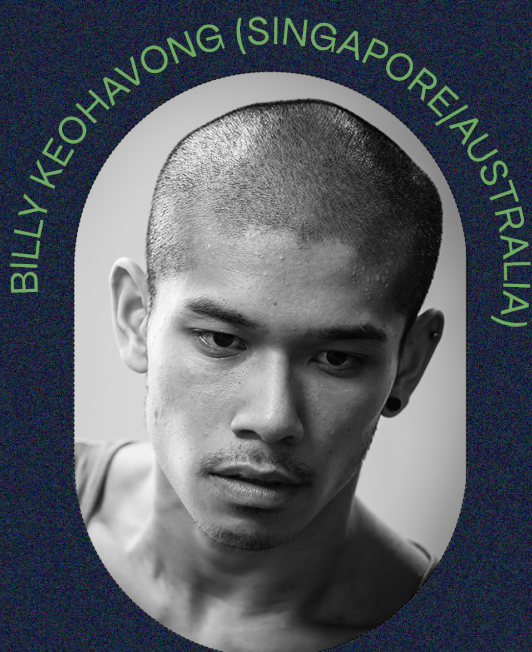


Rehearsal Assistant:
*MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude*

Fiona has been a full-time Dance Artist with T.H.E Dance Company since 2019, and was recently appointed as the Assistant to Artistic Director. Over the years with the company, she has been in numerous works by Kuik Swee Boon, resident choreographer Kim Jae Duk, and guest choreographers Dimo Kirilov Milev, Jos Baker, Albert Tiong and Anthea Seah. Fiona also had the honour to tour internationally with the company to various festivals such as Tanzmesse, OzAsia, Oriente Occidente and other independent venues such as Scenario Pubblico (Italy) and The Coronet Theatre (United Kingdom). In addition to performing, Presently, Fiona teaches, choreographs and facilitates HollowBody™ workshops with and for the main company, T.H.E Second Company, and T.H.E Training Initiative.

Prior to joining the company, Fiona had the pleasure of working with local choreographers such as Jeffrey Tan, Ryan Tan, Zaki Ahmad and Wee Ee-Ching. She was trained in various dance genres such as hip hop, jazz and street jazz before discovering her interest in contemporary dance. Her diverse exposure has given rise to a love for exploring and formulating unique movement phrases, and infusing different quirks into her movement. She has a deep interest in helping movers and non-movers alike to unlock the physical potential of their bodies, and connecting the community through the power of the arts.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY



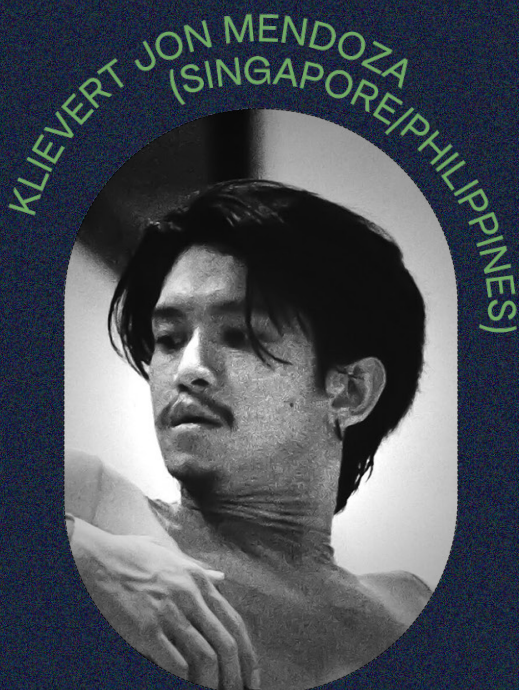
Rehearsal Assistant &
Performer:
Chorales

Billy Keohavong is a first-generation Laotian-Australian artist based in Eora (Sydney). He is a scholarship recipient of both New Zealand School of Dance and Ev & Bow Full-Time Training Centre. Billy is a movement coach and improvisational specialist focusing on character work and sensorial work.

