



Music Research Symposium Singapore 2024

Fri 1 Mar 2024

Flexible Performance Space,
LASALLE College of the Arts

Conference convenors

Dr Darren Moore, Dr James Félix

Conference overview

The Music Research Symposium Singapore 2024 (MRSS) brings together music pedagogues, practitioners and researchers to explore the theme of improvisation, interdisciplinary practice, pedagogy and Singaporean musical identity.

Hosted by LASALLE College of the Arts' School of Contemporary Music, the 4th annual MRSS conference will feature forums, panels, and performances addressing the conference themes and a keynote lecture by renowned composer and improviser Dr John Sharpley.

Contents

Schedule	4
About the keynote	5
About the keynote speaker	6
About the panels	7
Panel 1: Classical improvisation	7
Panel 2: Interdisciplinary practice	7
Panel 3: Improvisation within local music education	8
Panel 4: Negotiating the Singapore sound	9
About the performances	11
Performance: Full Circle, by Eshan Denipitiya	11
Performance: Twilight Phenomena	11
Biographies	13

Schedule

9:00am	Registration
9:30am	Opening address: Dr Tim O'Dwyer
9:45am	Performance: <i>Full Circle</i> Eshan Denipitiya
10:00am	Keynote: Dr John Sharpley – NOW: Essence of Improvisation
10:30am	Break
11:00am	Panel 1 – Classical improvisation Dr Tim O'Dwyer (Moderator), Frank DeMeglio, Valerie Tjota, Karst de Jong
12:00pm	Panel 2 – Interdisciplinary practice Brian O'Reilly (Moderator), Dr Natalie Alexandra Tse, Melissa Quek, Jeremy Sharma
1:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Performance: Twilight Phenomena Piano and modular synth: Mahakit Mahaniranon FryProne: Dirk Stromberg Erhu: Andrew Ng Dancer: Anabelle Phoebe Budyanto, Pia Angela Custodio Choreography: Fairul Zahid, Filomar Cortezano Tariao
2:30pm	Panel 3 – Improvisation within local music education Dr Patrick Olsen (Moderator), Dr Ng Hoon Hong, Dr Tony Makarome, Michael Cartwright
3:30pm	Break
4:00pm	Panel 4 – Negotiating the Singapore sound Belinda Foo (Moderator), Dr Lum Chee Hoo, Dr Hoh Chung Shih, Andy Chia, Felix Phang
5:00pm	Closing remarks – Prof Leon Rubin Refreshments

About the keynote

NOW: Essence of Improvisation

Dr John Sharpley

“Since I myself was created, I cannot help having the desire to create.” – Igor Stravinsky

Everything that we experience and beyond is in a state of infinite flux. The universe improvises itself, creating us as we create it as we create ourselves. The way to access this is to simply be in the NOW. From ancient spiritual wisdom to modern science, spacetime is illusion; nonlocality. What is called a *mystical experience*, also called *the zone* by musicians, resides in the essence of musical improvisations, fully liberated and completely intuitive.

“We are a way for the universe to know itself.” – Carl Sagan

About the keynote speaker



Dr John Sharpley is a composer, improviser, pianist, lecturer, and writer with a unique and multi-faceted career spanning geographic and cultural borders. He lectures at LASALLE College of the Arts, having developed a three-year improvisation course. His book, *We Are Music: An Existential Journey Toward Infinity*, has just been released.

About the panels

Panel 1: Classical improvisation

Dr Tim O'Dwyer (Moderator), Frank DeMeglio, Valerie Tjota, Karst de Jong

This panel traces the evolution of classical performance practice from co-creation to preservation. Classically trained musicians were at one point revered for their improvisational skills. However, during the mid- to late-1800s the composing performer gradually gave way to performer who composed and, in the 20th century, to the professional concert performer who, in all likelihood, had been actively discouraged from improvising or altering a single note from the printed score. Join our panel discussion as experts dissect the impact of this evolution on classical artistry, exploring the balance between tradition and individual expression in the realm of classical music.

Panel 2: Interdisciplinary practice

Brian O'Reilly (Moderator), Dr Natalie Alexandra Tse, Melissa Quek, Jeremy Sharma

The panel will explore how improvisation, with its spontaneous and adaptive nature, becomes a powerful catalyst for interdisciplinary practice in artistic and academic research. In artistic practices, improvisation allows intuitive responses to collaborators from diverse disciplines, fostering a collaborative environment that transcends traditional boundaries. In academic research, improvisation enables scholars to adapt methodologies, incorporate insights from various fields, and navigate unexplored intellectual terrain.

