

CAN ASIAN DANCE 25!

PROGRAM A

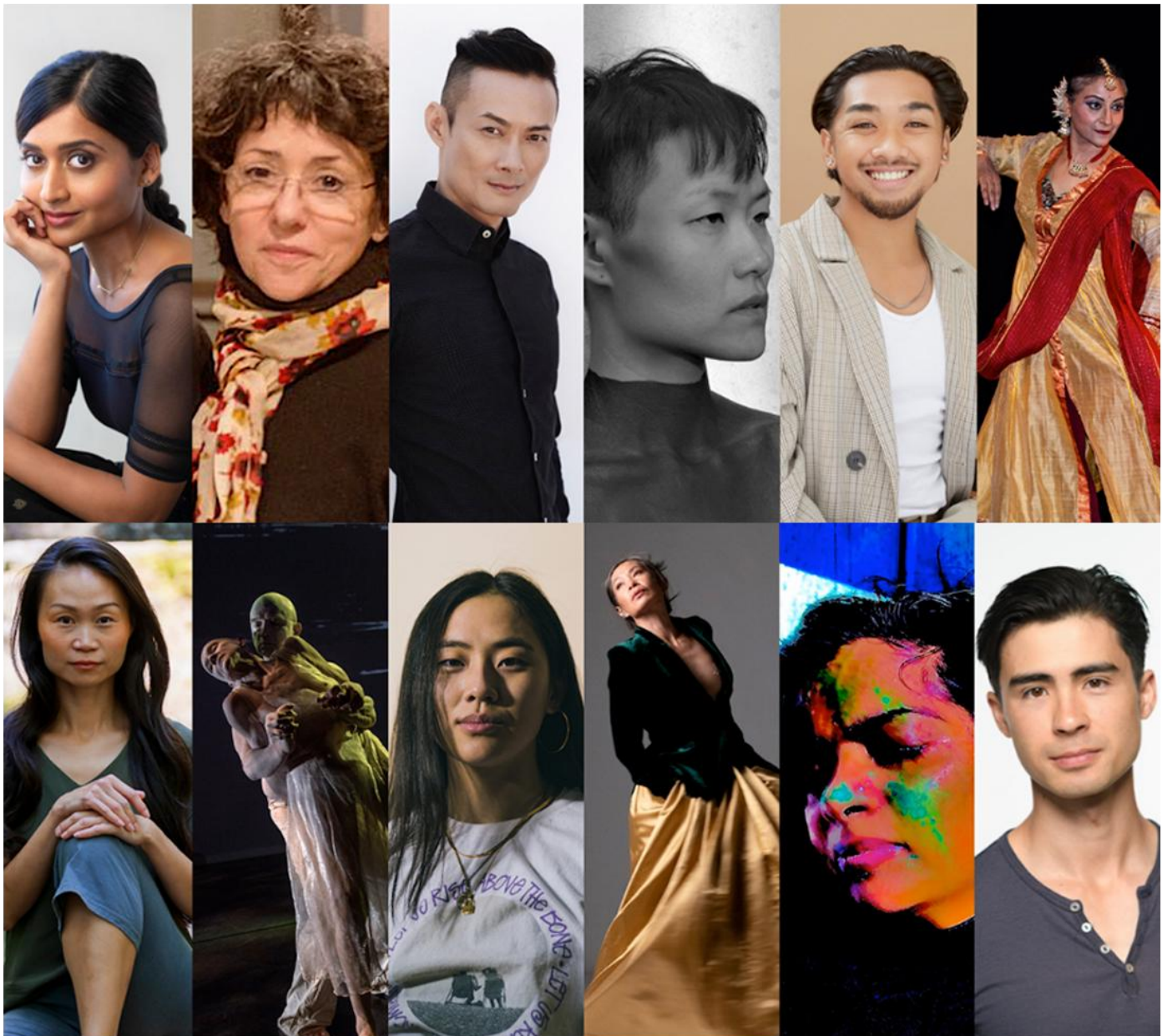
Wednesday, March 23rd, 2022

PROGRAM B

Wednesday, March 30th, 2022

PROGRAM C

Wednesday, April 6th, 2022





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PROGRAM INTROS FILM + EDITING

Phil Kim, Films by Fenton, Phoebe Sequino

POST-SHOW TALK MODERATORS

Natalie Tin Yin Gan, Kunji Ikeda, Michael Caldwell

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Coman Poon (President), David Norsworthy, Brandy Leary

CanAsian Dance is based in Tkaronto, colonially known as Toronto, which is the Mohawk name for *the place in the water where the trees are standing*. We respectfully acknowledge, that the land we live and dance on, is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.