His experiences extend to international borders where he has returned to Singapore as the current Rehearsal Master and Dance Artist with T.H.E Dance Company. He has performed extensively within festivals like Florence Dance Festival (Italy), Fukuoka Fringe Dance Festival (Japan), Daegu Dance Festival (South Korea) and Sydney Festival (Sydney). Billy has also worked with highly acclaimed choreographers such as Kuik Swee Boon, Kim Jae Duk, Ross McCormack, Sue Healy, Martin Del Amo, Meryl Tankard and Dimo Kirilov Milev.

Outside of all of this, Billy is also a part of the Australian Ballroom (Vogue) community and is a member of The House of IMAN based in Aotearoa (New Zealand). He is the current Father of the Sydney Chapter.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY



Performer:
Chorales;
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

Klievert Jon Mendoza graduated from the Philippines High School for the Arts where he received the Outstanding Student Artist Award in 2015. He went on to study at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in 2018 where he graduated with a Diploma in Dance (Distinction), was named Best Graduate, and received the NAFA President Award. Klievert was the first Filipino to compete in the Youth America Grand Prix 2018, and was awarded the Gold Medal in the pre-professional category of the 2014 Concours International De Danse Classique De Grasse in Paris, France.

Following his graduation from NAFA, Klievert joined T.H.E Dance Company in 2018. Since then, he has graced stages both local and international, captivating audiences with performances at renowned festivals such as Inteatro Festival, Cross Festival, Florence Dance Festival, and OzAsia, among many others.

Beyond being a performer, Klievert has also ventured into choreography, showcasing his creativity and artistic vision. He took the helm in choreographing the 2020–2021 editions of liTHE, demonstrating his versatility and depth as an artist. Currently, Klievert is poised to embark on a new creative endeavour, given the opportunity to create an incubation work with T.H.E Second Company for the 14th edition of cont·act Contemporary Dance Festival.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

HARUKA LEILANI CHAN (SINGAPORE)



Performer:
Chorales;
*MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude*

Trained in ballet and Chinese dance from a young age, Haruka's formal introduction to contemporary dance began at School of the Arts Singapore. In 2017, she was accepted into the New Zealand School of Dance majoring in Contemporary Dance where she got to train with a prestigious faculty that included Victoria Colombus, Paula Steeds Huston, James O'Hara, Balázs Busa, Daniel Jaber and other guest teachers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was unable to complete her final year at NZSD and returned to Singapore, where she joined T.H.E Dance Company in January 2021.

Since joining, Haruka has been an integral part of repertoire and original choreographies by Artistic Director Kuik Swee Boon, Resident Choreographer Kim Jae Duk, and guest choreographers such as Jos Baker and Dimo Kirilov Milev. With T.H.E Dance Company, she has performed in shows at home and abroad, traveling to different festivals and theatres worldwide

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

CHANG EN (SINGAPORE)



Performer:
Chorales;
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

Chang En first started dancing classical ballet at the age of 4, and then through her academic years, working with established choreographers such as Jeffrey Tan, Albert Tiong and Zaki Ahmad. From 2017 to 2021, Chang En was an integral part of T.H.E Second Company, where she honed her skills and talents. This opportunity culminated in her performance with T.H.E Dance Company in February 2021, representing a pivotal moment in.

In January 2022, Chang En officially joined T.H.E Dance Company, embarking on a new chapter of her dance journey. Since then, she has been actively performing with the company, showcasing her artistry both locally and internationally. This includes touring to festivals such as OzAsia and performing at independent venues like Scenario Pubblico and The Coronet Theatre.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

JHOU HAN-WEI (SINGAPORE/TAIWAN)



Performer:
Chorales;
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

Jhou Han-Wei, born 2001 in Taipei, Taiwan, embarked on his dance journey at the young age of 7. His passion for dance led him to pursue formal training at the Taipei National University of the Arts, where he graduated in 2023.