This dynamic approach encourages experimentation, breaking down rigid structures that may hinder interdisciplinary collaboration and promoting the discovery of new perspectives. The panel will highlight how improvisation is a transformative tool that fosters synergies when different fields converge and enriches the collaborative process, ultimately unlocking novel avenues of knowledge and creativity in the interdisciplinary landscape.

What is encompassed within the realm of interdisciplinarity? How can we interpret the engagement with knowledge through an interdisciplinary perspective? This panel aims to address these questions through an improvisatory lens within artistic practices and academic research contexts.

By exploring the multifaceted nature of interdisciplinarity, we aim to unravel its complexities and dispel any mystique surrounding this approach. This discussion seeks to shed light on the intersection of various disciplines in both artistic endeavours and scholarly investigations. Through a comprehensive exploration, we will articulate the nuances of approaching knowledge from an interdisciplinary lens and highlight the synergies that emerge when different fields of study converge.

Panel 3: Improvisation within local music education

Dr Patrick Olsen (Moderator), Dr Ng Hoon Hong, Dr Tony Makarome, Michael Cartwright

Improvisation can be a misleading term in music pedagogy. As Bailey (1991) revealed, improvisation can range from a being an integral and inseparable component to music making (i.e. Indian raaga performance), to being a hypothetical concept analysed outside of the music making. Within education, that dichotomy might span from

improvisation within the moment of a culturally-situated practice, to improvisation as a separate subject confined within the borders of a specific class.

Increasingly within school settings, improvisation has become a buzzword for policy makers as a way to increase engagement with creativity, imagination and other difficult-to-define educational buzzwords (i.e. Clegg, 2008). This can meet with tensions since many music educators have not been equipped with skills or materials for teaching and assessing improvisation to either groups or individuals (i.e. Taylor, 2018).

Within music lessons, the use of improvisation can be a useful tool for teachers and students to explore and inspire each other. This panel brings together practitioners to share how they have incorporated improvisation within their pedagogical practices. Moreover, it will bring light to how a Singaporean student may encounter improvisation in their learning journey from secondary school to beyond.

Panel 4: Negotiating the Singapore sound

Belinda Foo (Moderator), Dr Lum Chee Hoo, Dr Hoh Chung Shih, Andy Chia, Felix Phang

This is not a new discussion. Numerous conversations, top-down and bottom-up, have emerged since Singapore's independence in 1965. After 58 years, it might be opportune to move beyond the recognition and/or preservation of traditional musical forms, and familiar tropes involving the fusion of multicultural musical elements. It is time to negotiate an identity, which encapsulates the interplay between tradition and innovation, local culture and globalisation within the contemporary music landscape.

What will this entail? What will this sound like?

This panel comprises academics, composers and music practitioners, some of whom are hyphenates of all three. They will bring their unique perspectives to address these and other provocative questions, as well as rejuvenate the discussion on the negotiation and mediation of the Singapore sound.

About the performances

Performance: *Full Circle*, by Eshan Denipitiya

Eshan Denipitiya performs a captivating classical improvisation, transforming contemporary melodies into a romantic waltz in a style reminiscent to those of Chopin and Liszt. This creative reimagination of familiar music brings the performance full circle, harkening back to classical music's roots, where improvisation was an inherent part of any performance. Eshan demonstrates how classical music performance, by embracing its improvisational origins, can continue to evolve and captivate audiences in a modern context.

Performance: *Twilight Phenomena*

Piano and modular synth: Mahakit Mahaniranon

FryProne: Dirk Stromberg

Erhu: Andrew Ng

Dancer: Anabelle Phoebe Budyanto, Pia Angela Custodio

Choreography: Fairul Zahid, Filomar Cortezano Tariao

This piece is inspired by twilight phenomena, which is described as occurring when exhaust plume particles from missiles or rockets interact with the atmosphere, refracting sunlight. These phenomena occur either 30 to 60 minutes before sunrise or after sunset. However, whether one can see these phenomena depends on location as well.

Therefore, this piece is a creation akin to such twilight phenomena – something that has a rare chance of happening, combining instruments, performers and ideas that rarely occur together. Moreover, just like phenomena, it is truly something that cannot be controlled.

The nature of such a performance begets the question: if this composition does not make its impact or fulfil its potential as

expected, then is it because the phenomenon did not occur, or is it because the listener did not see the phenomenon from their point of view?

