

Lew J Whittington, Contributor arts journalist

KYL/Dancers' vital "Sanctuary"

05/04/2017 06:06 pm ET | Updated 16 hours ago



ROBLI PHOTOGRAPHY KYL/Dancers in Santuario

Choreographer Kun-Yang Lin's contemporary ballet "*Santuario*" is a stunning artistic response to the Pulse Nightclub shootings in Orlando, Florida last June. It is a profoundly moving dance elegy in honor of the 49 people who lost their lives on that horrific night. The work premiered on KYL/Dancer's spring home season at the Prince Theater last week on a program titled 'Sanctuary' paired with one of Lin's signature works *One: The Immortal Game*.

One: The Immortal Game is another of Lin's ballets that deals with complex social themes that Lin, originally from Taiwan, created five years ago when Lin was studying American history to become a naturalized US citizen. He was struck at

the contrast of the ideals of the nation and what he was seeing and experiencing in America.

The jumping off point of Immortal Game is the chess board and the dancers play out a symbolic mental and physical game, that give way to a sociopolitical metaphor. The opening tableau with Shaness Kemp and Liu Mo, seated on cubes as 'Players 1' and calling out chess moves, their arms slicing through the air with equal intensity. In 'Yang & Ying' dancers Liu Mo and Nikolai McKenzie are locked in a dramatic dance face-off with hypnotic adagio movement, punctuated with air-slicing leaps.



ROBLI PHOTOGRAPHY

The full company sections in 'Chess Pieces' on opposing Teams, with Lin's choreography showcasing athleticism and dynamic East-West dancefusion. You don't have to consciously be aware of any of the symbolism or applied technical skill of the dancers "One" is an entrancing movement feast without one knowing anything about the game.

Lin's dance pieces often have spiritual themes, as well as sacred dance and ritual, martial arts disciplines often fused with modernist idioms. I don't think anyone

was prepared for the transcendent impact of *Santuario* (Spanish for Sanctuary). Ken Metzner, executive director of KYL/D, in comments before the premiere told the audience “(This) was an attack on vulnerable people in a place many of them considered to be a sanctuary.... And that sense of urgency on the part of the artists to respond through acts of creation invitation/request at the Pulse memorial to go forth and create... the perimeter of the club has been converted into a living memorial...it is interactive...with photos, drawings, collages, sculpture—Candles, pens and paper are supplied- because action is requested. All of that work honors that exaltation / to honor, to resist, standing up to hate and to create something of beauty...” and in that spirit Lin and his company created *Santuario*.



ROBLI PHOTOGRAPHY KYL/Dancers in a scene from *Santuario*

The opening scenes depict the scene at Pulse last June, Lin had each dancer create their own solo to be danced as if they were in the club on what was Latino night at the club. It is a liberated social dance mosaic with the company in flash dances of vogue, salsa, couples partnering and friends joyously moving together. As a club track “Wake Up” grooves it is overtaken by disturbing voices and sounds. Composer Cory Neale, a frequent collaborator in Lin’s ballets, original music and soundscape that also include elegiac choral music of Arvo Part, is masterful. And Stephen Petrilli’s lighting design is sensitive and dramatic.

Soon, those scenes of joy and solidarity are overtaken by confusion, terror, mayhem and a concussive din of violent sounds. There are screams, sounds of panic, concussive movements where dancers seem suspended in space. Lin's imagery doesn't dwell on the carnage that occurred, but it doesn't back away from it either.



ROBLI PHOTOGRAPHY KYL/Dancers in a scene from "Santuario"

There are equally moving same-sex duets depicting lesbian couples and gay male partners expressing their love in intimate dance. Liu Mo & Nikolai McKenzie, Evalina Carbonell & Annielille Gavino and Grace Stern & Keila Perez-Vega, in a series of beautiful and disturbing duets. The ending imagery where they remove their garments, and their bodies entwine over the stage, suggest passage, metaphysical grace.

In his note in the program Lin writes "Our Sanctuaries no longer seem safe. There is an air of oppression..." and his response "I dance to sort through disquiet. ...I dance as an act of resistance and as an offering of peace, love and compassion."

Even though LGBTQ artists have always been part of dance companies and communities, gay cultural issues and gay life is rarely depicted on the dance stage.

Lin's subtext is the alarming rise and tolerance of anti-immigrant and antigay hate surfacing in America and around the world. "Santuario" also speaks to the larger context of the scabrous political landscape of the country where division and fear are the calling cards of politicians and hate groups.

The cast of 10 performed handled this emotionally challenging ballet with soulful artistry that fully embodies the artistry and depth of Lin's choreography. But it was particularly moving to see longtime KYL/D dancer Jessica Warchal-King, many months pregnant, perform in this work. (The company nudged her to the front during their curtain calls for a solo bow). And the audience remained on their feet in tears of appreciation for this stirring, eloquent and vital contemporary dance piece.

[For information about Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers and upcoming tours go to kyld.org](http://kyld.org)

SANCTUARY (KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS): Sanctuary for those who know pain

May 1, 2017 - [Eri Yoneda](#)



Photo credit: RobLi Photography

A non-profit dance company in South Philly, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D) presents **SANCTUARY** at the Prince Theater from April 27 through 29. As the title implies, what is **offered inside the theater is a sanctuary for those who carry pain, struggle, or need a safe space to express and share those feelings with someone who understands and embraces them.**

The first half of the program is “One-Immortal Game”. Kun-Yang Lin, the artistic director and co-founder, choreographed the piece inspired by a chess game that overlaps the world of politics and the art of dance. Wearing simple grey tunics and tights, Shaness Kemp and Liu Mo bow to each other, take a seat on cubes, and start a game of chess. The two players are joined by dancers and the stage turns into a chess board as dancers become the chess pieces.

Lin's choreography is a bridge between East and West. While the movements show elements of modern ballet, each movement is based on the method of T'ai-chi. **The unique breathing methods of eastern medicine and martial arts are introduced in his dance style, which let the dancers and the viewers feel qi—energy—around and inside the dancers.**

A duet by Liu Mo and Nikolai Mckenzie presents a classical chinese dance. Mo was trained at the prestigious Beijing Dance Academy. He spins and jumps, using one long cloth as an extension of his arms, sometimes sharp like a whip, other times gracefully like a petal floating in the air. **The dance is deeply philosophical and inspiring.**

The second half of the program drops a bomb of a reality that is hard to face. Titled "Sanctuario", (Spanish for sanctuary), the dance is a requiem for those who were slaughtered at the shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, and also for those who are vulnerable and suffer from discrimination, isolation, and violence because of who they are.

The piece starts as young lively dancers enjoy the moment at a club—their sanctuary and safe space—releasing the stress and oppression that they face in the outside world. With a snapping loud sound their movements suddenly change to stilted ones as if they are exposed. Then the gunshot reverberate in the theater. Dancers crawl on the stage and run around in fear and shock.

Lin provides a strong message with three beautiful duets by two male dancers, then by two pairs of female dancers. Genders and races mean nothing to the true affection and love among people. But unreasonable and meaningless ignorance tears us apart and destroys us. The dance is painful and hard to watch, as it is intended to be. It exposes viewers to the violence, pain, and sorrow minorities are exposed to, and which **viewers might never experience otherwise**. Sobs and gasps fill the theater.

This is a reality that we need to face, think about, and talk about.

Any form of arts can be beautiful and moving, and express the thoughts and feelings of artists. Art can also be a means to confront and combat issues of our society. KYL/D's SANCTUARY is one of those art pieces that has the power to start discussions on those issues we may miss or not pay attention to in our busy everyday life, in the safe sanctuary—the theater—where we are allowed to share moments and opinions.

