



tyc

tony yap company
annual report 2009



OVERVIEW

Jill Morgan – Executive Officer, Multicultural Arts Victoria

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) to write an overview for the inaugural Annual Report for the Tony Yap Company.

Multicultural Arts Victoria as Victoria's leading multicultural arts organisation supporting and promoting the excellence of Victoria's diverse artistic and cultural life would like to congratulate accomplished Victorian dancer Tony Yap in leading the development of the Tony Yap Company (TYC) which has presented an extraordinary breadth of work in 2009 both locally and internationally. Multicultural Arts Victoria has had a long standing and very positive relationship since the mid 90's with Tony Yap and is keen to nurture the Company's development through auspicing, support and advice.

Tony formed the Tony Yap Company in 2008, which was a significant step in his artistic career and the professional development of the Company is very timely. TYC has allowed Tony and his artistic collaborators to consolidate the relationships he has developed in the Asian region with a view to TYC being a strong conduit and incubator for the future development of Australian Asian dance. Having TYC funded as a key organisation by the Australia Council, an Asian Australian Contemporary Dance Company, is a very important step in the life cycle of dance in Australia. It is essential to have an alternative perspective, an Eastern leading choreographic focus which reflects Australia's diversity in dance in Australia.

MAV has worked consistently with Tony and his Company to showcase his work through performance, showcases and workshops in the Asian region at an International level. The Tony Yap Company is forging strong links with Asia which will have a profound impact on Australian dance in both the short and long term.

Tony has been producing innovative engaging works for many years and crossing new boundaries. He is a mentor to many artists and through his Company's work he will be able to impart his skill and knowledge

through his role as dancer, director and choreographer. In 2009 TYC produced five key works which you can see outlined in the following pages.

In late 2009, TYC and MAV received Company Development funding through the Australia Council and undertook a extensive review facilitated by Sophie Travers. Sophie's prior experience in company strategic development and strong connections with dance in Australia and internationally assisted the Company in exploring alternative ways of working. Whilst the Company had considerable experience in producing work and managing stakeholders, the transition from a collective of individual artists working together to a more formalised emerging key organisation required new skills in governance and strategic planning. This process of review led to TYC confirming that the Company is a choreographer-led interdisciplinary performing arts company, with a commitment to research and development and to working in the Asian region. The outcome of the strategic planning was the confirmation of four discrete streams of activity which all cross-pollinate. Each stream is informed by the common interdisciplinary and international aesthetic. The four streams identified are Stream 1 Virtual Temple, Stream 2 Melbourne Filament, Stream 3 Workshops, and Stream 4 Collaborations. It was also identified that the Company required a skilled producer to work strategically with the Company.

I would like to thank the all the Virtual Temple key artistic collaborators, Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Naomi Ota and Ben Rogan, and also all artists involved in the Melbourne Filament. Many thanks to the Australia Council for their support and partnership and to Sophie Travers for Company Development, Kath Papas agreeing to become Company Producer from 2010, and Tony Yap for his artistic leadership.

Tony Yap Company has made an enormous and very significant contribution to the cultural diversity of Australian dance.

Jill Morgan
Executive Officer

OVERVIEW

Tony Yap – Artistic Director's Report

2009 was a very full year for the newly established company. Thanks to the original core group (Tim Humphrey, Madeleine Flynn and Naomi Ota), Jill Morgan (Executive Officer of Multicultural Arts Victoria), Hung Nguyen (Accounts Officer) and Sophie Travers (company development consultant), TYC now has a clearer structure that outlined the streams of creative activities and a practical management of funds to facilitate the creative vision. I would also like to welcome Kath Papas as Company Producer from 2010. She has a wide experience in dance (previously director of Ausdance Victoria) in Australia and has a keen interest in Asian aesthetics with a sound knowledge in the diverse nature of TYC's artistic background and influences.

