

Preview: LEAP 2021 by Frontier Danceland



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(<https://bakchormeeboy.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/screenshot-2021-02-24-at-12.20.06-pm.png>)

This March, Frontier Danceland is set to present LEAP 2021 – their annual graduation showcase from the scholars of the M1-Frontier Danceland PULSE Programme, a youth contemporary dance training and development initiative by Frontier Danceland. Established in 2010, the annual year-long training programme programme has since produced over 240 graduates, some of whom have continued their pursuits of a higher education in dance and subsequently embarked on professional dance careers.



Zhuo
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In this 11th edition of LEAP, the programme will 2021 features a mixed bill of five unique choreographies by Frontier Danceland company artists Mark Robles (Philippines) and Tan Xin Yen (Malaysia), and independent dance artists Zhuo Zihao, Kay Lee, Neo Yan Zong and Ng Gek Theng Keryn (Singapore).

In Zhuo Zihao's *In The Aisle*, the PULSE Programme Coordinator explores the possibilities of the aisle to metaphor different perspectives. Starting from a simple idea of an aisle, he crafts a creative space that becomes shaped alongside the dancers' imaginative contributions throughout the creative process.



Kay
Lee's
SPACE

In *SPACE*, Kay Lee explores the space around, within and between people. Having an interest for both the dancers and audience to take away the “process of possibilities”, she shares about her creative process where “I often come into the studio with ideas or images that I want to create, and I’m glad to work with dancers who are willing to explore those possibilities with me. Nothing has been set in stone until they move, and being able to connect and be in contact with another body again feels amazing.”

Through *Me With My Pet Dinosaur*, Tan Xin Yen connects to her personal history and memories of the mural of Little Boy with Pet Dinosaur in George Town, Penang, Malaysia. Here, she reminisces the world of childhood play to celebrate its innocence and joy, and mulls that “Those days won’t come back, but they are always there with us.”

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Working together with ten dancers, Neo Yan Zong and Ng Gek Theng Keryn, who trained in the 2011/2012 PULSE Programme, facilitate a self-discovery journey and humbling process of working with another body in *Solidarity*. The choreographers share their vision of “Working within the idea of solidarity, where everyone takes equal responsibility and importance in the work. The performance will essentially be a test; an acknowledgment of the journey these dancers have gone through together. We wish the audience can walk away enjoying the simplicity, and complexity of these intricately designed group partnering sequences that are created.”



Neo Yan
Zong
and Ng
Gek
Theng
Keryn's
Solidarity

Mark Robles draws the core inspiration for *AviuMotus* from *Motus Avium*, the Latin term for the movement of birds, derived from the mystery of how the flying creatures maintain the soothing balance, precision and mesmerising forms. Although this work was conceived and meant to be staged a year ago in the cancelled edition of LEAP 2020, he is thankful that the cast of two PULSE alumni and four current PULSE scholars has worked harmoniously together and risen alongside him to the reconstruction challenge of the work.

Artistic Director and Mentor, Ms. Low Mei Yoke shares “Despite having experienced fear, hardship and disappointment in the recent unusual times, there is a silver lining of the cultivation of adaptability.”

Until recently where there is a greater semblance of normality, the PULSE programme has explored alternative pedagogical methods of engaging the young dancers in their training through online classes and blended-mode learning with reduced capacity since the delayed start of the programme last May. Artistic Director and Mentor, Ms. Low Mei Yoke shares “Despite having experienced fear, hardship and disappointment in the recent unusual times, there is a silver lining of the cultivation of adaptability.”

PULSE scholar, Mustafa Bin Mohamed Sukri reflects that “My experience in the PULSE programme has been very fulfilling – being able to learn how to better myself, expand my dance vocabulary, as well as work with different choreographers and fellow dancers. Especially during these COVID-19 times, it has changed my perspective on self-development.”

Looking forward to enable the audience’s live experience of LEAP 2021, Low says “This marks Frontier Danceland’s resumption of physical performances as we move into Phase 3 of re-opening in our navigation through COVID-19. It has been regretful to cancel all live performances in 2020, and we are thrilled to be back in the theatre again.”

Photo Credit: Lareina Tham

LEAP 2021 plays from 18th to 20th March 2021 at the Goodman Arts Centre Black Box. Tickets available from Peatix (<https://leap2021.peatix.com/>)

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