



10th edition

A photograph of a shirtless male dancer wearing a black beanie, in a crouching pose on a light-colored floor. He is looking upwards and to the right. The lighting is dramatic, casting a long shadow on the floor.

OFF STAGE

16 & 17 JULY 2019 | 8PM
T.H.E DANCE COMPANY STUDIO

Message from Festival Director, *Kuik Swee Boon*

一个舞蹈节最重要的是什么？

在我们庆祝十周年的这个重要时刻里，我忍不住想要问这个问题。十年里，我们的社会大众有更认可当代舞提倡的多元和开放精神吗？对于不同的声音或个体的特殊性是否更懂得尊重与包容？

十年间，我们有培养出懂得分辨娱乐或艺术的差别，具有个人独立见解的当代舞忠实观众吗？这些人在我们做的不够好时能温馨提醒，在需要的时候甚至亲身参与进程？

十年中，当我们坚定地支持那些坚持着同样理想的同行，我们有培养出新一代新锐的新血吗？十年很长，也很短。

我们有做到精彩新颖、大胆且具启发性？在地、普及、改变生活的质量？当我们开始强调具有互动性的思辨空间，我们是否培育了一股改进思维态度行为的力量？

在十周年温旧知新里，我们很开心兴奋；我们也很理智地察觉，我们(和你)，可以做的需要做的还可以更多，更棒。

谢谢所有现在或过去一起努力付出的同事，一直支持我们的朋友和机构。特别是M1，滨海艺术中心和艺理会。要感激的人总是很多，就让我们把他们放在心里，除了谢谢还是谢谢。也让我们在庆祝中开始反思，同时期待更多人能肯定我们的工作，以他们舒服的方式支持我们！

What is the most crucial role of a dance festival?

As we gear up to celebrate the 10th edition of M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival and mark this decadal milestone, I find myself increasingly occupied with this question.

In these 10 years, has our society at large grown in the appreciation for the diversity and openness that contemporary dance champions? Are we more aware of the different opinions that can coexist and the unique characteristics that define us as individuals? More importantly, have we learnt to respect and embrace these differences?

Over the span of 10 years, have we nurtured an audience who can distinguish between dance as an art form and dance produced for entertainment? Do we have an ardent audience who can express their points of view and have developed their own distinct preferences?

When we face times of failed artistic risks or creative low tides, will these people stand by us and offer well-meaning, but critical advice? In times of need, will our audience personally partake in the laborious process of rebuilding, restarting, or even venturing into uncharted territory?

We have spent 10 years developing the contemporary dance scene and extending our resources to fellow artists whose visions and beliefs we share. In this time, have we done enough to cultivate a new generation of emergent talent?

10 years is a long time, but it also feels like it has passed in the blink of an eye.

Have we succeeded in our goal of producing innovative work that pushes boundaries, sparks excitement and inspires? Locally, have we created high-caliber work that stays relevant, has the ability to connect with the man-on-the-street, and spurs us to pursue a better quality of life?

As we begin to place more emphasis on the need to engage in discourse and carve out space for deeper contemplation, have we harnessed the strength to evoke positive changes in mindsets, attitudes and behaviours?

Marking a decadal milestone inevitably brings about a warm glow of nostalgia as we celebrate past achievements, take heart in seeing familiar faces, and welcome new friends into our community. Yet, amidst our joy and excitement, we also find ourselves in a sobering moment at this juncture - to thoughtfully ponder over how we (and you) can – and must – do more, and do it better.

Our heartfelt thanks to every colleague, past and present, who has contributed in various significant ways, and to our long-time friends and supporters, in particular - M1, Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, and the National Arts Council. We are indebted to countless people, all of whom we hold dear to our heart; for them, there can never be enough thank-you's to convey our gratitude.

About the Platform

Off Stage is a no-holds-barred, intimate studio showcase of new works-in-progress by local and regional dance artists.

Shifting the focus away from the finished product, Off Stage invites you to share in the artists' creative journey, and to respond and critique their works in a session of performance and live discussion. You'll also get to exchange views with international festival directors and programmers in attendance.

About the Festival

"M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival has become a staple of the Singapore dance scene, and aims to dispel the myth of incomprehensibility while presenting quality international and regional works and championing new local artists."