2009 has been an exciting year, with TYC providing diverse and innovative works and projects, nationally and internationally. It has also been a year for structuring the company and developing strategies to realize our vision of putting TYC at the forefront of dance/performance practice in Australia and in Asia. The year was highlighted with a series of international collaborative projects, *Past Caring*, with The Necessary Stage, Singapore, *The Buddha my Body – A Palimpsest*, with Nettle Theatre (Sth Korea) and Surya Kencana (Indonesia); *Buddha Body Series: Melangkori; Eulogy for the Living* and TYC's major creative input to the inaugural Melaka Arts & Performance (MAP) Festival.

The multi-modal focused Virtual Temple is one of TYC's major stream. It has a decade long history of an ensemble that has produced the company's most innovative and integrated works and continue in the deep process that is risk-taking in the area of cross-cultural cross-medium investigations.

In 2002 I began a journey back to Asia with funding from Arts Victoria to return to my birthplace, Malacca, to develop and search for the influences to my dance. Later in 2004, I continued the momentum with an Asialink residency to Yogyakarta, as well as Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Later in the same year I was invited to the prestigious Little Asia Creators Meeting in a unique and rich live-in residential in rural setting

of Hooyong Performing Art Center in Munmak, South Korea. Participating artists came from all over Asia – Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. These meetings and residencies were rich in the way exchanges of ideas and practices in their informal and formal settings. Creative relationships took on a deep and lasting level. From these beginnings my network in Asia increased naturally, through meetings, experimenting with choreographic and theatrical theories in workshops, whilst being immersed into the local cultural environment. The genesis of ideas and choreographic language with roots from Asian cultures towards new contemporary work is indeed exciting and refreshing. I find my heritage and cultural background now pronounced in my own language and voice in the already diversified Australian multicultural milieu. TYC grew from these connections and ideas began and continue to develop and deepen especially with the long-term relationships that has been established.

The Company's choreographic stream, Melbourne Filament, from its historical beginnings from IRAA Physical Theatre and Mixed Company, has always been informed and developed through a focus in the Eastern philosophies and techniques in the movement arts. The Company's choreographic ideas and influences lie in the works of Grotowski, Butoh, Asian dance, martial arts and shamanistic ritual practices. This experimental choreographic stream also investigates vocal and theatrical method of Asia. I believe the Company has a sound base now as an organisation to nurture and produce innovative new works that have an alternative direction and will richly add to the sophisticated and diverse art practice in Australia.

The development of TYC would not have been possible without the generous support and interest of the arts community and associated funding bodies. Jill Morgan has been an invaluable guide and provided encouragement as the company develops. I would like to thank Jill for her unfaltering guidance. MAV (Multicultural Arts Victoria) as a leading organization is a champion for diversity in the artistic community in this state. To be under its wing has enabled TYC to develop and flourish.



One of the key developments for the Company has been the acquisition of new skills in the areas of governance and strategic planning. Sophie Travers facilitated this significant process through the Australia Council's Company Development fund. The company was assisted to develop a new clearer structure upon which to take the Company forward.

Thanks also to the Dance Board of the Australia Council for support over and above the funding it provides via its many branches with advice, direction, promotion and encouragement. Other Australian and international funding support that has helped bring our many projects to fruition are Arts Victoria, The City of Melbourne, Asialink, AICC, Ausdance, Dancehouse, Oki-Do Yoga Centre, The Moreland City Council, The Yarra City Council and fortyfivedownstairs.

I would like to thank all the key collaborative artists especially, Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Naomi Ota and Ben Rogan from the Virtual Temple Stream, as well as the artists involved in the Melbourne Filament Stream Yumi Umiumare, Mike Hornblow and Janette Hoe. Our international partners and collaborators have

continued to maintain our unique network providing a base for creative ideas, projects and organisational support. I would like to pay tribute to all partners and collaborators especially Mr Won Young-Oh of Theatre Nettle (South Korea), Agung Gunawan of Surya Kencana (Indonesia), Mr Duong Le Quy of LeQuyDuong Company (Vietnam), Andrew Ching of Melaka Arts and Performance Festival (Malaysia), and Aubrey Mellor, LaSalles College of the Arts (Singapore).