PROGRAM A

Vasantham
aWakening
moth
I AM HERE

PROGRAM B

Shù (Tree)
Self-Portraits with Amrita
Wabi-Sabi
Bahala Na

PROGRAM C

Answer
Elemental
A Freckle
Spells for Chinatown
Noppera-Bō

ABOUT

CanAsian Dance Festival 25!

2022 is CanAsian Dance's 25th Anniversary!

We're celebrating with a virtual multi-week festival featuring 3 diverse programs.

Presenting world premieres by commissioned choreographers from our New Moves: Short Digital Dance Works program, and recent digital dance works from our past talented Alumni - artists from our previous 25 years.

ABOUT

New Moves - Short Digital Dance Works Program

CanAsian Dance is proud to present the three talented, emerging choreographers that have received commissions in our New Moves - Short Digital Dance Works program.

They are:

Ashvini Sundaram (Vancouver/Toronto) working with Dramaturg Karen Kaeja

Mary-Lee Brunet (Montreal) working with Dramaturg Handy Yacinthe

Ian Simon (Toronto) working with Dramaturg Nina Lee Aquino

The New Moves program is made possible with the generous support of TD Bank Group.



CAN
ASIAN
DANCE

NEW MOVES:
SHORT DIGITAL DANCE WORKS

CANASIANDANCE.COM

SUPPORTED BY



Shù (Tree)

Choreographer / Performer

Charo Foo Tai Wei

Music Designer

David Blouin

Video and Editing

Charo Foo Tai Wei

How can intensity be delivered through the screen?

In this performance, I'm opening myself to the support of wood energy. I named this piece Shù (Tree). A tree which is trapped in one spot with its own history, feelings and struggles. I'm imagining myself living in one of these trees.

What if this specific tree experienced violence, discrimination, species inequality just because it has endless deep marks on its trunk?

My quest for this piece is to search for freedom of expression by intuitively exploring different levels of intensity through movement.



Trained in Chinese classical dance, **CHARO FOO TAI WEI** arrived in Quebec City in 2005 where she studied contemporary dance at L'École de danse de Québec. From 2007 to 2013, she performed in Robert Lepage's production *The Blue Dragon* (Ex Machina), as an actress, dancer, and choreographer.

In 2015, she discovered Butoh with Natsu Nakajima, Yukio Waguri, Atsushi Takenouchi. She is fascinated by how the resonance of the nerve cells triggers an organic movement which develops from the inner body. This discovery inspired her to research instinctive body initiation. Now, she intertwines Chinese classical dance and Butoh to develop her own choreographic language.

Self-Portraits with Amrita

Choreography & Art Direction	Deepti Gupta
Directed by	Michael Penney
Executive Producer	Deepti Gupta
Producer	Michael Penney
Performers	Deepti Gupta Sukriti Sharma Priyanka Tope
Director of Photography	Michael Penney
Second Camera Operator	Drew Hewitt
Stage Lighting & Venue Coordinator	Gary Santucci
Editor	Michael Penney
Music Composer	Sandy Singh
Poetry	Sheniz Janmohamed
Choreography Mentors	Peter Chin Claudia Moore
Costume Designer	Deepti Gupta
Costume Maker	Sanjay
Hair & Makeup	Sukriti Sharma
Wardrobe & Production Assistants	Kit Simmons Laura Welch
Administrative Support	Marketa Tokova

This film and its choreography were inspired by the paintings and legacy of Amrita Sher-Gil.

The choreography of *Self-Portraits of Amrita* was developed through a CanAsian Dance Festival Commission 2019/2020.

Arzoo Dance Theatre is grateful for the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for the filming of this excerpt.



Classically trained Kathak dancers absorb a carefully constructed aesthetic of the female body. A central aspect of Indian dance repertoire is the depiction of the Nayika – or archetypal heroine. This heroine is categorized by her relationship with her 'beloved'. The nayikas are performed for the gaze of the audience, traditionally male.