[The Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut street] *April 27-29, 2017*; kyld.org

About the author



[Eri Yoneda](#)

Eri Yoneda writes about dance and classical music for Phindie.

"Kun-Yang Lin explores the political landscape with a powerful choreographic voice in 'Sanctuary/.' "

Seeking sanctuary

Camille Bacon-Smith

May 01, 2017 in [Dance](#)

There's been quite a bit of talk lately about the intersection of art and politics. How can we engage with and critique the political sphere with art, and how we can do such art justice through our interpretations? In this spirit, the two compelling pieces in Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers' current appearance, *Sanctuary*, challenge us with their message and compel us to give them a voice.

Liu Mo in Heidi Barr's floating "water sleeve." (Photo by Rob Li Photography)



Politics as a dangerous game

In his introductory remarks, Ken Metzner, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers' executive director, described the influences on Lin's *One: Immortal Game*. In 2012, Lin became a citizen in time to vote in the presidential election. He soon realized how adversarial the political landscape was. From that experience he determined to create a piece that explored the competitive nature of politics as a game of chess that, like war, both reveals and obscures our common humanity.

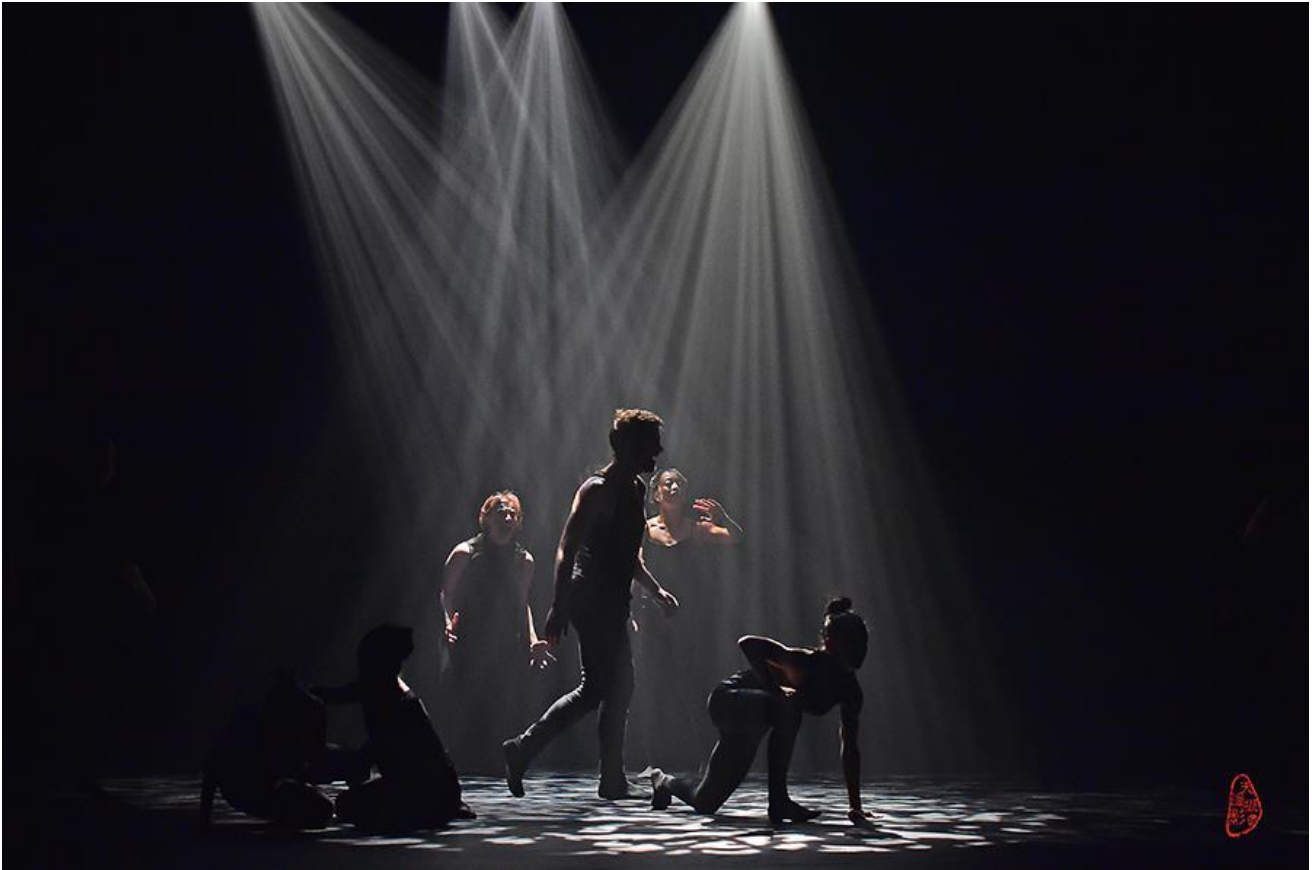
The curtain opened to three black boxes on an empty stage. Two dancers (Shaness Kemp and Liu Mo) in soft grey tunics and leggings entered from opposite sides and sat on opposing boxes, the box between them acting as the table across which they battled with sharp, aggressive hand and arm gestures. To the driving beat of original music by Cory Neale, the company, in the same Heidi Barr costumes, entered and the game moved from the table to the dancers' bodies.

I loved the forceful style of this dance, which combined Chinese and Western technique. The dancers' extensions were an in-your-face challenge, with legs like battle swords, flexible but steely. Even the frozen poses hummed with contained power.

In a shadow-duet titled "Yin and Yang," Nikolai McKenzie appeared alone, compact and intense, in a dance that was half martial arts and all force and angled movements. Then, haunting the back of the stage, Liu Mo, in a floating "water sleeve" that was yards long, presented the softer yin side in movements that seemed to flow effortlessly with a contained strength. The dancers met in shadowing movements that captured the sense of battle between two sides of the universe. Against expectations, the pair opened our perspective to the eternal nature of the conflict, while the full company narrowed the focus to the game.

The Politics of Tragedy

Metzner returned after intermission to introduce the world premiere of Lin's *Santuario*. He explained that the title means "sanctuary" in Spanish. The piece was Lin's response to the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, in June 2016, which targeted young LGBT people of color, and to the growing culture of hatred and violence in the wake of the recent election.



A stark moment from "Santuario." (Photo by Rob Li Photography)

The piece took place in a club setting, with dancers in black pants and shirtless or in tanks moving freely to a mix of club music and flirting in various carefree combinations. Then the mood turned ominous, fearful. The music shifted as well, to Arvo Pärt's "Kyrie" and more of Cory Neale's soundscape, while dancers mimicked shooting guns. The piece ended with a striking image: dancers folded in on one another in a resonant composition that brought to mind Michelangelo's *Pietà* and the iconic 1970 photo of student protestors shot at Kent State University, while excerpts from Jameson Fitzpatrick's "Poem for Pulse" played over the sound system.

"Santuario" had some beautiful passages, including that joyous opening. A duet with two men was powerful and sexy, and the very pregnant Jessica Warchal-King brought to the piece a reminder that, ultimately, life wins. The masterful lighting by Stephen Petrilli was sometimes diffused, sometimes concentrated in a claustrophobic cone of light, and sometimes both at once, heightening the effect of the dance. And the ending was shattering.

I think, with time and distance, Lin may tweak a few things. In particular, the duets for the women were not quite as strong as the one for the men. As an immediate and visceral artistic response to the tragedy, however, "Santuario" certainly succeeds. ♦

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers – A Sanctuary of Hope

May 2, 2017 Kat Richter



by Kat Richter for The Dance Journal | photo credit RobLi Photography

Between Koresh, Project Moshen, and Shut Up and Dance, the annual MANNA fundraiser presented by the dancers of Pennsylvania Ballet, there was no shortage of great dance to be had in Philadelphia this past weekend. I found myself at The Prince Theater, for Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers' Sanctuary, a split bill featuring a world premiere of the eponymous Santuario and ONE-Immortal Game, which I had the pleasure of seeing when it debuted in 2013.