I hope TYC will provide platforms for unique works from artists Australian and Asian alike and continue to encourage and inspire innovative streams of consciousness.

Tony Yap
Artistic Director



SINGAPORE
Feb 2009
Past Caring
TYC collaboration with
The Necessary Stage

Our Vision and Goals

Vision:

Position Tony Yap Company as the leading creative force in contemporary Australian/Asian Dance practice

Goals:

- > A **flexible organisational structure** that will ensure the long-term creative and financial viability of the Company. We create work that is unique in that it allows evolution: we are constantly looking for a structure that allows spontaneity within structure, work that is always fresh and current and still within the original artistic framework.
- > **Financial viability** of the Company established by 2011. The unique artistic language that we have created makes us effective ambassadors for the Australian Asian experience. We aim to be financially viable as a touring company.
- > **New work** which positions the Company as a leading creative force in Australian/Asian contemporary dance practice. We want to foster and continue artistic and creative collaborations in the Asian region and to profile Asian Arts in an international context.
- > A **creative laboratory** environment which experiments in new methodology and cross-cultural art forms working with bilateral collaborating partnerships. Our new direction for physical dance practice transforms ancient shamanistic practice into a post-modern medium. To create a multi-modal form that is intrinsically international in its artistic language.
- > **New audiences** from all multicultural backgrounds who appreciate challenging contemporary Asian Arts. We want to foster and continue artistic and creative collaborations in the Asian region and to profile Asian Arts in an international context.



AUSTRALIA / MELBOURNE
 March 2009
EDGE
 Rooftop PULSE project

Our Streams

TYC's artistic output consists of four, inter-related streams of activity which were identified and formalised through the Company Development project in 2009. They are summarised below.

Stream 1

Virtual Temple

A series of productions developed in collaboration between: dancer/director Tony Yap, musicians/composers Tim Humphrey and Madeleine Flynn, visual artist Naomi Ota. These projects are interdisciplinary in their conception, development and production and have been staged in Australia and internationally since 2004. This long-term collaborative process deeply investigates the relationship between the movement, music composition and visual installation.

Stream 2

Melbourne Filament

Melbourne Filament is an ongoing choreographic laboratory and long-term creative development process. Collaborative research and mentoring contributes to the ongoing evolution of TYC's distinctive dance theatre language. There are eleven founding members of Melbourne Filament, all independent artists in their own right.

Stream 3

Workshops

Workshops and masterclasses led by Tony Yap, nationally and internationally.

Stream 4

Collaborations

Tony Yap's collaborative projects with a range of artists, including long-term collaborators Yumi Umiumare (Australia), Agung Gunawan (Indonesia), Won Young-oh (Korea), Duong Le Quy (Vietnam) and Andrew Ching (Malaysia). Where funding has been sourced by the other party, TYC identifies these projects as TYC partnerships.



A Palimpsest

Pic: Jave Lee

Virtual Temple

This is a series of productions developed in collaboration with artists; director/dancer Tony Yap, musicians/composers Tim Humphrey and Madeleine Flynn and visual artist Naomi Ota. These projects are interdisciplinary in their conception, development and production and in 2009 the Virtual Temple stream presented an integrated show of ***Buddha Body Series: Melakgkori***. *Buddha Body Series* draw on issues of trance, migration and identity as well as the language of 'emptiness' and 'fulfilment' in spirituality. It is a transposition of a language out of its original religious context and into a contemporary dance and theatrical context; creating a poem of what still reigns true and mythic in a complex era of metanarratives.

The cross-cultural and cross medium practice has been very successful. The music, choreographic and visual installation relationship has developed into one where each artist has an intimate understanding of each other's medium. The six years of practice as an ensemble and collaborative work in many different local and international context have built this deep understanding.

The placements of musicians, installation, the media projections and performer provided a spatial experiment for audience to roam through the site before the performance begun. The audience felt an intimate relationship to the elements and as though in a sacred space they were open to very personal inner and deeper realms of interpretations. The audience were particularly impressed with intimacy as summarised by a comment of a super-natural experience by Peter Eskersal. "like a Japanese temple garden that gives deep feelings of nature but it's absolutely man made. Each mediums (dance/visual/music) had a strong character and originality, and not focusing on creating a typical beautiful 'Asian' harmony made it an interesting contemporary exploration.

