



Frontier Danceland's Milieu 2022, A Preview

Take a moment to imagine, a world without the self.

Now, imagine a world without the environment.

Take a moment to listen, to the sounds: outside, inside, implicit, and explicit. Does it come from within the self or from without, the environment? “Listening...” created by guest choreographer and long-time collaborator of Frontier Danceland, Loke Soh Kim, will prompt you into a multi-sensorial opening of [Milieu 2022](#), the annual year-end double bill to be set on [Esplanade Theatre Studio](#) from 9-10 December. The double bill closes with “Incessant”—a cross-cultural work co-created by artistic director, Low Mei Yoke and Irene Kalbusch, artistic director of [Compagnie Irene K.](#) They will take you on a parade of traditions reimagined in the contemporary world, specifically the Chinese and Rhineland traditions.



Photo credit: Crispian Chan, courtesy of Frontier Danceland

“Listening...” will be set to music unset by Ng Chor Guan to allow for authentic listening to happen between movement and sound. Ng will be present for all three performances and he will be starting the piece with his sound improvisation which is a very logical choice befitting the title of the work engaging audience into the state of listening. As with many contemporary dance works that are more minimalistic, the dancers clad in plain loose clothing of faded red, blue, and green, start in isolation with barely any interaction with one another. They were really challenged by Kim to listen with the whole of their being to bring the work to life. It is a risky approach, but a risk worth taking as a simple yet elegant way to bring the audience into the work, to not just be a spectator, but a participant, too.

The participation begins from the start, whereby one cannot help but hear the dominating sounds leading to the bodies of the dancers in space. The unique personalities of each dancer as human beings started to shine as the piece progressed with the autonomy of movement given to the dancers within the structure set by Kim. Their preferred movement styles, training background, and even what they might be feeling can be “heard”. While the piece is very

minimalistic, just pure movement and sound, the overall dynamism is achieved when the dancers begin to interact in spontaneous duets and trios crossing paths with collision and total synchronization.



Courtesy of Frontier Danceland



Photo Credit: Crispian Chan, courtesy of Frontier Danceland

“Incessant” seeks to bridge cultures that relate to one’s sense of identity and belonging based on both co-choreographers’ extensive experience and personal backgrounds with Low in Chinese dance and Kalbusch’s Rhineland ancestry. The movement quality and narrative of the piece reflect the complexity of the many dialogues between Low and Kalbusch. There were layers of intense conformity, oppression, resistance, confusion, comedy, insanity, and acceptance... all of which ended up in the articulation of affection, the strongest of all, “I love you”. In a world that is rapidly changing and the cultural differences unifying through globalization, the piece urges introspection into the complex process of adaptation crucial for modern life to deal with “no time” in finding one’s cultural identity that makes each of us unique despite being in the same cultural group or practices the same cultural norms.

Dancers dressed in black and white flow one by one into the space in a peaceful ocean soundscape and guzheng in the mix composed by Mervin Wong. Scrolled-up water sleeves were ceremoniously brought in as if a royal procession and laid down on the ground marking a clear difference between the black and white. The water sleeves are obviously Low’s choice of tool to mark her tradition while Kalbusch chose the “Snow White” mask and confetti to mark her Rhineland carnival tradition. Finally, the dancers don on the water sleeves for what they were meant to be, while the sleeves hit the ground covered by confetti, it created a rather memorable moment that mark the coming together of two cultures and traditions into the contemporary time.

Milieu 2022 is curated in a way that could take you on a journey of “Listening...” from within to without, finding even just for a moment of your own place in space, the self in the environment. While the many layers of narrative in “Incessant” shall inspire one to take the time to look into one’s own personal identity in a world that is becoming more unified.



[Buy Tickets](#)

Date/Time:

9 December 2022 (Friday), 8pm

10 December 2022 (Saturday), 3pm* and 8pm

* There will be a post-performance dialogue

Venue: Esplanade Theatre Studio, 1 Esplanade Drive, Singapore 038981

About Frontier Danceland

Founded in 1991 by Low Mei Yoke and Tan Chong Poh, Frontier Danceland is a professional contemporary dance company in Singapore that became full-fledged in 2011. Committed to cultivating versatility in expression through the body, Frontier Danceland's dynamic range of innovative works craft unique experiences that heighten sensibilities and evoke introspection.

About MILIEU

Curated in 2012, MILIEU (previously known as Double Bill) is Frontier Danceland's annual year-end production that features a double bill of mid-length works, usually a creation by artistic director, Low Mei Yoke, alongside another invited local or international choreographer.