Inspired by the game of chess (but expertly avoiding the overly gestural choreography this might suggest) ONE pits two players against one another, perched atop two cubes, hands whirring above an imagery board. Their "moves" become movements, gaining speed and losing their patient, measured quality as the dancers refuse to wait their turns any longer.

The curtain opens to reveal a white grid on the stage. Two "teams" of dancers vie for space, walking, pivoting, slicing their limbs through the through the air. The true inspiration for the piece becomes clear: not just chess, but the frustrating stagnation of the political climate in 2012, when choreographer Kun-Yang Lin first became an American citizen. **The dancing is exquisite**, and returning guest artist Shaness Kemp provides a grounded counterpoint to the coiled energy of veteran dancer Liu Mo, but the players are political parties, and for every inch of ground they seem to gain, the game ends in a stalemate.

We could wring our hands and say little has changed in Congress, but to do so would be to ignore, as Lin rightly points out in his program note, “We are living in a time when it feels as if our very humanity is under siege. There are aggressions against the environment, health care, immigrants and other marginalized people, even the arts. Our SANCTUARIES no longer seem safe. There is an air of oppression. So many unknowns.”

Lin’s work, or at least what I’ve seen of it, always has a spiritual component. There’s usually something political too, but here the oft-used term “offering” is more apt than usual: **Lin and his dancers are giving their audiences something, and on Thursday night, that something was hope.**

Before the premiere of Santuario, Executive Director Ken Metzner explained that the work’s “impulse” comprised the tragic shootings at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. “It was Latin night,” he explained, not sugarcoating the “normalization of hatred” and “demonization of others” that took the lives of nearly 50 young people that night. And yet amidst the paintings, sculptures, poems and photographs left at the site to honor the victims are blank sheets of poster board, markers, and ribbon, urging visitors to create something beautiful as their tribute. This, precisely, is what Lin has done.

A campy club scene begins the work, with the company of dancers dressed in black and ready for a good time. They vogue and vamp, and we almost want to laugh because it’s so much fun but something happens; the dancers freeze and begin to bob their heads like chickens.

Lighting designer Stephen Petrilli is to be commended for the bright diagonals he carves into the space, their steep, funnel-like shapes piercing the darkness. We know what’s happening without exactly seeing it happen as the dancers begin to fall, slow motion, hinting at unspeakable carnage without explicitly rendering it onstage. A series of duets, the first performed by Liu Mo and Nikolai McKenzie, are tender as arms twine in “V” shapes. We’re reminded not just of the people but of the relationships that died that night.

Company veteran Jessica Warchal-King, visibly pregnant, brings another layer to the work. She screams repeatedly, forcing us to think of the parents who lost children and continue to do so, not just at Pulse but at traffic stops, parks, storefronts, and, most recently, leaving a house party.

The dancers conclude by kneeling down to face the audience, reminiscent somehow of Leonardo Da Vinci’s The Last Supper. They remove their black tops to reveal bare chests or flesh colored bras and we no longer see them as men or as women but simply as human, stripped of the costumes that would have us peg them in one box or another.

The catchy refrain of Safe and Sound by Capital Cities comes as a welcome relief as the company bows and I can’t help but feel a little better about the state of the world. **Love will triumph with artists like Kun-Yang Lin adding dance to the arsenal of the resistance.**

THE DANCE ENTHUSIAST

Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers in "One-Immortal Game" & "Santuario"



Freeform Review of Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers // April 27-29th at The Prince Theater:

Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers performed at the Prince Theater last month. The two pieces they performed communicated a larger picture. The first piece, *One-Immortal Game*, is reminiscent of the Chi dance techniques which can be graceful and fierce. The lighting is marked by crisp shadows, and the dancers' turns throw light onto a checker board. The second piece, *Santuario*, comes in many forms, such as acting and just being, as Kun-Yang Lin refers to it, rather than performing. Voices in the music and the dancers' voices added a theatricality. Unity takes shape with groups of dancers and with one dancer alone.

One-Immortal Game is in the realm of two chess players, many chess pieces, and stratagem. This chess board is a modern concept with historical connotations in conceptual art. The meaning of *One-Immortal Game* is in the unity of a one-on-one game, a game of solitude, and the concept of objectivity. The duets naturally evoke a mindset between two players.

There are three cube shaped blocks used as pedestals. Two dancers come out facing each other seated on the cube blocks. It is a metaphorical chess match. Later these blocks are moved around the stage or taken away. These alternating objects unfolds a complexity within the game. The dancers move like the chess pieces and the stage has become the chess board. The dancers are chess pieces, and the chess board becomes crowded with pieces.

In *One-immortal Game* the checkered stage is scattered with different moments of the game. In a game of chess the chess pieces are moved and this changes the outcome of the game. In the dance, the pieces and players become one. The players and the pieces set the stage and are interchangeable.

The strategy of the player is an attack or a hesitation, and weighted decisions become more fluid. The chess board becomes filled with a mass that builds tension. It changed from one-on-one competitiveness to a movement of dancers which rotated and reassembled in unison. They shouted, "Go!" and the next turn was made. It was no longer a game but a state of democracy.

After an intermission, **Santuario** unexpectedly and artistically brings a club vibe. In this piece Kun-Yang Lin is speaking directly to the Orlando shooting that happened last June. At the beginning of the night, Ken Metzner spoke a few words about the impact that this kind of terror brings forward. A sanctuary is a space where it is safe to be free from any judgement. Pulse Night Club in Orlando was that space. The rights for security are important for privacy and expression without discrimination. There was also a relief given to the majority of Spanish dancers that were ripped out of their sanctuary. Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers are using art to raise the issue of equality. Sanctuary is a dance about dancers attacked for being themselves.

The emotional battle to for the strength to re-experience the trauma took perseverance. Jessica Warchal-King described the principles that Kun-Yang Lin promotes in his dance theory, and this includes a sense of being for the audience. For example, Frank Leone reenacted as the gunman and the shrilling screams from Warchal-King darkened the mood. The deranged shooter's laugh or the panic in the victims screams could be described as nightmarish. This play that unfolds within the dance is especially jarring when the lights turn on over the audience. Some of the dancers climb down off the stage. Breaking the fourth wall and staring out at us in a trance forces us to look at this recent history. The combined imagery from *One-Immortal Game* and *Santuario* is a patchwork of visualizing our next move.

Psychology Today



[Kimerer LaMothe Ph.D.](#)
[What a Body Knows](#)

Dancing in the Face of Death

"Santuاريو" and the Pulse nightclub shootings.

Posted Mar 31, 2017

The room was bare. White walls, a gray floor, minimal lighting. The dancers were dressed in black clothes, gathered in a mass in the back corner of the studio. The audience sat on three rows of chairs, our backs to the front wall. I sat among them, at a studio showing of a new dance piece by the Philadelphia based company, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers.

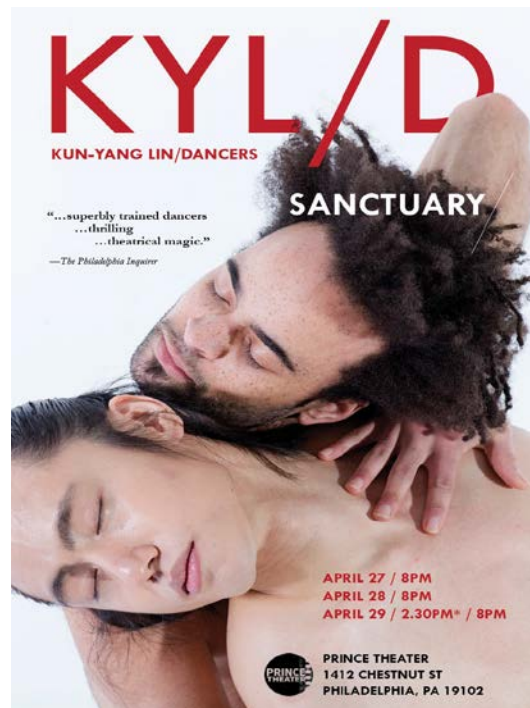
What transpired over the course of the next forty minutes shocked me back into a clear, recurring realization of how dancing serves, perhaps uniquely, to buoy and nurture humanity in the face of tragedy.