- Bakchormeeboy, 2018

Fondly known as "CONTACT" to the local dance community, M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival began in 2010 to promote contemporary dance in Singapore. Since then, it has become an annual pillar event that brings growth to the local dance scene.

Helmed by T.H.E Dance Company's Artistic Director, Kuik Swee Boon, this artist-led Festival pursues an attitude of openness where every individual's point of view is valued. In recent years, it has gradually allowed different voices to enter and shape its programmes.

Luna(s)

Choreography Zunnur Zhafirah

Performance Lyn Hanis
Chloe Chotrani

Archiver, Rehearsal
Assistant & Costume Sarah Sim

Music *Marea Negra* by Bachar Mar-Khalifé
The Predator by Nikolaj Bjerre
Ismail Oro by Kocni Orkestar
Purnama by Max Lane

Translation of *Marea Negra* used in *Luna(s)*:

There are no parachutes that
resist the fall,
The battle is lost,
There's no going back, you told me,
You turned around and fled....

Luna(s) Manifesto

May we always have the openness to gaze intimately within
and our truest of truth through others

May we always use this gaze as timeless portals of reflection
May we always observe the complex honesty of the ego;
the claws that kill and soft magical layer that protects
May we always be attached to nothing and connected to everything

May we always allow the soft eye(s) to observe and gaze without
judgement

May we always listen to the chanting that sits in our guts

May we always trust and ride the fluid Luna energy

May we always have the gift to be on the inner quest
to see fearlessly and be naked again

May we liberate ourselves

Exploring the tantra method of soul gazing to approach intimacy,
honesty, trust and letting go of the ego; getting to the truth of the soul
that takes you from the guts.

Choreographer's Notes:

Big hugs to P7:1SMA for the love, warmth and embracing me with open
arms. Being able to undergo this magical process in your studio space
has been a big blessing. To all the lovely souls that have been part of
my journey be it with *Luna(s)* or not, you know who you are. This goes
out to my soul family, may we always seek deeper within. Of course to
my *Luna(s)* ladies, this would not have happened without your wisdom,
power and dedication. So much appreciation to life.

Zunnur Zhafirah, a dance artist currently with the Hofesh Shechter Company, is a graduate from London Contemporary Dance School and also a recipient of the National Arts Council Scholarship (Singapore), and Leverhulme Trust (UK).

Zhafirah started her dance training in Malay Dance at a young age with Sri Warisan Som Said Performing Arts Ltd, under the tutelage of Cultural Medallion Mdm Som Said. She was part of the pioneer batch at School of the Arts Singapore and danced with T.H.E Second Company. In the UK, she performed in several projects with Punchdrunk, RUBBERBAN Dance (Canada), Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Ignition Dance Festival, Just Us Dance Theatre, Richard Alston Dance Company, East Wall and Shechter Underground.

She is also an Associate Artist with the Bhumi Collective, a company that actively produces works locally & internationally.



Zunnur Zhafirah
(Singapore)

Lyn Hanis is no stranger to the performing arts; specialising in choreography, traditional and modern Asian contemporary dance.

Hanis started her involvement in dance at the age of 13. Traditional Malay dance was her Co-Curricular Activity at Teck Whye Secondary School, where she trained under dance instructor Fathurahman Said.

Hanis decided to pursue a professional education in the performing arts, and enrolled into Jakarta Institute of the Arts for a Bachelor's degree in performing arts in July 2011. She sharpened her skills and explored different genres through the numerous experiences, masterclasses and productions in her 6 years of study, graduating in December 2017.

Hanis is currently exploring choreography in both Asian traditional and modern contemporary pieces. She strives to fuse different elements of old and new to achieve an originality and style that portrays Singapore's evolving community. She hopes that more millennial youths will be eager to immerse themselves in the artistic form.



Lyn Hanis
(Singapore)

Chloe Calderon Chotrani is a movement artist from Manila and based in Singapore. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art from the School of Oriental and African Studies (London). She has performed and trained internationally with Romançon Dance Company (Manila), B Supreme (London), Ecole Des Sables (Senegal), Omi International Dance Collective (Hudson), Evidence/Ronald Brown Dance Community (New York), Movement Research (New York), and Gati Dance Forum (New Delhi).