Throughout his training, Han-Wei has cultivated a versatile skill set, encompassing a wide range of dance styles. From the graceful movements of classical Western dance, including ballet, modern, and contemporary techniques, to the rich traditions of Eastern classical dance, such as Chinese opera, Chinese folk dance, and martial arts, he has immersed himself in diverse cultural expressions. Han-Wei's dedication to mastering various dance forms reflects his commitment to artistic exploration and his desire to push the boundaries of his craft. Han-Wei joined T.H.E Dance Company in 2024, marking his first significant milestone in his dance career.

T.H.E DANCE COMPANY

CARMELITA NUELLE BUAY
(SINGAPORE/AUSTRALIA)

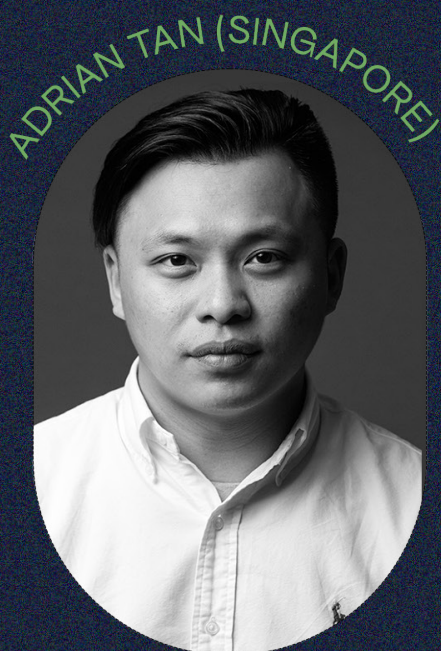


Performer:
Chorales;
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

Carmelita was born in Singapore, grew up in Sydney, Australia and trained in classical and contemporary dance from a young age. She pursued contemporary studies with Sydney Dance Company's pre-professional course for two years, and has since collaborated with and performed works by established artists such as Rafael Bonachela, James O'Hara, Gabrielle Nankivell and Sam Coren. Carmelita has performed in Stephanie Lake Company's internationally toured work *Colossus* as part of Newcastle's New Annual Festival.

She worked with the Australian Ballet Company as a junior artist in the professional productions of *The Nutcracker* and *The Story of Clara*, working alongside former Artistic Director, David McAllister. Carmelita also spent four years teaching and choreographing at North Shore Dance Academy Sydney, coaching contemporary, classical and commercial styles to younger dancers. She joined T.H.E Dance Company as a Junior Apprentice in January 2024.

COLLABORATORS



Lighting Designer:
Chorales;
MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude

Since graduating from LASALLE College of the Arts in 2006, Adrian has been designing shows for the local and international arts scene. His work spans a wide spectrum, including the performing arts, and outdoor light installations. He has worked with most major theatre and dance companies in Singapore, creating design and spaces for operas, dance, and experimental works produced by companies like Singapore Lyric Opera, Singapore Ballet (previously known as Singapore Dance Theatre), T.H.E Dance Company, W!ld Rice, The Necessary Stage, and Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay. Several of his works have received theatre awards, including shows like *Monkey Goes West* and *Another Country* by W!ld Rice, *A Cage Goes In Search Of A Bird* by A Group of People, *BITCH* for M1 Fringe Festival, and *Dark Room*, which was commissioned by the Esplanade as part of The Studios 2016.

COLLABORATORS



Costume Designer:
Chorales

Costume Coordinator:
*MALEBRANCHE —
Harleking multitude*

Loo An Ni is fascinated with the tactility of objects and spaces. This brought her into theatre where the possibilities are endless. She has taken various roles in costuming, from design and construction to wardrobe management.

Her costume design credits include *PheNoumenon* (Kuik Swee Boon & T.H.E Dance Company), *Transplant* (The Finger Players), *First Fleet* (Nine Years Theatre and Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre), and *Windward Side of the Mountain* (T.H.E Dance Company, Nine Years Theatre, and SAtheCollective).

An Ni is currently a member of The Finger Players' core team.

UPCOMING FESTIVAL PROGRAMMES

SHOWS

Dance at Dusk
DBS Foundation Outdoor Theatre at Esplanade

29 June, 6PM

30 June, 5:30PM



Perfect for both first-time and seasoned contemporary dance audiences, come experience captivating moments of sensitivity and explosivity at Dance at Dusk — our annual free, family-friendly series!