The dance piece was *Santuاريو* (Sanctuary). It was inspired by the deadly shootings of forty-nine people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 11, 2016. What I was to see was only a fragment of the piece, yet it was enough to pose the question: what response is possible to an event that is so horrific, not just for the gay community or the Hispanic community, but for anyone who has known and loved a gay person, or Hispanic person, or any other person?

The lights dimmed. The music began.

In the beginning, there was joy. In their clump, the ten dancers pulsed harmoniously together. Each was an individual, with his or her own signature style. Each was paying attention to the others, moving without conflict or collision.

The movement expanded into longer phrases that evoked club dancing. The dancers spread throughout the space. As we learned later, each dancer created his or her own sequence, as a personal exploration and expression of freedom and joy. Kun-Yang expertly wove these phrases together in a vibrant tapestry that folded and unfolded in space. A pair of men broke out of the group into a duet. Then one pair of women, and another, drawing the audience's attention into the details of their relationships.



The range of freedom shrank. The dancers found themselves in a line, or a line-up, stretched across the stage. Under surveillance. Being watched. Watching those who were watching them. They tried to recreate their sequences of joy in this restricted space, without moving too much; without bumping into one another; without drawing too much attention to themselves. Their movements registered a sense of oppression, not from one another, but from their common location in the line. Easy targets.

The line broke up. When a woman ran in from the back screaming in horror, I jumped in my seat. Harsh, leering slashes of hatred exploded from the stage, passing from dancer to dancer in waves, like a virulent infection. Everyone was engulfed, [laughing](#) cruelly; rolling on the floor; jumping up; shooting into the sky. Chaos reigned.

The group of dancers gathered in the back corner. They were in the same place where they had been just minutes before, but everything was different. The group was ravaged by an invisible scar. The dancers leaned on one another, swaying and cradling one another, without allowing any one of them to fall to the floor.

It was just an excerpt of what the company will perform at the Prince Theater in a month. But it reminded me of how dance is transformative.

At one level, a dance tells a story, in this case, loosely acting out a tragic event, not literally, but in an abstract, symbolic manner.

Yet a dance is never just telling a story. Because there, in front of you, are bodily selves – whole humans – beautiful, strong, lithe, expressive bodily selves. And they are moving. They are pouring their attention, their time, their energy, their [love](#) into making these kinetic images. The pain they depict bleeds out in their sweat and our tears.

Because of the dancing in *Santuario*, the devastation of the Pulse shooting registers at a sensory level. It is felt viscerally. The victim is me. The shooter is me. The ache is greater. But so too is the joy. The joy is never abstract. The joy is never absent. It is forever coursing through moving bodily selves and felt as a rousing affirmation of life by those in the audience who bear witness to it.

In *Santuario*, pain and joy, despair and celebration erupt simultaneously in a such a way that the pain expands, softens and becomes more pliant; the joy radiates, and grows more [resilient](#). New insights and options for response emerge.

The ability of dance to deliver this combination of deep physicality and heightened [empathy](#) is not an invention of the modern period. It may be as old as human culture, present in the traditions with the longest histories. It is comforting to know that, as hard as certain elements of modern culture have tried to extinguish it, this dance still thrives.

Dance has agency in its ability to stir and catalyze acute awareness of pain and a loving, whole human response to it at the same time. The very movements that make our pain evident, visceral, and communal are the same movements that exercise our only hope of acting otherwise.

For more information: <http://www.kyld.org>

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Mike Hurwitz

Kun-Yang Lin / Dancers: Occupying The Spaces Between by Kalila Kingsford Smith

In preparation for their upcoming performance, *SANCTUARY*, [Kun-Yang Lin / Dancers](#) offers a series of in-studio showings that highlight how choreographer Kun-Yang Lin creates his works. These feature excerpts of *SANTUARIO*, to premiere [this month at the Prince Theater](#), and *ONE: Immortal Game*, a reimagining of a work that Lin created in 2013. Lin speaks to the audience about his creative process, answers questions, and discusses his philosophy surrounding his choreography and dance technique, which he calls Chi Awareness.

An upbeat song fills the room as the lights rise on a clump of dancers in the upstage corner. Their movements are familiar—I see voguing, whacking, the robot—they are ever-changing, much like dancing you’d see at a club. Imagining myself in that clump, I don’t mind our closeness, our crowdedness. There is joy there. There is heat.

After each dancer comes forward in a happy display of their personality, the whole group tumbles to the front of the space. They land before the audience in a straight line. Each dancer looks forward, but in a slightly different direction. Their stillness and seriousness is shocking after so much joyous energy. They isolate their heads—sharp little shifts in focus—and I begin to see it, the horror. Each dancer’s eyes tell a different story, but I can tell they are witnessing the same unspeakable event.

Lin developed *SANTUARIO* as a response to the shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. Affected deeply by those events, he asks the question: how does one respond to a horrible heartbreaking event, an attack on one’s personal identity? His answer: counter it with joy. Rather than a retelling of the events at Pulse, *SANTUARIO* strings together sequences of movement that

were created with 'joy' in mind and embedded within impulses and images that have taken hold in Lin's creative mind since the shooting.

The dancers disperse into swirling chaotic phrases. Four emerge as the embodiment of hate: mocking laughter and aggressive postures. They link arms and walk backwards, pressing the remaining dancers into a smaller and smaller clump, bodies scrambling to get out, bodies trapped behind this wall. Imagining myself in that clump, this time I mind our closeness, our crowdedness. There is fear there. There is heat.

Lin mentions that he hopes to lead the audience through the discomfort of these images and into a greater sense of resolve by the end of *SANTUARIO*. But he also says that there is value in living between the comfortable and the uncomfortable. He embraces the contradiction in the hopes of finding equilibrium. This concept is the basis for Lin's Chi Awareness technique.



ONE: Immortal Game, Dancers: Liu Mo, Shaness Kemp, Grace Stern, and Keila Pérez-Vega, Photo: Mike Hurwitz

Before showing excerpts from *ONE: Immortal Game*, Lin passes around two photos. One is the familiar Yin-Yang symbol. The other is a picture of a crowd gathered around a Chinese Chess game. The players and the spectators all focus intently on the board. Lin started this process in 2012, when Obama's reelection was causing political anxiety. This context led him to consider the polarization and often blatant disregard for one's opponent in the world of political debate. This he contrasted with the competitive, yet respectful, etiquette embedded within a game of chess.

Dancer Liu Mo and guest artist Shaness Kemp approach three wooden cubes at the front of the stage. They dip into a slow bow before sitting cross-legged on two cubes, the third centered between them. Mo slices his arm to the high diagonal, folds it back in, gestures toward the surface of the block, and returns to a neutral position. Kemp gestures similarly, crossing her arm across her chest, rolling her hands around each other and points to the block. At every gesture, they shout words—Kemp repeats “King. Queen. Bishop. Knight. Rook.” Mo repeats what I assume is the equivalent in Mandarin. They exchange ‘turns’ back and forth a number of times, speeding up and gaining aggression until they end up slicing toward the ‘board’ in near unison. Eventually, they make their final moves, stand, bow towards each other, and exit to opposite sides of the space, the ritual complete.