This work give us the feeling of a bizarre performance featuring electro-acoustic sounds and a mix of folk instruments, the atmosphere created by the various sound forms mimicking the sensation of being trapped in a trance. While the sounds that occur convey feelings of suffering and discomfort, these negative feelings fade with the sounds. This is no different from life – while life sometimes hurts, if you can get through it, you will grow and develop yourself further.

Biographies

Michael Cartwright is a graduate of Edith Cowan University with a Bachelor of Education. He taught instrumental and classroom music for 18 years in Western Australia before joining the Ministry of Education in Singapore in 2012. Currently a senior teacher at Yio Chu Kang Secondary School, he continues to perform jazz and blues gigs.

Andy Chia is a leading flautist/wind player, talented artist, renowned producer and innovative artistic director, as well as a husband and father of three. He has dedicated his career to exploring the intersection of humans, nature, and technology, seeking a harmonious, unified existence between the three on our planet.

As co-founder and resident artist of SAtheCollective Ltd, supported by the National Arts Council, Andy is recognized as a leading producer and artistic director in the contemporary arts scene. With deep roots in traditional Chinese music and a portfolio of performances in contemporary and experimental art, Andy continues to push boundaries with his innovative vision, skills and talents in stage production, choreography and storytelling.

Andy has a well-established reputation in the international arts community, having been commissioned by major festivals across Asia, Europe, and North America, including the Singapore International Festival of the Arts (SIFA), OZAsia, Sydney Festival, and AngelicA Festival Internazionale di Musica. He has also given guest lectures, workshops, and talks at institutions such as SOAS University of London, National Gallery Singapore and SIAM museum.

Andy's unique approach to art has been described as hypermodernism, drawing from ethnic roots yet modern. He is a source of inspiration for other artists, and his work has received notable awards and recognitions. Andy continues to

push boundaries with his innovative vision, skills and talents, seeking new collaborations and opportunities to showcase his artistry.

Pia Angela Custodio is a professional dancer born and raised in the Philippines. At the age of six, she started her rigorous training in classical ballet as well as contemporary/modern dance under ACTS Manila, Philippines. Since then, she has undergone pre-professional training from various professional dancers and teachers from prestigious companies such as American Ballet Theatre (ABT), The Australian Conservatoire of Ballet (ACB), Singapore Ballet, and many more.

She is currently based in Singapore, pursuing her Diploma in Dance under the School of Dance at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), after being one out of only two students in her year to receive the NAFA Talent Scholarship, and has been a consistent recipient of the Dean's List award. Through NAFA, she has also completed her four-month industry attachment under Singapore Ballet in 2022.

Pia has performed in works by choreographers such as Jeffrey Tan in an excerpt of *Amalgamation* for NAFA's Crossings 2023, Albert Tiong in *Journey* for NAFA's The Third Space 2022, and Dr. Filomar Tariao as the role of Sinulid in *KATHABI* for NAFA's Crossings 2022. She has also performed in events such as NAFA's *85th Anniversary Gala Dinner 2023*, *Fluid Entities 2022* hosted by Peter Gn, Esplanade's *In Youthful Company 2022*, to name a few. Since 2021, she has been a ballet and contemporary instructor with One Dance Asia, Singapore.

Frank DeMeglio is a classical music teacher, lecturer and writer. He began teaching at LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts part-time in 2003 and he joined the faculty in 2009. Beginning in 2013, he spearheaded the classical music programme's venture into improvisation by

launching a three-year BA-level improvisation course that forms a cornerstone of the curriculum. The unique and intensive emphasis on improvisation has manifested itself notably in the annual classical showcase concerts *Piano Voyage*. In this performance series, classical music is presented in an original format that combines imagery, video, voice-overs and text, as well as collaborations with dance, animation, acting, film and musicians from LASALLE's pop, jazz, composition and electronic Music specialisms.

Frank studied piano at the University of Michigan and earned a Bachelor's degree in performance. After graduating, he taught with Randy and Nancy Faber, authors of the best-selling *Piano Adventures* library of piano books. He returned to the University of Michigan for an MBA in marketing in 1992, and was hired by Steinway & Sons as their New York Institutional Sales Representative. While working for Steinway & Sons, part of his duties included managing the famed Steinway Selection Room of concert and studio grand pianos.