Even though all the different artistic mediums provided individual investigations from their traditional backgrounds, the outcome was contemporary and successfully integrated. The artists have in common the thematic focus. Their interpretations have a very close understanding of each others mediums.

Melancholic in its beginnings, this first series of the ***Buddha Body Series*** was highly poetic. The audience expressed individual emotions and narratives from the event. The meanings were universal, crossing the boundaries of culture and differences in background. This is one of the more successful areas as the concept was strong within each mediums exploring within the perimeters of their individual form to new grounds.

The media work by Bambang Nucharyadi had a space all of its own with the integration of Naomi Ota's sculptural link to the inner space of the performance as well as the soundscape created by Tim Humphrey and Madeleine Flynn through the environmental feed of the space and audience through numerous hidden computers. One area that we would have liked to explore further is the relationship of the video work to the dance performance of Tony.

AUSTRALIA / MELBOURNE
May 2009

Buddha Body Series 1
Melangkori



Melbourne
Aug 2009

The Buddha My Body: A Palimpsest
fortydownstairs Melbourne
with Nettle Theatre & Surya Kencana

Although the video media art prepared the audience with a poetic introduction of its own to the evening's whole experience. The audience were firstly prepared in this stage for the linking meanings in the inner space of the performance. This is a new discovery and will present an unexpected inquiry for the second or third series.

Greater understanding of the different mediums in the work will tighten their intimate relationship in future. The video media art is relative a new addition to the along-term collaborative team. More time and will be needed in future for experimentations.

2010 will see the second of the series in ***Buddha Body Series: Rasa Sayang*** to be performed at fortyfivedownstairs, Melbourne as a major solo in April 2010.



CHINA / SHANGHAI
May/June 2009

Project 2222
Shanghai Interantional
Experimental Festival
Director Duong Le Quy





MELAKA FESTIVAL
Nov 2009

*Budak Melaka
Eulogy for the Living
Sen Siao*

Melbourne Filament

– Choreographic Laboratory

TYC's distinguishing choreographic language continues in its evolution. TYC remains committed to the exploration and creation of an individual dance theatre language that is informed by psycho-physical research, Asian shamanistic trance dance, Butoh, voice and visual design. To date, workshops and classes are held twice a week on Saturdays and Wednesdays. Eleven long-term participating artists are part of this laboratory for exploration and investigation.

We are looking at the forming of a performance work primarily through a long process of laboratory work as oppose to an idea-initiated outcome. This approach is the reflection of long-term and skilled collaborators seeking new grounds.

Every year the company produce a platform for independent artists with affiliation to the company's continuing choreographic processes and vision in a **Beyond Butoh Festival, BBO# Series**. In 2009 this platform extended to an international tour in **Melaka Arts and Performance (MAP) Festival, Malaysia**. TYC presented ***Eulogy for the Living*** as a showcase of Australia's diverse and innovative dance practice.