Presenting these oppositional forces while maintaining a sense of integrity seems to be Lin’s intention for *ONE: Immortal Game*. Chinese chess is a metaphor for life. It requires strategy—moving with an understanding of your pathway—but it also requires improvisation, as your course could change in response to your opponent’s move. It is concentration, focus, precision, and awareness of both self and other. This is yin-yang. This is Chi Awareness.



Kun-Yang Lin in *Mandala*, 2013, Photo: Bill Hebert

With a simple walking pattern—step, step, together, turn—we maneuver through each other in a grid-like pathway. There are fifteen students in class, all walking through the space and towards each other. I have to sense my own pathway—deciding which direction I turn. I also have to be aware of the distances between bodies and the relative speeds of the dancers around me in order to avoid any collisions. Internally, this feels like the coexistence of the internal and external, me inside of the community. We are aware of the spaces in-between us.

Though I have been frequenting his class this year, I'm only now starting to understand what Lin means by Chi Awareness as it applies to dance practice. We always begin with an independent improvisation, moving through more technical exercises before we reach a culminating vigorous combination. Lin calls into focus how we are breathing and how we *become* the essence of a shape. We are not just dancing solo; we are energizing the space around us. There is resistance and information in those empty spaces. There is no separation between right and left, inhale and exhale, internal and external, positive and negative. It is the coexistence of opposite forces, and the embracing of both. Chi Awareness is about occupying those spaces in between.

At the end of class, we return to the breath, standing in a circle, both aware of our internal energies and the energy of the group. Slowly we move together, sensing each other's presence, responding to each other's impulses. We end up in a clump, sensing not by sight but by warmth. We move in and around each other's empty spaces with delicacy and respect. I am inside of this clump, and I don't mind our closeness, our crowdedness. There is love here. There is heat.

SANCTUARY, [Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers](http://princetheater.org/events/kun-yang-lin-dancers/), Prince Theater, April 27-29. Tickets:
<http://princetheater.org/events/kun-yang-lin-dancers/>

Pre-Show Encounters, CHI Movement Arts Center, *Deconstructing SANTUARIO*, March 30,
Deconstructing ONE: Immortal Game, April 13.

By Kalila Kingsford Smith
April 23, 2017

Dance company explores hot-button issues in benefit performances

[Larry Nichols](#)

April 20, 2017



The Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, the internationally active Philadelphia-based dance company, will perform the world premiere of a work inspired by the Pulse Nightclub shootings in a show called “Sanctuary.”

The show features “SANTUARIO,” a new work choreographed by Kun-Yang Lin with his ensemble, created in response to last summer’s tragic shooting at the LGBT club in Orlando. The work explores themes of alienation, gender identity, race relations, gun violence and demonization of “the other.” The piece will be accompanied by a score designed by Cory Neale and excerpts from Jameson Fitzpatrick’s “Poem for Pulse.”

The out Lin, who founded the company with his partner and executive director Kurt Metzner, is known internationally for his choreography, which is influenced by his Buddhist and Taoist world views. He also draws inspiration from the many Eastern arts he has practiced, including tai chi, chi gong, calligraphy and meditation, filtered through a broad range of contemporary dance techniques and improvisation practices.

Lin said the Pulse tragedy was especially disturbing for him and Metzner, and both felt like they had to address the tragedy in their art.

“Both of us are LGBT community members and there was something [about the Pulse shooting] that really bothered me,” he said. “It’s a fear that hit me so close to that sense of home. I create a world called home and this situation is really where you feel like something has been taken away. Pulse was really an attack on the queer community and many other labels in our society. I just wanted to do something that was more empowering, and yet, something that is so simple and small can resonate with some people. That was the seed that gave me the impulse to make this work.”

The Kun-Yang Lin Dancers are donating \$5 of every ticket sold to New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, William Way LGBT Community Center and Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia.

Metzner said he and Lin were inspired to support these local organizations after a visit to Orlando.

“We traveled to the Pulse Nightclub as part of the research for the work,” he said. “It’s very unlike a lot of memorials because it is interactive. They have candles and paper and poster board and magic markers and ribbons and ways for people to engage with the memorial so that those lives that were taken can continue to have an impact in the world. One of the things that the families of those who were lost and those associated with the survivors have specifically requested at the memorial is that you please create something of beauty. That’s a request from the victims, and they have a box of ribbons there at the memorial with a sign that says, ‘Please take a ribbon and photograph yourself doing something happy.’ We brought back a bunch of ribbons to our studio and we feel that is a way of honoring that request, by creating something of beauty, of introspection, of healing in keeping with that request of the survivors’ families.”

“SANTUARIO” is being performed alongside an acclaimed and revised Kun-Yang Lin piece, “ONE: Immortal Game,” a meditation on the journey from external division to internal oneness.

“I paired it with this piece particularly because of our political climate,” Lin said. “Everything right now isn’t for our self-interest; we are living in a time where everything is threatened and we are under attack. So I thought I’d pair these two pieces because they are about our own political division. But the works search that reflective and mindful consciousness and integrity in that division. It’s really about love and humanity. One proceeds from an embodied exploration of some of the more obvious parallels between chess and dance to an examination, via the dancing body, of the less apparent but compelling resonances I see, including the utility of both chess and dance as holistic vehicles for the development of an integrated human being, and chess as an art and a practice for living, which is how I conceive of dance. Just as chess includes, and is not limited to, the pieces, the chessboard and the way the pieces are moved on the board, so, too, dance is not confined merely to the shapes, the forms, the space and the bodies that make them. The totality of each of them is much more than that. It includes the stories communicated or explored on the board/in the space, the personal processes of the players/dancers. The dynamics among them, the

politico-historical context in which the game/dance plays out, and ultimately, in my view, the relationship of all of this to our common humanity.”

Lin said that, while the two pieces that make up “Sanctuary” deal with the tragedies and the politics of our turbulent times, they aren’t necessarily exploring those issues directly, as Lin prefers to express what he wants to say in an abstract fashion.

“Dance cannot really tell a story but dance has the ability to bring people a feeling,” he said. “You can deeply feel what is going on. Sometimes we feel sympathy. Sometimes we feel shock. But even though these are abstractions, we can all feel them. Right now, this society feels that sense of brokenness and maybe it’s our responsibility to contribute art to try to make our way to repair or rebuild this wounded society. These two works are touching on a lot of issues. We’re talking about gun violence, health care, hatred, bullying and polarizing division in our country. I think people will associate with both of the pieces deeply because of what is happening in our world right now.”

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers presents “Sanctuary” April 27-29 at Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut St. For more information or tickets, call 215-422-4580 or visit www.kyld.org or <http://bit.ly/KYLDPrince2017>.

Entertainment » Culture

New Ballet Offers an Elegy for Pulse Victims

by Lewis Whittington
EDGE Media Network Contributor
Wednesday Apr 26, 2017

Company members of the Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers in "Santuario."



In the aftermath of the shootings at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando last June, choreographer Kun-Yang Lin knew right away that he wanted to create a work that would honor those lost, injured and the LGBTQ community that stood in solidarity against hate. Since then Lin has been developing the ballet with his ten-member company Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers. Titled "**Santuario**," the ballet will have its premiere

this week at the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia. It is paired with "ONE: Immortal Game" one of the company's signature ballets.

In the weeks leading up to the opening run, Lin had the dancers refine the choreography and discuss the piece in the company's studios in South Philly. Lin knows that the material is challenging for the dancers and his choreography, some of it with violent imagery that involved real people, is emotionally difficult for the dancers.