Currently, she performs for local dance companies P7:1SMA and Chowk that work in between the space of both traditional and contemporary; she is also an associate artist with Dance Nucleus.

When she's not dancing or writing, she is immersed with nature.



Chloe Chotrani
(Philippines/Singapore)

Photo by (top, bottom) Derrick-Siu, Edmond Terakopian

HOMESICK

Choreography Michelle Lim

Performance Maybelle Lek
Charlene Clyde

Rehearsal Assistant Sarah Sim

Music *Wings of Glass* by La Reve
4(E+D)4(ER=EPR) by William Basinski

Spoken Text:
Find Me by Forest Blakk, recorded and spoken by Michelle Lim.

I grew up in a mixed race household, with family members in Singapore, the Philippines, and America. My identity and my sense of home has been challenged ever since I was young. After spending more than 5 years abroad in New York, I began to notice an increasing sense of alienation from my home country with each visit I made. That, coupled with the culture of moving from one rental space to the next (I moved 8 times in the past 5 years), began to change my sense of home from a physical place to an emotional one.

The struggle to define home is not something I am alone in. Refugees, immigrants, broken families, the end of relationships, death, fires. We instill "home" in physical places, in memories, and in people. All of which are more than temporary, all of which have the risk of being lost. To many, including myself, it can be this crippling place of liminality. It is almost a sickness.

HOMESICK aims to explore the idea of home and where we derive that sense of belonging. By tapping into my collaborators' experiences, the piece looks to establish familiar spaces, challenging them, reconfiguring them, and seeing how the individual navigates these.

Michelle would like to thank Attitude Performing Arts for their generosity in providing a space for the creation of *HOMESICK*.

Photo by Malcolm Fu

Michelle Lim is a multidisciplinary creative, specialising in contemporary dance for stage and film. Lim was the first Singaporean dancer in The Juilliard School in New York City, where she graduated in 2017.

She has trained with Springboard Danse Montréal, AXIS Connect, the Movement Invention Project, and BODYTRAFFIC. She has performed works by Jose Limon, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Mark Morris, Takehiro Ueyama, Matthew Neenan, Loni Landon, Zvi Gotheiner, Roy Assaf, Peter Chu, Andrea Pena, Young Soon Kim, Brandon Coleman and Christian Denice, across venues in the United States, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and multiple digital platforms. Lim has also taken on roles beyond the stage, as Assistant Director and Dance Captain for the Off- Broadway production of *COMFORT WOMEN: A New Musical*. She is also Assistant Choreographer to Tony-Award winner and original *A Chorus Line* star, Baayork Lee.

As a choreographer, Lim is passionate about exploring the complexities of human experiences: psychology, intimacy, and culture.

Lim is currently creating and presenting her work under MVL + Artists. She has presented her work in the DUMBO Dance Festival and SoloDuo Festival in New York City.



Michelle Lim
(Singapore)



Charlene Clyde
(Singapore)

Charlene Clyde started her dance training at the age of 3 with Attitude Performing Arts Studio. She joined the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) Diploma in Dance Programme in 2015 and is a recipient of the NAFA scholarship for 2017. Clyde is a versatile dancer and has performed many works for Esplanade *da:ns* festival – *The Third Space* (2016) & *The Next Generation* (2017) and *CROSSINGS* (2016, 2018) with NAFA. She has been active in the competitive dance scene since young and has won numerous awards in various dance competitions locally and abroad. Most recently, Clyde attended dance intensives at Batsheva Dance Company (Israel) in 2018, and East point West Interdisciplinary Festival of Embodiment in 2018.



Maybelle Lek
(Singapore)

First dipping into dance at age 6, Maybelle Lek entered pre-tertiary education at SOTA before pursuing full-time vocational training at Rambert School (UK) and Northern School of Contemporary Dance (UK). A recipient of the Linbury Trust Bursary Award, Lek graduated in November 2017 with a Master's Degree with Distinction. Working with a range of local and international choreographers, she has performed professionally with Moving Visions Dance Theatre, Rambert Dance Company and VERVE on local and international stages. She joined T.H.E Second Company as an Apprentice in August 2018. Outside of performance, Lek has multi-faceted experience in teaching, choreographing, music and inter-arts collaborations.

