



International Dance Day 2016

Summary

International Dance Day is celebrated every year on 29 April all over the world through the ITI network. In 2016 the main event was held on 29 April at the Grande Halle of La Villette in Paris. With the patronage of UNESCO, performances from Samoa / New Zealand, France and China were presented. The sponsorship of the FOSUN Foundation financed the event. ITI collaborated with La Villette as a co-organizer. Joint effort of all, including the 1000 guests that attended the event were all helping that the 2016 IDD Ceremony in Paris was a great success.

IDD Message Author 2016

Lemi Ponifasio, the choreographer from Samoa and New Zealand, artistic director of MAU dance company New Zealand, was the message author of IDD 2016.

The IDD Ceremony 2016 at La Villette, Paris

In order to promote the ceremony and attract as many people as possible to participate the event, the General Secretariat of ITI and Communication Department of La Villette sent out more than 4000 emails, newsletters and information. The recipients included the UNESCO delegations, dance schools in Paris, VIP guests from all the performing companies and the sponsor, local dancers, dance teachers, critics, etc. More than 1,000 persons took part in the ceremony on 29 April.

The event – as usual – concentrated on dance performances.

The Company MAU of Lemi Ponifasio introduced the event with a very intense song, performed by his group on stage and in the public. The Dance Company of the Shanghai Theatre Academy presented an impressive performance about evilness, beauty and hope, an excerpt of their performance RED. Shantala Shivalingappa from France and India performed a short but beautiful solo. At the end the Company MAU showed a 30 minutes performance with a unique set design, a performance with songs, spoken words, dance, fight and the use of multimedia.

Short intros, welcome addresses and speeches were held, to create an International Dance Day event. The DG of ITI and the president of La Villette introduced the event, later Susannah Gordon, head of permanent delegation of New Zealand to UNESCO, and Jan Goossens, artistic director of the Marseille spoke, honouring Lemi Ponifasio and his work. Machi Lindahl, president of Dance Committee of ITI introduced Lemi Ponifasio who then talked about his message (see at the end of this paper) and read the message in Samoan, translated by Malory Domecyn, on stage. Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Culture could not attend, his speech in French could be found in the brochure.

Further VIPs that attended the event were 50 UNESCO delegations, Henri Giscard d'Estaing, president of Club Med as representative of FOSUN Foundation, Guan Jian, Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in France, plus the heads of ITI Centres of Switzerland, Belgium and Spain.

At the end the DG ITI thanked all the persons who contributed to the event and then all the artists and the choreographers were invited on stage to take the last applause.

The event itself was received very well. The message author and the performers were happy about it and the audience congratulated ITI for the event.

As usual the artists and VIPs were invited to a small reception at la Villette, after the show.

Promotion and Media Exposure

One part of the success of the event was based on the excellent media coverage and promotion. The 2016 IDD message has been sent to all the centres of ITI and been translated into about 20 different languages. Three waves of media reminders were sent out on March, mid-April and right before the event. Two press releases were published which were sent to over 2,000 journalists including printing press, radio, TV and websites.

Websites like *Le Parisien*, *Artistik Rezo*, *Espaces Magnetiques*, etc. posted the information about the event. The daily national Press *Le Figaro* published the information of the event. LCI TV Channel has a programme named "International Dance Day, an event you should not miss".

Comment by the DG:

"Thanks to the dedicated management and guidance of Chen Zhongwen, the event has been a great success. It was a joint effort of the General Secretariat (Zhongwen, Malory, Yiming, Aktina and the DG), the local event managers (Renaud Mesini and Aicha Boutella), the media company, the cooperation with La Villette, the agency who created the brochure and the agency who created the documentation.