Hailing from a reputed family of musicians in Sri Lanka, **Eshan Denipitiya** is a classically trained pianist, music director and composer. With experience in both classical and contemporary music, he incorporates stylistic elements and techniques from classical music into his own arrangements and compositions. Mentored by Mr Frank DeMeglio, he graduated with first class honours from LASALLE College of the Arts. Eshan continues his journey as a performer, collaborating with local and international artists. Now a director at Aureus Music Group, he leads efforts to make music learning more accessible through innovative learning products.

Fairul Zahid holds a master's degree (MFA) from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. He was a principal dancer/choreographer at ASK Dance Company, Christina Noel and the Creature NYC, The Nutcracker New York City

Ballet, LaneCo Arts NYC, as well as an artistic director of Asia Duo Dance Company.

Belinda Foo is a composer, arranger and orchestrator. She teaches Ear training, Theory, and Composition at LASALLE College of the Arts. Her areas of interest and research lie in the realm of music identity: specifically, the negotiation of the “Singapore sound”, and the exploration of intercultural amalgamations. Meaning-making through music (musical semiotics) is another area of interest, where she hopes to use music exegetically – to amplify and elucidate text or narrative.

Belinda has been in the music industry for over 35 years. Her involvement includes composing and arranging commercial music locally and regionally, orchestrating for arts festivals such as the Singapore and Hong Kong Arts Festivals, composing for National Day Parade, as well as music directing various performances and musicals. Additionally, she has composed and orchestrated for the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, the Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra and other ensembles. Her most recent symphonic project is *JOB, A Symphonic Dance*. She is currently working on another symphonic project, *Songs of Ascent*.

Dr Hoh Chung Shih studied the *guqin* with Master Ji Zhiqun in Singapore since 1996, learning the lineage repertoire of his grand-teachers, Gong Yi and Wu Wenguang. While completing his PhD in Composition at the University at Buffalo, he also took independent studies in Chinese art and Chinese philosophy with Gao Ming Lu and Kah Kyung Cho respectively. His interest in literati culture extends to calligraphy and garden design.

As a composer, he has worked with some of the world's most exciting musicians. Consequently, his cultural interest can be described as an exploration of the intersection between the contemporary and traditional. Dr Hoh Chung Shih has served

as the President of the Composers' Society of Singapore since 2016.

Karst de Jong studied Classical Piano and Music Theory in the Netherlands. He is internationally recognized in the field of classical improvisation, having transformed his artistic practice from performing classical pieces to bringing improvisation to the stage.

As a former professor at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague and The Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC) in Barcelona, he has been teaching improvisation, music theory and composition techniques. He is active as a performer, music theorist, improviser, teacher and researcher, and has taught many masterclasses of improvisation at international festivals. He has been invited as a guest teacher and visiting artist at many renowned institutions all over the world.

As a firm believer in the importance of improvisation skills for any contemporary musician, he was one of the founders of the European METRIC project: a collaboration between 14 major European institutes of Higher Music Education with the aim to promote the integration and development of improvisation into the curricula of classical performance students.

Since 2023 Karst de Jong has been appointed full professor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore, where he is teaching music theoretical subjects and improvisation, as well as leading creative collaborative projects and developing improvisation as a core activity in the curriculum. Karst de Jong released two CD's with solo piano improvisations: *Improdisiac I & II*. He currently lives in Singapore.

Dr Lum Chee Hoo is associate professor of music education with the Visual & Performing Academic Group at the National

Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is the Coordinator of the NIE Centre for Arts Research in Education (CARE).

Chee-Hoo's research interests include examining issues towards identity, cultural diversity and multiculturalism, technology and globalisation in arts education, children's musical cultures, creativity and improvisation, and elementary music methods.

Chee-Hoo has published four edited books:

1) *Contextualized Practices in Arts Education: An International Dialogue on Singapore*; 2) *Musical Childhoods of Asia and The Pacific*; 3) *Arts Education and Cultural Diversity: Policies, Research, Practices and Critical Perspectives*; 4) *The Artground Ecology: Engaging Children in Arts and Play Experiences*, as well as four co-authored academic books, 1) *Teaching Living Legends: Professional development and lessons for the 21st century music educator*; 2) *Semionauts of Tradition: Music, Culture & Identity in Singapore*; 3) *World Music Pedagogy: School-Community Intersections*, 4) *Reimagining Singapore: Self and Society in Contemporary Art*. He has also authored school textbooks, academic book chapters, referred journal articles and made numerous conference presentations at local and international settings.