H A S E R

Choreography Syimah Sabtu

Performance Syimah Sabtu
Syarifuddin Sahari
Jonit On

H A S E R explores the duality of being, which recognises silence in strength.

Choreographer's Message:

I am exploring different methods to access relatable elements nested in our bodies, such as gender and sexuality. I feel a need to question the necessary, and possibilities regarding challenging societal norms and the co-existence of femininity and masculinity. Therefore *H A S E R* speaks a lot about what happens to the body internally and externally.

I would like to thank Jonit On, Sharul Mohd and Syarifuddin Sahari for their commitment to this work, family and friends for their support and love, M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival and The Human Expression (T.H.E) Dance Company for the opportunity to share in this platform. Most importantly, thank you, P7:1SMA family, for the mentorship, studio space and encouragement!

This work is incubated in Catalyst, a creation programme by P7:1SMA, where the presence of hope for growth, and the embracing of failures is shared. (www.p71sma.com)

Thank you to all of you! The audience.

This work will be presented at the Dance Bridge Festival in Kolkata, India, this August. Do share your thoughts and feedback with us!

Photo by Malcolm Fu

Syimah Sabtu holds a Diploma in Dance from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA, 2018), and a Diploma in Theatre and Arts Management from Republic Polytechnic.

During her time in NAFA, Sabtu was exposed to choreography and found her natural inclination towards it. She has choreographed a few works, with *EMOH TON SI EMOH*, a piece that explores masculinity and femininity, being the most recent. In her years of dance, she has worked with choreographers such as Norhaizad Adam, Lee Mun Wai, Noramin Farid and Lim Fei Shen.

In August 2018, Sabtu participated in the Gaga Summer Intensive with Batsheva Dance Company in Tel Aviv, Israel. She is currently an Apprentice Project Artist with P7:1SMA Ltd., a local dance company in Singapore.

She has been awarded the Arts & Cultural Award by Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan in 2016 & 2017, and the Merit Award by Tan Chin Tuan Foundation in 2018.



Syimah Sabtu
(Singapore)

Syarifuddin Sahari

(Singapore)

Syarifuddin believes that dance as movement is a universal language that deserves equal recognition regardless of form and genre.

He is in search of different ways to move and communicate in our physical realm. Actively observing inclinations towards intrigue and wonder, he negotiates his existence through the dichotomy of his actions and impulses.

He is currently exploring the relationship between sound and movement. Deriving his movements from street dance and mainly practising Hip Hop, House, Dancehall & African.



Jonit On

(Singapore)

Jonit On started her formal dance training at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and graduated in 2017.

During her time there, she discovered her interest in contemporary dance and improvisational techniques. In the summer of 2017, she took part in Batsheva Dance Company's Gaga Intensive in Tel Aviv.

On wishes to continue learning, exploring and hopes to share her knowledge and passion for movement.



SILA

Exploring my ritual culture that connects the body with God.

Choreography/Performance

Moh Hariyanto



Moh Hariyanto or Hari Ghulur, is a dance artist from Madura island who domiciles in Surabaya, Indonesia. Hariyanto is a lecturer at the Wilwatikta College of Arts (STKW) Indonesia and a founder of Sawung Dance Studio.

In his repertoire of works, Hariyanto created *Ghulur*, which has performed at Bozar Studio, Brussels, and Belgium at the Europalia Festival, Salihara Hela Tari Festival, M1 CONTACT Festival, Singapore, Choreo Lab Jakarta Arts Council, Indonesian Dance Festival, China and Malaysia.

Other places that Hariyanto has performed and visited include Europalia Festival (Rosas School) in Belgium, Kaki Seni Art Exchange in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Choreo Lab Jakarta Arts Council and Indonesian Dance Festival.

In July 2018, Hariyanto attended the American Dance Festival's International Choreography Residency (ICR) in Durham, North Carolina, United States. He participated in the festival with artists such as Sukarji Sriman (Indonesia), Rianto (Indonesia), Suprpto Suryodarmo, Hanafi Muhammad, Kuku (Taiwan), Carlos Gracia Esteves (Spain), Park J Chun (South Korea), and Arco Renz (Belgium).