Shanghai 25 May 2016,

Prepared by CHEN Zhogwen, TANG Yiming, Malory DOMECCYN, edited by the DG

International Dance Day 2016 Programme

La Villette, 29 April 2016, 20.00 to 22.00 h

Introduction

Tobias BIANCONE, Director General of International Theatre Institute ITI
Didier FUSILLER, La Villette President

Dance

Performance of the MAU Company

Speech

Susannah GORDON, Head of Delegation of New Zealand to UNESCO

Dance

Performance of the Shanghai Theatre Academy

Speech

Jan GOOSSENS, playwright, artistic director of the Festival of Marseille

Dance

Shantala SHIVALINGAPPA, solo performance

Introduction to Lemi PONIFASIO

Andromachi DIMITRIADOU-LINDAHL, President International Dance Committee ITI
Lemi PONIFASIO, Message reading

Dance

Performance of the MAU Company

Thanks and Final Applause

Speech of Lemi Ponifasio

Your Majesties, Your Excellencies, dancers, dance teachers, choreographers, dance administrators, dance critics, ladies and gentlemen

Talofa Kia ora - Good Evening. It is a magical honour to be here with you tonight.

Thank you to the International Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute of UNESCO - for inviting me to give this year's International Dance Day message.

I was born and brought up in Samoa, a small island nation in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Dance is truly a borderless spiritual force, borderless in form and it brings people together everywhere in world. It is a demonstration of people in cooperation, people in search of beauty and celebration of our existence with all sentient beings.

A tree is always dancing towards the rays of the sunlight. A dancer's work is to orient us towards the divine that is within us. Therefore, we are born from Earth to change the world. Towards the world of light.

We are part of the Earth's process.

Like us Earth is also looking for its dance.

Like us Earth is looking for its home.

The birth of the universe was the birth of dance.

So dance was born long before the first human.

We are the flesh of the cosmos - we are the weave of everything.

The nature, the stars and all celestial life.

Dance activates our connectedness.

Each moment you dance you ignite this energy.

Each moment you dance you are gifting and sharing something beautiful from your heart to someone or with a community.

Our world is facing many challenges at the moment.

Both the human nature and the non-human nature.

We mistreat our planet in the same way we mistreat our children.

We send our children to die in deserts and swamps in wars.

We make our children flee from their homes and drown in seas or suffocate in container trucks.

We are using our children to feed the darkness of the human heart.

We as a species are consuming our own children.

Dance is an invitation to transform.

And like dance, the transformation starts here with us.

Let's share our dance.

Take your dance to the children, to the river, to hospitals, to prisons, to refugee camps and into different communities, those with disabilities and the young and old.

To all corners of the world.

Thank you.



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Message by Mr Francesco Bandarin,

UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture

on the occasion of International Dance Day

Paris, 29 April 2016

On this 34th edition of International Dance Day, I wish to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating this treasured form of artistic expression at the event organized by the International Theatre Institute (ITI) in Paris.

Founded in 1948 as an official NGO partner of UNESCO, the International Theatre Institute has long advocated for increased international cooperation and exchange within the performing arts sector – seeing the performing arts as key to promoting intercultural understanding and dialogue, as well as sustainable development.

International Dance Day, established by ITI's Dance Committee in 1982, was born out of this conviction. It celebrates dance as a universal art form which transcends differences of language, religion, and nationality, and offers a platform for dancers – both professional and amateur – to share their talents, passion and creativity with the world. UNESCO commends the ITI for inspiring and supporting these talented dancers, who, through their art, serve as powerful ambassadors of peace.

In these challenging times, too often marked by conflict and discord, we need dance more than ever. Dance infuses our lives with joy and reminds of us all that we share as members of the same human family. On this International Dance Day, let us celebrate one of humanity's oldest forms of creative expression and embrace its tremendous unifying power.

I can think of no better place to highlight the universality of dance than the Parc de la Villette, which is home to dozens of museums, concert halls, theatres and performance spaces meant to engage all people, regardless of age or background. This day represents the ideal opportunity to showcase France's long, diverse history of dance traditions – which extends from 17th century ballet to contemporary hip-hop – and the ways in which that history is intricately intertwined with the histories and cultures of individuals from around the world.

In this spirit of celebration and togetherness, I wish you all a very happy International Dance Day.