Dr Tony Makarome is an award-winning solfege-teacher (Walden School). His teachers included: Robert Spano, Miroslav Vitous, Herb Pomeroy, Sundaresan, Chettiharaveetil Sreekanth. His compositions include: *Kuanzhai-Xiangzi* (2022), *Jewel-Srivijaya* (2019), *Rain-Konnakkol* (2018), *What-Pattern?* (2016), *Shiva* (voice-mridangam 2015). He has arranged music for the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and China Broadcasting (Beijing). Tony has been the bassist for: Louis Bellson, Tony Bennett, Quartet West. He also earned an award for *Vadya-*

Visharad (mridangam-2019), published in Malaysian Music Journal.

Mahakit Mahaniranon is a Thai composer-performer who plays piano and modular synthesiser. His practice combines performance, composition, improvisation, sound of traditional Thai music and electroacoustic elements. Never stopping to innovate and expand the scope of his work has led to a search for a sound incorporating acoustic elements, synthesisers and digital processes.

Andrew Ng, a graduating erhu major from the esteemed Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), began his professional musical journey under the mentorship of erhu pedagogue Zhang Yuming a decade ago. A perpetual seeker of new musical horizons, he actively engages in diverse projects across Singapore, exploring different forms of music-making and learning new instruments.

Dr Ng Hoon Hong is a lecturer in music education at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. He conducts music pedagogy, free improvisation, creativity and ICT courses for pre-service and in-service music teachers. His research interests include free music improvisation, music creativity, music pedagogy, and popular music.

Dr Tim O'Dwyer has been the Head of the School of Contemporary Music at LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts for the past 14 years. He plays the saxophone, composes music, and grapples with the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri in the context of his practice.

Brian O'Reilly works within the fields of electro-acoustic composition, sound installations, moving images and noise music. Also, he is a contrabassist focusing on uncovering the inaudible textures and hidden acoustic microsounds of his

instrument through the integration of electronic treatments and extended playing techniques.

In addition to his solo performances and works for moving images, he also plays modular analog synthesiser and generates visuals in the duo Black Zenith and contrabass and electronics with the noise-jazz group Game of Patience. Currently, he is a Senior Lecturer at LASALLE's School of Contemporary Music, focusing on electronic music composition, visual music and creative music-making techniques through the use of improvisation.

Dr Patrick Olsen is a lecturer in popular music at LASALLE College of the Arts. His teaching experience spans from primary schools to universities. His research interests include curriculum design and assessment, as well as sociocultural explorations to music pedagogies, particularly popular and traditional learning cultures.

Felix Phang, a Berklee College of Music graduate, stands as a leading contemporary composer in Singapore. His compositions gracefully blend tradition, culture, and evolution, finding resonance at international music festivals and symposiums. Formerly heading the Music & Drama Company (MDC) from 2018 to 2023, Felix now directs Pasat Merdu, a non-profit organisation championing intercultural arts through music composition and performances.

His intercultural piece, *Pasat Merdu* was showcased at the Temasek Foundation Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) National Day Concert 2023, performed by SSO and his multicultural ensemble, The Straits Ensemble.

In addition to his adjunct position at LASALLE College of the Arts, Felix mentors young composers and producers in his free time.

Annabelle Phoebe is currently studying dance at LASALLE College of the Arts and has been pursuing dance since she

was three . Annabelle is a versatile dancer working in contemporary, ballet, jazz and street dance disciplines. She performed locally and internationally in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia under Fairul Zahid's choreographic direction. Annabelle choreographed for the *Tipping Points* production in collaboration with classmate Keena Ouh Suiying. She performed in *The Sound of Music*, a collaboration between Able Ballet and Nez Ballet, playing as one of the main characters, Kurt Von Trapp, in 2018. She was a contemporary finalist for Dance Prix Indonesia 2019.

Melissa Quek is Head, School of Dance & Theatre at LASALLE College of the Arts and is also Programme Leader for the Diploma in Dance programme. She is a choreographer, performer and educator whose research and choreographic interest lies in investigating the body-subject. Her works and creative process attempt to touch on questions of agency, materiality and perception to create a visceral experience for the audience.

Melissa enjoys multidisciplinary collaborative works, site-based work such as site-specific outdoor performance *Tracing the City* (2016) and cause-based performances and workshops such as *Stride with Pride*, a performance aimed at increasing respect for wheelchair users. She founded The Kueh Tutus, a collective dedicated to creating dance for young audiences and has created several works that have been presented at The Artground, toured regional libraries and appeared in the Esplanade's Festivals *Octoburst!* and *March On*.