> Workshops/Classes

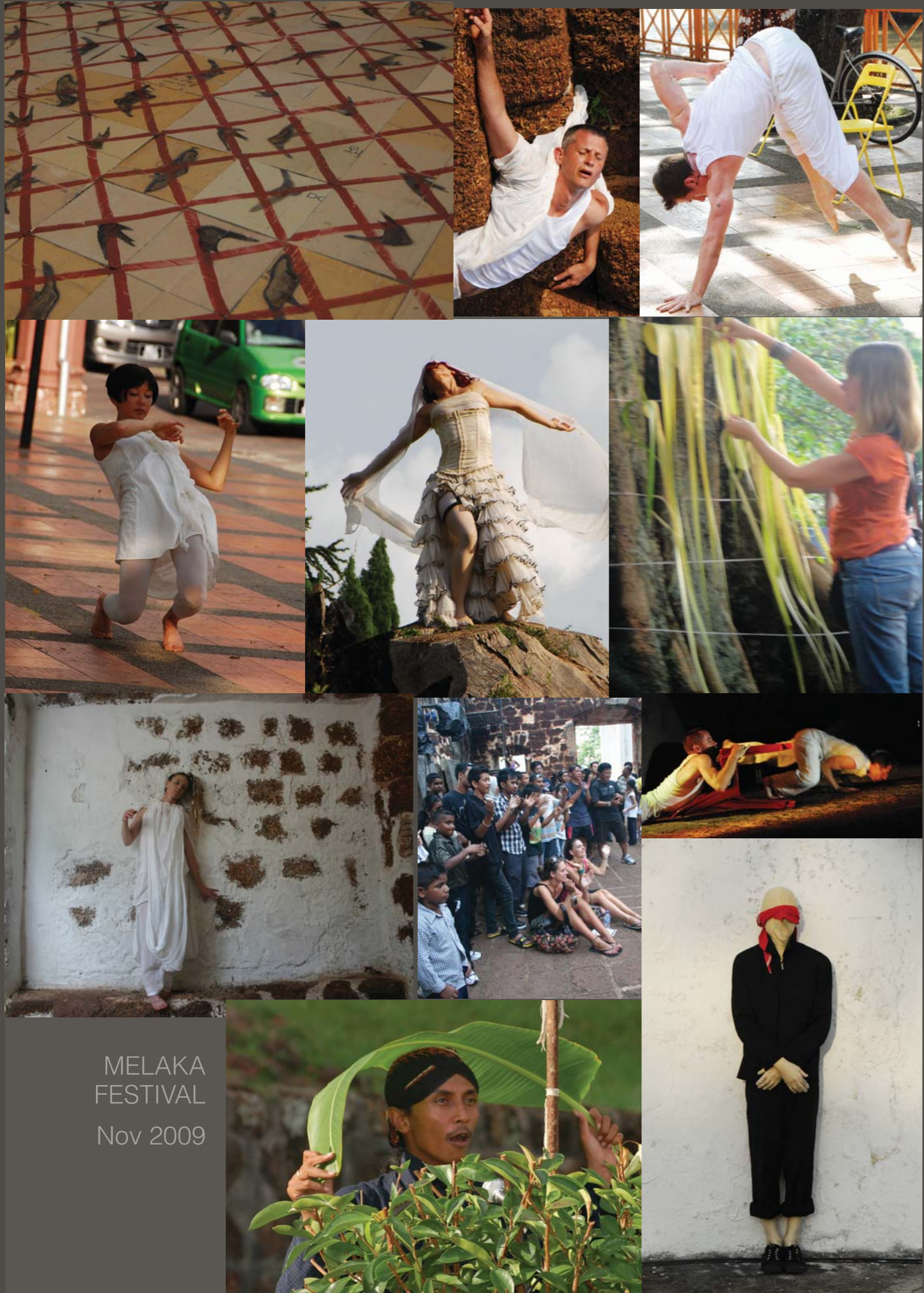
> 2 x a week ongoing classes/ workshops – Incorporating training, experimentation, improvisation and performance making.

> O/Seas Workshops

> Ho Chi Minh City, **Vietnam** – Lequydoung Company, run workshops and rehearsals for ***Project 2222***.
> Shanghai, **China** – Run workshops and showing of ***Project 2222*** with Vietnamese performers.

> Others

> ***Eulogy for the Living***; Melaka festival, Malaysia (Janette Hoe, Geraldine Money, Daniel Mounsey, Brendan O'Connor, Adam Forbes, Matthew Gingold, Mariella Laratro, Yoka Jones, Naomi Ota)
> ***Full-moon series***; (TYC workshop/class members)
> ***Silenzio***; Cultural Intersections (Domenico de Clario, Lella Cariddi. Janette Hoe, Mark Mitchinson) > It's all I ever want to do; (Domenico de Clario, Lella Cariddi. Janette Hoe, Mark Mitchinson)



MELAKA
FESTIVAL
Nov 2009

International Collaborations

> **Melaka Art and Performance (MAP) Festival** – Melaka, Tony's birthplace, launched its first art festival. **MAP festival** took place on November 27-29, 2009, and will be an annual event thereafter and has the backing of the Malaysian Federal Ministry of Culture and the Melaka Chief Minister. The festival was sited at various points around the city, with central sites being the historical St Paul's Hill.

