

Beat: Arts

Ministry of Culture - Republic of China - Taiwan

Edinburgh Reception

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USPA NEWS - Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan) and Performance Infinity present: The Taiwan Season - The first season of Taiwanese work at the Fringe, showcasing a diverse range of contemporary dance from the five of the country's most exciting emerging companies.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Various Venues, 1st to 24th August 2014

Taiwan's Ministry of Culture proudly presents the inaugural Taiwan Season. This spectacular showcase of Taiwan's performing arts will offer a diverse spectrum of contemporary dance, physical theatre and music, with radical new interpretations of the country's aboriginal culture by five of its hottest companies, now emerging onto the international stage.

Feng Dance Theatre's Kid Box integrates interactive digital effects with elegant choreography, creating innovative and moving dance works. The Grammy and American Independent Music Award nominated Ten Drum Art Percussion Group has rocked audiences from Sydney to Avignon with Impression of Taiwan, a mind-blowing work of percussive art. Jade and Artists Dance Troupe's Eggs of Blessings explores the tensions between Eastern aesthetics and the narrative techniques of the West to form intensely dramatic dance productions that have toured Europe and South America to critical success.

The Langasan Theatre's Misa-

Lisin presents the profound artistic traditions of Taiwan's Amis tribe, with ancient songs, choreography, and rituals that bring their intriguing culture vividly to life. Tjimur Dance Theatre's Kurakuraw Dance Glass Bead invents new creative possibilities for aboriginal dance, expressing the spirit of the "Paiwan" tribe in a technically stunning and thematically innovative production.

Taiwan's Ministry of Culture has been serving as a major public sponsor to theatre companies in Taiwan since its antecedent organisation the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) was established in November 1981. In May 2012, the CCA was restructured and upgraded to the Ministry of Culture, with a vision to create more opportunities for Taiwan-based artists and groups to showcase work to a global audience. Establishing a UK presence for the first time at London 2012, last year a record 9 Taiwanese companies and individuals staged their shows in the Fringe, with support from the MoC.

To better support the journey of small and medium sized theatre companies on the international stage, the MoC has initiated its first Taiwan Season to make a full festival run at the world's largest arts platform. Kid Box Summerhall (Main Hall) 1pm (1.45pm), 1-24 Aug (not 4, 11, 18) Feng Dance Theatre, this double bill of two short works starts with Kid, exploring the complex relationships between mother and child through light and shadow with extraordinary movement and combination of noises, sounds and melodies to challenge and potentially manipulate the audience's auditory perception.

The Feng Dance Theatre has been exploring the possibilities of dance as an art form since 2005, with each production executed in a cross-disciplinary manner, assembling an elite group of artists from varying backgrounds. Misa-Lisin Summerhall (Old Lab) 5.20pm (6.05pm), 1-24 Aug (not 4, 11, 18) Langasan Theatre, Langasan Theatre derives its name from a mountain in Hualien (on the West coast of Taiwan) called Cilangasan mountain, that legendarily contains the treasures of fables and tales of Cilangasan clan.

Langasan Theatre's founder Adaw Palaf is a senior aboriginal performer in Taiwan, and the company's work incorporates mixes of dancing, singing and story-telling, interpreting an aboriginal culture with concepts of modern live performance in order to keep it alive. Misa-Lisin means "ceremonies in all seasons", and the work is informed and inspired by collective recollections, the power of humanity and the notion of "motherland".

impression of Taiwan Venue150@EICC 5pm / 6pm / 6.30pm (45 mins) 1-24 Aug (not 11, 18, 20)

Ten Drum Art Percussion Group With an album, Island of Drums nominated for the 52nd Grammy Awards (2010) in the Traditional World Music category, Ten Drum Art Percussion present an epic scene of humanity, culture and the countryside, with a powerful drum part bringing natural energy into their signature performance. Founder and composer Hsieh Shih began playing the drums at the age of three, and Ten Drum Art Percussion Group was established in 2000 with the aim of capturing local Taiwanese culture and to train future percussionists. The word “Ten” in the group’s name represents the generating powers from all directions that combine to form unity.

The mind-blowing percussive art rocked audiences at the Sydney Olympics, the Vancouver Cultural Olympiad, the 2002 FIFA World Cup, the Shanghai World Expo, the Festival d’Avignon, and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. Kurakuraw Dance Glass Bead Dance Base (Studio 3) 6.30pm (7.15pm), 1-24 Aug (not 4, 11, 18)

Tjimur Dance Theatre This work is a narrative of the kurakuraw Paiwan (an aboriginal group of Taiwan) bead legend, combining traditional Paiwan music with contemporary dance to create a means by which to illustrate a new style of traditional and modern Paiwan dance, blending tradition and innovation.

Tjimur Dance Theatre is named after a village in Pingtung county of Southern Taiwan, and their works draw inspiration from tribespeople, myths and legends to commemorate and appreciate the village’s traditional culture and heritage through vivid stage performance. The performance considers the ancient relationship between glass beads and Paiwan society: the beads are of great importance to the Paiwan, considered heirlooms and used in engagement and marriage.

In traditional Paiwan society only the nobility were able to have glass beads, which were a symbol of status: each bead is of a different color and pattern, with each passing on a different legend and given name, making the beads sacred. This work is a narrative of the “kurakuraw” glass bead. Legend has it that a magnificent peacock, kurakuraw, flew down from the sky in a quest to find a suitable wife. After numerous trials, kurakuraw received the girl’s parents’ approval; a kurakuraw bracelet and necklace were the dowry and the two were wedded with the blessings of the heavens.

Eggs of Blessings Dance Base (Studio 3) 8pm (8.45pm), 1-24 Aug (not 4, 11, 18) Jade and Artists Dance Troupe Fusing the elegant and modest dance movements of the East with the expressive dance techniques of the West under the leadership of Artistic Director Jade Pi-yu Hua, Eggs of Blessings is based on the lives of Taiwanese people in the 1940’s when communities lived and played together, specifically the traditional housing of three or four-section compounds, before the onset of TV and modern electric devices.

In Taiwanese traditions, red eggs are passed around when the new-born babies get to one-month old, when families, relatives and people from the neighborhood get together in the courtyard to give blessings and share the happiness of the new life. The eggs symbolise the coming of the next generations and contentment; the red colour also suggests good luck and peace.

Source: Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan) and Performance Infinity

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