The women in Sher-Gil's paintings are not classical. They are not designed for the male gaze. They offer a variety of bodies and physical intents as a way to begin moving differently. Her self-portraits explore European as well as Indian identities. Many South Asian women in Canada grapple with dual cultural identities including how their body is projected.

This work offers the dancers an opportunity to create 'self-portraits' in dance, exploring their own body language, inhabiting their own bodies with movement that speaks to themselves rather than to an outside 'gaze'. This concept is completely radical for Kathak which is traditionally frontal, highly presentational and for the 'audience'. This work provokes dancers to move for themselves and seek out different movement expressions while also working to bring the rebellious, sometimes intimate spirit of Sher-Gil's painted world, to life.

It is important to add that there is little support for such experimental work within the South Asian dance milieu and CanAsian Kickstart has provided us with a milieu and the community to make and share this work.

DEEPTI GUPTA is an exponent of the elegant Kathak style of Indian dance. She is a disciple of preeminent Kathak Gurus, Shri Munna Shukla and Pundit Birju Maharaj. As artistic director of Arzoo Dance Theatre she creates new works in dance that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. A relentless experimentalist with a variety of theatrical interests she loves to collaborate with musicians, designers, and new media artists.

Deepti's works have been presented by the National Arts Centre of Canada, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Canada Dance Festival, Tangente, Danceworks, Danspace Project and DTW, New York, International Kathak Festival, Chicago, Kalanidhi Fine Arts of Canada, Vasantotsava, Delhi and Panchatattva, Mumbai, amongst others.

Wabi-Sabi

Choreography & Performance	Barbara Bourget Jay Hirabayashi
Music	Joseph Hirabayashi
Lighting	Hina Nishioka Gerald King
Costumes	Tsuneko Kokubo
Projected Photography	Jay Hirabayashi
Violin	Meredith Bates Joshua Zubot
Cello	Martin Reisle
Guitar, Piano	Joseph Hirabayashi
Guitar	Elliot Langford Jay Hirabayashi
Synth, Drums	Justin Devries
Upright Bass, Electric Bass	Jeff Gammon
Videography	Chris Randle Dan Loan Zac Whitcomb Em Rogers
Video Editing	Joseph Hirabayashi

Kokoro Dance acknowledges that this performance took place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples—Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

We are grateful for the financial support of the City of Vancouver, British Columbia Arts Council, Province of British Columbia, Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, and Vancouver Foundation.

Kokoro Dance contemplates transience and imperfection in *Wabi-Sabi*, a duet choreographed and performed by Kokoro Dance directors, Barbara Bourget, and Jay Hirabayashi to live music performed by an 8-piece ensemble directed by composer Joseph Hirabayashi.

Kokoro Dance's butoh expression gives recurring attention to the seven aesthetic principles of Zen philosophy: *kanso* — simplicity; *fukinsei* — asymmetry or irregularity; *shibumi* — beauty in the understated; *shizen* — naturalness without pretense; *yugen* — subtle grace; *datsuzoku* — freeness; and *seijaku* — tranquility. These terms are encompassed in a world view contained in the words *wabi* and *sabi* — the acceptance of transience and imperfection.

The choreography in these *Wabi-Sabi* performances consists of a structured score within which Barbara and Jay have the freedom to improvise. Each performance is unique. The music, by Joseph Hirabayashi, lighting by Hina Nishioka and Gerald King, costumes by Tsuneko Kokubo, and projected photography by Jay Hirabayashi, were conceived independently from the choreography. Each collaborator intuitively understands Kokoro Dance's aesthetic choices through decades of working together on Kokoro's creative projects.

KOKORO DANCE was formed in 1986 by Barbara Bourget and Jay Hirabayashi. Taking its name from the Japanese word *kokoro* - meaning *heart*, *soul* and *spirit* and inspired by the Japanese avant garde dance form known as *butoh*, Kokoro Dance has presented over one thousand performances across Canada, in the United States, South America, Mexico, Europe, and Japan. Kokoro Dance produces the annual Vancouver International Dance Festival every March featuring local, national, and international dance artists in performances and workshops. Kokoro Dance's offices and studios are located in the Woodward's Heritage Building in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.