UPCOMING FESTIVAL PROGRAMMES

FESTIVAL WORKSHOP & SHARING

Happy Body workshop with Ravid Abarbanel (Israel/Spain)

29—30 June, 1:30PM—5:30PM

Advanced level

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

+ Informal workshop sharing & work-in-progress showing

30 June, 5:30PM

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

FESTIVAL CLASSES

Of Initiations and Pathways class with Lynette Lim (Singapore)

29 June, 9:30AM—11AM

Beginner level

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

The Jae Duk Method class with Kim Jae Duk (South Korea/Singapore)

29 June, 11:30AM—1PM

Advanced level

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

Meet The Floor class with Ravid Abarbanel (Israel/Spain)

30 June, 9:30AM—11AM

Intermediate level

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

Awareness, Control and Play with Ng Zu You (Singapore)

30 June, 11:30AM—1PM

Advanced level

T.H.E Dance Company's Studio

UPCOMING T.H.E PROGRAMMES

PERFORMANCES IN SINGAPORE

Searching Blue

16, 17, 23, 24 August 2024, 6:30PM

ArtScience Museum

Invisible Habitudes

8—9 November 2024, 7:30PM

Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre
Auditorium



INTERNATIONAL TOURS

Invisible Habitudes

29 November 2024, 6PM

National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts,
Weiwuying, Taiwan

Invisible Habitudes

10—11 January 2025, 8PM

Damansara Performing Arts Centre,
Malaysia



Original photos by Thum Chia Chieh (top);
by Bernie Ng (bottom)

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Help us to continue making waves, nurturing artists, and inspiring generations.

With you, we can:

- 01 Bring diverse, high-quality programmes to audiences in Singapore,
- 02 Create better opportunities for emerging artists and arts leaders to learn and work with us, and
- 03 Represent Singapore on the world stage as a homegrown contemporary dance company.

Your support for contact Contemporary Dance Festival and T.H.E Dance Company is greatly appreciated. As T.H.E Dance Company is a non-profit charity organisation with IPC status, all donations till 19 February 2026 are entitled to 250% tax deduction.

To donate, or to find out more, head to **the-dancecompany.com/14-donations**.

You may also support us by joining our **Friend of T.H.E** membership programme. **[More information here!](#)**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Kuik Swee Boon	
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Belina Tan	

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Kuik Swee Boon	<i>Founding Artistic Director, T.H.E Dance Company Festival Director, contact Contemporary Dance Festival</i>
Silvia Yong	<i>Associate Artistic Director, T.H.E Second Company</i>
Kim Jae Duk	<i>Resident Choreographer</i>
Fiona Thng	<i>Assistant to Artistic Director & Dance Artist</i>
Billy Keohavong	<i>Rehearsal Master & Dance Artist</i>
Klievert Jon Mendoza	<i>Dance Artist</i>
Haruka Leilani Chan	<i>Dance Artist</i>
Chang En	<i>Dance Artist</i>
Jhou Han-Wei	<i>Apprentice</i>
Carmelita Nuelle Buay	<i>Junior Apprentice</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FESTIVAL & OFFICE TEAM

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Slm Yan Ying “YY”	<i>Executive Assistant to General Manager</i>
Kwek Yixuan	<i>Communications Manager, T.H.E Dance Company Festival Manager, cont·act Contemporary Dance Festival</i>
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Tha Zin Htet	<i>Festival Intern (Publicity)</i>

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Cindy Yeong	<i>Festival Production Manager</i>
Lee Xinzhi	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Adrian Tan	<i>Lighting Designer</i>
Loo An Ni	<i>Costume Designer & Coordinator</i>

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Crispian Chan	<i>Key Visual Photographer</i>
Paraphrase	<i>Festival Trailer Editor</i>
Bernie Ng	<i>Full-Dress Rehearsal Photographer</i>
Tha Zin Htet	<i>Programme Booklet Designer</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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T.H.E Dance Company is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company
Scheme for the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.