Lin said from the start he wanted everyone to be free to express their feelings about this project," which, Lin notes, "took us a while. "I wanted to digest that information and those emotions through our creative process. How it has affected us and entering into a collective way to approach it and deciding what is most essential in response to this tragedy. You always want to empower the dancers, so they maintain a sense of creative ownership."

A living memorial

Because of the challenges of depicting a real tragic event Lin said that there was inevitable discussion on how much attention would be on the killer. "I didn't want to focus on the killer, because that is a part of something much larger," Lin explains.

Jessica Warchal-King, longtime member of the company who is expecting a baby in July, says that the experiences of working on the piece has been an emotional challenge, but that it was one of the most rewarding dance projects she has been a part of.



Ken Mentzer, Lin's husband and executive director of KYL/Dancers, traveled to Florida to visit the Pulse Nightclub to get a sense of how the community was doing in the aftermath of the killings. The club is still closed and plans for reopening have not been announced. Mentzer recalls the experience being there was more powerful than he expected. The outside of the building has become a testament to the tragedy with people contributing artwork, poetry, sculpture and photos of those who lost their lives, reflecting of the impact the shootings continue to have on the community.

"Survivors and families of those lost have made it very much a living memorial, not just to look but to participate and honor the memory. It is so powerful," Mentzer says.

In the opening scenes of "Santuario" Lin has each dancer create his own solo to be danced during a propulsive club track. It is a liberated social dance mosaic with the company in flash dances of vogue, salsa, couples partnering and friends joyously moving together. Lin viewed Pulse as a sanctuary for the LGBTQA people and other minorities. On the night of shooting, the club was hosting a Latino night. Composer Cory Neale, a frequent collaborator in Lin's ballets, has composed original music for the score and soundscape that also include elegiac choral music of Arvo Part.

An alarming subtext



Soon, those scenes of joy and solidarity are replaced by confusion, terror, mayhem and a concussive din of violent sounds. Indeed, Lin doesn't sugarcoat imagery that depicts murder, terror and violent imagery. Even though LGBTQ artists have always been part of dance companies and communities, gay cultural issues and gay life is rarely depicted on the dance stage. Lin's subtext is the alarming rise and tolerance of anti-immigrant and antigay hate surfacing in America and

around the world.

As stirring as "Santuario" is with elegiac ensemble sections throughout the 40-minute piece, there are equally moving same-sex duets depicting lesbian couples and gay male partners expressing their love in intimate dance. A gay male couple kisses passionately while they are dancing and Lin wanted to use that image directly because the shooter's father told authorities and the press that his son was "incensed" by having to see that in public.

After the run-through Mentzer observes what he finds remarkable about Kun-Yang's duets: "I feel like I'm going into someone's mind, and what they are feeling in my own mind and heart. If you peel back the layers of what's happening in any kind of sanctuary- a church, a club... people are relating to each other on a very deep level. And at Pulse, they were robbed of that in an instant."

Over the years the KYL/D has always been diverse and inclusive, "We have gay dancers and straight dancers, people of color; we have someone who is an evangelical Christian. Our ensemble of dancers is our own sanctuary," Mentzer said.

Lin is renowned for its fusion of Asian classicism and Chinese opera movement and multi-genre contemporary idioms. Many of his ballets often have incorporate symbolic rituals, sacred dance and ecumenical spiritual themes. Lin emigrated from Taiwan, established his company in New York City, then relocating to Philadelphia where he and Mentzer established the CHI Movement Arts Center, which has become a nexus for Philadelphia dance, performance and education.



Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers presents "Santuario" April 27-29 at Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut St. For more information or tickets, call 215-422-4580 or visit [visit the company's website](#).*

**Join KYL/D for conversation after the matinee performance 4/29*

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D) will donate \$5 of EVERY ticket sold to be shared by: New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia; William Way LGBT Community Center and Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia.

Lewis Whittington writes about the performing arts and gay politics for several publications.

Comments

-  **Anonymous, 2017-04-26 17:07:09** Lin's work is visceral and evocative. Not to be missed
-  **Anonymous, 2017-04-26 17:08:11** Art as witness and as an act of resistance. Essential!

Top Things to Do in Philadelphia in April 2017

Opening of the Museum of the American Revolution, the NFL Draft, big street festivals and more

April is shaping up to be a monumental month in Philadelphia with a major museum opening, a huge sporting event and the start of blockbuster spring festivals throughout the area.

After much anticipation, the Museum of the American Revolution opens its doors on April 19 with rare artifacts, interactive exhibitions and more that all celebrate Philadelphia as a world headquarters during the Revolution.

A few days after the museum opens its doors, the NFL Draft — one of the biggest sporting events of the year — fills the Benjamin Franklin Parkway with a ton of free fan events, the chance to meet current and former football players and more.

And in the coming weeks, the city celebrates cultures and subjects of all sort with festivals like the Philadelphia Science Festival, Philly Tech Week, the Cherry Blossom Festival, Flavors on the Avenue and more.

Check out our guide to April events in Philly, below.

Kun-Yang at the Prince Theater

April 27-29, 2017

The local modern dance troupe takes the stage at the Prince Theater for a show of innovative contemporary dance fused with classic Asian dance techniques.

[More about Kun-Yang at the Prince Theater](#)

“superbly trained dancers...thrilling...theatrical magic.” –
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Lin’s dances “create and inhabit worlds of their own.” –
The New York Times

April 27-29, 2017

Prince Theater | Main Stage

Read more: http://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/top-12-things-to-do-in-april-in-philadelphia/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=VisitPhillyFacebook&utm_content=Social

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TimeOut

Philadelphia

Things to do

KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS (KYL/D)



KYL/D
KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS

SANCTUARY/

"...superbly trained dancers
...thrilling
...theatrical magic."
- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

APRIL 27 / 8PM
APRIL 28 / 8PM
APRIL 29 / 2.30PM* / 8PM

PRINCE THEATER
1412 CHESTNUT ST.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102



"superbly trained dancers...thrilling...theatrical magic." – The Philadelphia Inquirer

Lin's dances "create and inhabit worlds of their own." – The New York Times

April 27-29, 2017

Prince Theater | Main Stage

Reserved Seating: \$22 to \$38

Run-time: 90 minutes, including intermission



Uwishunu – Philadelphia Blog About Things to Do, Events, Restaurants, Food, Nightlife and More

Dance Picks

Posted [April 6, 2017](#) by [Christopher Munden](#)

10 Stunning Dance Shows In Philadelphia This April

Spring puts a spring in everyone's step, so it's fitting that there are a host of enticing dance shows in Philadelphia this April.

There's something for every gait, as world-class ballet, modern dance and cutting-edge movement artists all show off their work this month.

Here are 10 shows we'll run — not walk — to see.

Kun-Yang Lin Dancers Home Season at Prince Theater



The complex poetic choreography of Kun-Yang Lin Dancers includes a [new work](#) inspired by the recent mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub.