Bahala Na

New Moves - Short Digital Dance Works Commission

Writer, Director, Co-Choreographer

Ian Simon

Producers

Safa Ali
Renzo Sunga
Ian Simon

Director of Photography

Renzo Sunga

Co-Choreographer

Joseph De Los Santos

Sound Producers

Denice Badua, NΣΣT

Dramaturg

Nina Lee Aquino

Main Talent (Juan)

Neil Robles

Supporting Talent (Luna)

AJ Velasco

Main Dancers

Matt Morales
Josh Torres
Neil Lordson

Production Team:

1st AD

Axel Villamil
Safa Ali

1st AC

Adrian Anvari

2nd AC/Swing

Justin Manabat

Gaffer

William Nguyen

Grip

Zachary Guy

Swing

Jason Dam

Sound Recordist/Boom Operator

Paolo Furguele

Production Assistant

Jonathan Yau

'Bahala Na' is a short narrative-dance film about the Filipino diaspora of a first-generation immigrant navigating to find his cultural identity. The short film follows the story of Juan, a young adult who feels out of touch with his cultural roots. Going out to a party with his best-friend Luna, what was supposed to be a regular night turns into a journey of navigation, reflection and acceptance of his ethnic roots and cultural identity.



"Bahala Na" is produced by a group of non-Indigenous Filipino creatives, and we are eternally grateful for the Maranao, Maguindanaon and T'boli peoples from southern islands of the Philippines who have played the traditional instruments used in the film for generations.

These instruments, called *kulintang*, *agung*, *gandingan*, and *dabakan*, are played in kulintang music which is what we may know as "traditional" Filipino instruments. Originally, kulintang music were a significant part of ceremonies like weddings and healing rituals, and community celebrations such as parades and feasts.

However, through centuries-long processes of colonization, kulintang music have been removed, appropriated, and taken from Indigenous groups including the Maranao, Maguindanaon, and T'boli peoples. To this day, Indigenous tribes and cultures continue to be harmed through imperialism and fascism in the Philippines.

It is a privilege to be able to produce the film with kulintang music, as non-Indigenous people who were introduced to the instruments through non-Indigenous organizations and musicians."

We continue to learn about the origins of the music we are honoured to bring to our craft. We ask audience members to join us in learning from and being in solidarity with Indigenous struggles:

- <https://www.ikatvoices.com/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/sabokahan/>
- https://www.instagram.com/liyang_network/
- <https://ncip.gov.ph/>

IAN SIMON is a multidisciplinary Filipino artist based in Toronto, Canada currently pursuing a career in both filmmaking and dance. He moved to Canada at the age of 15 from the Philippines and has always had a huge connection with art growing up. Ian's dance journey began in 2013 watching shows like ABDC and learning choreography through YouTube videos, and started formally taking in-person dance classes a little while after. He began taking dance as a professional career path around 2016 building his repertoire in choreography, freestyle/improv, and teaching. He's performed and showcased his own work on different stages in the Toronto dance industry as well as teaching dance workshops nationally and internationally, and competing in different dance competitions with a local Toronto dance team. His journey in film started in 2017 after graduating from Seneca's Interactive Media Studies program where he solidified his passion for video creation and filmmaking. In 2020, he decided to take a career path in the film industry and has then been developing and improving his skills in directing, cinematography, producing and editing and wants to bring the two mediums together to make timeless intentional art pieces.

With a string of firsts in Asian Canadian theatre, **NINA LEE AQUINO** was the founding Artistic Director of fu GEN Asian Canadian Theatre Company, organized the first Asian Canadian theatre conference, edited the first (2-volume) Asian Canadian play anthology, and co-edited the first (award-winning) book on Asian Canadian theatre. She became Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre, currently holds the same position at Factory Theatre, and is the incoming Artistic Director of the National Arts Centre English Theatre. Awards for her work include the Ken McDougall Award, the John Hirsch Prize, the Toronto Theatre Critics Awards for Best Director, Toronto Arts Foundation's Margo Bindhart and Rita Davies Cultural Leadership Award, and three Dora Awards for Outstanding Direction.

Diamond Sponsor

The New Moves - Short Digital Dance Works Program was made possible with the generous support of TD Bank Group



CanAsian Dance
is grateful to the following funding
partners for their ongoing support.



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