

A Dozen Malaysian Dances Premier at KL Festival

by MyDance Alliance
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Kuala Lumpur – From 2 to 5 September 2015, local dance organisation MyDance Alliance will present *Tepak Tari*, two enchanting evening performances by Malaysian dancers and dance companies, at DBKL Auditorium, Kuala Lumpur.

Each performance in *Tepak Tari* features six short dance premiers, created especially for this program. *Tepak Tari* is part of the stellar lineup of dance programs in the *KL i Dance* segment of the first Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival.

“Like the traditional welcoming betelnut box, or *tepak sireh*, *Tepak Tari* is a box of dancing variety which results in an intoxicating experience,” says Bilqis Hijjas, president of MyDance Alliance and *Tepak Tari* producer.

“In Southeast Asia, the betelnut box has welcomed guests for hundreds of years. The ritual of assembling the perfectly combination of areca nut, betel leaf and lime paste is often a sign that the festivities are about to begin. As the Malay saying goes, ‘*Sirih bertepuk, pinang menari*’ – where the betel leaf claps, the betelnut dances.”

Like the betelnut box, *Tepak Tari* stirs together the rich living tradition of Malaysia’s dance heritage with fresh perspectives and spicy dashes of creativity. *Tepak Tari* offers a window onto Malaysian dance today, featuring works as diverse as classical dance performed by children to minimalist contemporary works set to avant-garde music, and from the rhythmic tapestries of odissi to the explosive power of wushu.

“The programs explore the continuum of modernity that flows through both traditional and modern genres, giving us a diverse creative perspective of what is ‘cooking’ in the contemporary dance scene in Malaysia,” says Datuk Ramli Ibrahim, artistic director of Sutra Foundation and curator of dance for Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival 2015.

Renowned Malaysian dance companies performing in *Tepak Tari* are Sutra Dance Theatre, ASWARA Dance Company, Kwang Tung Dance Company, DPAC Dance Company, Lee Wushu Arts Theatre, Temple of Fine Arts Kuala Lumpur, and Sultan Idris Education University.

Tepak Tari will also include a new work by the most exciting independent dancers in the Malaysian scene. Celebrity dancer and choreographer Suhaili Micheline, presents a collaboration with ASWARA graduate and lecturer Faillul Adam, recently returned from graduate training in Ireland. World-class classical Indian dance performers Rathimalar Govindarajoo and January Low-Siva team up once again to create a powerful new work.

Wong Kit Yaw, a respected artist in the Chinese dance community with a long track record of developing creative dance for children, brings the award-winning dance troupe from Yu Hua Secondary School to the professional stage.

International guest choreographers Mikuni Yanaihara (Japan) and Gerard Mosterd (Netherlands) will each work with some of Malaysia’s finest dancers, to create original renditions of their signature works.

Tickets for *Tepak Tari* will be priced at RM36 and RM56, available for purchase from August 2015.

About MyDance Alliance & Partnerships

Tepak Tari is presented by MyDance Alliance, a non-profit volunteer membership organisation. MyDance Alliance brings dance practitioners and dance enthusiasts together to support and promote dance in Malaysia.

This production is the latest in a series of flagship biennial national dance festivals dating back to 2001. Building on the success of MyDance Festival 2011 “All in One” and MyDance Festival 2013 “Show Off!”, Tepak Tari unites an experienced production team with the spirit of volunteerism which illuminates our local dance community.

MyDance Alliance is delighted to partner with Sutra Foundation and to have the opportunity to appear in the first Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival. The organisation also welcomes The Japan Foundation Asia Center as a partner, continuing a tradition of partnership with the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur established with the regional dance project Asia Pacific Impro! in 2013.

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