

NUS CENTRE FOR THE **ARTS** presents:

NUS ARTS FESTIVAL 2022

SHADES OF LIGHT(NESS)

Incandescent – A City That Never Sleeps

**NUS Dance Synergy
feat. NUS Guitar Ensemble
18 March, UCC Hall**





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



A very warm welcome to **NUS Arts Festival 2022: Shades of Light(ness)** – which NUS Centre For the Arts is once again proud to present.

We live in a world grappling with uncertainty. Now, more than ever, society is challenged to look beyond black-and-white paradigms, and contend with the shades of grey in-between. This ever-expanding liminal space demands that we use a wider variety of cognitive “lenses” to bring focus and make sense of a multi-hued, multi-faceted world. In that regard, this year’s festival theme is most apt, as is our multi-disciplinary creative approach which brings together student artists, professional arts practitioners, as well as leading researchers and thought leaders in NUS to explore how the arts can help us better appreciate and negotiate ambiguity.

To that end, we open the festival with NUS Dance Synergy’s *Incandescent - A City That Never Sleeps*, a work that investigates the disappearance of stars in Singapore’s night sky. In a city with one of the highest light pollution levels in the world, this work probes the effects of our contemporary urban lifestyle, asking if it embraces or disrupts the symbiotic relationship between the environment and our human bodies.

We also see this in works like *Bodhi - The Awakening* by NUS Indian Instrumental Ensemble. Directed by Cultural Medallion recipient T Sasitharan, the work fuses Indian classical music with theatrical elements, reflecting on the duality of light and darkness, and the transitions between light and darkness in the journey towards enlightenment.

Another work utilising the metaphor of light to explore ambiguity and uncertainty is *Blackout* by NUS Stage. Directed by award-winning theatre-maker Chong Tze Chien, this dark comedy looks at a man’s odyssey through the fractured recesses of a dark, forgotten past, as he struggles to make sense of the conflicting stories about who he is.



In this edition of the Festival, we have been most fortunate to partner the College of Design and Engineering (CDE) for a series of thought-provoking and visually arresting installation works. *Somewhere in This Fog of Memory* explores the mind of a person living with dementia, putting the viewer in the place of someone constantly grappling with a slippery reality; *In Living Company* challenges the norms of our disposable economy, using light to show how discarded objects can give rise to new life. *A Close Eyecounter* - a collaboration with visual artist Ryf Zaini - uses simulated LiDAR technology in an interactive installation that questions how our physical vision determines what we can see, and how we take our natural quality of eyesight for granted.

Of course, NUS Arts Festival would not be possible without the hard work, courage and creativity of our students and artistic directors. Their passion, resilience, and creativity have really shone through during these dark and uncertain times.

We are also deeply grateful for the continued support from NUS creative partners, such as our long-standing partnership with the Department of Communications and New Media, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We are also particularly privileged to extensively partner the College of Design and Engineering for the first time, and we believe that this fusion of the arts and engineering will be particularly illuminating.

Our thanks also for the continued support of our donors: Bowen Enterprises, Kewalram Chanrai Group, and RB Capital. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth for its Cultural Matching Fund. All these generous support has been invaluable in keeping ablaze our students' passion for the arts.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy **NUS Arts Festival 2022: Shades of Light(ness)** - may the many performances, installations, and films bring light into your life.

Sharon Tan
Director
NUS Centre For the Arts



MESSAGE FROM YARRA ILETO

Artistic Director and Choreographer,
Incandescent – A City That Never Sleeps



Over the past couple of years, many of us have reflected deeply on topics that impact our wellbeing and the livelihood of our communities. The onset of the pandemic - which kept us indoors and isolated; blurred physical and mental spaces of rest, work and play that ultimately altered the way our urban bodies organically relate to time.

As we progress from this state, a question has emerged on whether we have distanced our body's way of connecting to the natural world, leading to an investigation on the use and purpose of one of man's greatest inventions: artificial light.

In line with the festival's theme of light and after the discovery that claimed Singapore as one of the highest contributors of light pollution in the world, in 2016, I was intrigued to comment on this revelation to further highlight a culture that appears luminous at all costs. How does artificial light affect the natural rhythms of the body, affect biodiversity and diminish the value of darkness that has earned us the nighttime glow we see in our skies today? I welcome the audience to question these thoughts with us tonight.

Furthermore, this journey would not have been made possible without the inquisitive minds of the creative and production teams, who too have pondered on this shared experience. I would like to begin by thanking our show director, Jeremiah, for supporting the vision of this piece, adding dimension to the stage and facilitating the imagination of the dancers. Our lighting designer, Enqi, and film & multimedia artist, Mervin, for capturing images with light that have added layers to this inquiry. Thank you to NUS Guitar Ensemble (GENUS) and music director, Robert, for navigating this path with the live composition of City Scape to set the mood. And to our group manager, Jonathan, and the NUS Centre For the Arts team, for supporting the group and the development of this show.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the students from various teams working on stage, on camera and behind the scenes. Your tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed and I am very proud to witness artistic growth in all of you, particularly during these uncertain times that have challenged you on all levels of your young adult life. Thank you Synergizers!