When: April 27-29

Where: Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street

Cost: \$22-\$38

www.princetheater.org

4月27-29日林坤陽舞團將在Prince Theater推出年度現代舞主題展演《庇護聖堂》 ——一部世界首演新作品和一部舞團經典劇目

KYL/D

KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS

林坤陽舞團
 聯系人：趙玲苑Maggie
 電話：267.687.3739
 郵箱：Maggie@kyld.org

演出時間：4月27-28日晚8點4月29日，下午2：30 & 晚8點
 票價：\$22-\$38
 售票網站：<http://bit.ly/KYLDPrince2017> 售票電話：215.422.4580
 劇院地址：1412 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19102



劉沫 & Nikolai McKenzie in SANTUARIO (庇護聖堂) 攝影：Rob Li

費城林坤陽舞團將於4月27-29日出現代舞主題展演《庇護聖堂》。此次的展演是一場以舞蹈藝術形式來呈現文化種族多元化的深度冥想與包容，一場用舞蹈語匯對人性真、善、美的探索，更是一場卓越舞蹈技藝的視覺盛宴。本年度林坤陽舞團的舞蹈展演《庇護聖堂》，由兩部舞劇組合而成。一部是本年度林坤陽舞團的世界首演作品《聖堂》，它是一種憑借舞蹈編演來向曾經發生在奧蘭多Pulse俱樂部槍擊慘案的回應與悼念。另一部作品是舞團的經典保留劇目《不朽棋局》——以棋悟人生，人生如下棋，輸贏游走于遊戲，進與攻、捨與得卻活在自我內心戲。

新舞劇《聖堂》是由總導演林坤陽攜手與他的舞者共同孕育而成的新作。該舞劇的編創初衷是向那場殘酷的奧蘭多Pulse槍擊案深深地悼念。而在作品的編創過程中，這個單一的“初衷”在總導演林坤陽與他舞者們的反思下，映射出了更多政治因素、并連帶出了更多向自我與社會的發問和探索。例如，人與人之間的敵意從何而來？種族與種族間需要怎樣去求得和諧且相對平等的關聯性？我們是如何將那些“奇怪”的歷類人群妖魔化？而作為移民者，我們又如何在這片土地找到一個安全的地方栖居？而這些發問，讓總導演林坤陽帶領他的舞者們一同以舞蹈藝術來探索人性最難能可貴的真、善、美。該作品的音樂選自于 Reggasoca, Arvo Part, 和 Jameson Fitzpatrick 的 “Poem for Pulse” 音樂專輯，後期特別邀請音效設計師 Cory Neale 進行音效制作。

總導演林坤陽精心挑選了舞團保留作品《不朽棋局》與新作品《聖堂》。舞劇《不朽棋局》是林坤陽舞團以現代舞藝術創作的形式探索人性。俗話說：人生如戲亦如棋，真假進退，步步為營。該舞劇以棋局擬人性，不僅體現了一場內在與外在的格鬥，分與合之間的較量，它更是一場從混亂分歧中尋找團結與和諧的夢想體驗。總導演林坤陽曾說過：“我在編創《不朽棋局》過程中，看到了象棋與舞蹈的諸多相似之處，我希望通過我的舞蹈編創把我所感受到的共鳴分享并呈現到作品中。象棋和舞蹈不僅僅是藝術，更是生活的實踐，而我的舞蹈就是從這些實踐裏孕育而成。”他補充解釋道：“象棋是旗子間在棋盤上的鬥智鬥勇，不局限于部件本身，是戰略帶領着旗子游走。而舞蹈編創，更不單局限于形狀、形式、空間以及身體。每一個舞者在空間都有它獨特的意義，

無論是靜止的還是流動的，他們就如棋盤上的旗子，每一次呼吸和舞動，都是在尋找他們與空間、與他人、與棋盤的關係，而這，也是我們活在這個世界上一直在尋找的人性共通性。”

林坤陽舞團簡介

坐落于費城南部的林坤陽舞團致力於探索肉體與靈魂的無畏共鳴，憑借其訓練有素的舞者、獨特的舞蹈編創風格、以及國際上活躍的展演而備受關注。林坤陽舞團堅持通過塑造個體與群體的意識、邀請觀眾積極參與其中，來進行一場自我探索發現的旅程。林坤陽的舞蹈編創思想來源于亞洲不同的哲學理念來觀察與思考框框條條中的傳統生活，超越了文化的界限，也孕育出獨特的當代舞蹈風格。舞團藝術總導演林坤陽的舞蹈是在禪宗思想的啟發下，呈現出充滿詩情畫意的舞蹈編創，《紐約時報》形容他們的舞蹈是：“栖居在他們創造出的時空中。”

林坤陽舞團首席舞者

劉沫，畢業于北京舞蹈學院古典舞表演教育專業，在校期間曾在各項演出比賽中取得優異成績，如第八屆中國國家一級舞蹈比賽“桃李杯”中獲得A級男子少年甲組三等獎。作為舞團的首席舞者，劉沫于2012年加入林坤陽舞團，多年來，排練廳和舞臺的寶貴經驗，劉沫越發了解如何靈活運用自己豐富的舞蹈經驗，把中國古典舞的身法技巧與西方現代舞的抽象表現形式相結合，從而，完美的呈現舞團總導演林坤陽對中西舞蹈藝術的追求。在舞團經典保留劇目《不朽棋局》裏，劉沫以剛柔并進的動作質感，精彩詮釋出了象棋間的進攻、防守的巧妙關係。在總導演林坤陽眼裏，劉沫是唯一一名完美呈現他年輕時成名獨舞劇目《月舞》的傳人，更是舞團裏的代表靈魂人物。



馬薇薇 in ONE: Immortal Game (不朽棋局) 編導：林坤陽

馬薇薇，畢業于中國人民解放軍藝術學院舞蹈編導專業，畢業于美國天普大學MFA藝術碩士學位。在中國，馬薇薇曾多次為全軍做匯報演出，為中國各大電視媒體編創舞蹈。2013年，馬薇薇來到美國天普大學開始探索美國西方現代舞編創，并勵志探索東方與西方的舞蹈藝術創作結晶。2016年三月，馬薇薇的原創舞蹈作品“Transformation”——一支含有東方文化的當代三人舞，代表天普大學參加2016年美國大學生舞蹈節。馬薇薇與林坤陽的結緣于天普大學，林坤陽曾是馬薇薇的研究生導師。無論是在天普大學林坤

陽的現代舞課上、林坤陽舞團的公開現代舞課裏、還是在燈光布滿的舞臺上，馬薇薇總是以幹淨、利索、通透的舞姿脫穎而出。就如林坤陽所述：“薇薇的性格和她的藝術修養一樣，就如一朵綻放在陽光下的百合，純淨，不含任何雜質。”

排練指導/導演助理

趙玲苑 (Maggie)，畢業于美國北卡羅來納格林斯伯勒分校MFA藝術碩士舞蹈編導專業。趙玲苑曾在中國接受10年舞蹈專業訓練：芭蕾舞、中國古典舞、中國民族民間舞、現當代舞、舞蹈編創等，并對結合多樣的舞蹈風格產生強烈的興趣。2008年殘奧委會開幕式《飛翔》作品中，趙玲苑擔任主要舞蹈演員和編導助理，在中國兒童音樂劇網擔任舞蹈形體教師、在大型音樂劇《歌聲伴着我成長》擔任舞蹈編導和總導演助理。在美國，趙玲苑結合中美文化和世界人文全球化的基礎下，探索屬於中國的“中國當代舞藝術”和“包含中國特色的高等舞蹈教育學理念。”在留美深造期間，趙玲苑在北卡羅來納格林斯伯勒分校舞蹈學院擔任助教，負責芭蕾舞、現代舞、世界舞蹈、舞蹈基礎知識和舞蹈鑒賞教學。趙玲苑與2015年加入林坤陽舞團，負責排練指導和基本功訓練，并代表舞團在美國高等教育高峰論壇進行演講。她試圖以一種通俗易懂的方式將林坤陽的中西合并藝術理念貫穿于排練和基本功訓練裏，從而使舞團的美國舞者對林坤陽的藝術追求和理念有更深一步的了解。