TYC had a role to bring Australian and Asian artists and performers together for cultural exchanges and presentations of innovative works. Melaka will be a hub for small scale collaborative works, residencies and present the region's independent artists and performers with a platform for creative activities. TYC will continue to have major creative roles in the future of this festival.

TYC also presented **Budak Melaka** (a performance with Agung Gunawan and TYC's Virtual Temple team), **Sen Siao** (dance film with Tony Yap and Agung Gunawan by acclaimed filmmaker Sean O'Brien). TYC, together with MAV, is a major partner of MAP Festival and in 2009 provided creative directions, expertise and brought over 20 Australian artists in contribution to the festival site-specific sites and its major artistic program. This year TYC continues with this creative connection with growing vision for intercultural exchanges, workshops, forums and collaborations. (see www.melakafestival.com)

> **A Palimpsest** had a sellout Melbourne season in August 2009.

This project engaged three companies, Notthle Theatre from Sth Korea, Surya Kencana from Indonesia and TYC of Australia in an interdisciplinary collaborative work. The form of the work is hybrid: physical theatre with Korean text: traditional Javanese dance and song: contemporary electroacoustic and contemporary classical music with sound recordings from Yogyakarta, and Munmak, Sth Korea: contemporary lighting design from Sth Korea.

"... The artists in the performance Lee Jee-Hyun, Agung Gunawan, Lim So-Young, Lee Eun-A, Yun Sang-Don, Eom Ju-Young and Tony Yap demonstrated remarkable technical finesse and extraordinary talent. The lean and sinewy Agung Gunawan... was captivating as he contorted into beautiful shapes with an embodied intensity. Tony Yap exuded excellent mastery and control in his dance; from playing a man in mourning, to a baby in and out of the womb, Yap was a mesmerizing dancer. As an ensemble, the performers' relationship to the space and one another was cohesive, energetic and magnetic, and there was a sense of profound intimacy in the performance space. The ensemble as a whole moved with a subtlety and intensity which was breathtaking, while the performance itself unraveled with moments of alarming beauty and penetrating insight..." – Lian Low & Raina Peterson, ArtsHub

A Palimpsest had the involvement of the local Korean and Indonesian community, providing food, hospitality and photography, translations, guide for the visiting artists and Korean food. This has been both a creative achievement in international collaboration as well as community involvement.

> **Past Caring** – At the beginning of 2009 TYC in collaboration with The Necessary Stage, presented in Singapore, **Past Caring**. The premiere of **Past Caring** was presented as inter-cultural and interdisciplinary, non-linear with multilayered narratives. The impact of the mixed-mediums collaborations was successful despite not having all the artists (musicians and media artist) present in Singapore.

This is because of the high level of skill of the musicians, including understanding complex situation and the flexibility of their sophisticated musical mediums. The abstract images by Kim Lawler presented a unique poetry of landscapes both from the physical beauty to the metaphoric meanings. Actors Le Roy Parsons and Glynis Angell, and dancer, Tony Yap brought a rich process to the rehearsals, challenging and experimenting and in the end, finding the elasticity of cross-cultural, cross-mediums collaboration. The impact was powerful and drew very positive responses from reviewers and the audience.

"Powerful performance from Innovative mix" – Amanda De Guzman, The Business Times (Singapore)

"Tony Yap glides across the stage ... (I) eventually gave in to its charms – a parallel shadowy movement trailing every episodic moment in the piece." – Mayo Martin, Today (Singapore)



Tony Yap Company has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Photographers

> Damien Vincenzi > Suen Kar Nee > Martin Renaud > The Necessary Stage > Naomi Ota