Sincerely,
Yarra

SYNOPSIS



Incandescent - A City that Never Sleeps is a series of cycles that highlights the journey of the body through light and darkness.

- Cycle 1** as dawn breaks, the body moves, awakened by impulses, internally and externally driven.
- Cycle 2 (film)** the day is extended with the production of artificial light, bodies move beyond dusk.
- Cycle 3** as darkness rises, the body navigates through chains of artificial moons. Are we more vulnerable in this environment?
- Cycle 4 (film and live)** nocturnal creatures of the urban landscape are drawn towards our man-made fixtures. Are they displaced in this interaction?
- Cycle 5 (film and live)** households ignite their own stories of artificial light.
- Cycle 6 (film)** the future is bright. What is necessary?
- Cycle 7** a lonely echo in darkness seeks comfort and connection.
- Cycle 8** the body and mind are in search of rest.
- Cycle 9** the natural moon and our body clocks reset.

Yarra Iletto Artistic Director / Choreographer



Born and raised in Australia, Yarra Iletto relocated to Singapore pursuing her BA First Class Honours Degree in Performing Arts (Dance) at LASALLE College of the Arts. In 2008, she joined T.H.E Dance Company as one of the full-time pioneer members and has toured extensively in Asia and Europe. She has also choreographed works for T.H.E Main Company, T.H.E Second Company and several local Universities and Colleges. Since then, Iletto has worked as a professional freelance dance artist, choreographer, instructor and artistic director, choreographing and performing works presented at M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival, M1 Fringe Festival and the Joint Dance Congress in Adelaide, Australia. In 2017, she received the Young Artist Award, Singapore's highest honour for young people in the arts and furthered her studies to graduate with a Master's Degree in Arts Pedagogy and Practice with Distinction from Goldsmiths University, London in 2020.

CREATIVE TEAM



Dr Robert Casteels

Music Director

Provider of artistic content summarizes at best the prolific activities of Dr Robert Casteels. Renowned composer, conductor, educator, pianist, educator and researcher, he believes that these roles are fundamentally interrelated in the kaleidoscope of activities that is music making. Born in Belgium, since taking up permanent residency in Singapore in 1996 and citizenship in 2007, Robert has contributed tirelessly to Singapore's music scene. Robert has written a growing corpus of 140 musical works that defy classification because they cross cultures, genres and disciplines. Robert has conducted more than 50 professional orchestras in a repertoire of 600 works ranging from the early classics to contemporary music, from symphonic to vocal and dance repertoire.



Jeremiah Choy

Director

With close to 30 years of experience in Singapore's arts scene and with international experience that ranges from Asia to South Africa and Europe, Jeremiah Choy is a Creative Director, Producer and Curator. He has directed and produced theatre shows, concerts, arts festivals, Singapore and International events such as Singapore Day (Sydney, Shanghai, San Francisco), Spotlight Singapore (Cape Town, Bratislava and Prague, and Mexico City), NS50 and Sing50.

His recent works include: Creative Director for Silver Arts Festival (NAC – curating 16 online and live performances), Singapore Discovery Centre Lower Gallery Experience, Sunburst 2021 and ChildAid 2021.

CREATIVE TEAM



Mervin Wong

Film & Multimedia Designer

Mervin Wong is a composer, new media artist and multimedia designer who embraces the duality of sonic and visual. His endeavour surrounds the fields of sonic compositions, projection mapping, and audiovisual creation. With the interest into experiential qualities of multidisciplinary work, his practice involves the exploration of light, sound and visuals in a performative manner. His output has been featured both in Singapore and overseas.

His work as a new media artist and multimedia designer has involved a variety of collaborations across the arts scene ranging from production design to audiovisual integration and synergy. His studio THEEMPTYBLUESKY PRODUCTIONS centres on creating remarkable live experiences that are immersive and enchanting.



Chee Enqi

Lighting Designer

Enqi is a co-founder of Roadie Pte Ltd, a lighting and production design firm in Singapore serving the Arts & Entertainment, Film & Broadcast and MICE industries.

The team at Roadie is known for bringing together artistry, technicality and technology, and interweaving elements of various design styles to provide creative solutions for visual experiences, enhancing the experience for both their clients and their audiences.



Aletheia Lai



Bernard Wong



Cheong Kai En



Faye Ng Yu Ci



Foo Ching Wen



Francesca Ong



Jan Nicole Si



Liew Chen Kai



Meg Liang

OUR DANCERS (ONSTAGE)



Melissa Han



Ng Ze Xuan



Shaelyn Lam



Shayna Yang



Sylvia Ng



Tam Ye Ting



Tan Yanni



Tan Yi Ming



Vera Chiew

OUR DANCERS (ONSTAGE)



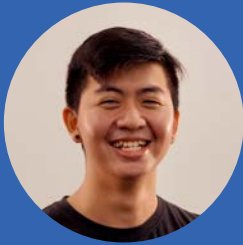
Andrea Dunn



Cherie Koh



Foo Jing Yi



Jeremiah Chan



Jorshall Law



Kelyn Teo



**Muhammad
Ismail B Sahan**



**Nurizzawanti
Binte Ramli**



**Tammy
Genevieve Ng**



Vanilla Wong

OUR DANCERS (ON FILM)