Jeremy Sharma is a versatile artist who merges visual art and music. He has held four solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions, namely *Athlete* (5th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, Bangkok and USA), *City_net* (Seoul Museum of Art), *Whose Playground is This?* (Plastique Kinetic Worms, Singapore), *8 Young Contemporaries* (ArtForum, Singapore), *Peninsular/*

Island (Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur), *insomnia: KYTV presents: The P.O.P Station plus Tiramisu* (ICA, London), *Iconoclast/Persistence: Site of Memory* (Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, Singapore), and *BigSmall Works* (Art Seasons Gallery, Singapore).

Jeremy has participated in Artist Residency and Exchange Programme (REAP) by Artesan Gallery, Manila, Royal Overseas League (ROSL, UK) and Studio 106 (Former Ng Eng Teng Studio, Singapore) and is a recipient of the JCCI Art Award, Finalist Philip Morris Art Award, First Prize Action for Aids Award and the Della Butcher Award (presented by The Rotary Club Singapore).

Dirk Johan Stromberg is an American music technologist, composer and improviser. His body of work explores dynamic interaction between performer, technology and performance practice. Designing both hardware and software has led to the development of a variety of interfaces, synthesis techniques, installation works, electro-acoustic instruments and interdisciplinary production works.

Filomar Cortezano Tario or Dr Fil as his students fondly call him, was recently seen essaying the role of Shakespeare in the Asa Palomera's *The Curious Lives of Shakespeare and Cervantes*. His professional career in dance and the performing arts spans 18 years globally.

In 2013, his choreography *Lakbay Rama* won 1st place accolades in Dance Theatre, Folk Dance and Audience's Vote at the Prague International Dance Festival. His local choreographic credits include: *Jungle Book*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Esplanade Dance Festival 2012, *Twelfth Night*, *Pinocchio*, *Jack & The Beanstalk*, *La Traviata*, *Annie*, *Santa Claus The Musical*, *HONK!*, and *Just So, Alice in Wonderland*. Fil has choreographed for Singapore Repertory Theatre, Singapore Lyric Opera, Marina Bay Sands, Chingay (2006 - 2008), Youth Olympic Games

(Singapore), ACSian Theatre, InDancity, and the SAF Music & Drama Company.

His commissioned ballet, *A Message of Peace*, was performed in front of His Excellency President S.R. Nathan for the New York State Bar Association Gala, and met with standing ovations. Dancing for the Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Company Chicago, Fil has performed for Chicago Dance Masters Association, Dance Chicago, The International Jazz Congress, at the Merle Reskin, Athenaeum & Daley Center. Fil has worked with international choreographers such as Randy Duncan, Jon Lehrer, Davis Robertson (Joffrey Ballet), Eddy Ocampo, Natalie Weir and Csaba Buday.

In Manila, Fil joined Ballet Philippines in Darna and taught the company in De La Salle University thereafter. As an actor, he captained Repertory Philippines's production of *Fame* as Tyrone Jackson, and choreographed *Forbidden Broadway*. He is a full-scholar alumnus of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (Le Sacre Du Printemps, Interior).

As a dancer and singer, Fil has toured internationally, performing with Powerdance Company and Filipiniana Folk Dance Company. A versatile performer, his dance/theatre credits include *Everything But The Brain* (Life Awardee for best playwright), *Admiral's Odyssey*, *Romanza Española*, *Mercury Rising*, *Moment*, *Carmina Burana*, *Beauty World*, *Snow White*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Imelda's Boys*, *Theatre Idols*, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *Victor Victoria*, *Vision*, *Salome*.

Fil is a fully certified Stott Pilates Instructor with a focus on injuries and special populations. He has developed a Pilates for Dancers programme, which he launched in 2012.

Valerie Tjota, a classically trained Singaporean pianist, educator, and music director, started her musical journey at the age of five. Fluent in various styles, she excels in

interpreting lyrical works. Commended for her performance at the Victoria Concert Hall, she's a regular accompanist for the De Vita Christi Youth Choir. Valerie aims to develop her unique musical identity and explore innovative pedagogical methods, especially for students with similar backgrounds.

Dr Natalie Alexandra Tse plays with sound, sonic objects, and the environment. Curious about the ancient past but eager to find a place in the contemporary, she uses experimental techniques on the guzheng, strings, and other found objects to evoke emotions in sonic performance. A mother to three children, she integrates her passion in sound with early childhood education and research, creating pedagogically informed work as a SonicPlay™ Artist, through artistically directing LittleCr3atures®.