Moh Hariyanto

(Indonesia)



An Interview

with Michelle Lim, Zunnur Zhafirah, and Syimah Sabtu



A CONVERSATION WITH LOCAL OFF STAGE ARTISTS

We managed to catch up with these three artists from Off Stage!

Syimah Sabtu (Choreographer/Performer - *H A S E R*), Zunnur Zhafirah (Choreographer - *Luna(s)*), and Michelle Lim (Choreographer - *H O M E S I C K*) share their experiences as choreographers and performers, how experience shapes their work, and what it means to be a choreographer in Singapore.

Tap the image or visit bit.ly/OffStageinterview to watch the video!

*T.H.E Dance Company and M1 CONTACT Festival will not be held liable for any additional data charges from the viewing of this video on mobile data.

Upcoming Events

MI OPEN STAGE
18 JULY 2019 | 8PM (PROGRAMME A)
~~20 JULY 2019 | 3PM (PROGRAMME B)~~
20 JULY 2019 | 8PM (PROGRAMME C)
ESPLANADE ANNEXE STUDIO

MR. SIGN
19 JULY 2019 | 8PM **SOLD OUT**
ESPLANADE THEATRE STUDIO

*Limited tickets are now on sale for Mr. Sign's performances on 16 & 17 July (3pm), 18 July (5pm).
Click here or head to our Front-of-House for more info!

Decoding Contemporary Dance

Abstract. Emotional. Emotionless. Thought provoking. Open to interpretation. So you think you can't understand contemporary dance.

In this casual afternoon tea session, be prepared to let your hair down and share your rawest, honest thoughts about what you've watched, observed and experienced throughout the 10th edition of our Festival. Gain insights from our Festival team and guests as we decode ways to appreciate the art form, and discuss its relevance to our daily lives.

All are welcome.

*You must have watched at least one show in our Festival to participate in this conversation.



Sunday, 21 July, 2:30PM – 3:30PM
Ginett Restaurant and Wine Bar, Hotel G.

Tap here or visit our website to reserve a slot

Festival Team

Board of Directors	Jobina Tan, Foo Yuet Min, Kuik Swee Boon, Lee Biyi, Lee Chor Lin, Jason Chia	Production Stage Manager	Henrik Cheng
		Festival Interns	Malcolm Fu, Danielle Marie
T.H.E Artistic Director & Festival Director	Kuik Swee Boon	Blog Writer & Copywriter	Adeline Loh
T.H.E Associate Artistic Director	Silvia Yong	Videographer	Malcolm Fu
T.H.E Company Manager	Jael Chew	Photographers	Kuang Jingkai, Malcolm Fu
Festival Manager	Athelyna Swee		
T.H.E Ticketing & Operations Manager	Lee Loo Yen		
T.H.E Marketing & Publicity Executive	Gina Tai		

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Mr Lim Peng Hor and Mr Lim Peng Chuan for their kind donation, as well as to all our volunteers for their time and dedication.

If you'd like to support our causes by contributing financially, please visit www.the-contact.org/donate for more details. As a charity with IPC Status, all cash donations are entitled to 250% tax deduction.

Festival Presenter



Festival Title Acknowledgement



Supported by



Official Privilege Card



Official Credit Card



Official Dance Wear



Official Secretarial Services



“M1 is extremely proud to present the 10th edition of the M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival.”



Rehearsal of H A S E R by Syimah Sabtu, photo by Malcolm Fu.


“We are glad that our sustained support has helped in growing this Festival, as well as the contemporary dance scene in Singapore.”

- Mr Ivan Lim, Director, Corporate Communications, M1 Limited.





Thank you for joining us at this Festival programme!
Please scan or click the QR code to give us your valuable feedback.

tinyurl.com/offstage2019

 the-contact.org

 [@TheHumanExpression.Contact](https://www.facebook.com/TheHumanExpression.Contact)  [@M1CONTACTFestival](https://www.instagram.com/M1CONTACTFestival)

 info@the-dancecompany.com

 +65 6345 8454

90 Goodman Road, Goodman Arts Centre, Block M #01 - 51, Singapore 439053.

T.H.E Dance Company is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020. UEN: 200818017E.