Ethan Ng



Gideon Chia



Lim Feng Yue



Moses Ang



Natalie Sim



Nicholas Koh



Peck Chin Yun



Zhang Jin Tao



Zhang Peiran

NUS GUITAR ENSEMBLE



FIRST COMBINED REHEARSAL



FULL RUNS





LIGHT MANIPULATIONS

EXPLORING TIGHT SPACES





FILMING IN UNCONVENTIONAL SPACES





WORK HARD, PLAY HARD





CREDITS

Artistic Director & Choreographer:	Yarra Iletto
Show Director:	Jeremiah Choy
Music Director and Composer:	Dr Robert Casteels
Film/Multimedia Designer:	Mervin Wong
Lighting Designer:	Chee Enqi
Sound Engineer:	Varian Tan
Production Manager:	Ng Liang Ni (EMCC Crew)
Stage Manager:	Coco Yau (NUS Dance Synergy)
Assistant Stage Managers:	Cui Jing & Judith Chan (NUS Dance Synergy)
CFA Group Manager:	Jonathan Heng

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank Dr Lau Siu-Kit Eddie (NUS College of Design and Engineering) and Mr Yusuke Hattori (Lighting Planners Associates) for sharing their perspectives on the topics of artificial and natural light in our urban environments. Their unique viewpoints and experiences opened up new possibilities for responding to the theme, and inspired us to translate these ideas into movement for the show.

NUS DANCE SYNERGY



Known for their warm and welcoming dance culture, NUS Dance Synergy, a member of NUS Centre For the Arts, hopes to cultivate a community of contemporary dancers committed to refining their craft through exploration and experimentation. With dancers of varying levels of experience, NUS Dance Synergy provides inclusive opportunities for training and performances in contemporary dance.

Under some of Singapore's top dance luminaries such as Mr Fan Dong Kai and Ms Sylvia Yong, NUS Dance Synergy has established itself as a group dedicated to producing high quality performances. Under the tutelage of Albert Tiong and our Artistic Director Yarra Iletto (formerly under T.H.E Dance Company), the group continues to strive to produce thought-provoking works that test the boundaries of dance and its expressive abilities, whilst developing dancers with a deep respect for their craft.

Instagram: @nusdancesynergy

Photo: Crispian Chan (@kines.thesia on Instagram)



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 21/22



President:

Pu Fangxin

Vice-President:

Melissa Han

Secretary:

Kathryn Oei

Dance Mistresses:

Pu Fangxin, Sylvia Ng Eng Qin

Community, Outreach & Engagement:

Foo Ching Wen, Meg Liang Kaili

Publicity Heads:

Cheong Kai En, Foo Jing Yi

Logistics and Finance Head:

Francesca Ong



ABOUT NUS ARTS FESTIVAL

The NUS Arts Festival was first staged in 1998, primarily as a showcase of student talents. As part of NUS' centenary celebrations in 2006, the Festival was relaunched and expanded to incorporate faculty and practising local and international artists alongside the best student performers.

NUS Arts Festival is the largest arts event on campus, presented each year in March with collaborative practice at the heart of its programming.

Working with local and international practitioners, our student artists are encouraged to avail themselves to the content-rich environment within the University, grounding their work in deep knowledge and using it as the basis of the development process.

Each edition of the Festival is crafted with a core theme that responds to contemporary issues and facilitates the integration of research and learning as part of the artistic process, in addition to showcasing performances with mass appeal.

Now in its second decade, the NUS Arts Festival draws artists and collaborators from across campus and around the world. It is known for conceptually challenging pieces that speak to both the creative and academic output of NUS.

nusartsfestival.com

Follow us on social media @nuscfa

#nusartsfestival



NUS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA) comprises the NUS Museum and NUS Baba House; the University Cultural Centre, a world class performing arts centre; and a Talent Development and Programming unit that oversees 20 student arts excellence groups in music, dance, theatre and film. On campus and beyond, we take pride in providing the opportunities for the appreciation of the arts.



We seek to champion creative possibilities and inspire strong communities through programming, exhibitions, workshops and outreach such as the university's flagship arts event, the NUS Arts Festival and Singapore's longest running arts outreach programme, the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts.



UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE

As a high-grade, flexible performance venue nestled in the grounds of a premier university, the University Cultural Centre is a consistently sought-after venue. It operates year-round, hosting key University events, external bookings and CFA's own programming. The Hall and Theatre have hosted numerous political and cultural leaders, thinkers and well-known artists and musicians.

In late 2017, the UCC underwent an extensive renovation to ensure that it continues to be operationally and environmentally efficient and offers a high standard of service.

To enquire about hosting an event at the UCC, please contact the Venues Team (uccvenues@nus.edu.sg).



PRESENTED BY

NUS
- CENTRE
FOR THE -
ARTS



NUS
National University
of Singapore