總導演/藝術總監，林坤陽

出生于臺灣的林坤陽是一名舞蹈藝術家、藝術教育家。他的舞蹈藝術創作形態在道家以及禪宗思想的影響下，尋找東方與西方文化的交叉路口，堅持探索有形與無形、創新與傳統、個體與群體的平衡。《紐約時報》稱：“林坤陽舞蹈編創的獨特性是把東方的傳統文化和西方的抽象現代感結合在一起，有一股好似木刻印刷的強大力量。”因此，林坤陽的舞蹈深受海內外評論家和觀眾的好評。《舞蹈雜誌》形容林坤陽的舞蹈藝術“好像運輸生命的源泉，憑借舞蹈傳達人文精神，以卓越的舞蹈呈現把我們帶回到人性的始端。”林坤陽的舞蹈藝術理念在佛學與道家學派世界觀的影響下，注重內在能動力的練習，如太極、太極宮、書法和冥想；同時，也在橫跨文化領域研究中探索當代舞蹈藝術創作技法和即興創作實踐，追求身、心、精氣為一體的舞蹈藝術呈現。作為一名美籍華裔移民，林坤陽的經歷為他的藝術創作鋪墊了濃厚的東方傳統文化色彩和現、當代的西方突破性的舞蹈藝術創作手段。林坤陽以舞蹈形式呈現實踐研究，被當代評論家稱贊為林坤陽的當代舞突破了舞蹈種類標籤、超越了刻板的舞蹈形態動勢。林坤陽舞團在國家藝術基金會、Pew Center文化藝術遺產、the MidAtlantic藝術基金、獨立基金和Jerome Robbins基金會的支持下，在美國以及世界多個國家精彩展演，如紐約林肯中心、Jacob's Pillow、德國Tanzmesse國際舞蹈節等。

林坤陽舞團演員：Jessixa Waechal-King, Evalina Carbonell, Brian Cordova, Annelille Gavino-Kollman, 劉沫, 馬薇薇, Nikolai McKenzie, Grace Stern, Frank Leone, Keila Perez-Vega, Frankie Markocki (Apprentice) and Shaness Kemp (former KYLD artist & guest performer).

THE DANCE Journal®

a publication of PhiladelphiaDANCE.org

American Dance Abroad checks out the Philly scene

July 31, 2017 | Lewis J. Whittington | Lew's Danceland



by Lewis J Whittington for The Dance Journal | photo courtesy ADA

Established in 2009, American Dance Abroad was established to assist and support US dance artists in expanding their international reach and facilitate opportunities for them on stages all over the world. The organization embarks on 'Recon' tours around the US with programmers from several countries to engage with American dance artists and see their work. On July 27, ADA's co-directors Carolinda Dickey and Andrea Snyder, brought eight international programmers from four continents on their 7th 'recon' in Philadelphia before stops in New York and Jacob's Pillow. The contingent spent all day dropping in on several studio rehearsals of area dancers and capped off the day at a concert at the Performance Garage in Fairmount. On the program were works by Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, Kun-Yan Lin/Dancers, Megan Bridge and BalletX.

There was a distinct air of dance occasion right out of the gate as Garage artistic director Jeanne Ruddy welcomed the audience of local dance professionals, ADA directors, the programmers and arriving just in time, former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell.

Moments later, everyone's attention was riveted on the arresting images of Kosoko's 'Séancers' described as a "journey into the surreal and fantastical states of the Black imagination axis of abstraction, illegibility, identity and gender multiplicity."

At center stage, IMMA Asher is collapsed in a pool of light, writhing and surrounded by deflated masks fetish dolls, Trump masks and fright wigs and Kosoko downstage at the end of a trail of tulle. IMMA and Kosoko in black and white bodygloves with symbolic African symbols on them and donning hideous nylon facemasks with long fire-orange hair. "I have not been able to touch the destruction within me." From black lesbian poet Audrey Lorde's poem Power is the refrain that ushers in Kosoko's surreal world of colliding political realities, and social justice polemic.

They circle each other, ritualistically, heads twirling with the hair looking their heads are on fire. It is a primal dance scream and polemical incantation. Later, Kosoko starts to pull off his nylon mask, puts on white lipstick as he flawlessly lip-syncs black civil-rights leader Ruby Sales' recent speech about the state we are in now politically and a new era of open racism. IMMA meanwhile appears in gold glitter in a convulsive solo. This 20-minute excerpt of an obviously complex 70- minute work, was at a certain disadvantage, but Kosoko's choreography, visuals and text nevertheless commanded attention.

Next, KYL/Dancer's Santuario also takes on serious social justice themes and was presented in its entirety. The work had its premiere at the Prince Theater in the Spring also dealt with social justice issues, in memorializing the victims of the Pulse Massacre that claimed 50 lives.

The opening movement is a joyous depiction of the Orlando GLBTQ community on Latin night at Pulse in liberated club dance to the track 'Wake Up.' The partying is soon overtaken by disturbing voices and harrowing sounds. Mayhem ensues, There are screams, sounds of panic, concussive movements where dancers seem suspended in space. Lin's imagery doesn't dwell on the carnage that occurred, but it doesn't back away from it either. Lin's final passage is a stirring movement elegy, as their bodies entwine over the stage, suggest passage, metaphysical

dignity of the body. This performance of Santuario was minus some of the technical precision-voiceovers of antigay preachers and politicians were drowned out by the choral track and the lighting design wasn't fully realized at key points, but these deficiencies took nothing away from the dancers' performances or the power of Lin's choreography.

Megan Bridge's 'The Backyard' is based on a prose narrative about a relationship between a man and a woman. Bridge and Beau Hancock dance to are the inhabiting the narrative is read over a soundtrack of Indian tabla percussion and piano laced through. Bridge is costumed in red petal pushers and Hancock in a Hawaiian shirt.

Bridge's movement has a sense of immediacy, phrase clarity and mostly both witty and unpredictable lyricism. Sometimes at far ends of the stage observing each other, other times scaling each other's bodies in intricate interlocks and releases, 'The Backyard' suggest physical and emotional space, a territory that Bridge defines with a keen sense of stage composition. Her liberated physical expression, for instance, is still carved out in distinct lines that eventually traverse the depth and expanse of the stage, to great effect. Meanwhile, Bridge and Hancock are hypnotic together.

The choreography is eloquent and witty, with a forward drive that tackles Ashley's baleful narrative, because the dancers are inhabiting his story and embodying these characters. Bridge's choreography defines their intimacy and mystique with wit and pathos that builds over 40 minutes. Not an easy dance trick.

BalletX closed the showcase with Matthew Neenan's 'Credo' choreographed by Neenan and inspired by the people and culture he experienced on a trip to India last year. Scored to music by contemporary composer Kevin Putts and Haydn, Neenan's opening tableaux has the ensemble passages in flat footed, stiff legged skips, arms rigidly out, configurations that are contrasted turn with mise-en-scenes of more expressive dance.

Andrea Yorke flies into a solo and it sets-up a central duet and partnering with Richard Villaverde and Chloe Perkes. But Villaverde and Yorke later also have an intimate duet, so there might be more dance drama to reveal. Meanwhile, Gary Jeter and Roderick Phifer also have a vivid duet featuring muscled balletics. Other couples appear and vanish, but Neenan repeats the some configurations that strike as ponderous. Neenan ending ensemble unison work, though, is fueled with flash duets, explosive layouts and flying arabesques scored to the propulsive drive of Haydn's string quartet no. 76, and by then Credo kicks into high Neenan gear.

Richard Villaverde is finishing out this season with BX and it was particularly poignant to see what will be for the moment his final regular appearance in Philly with his company. Needless to say, this gifted contemporary danseur exited in top form.

In comments after the performance Dickey explained that ADA "tries to fill in the gaps for dance in America because the US doesn't have a cultural policy. We don't have the

infrastructure and support that other countries provide their artists. We try to fill in the gaps so that American artists can compete fairly with non-American artists. Make it possible for international programmers to see American work and to introduce American artists on the international scene.” Stay tuned.

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American Dance Abroad presents a Philadelphia Dance Showcase

Four on the dance floor

Merilyn Jackson

July 31, 2017 in [Dance](#)

The performance was part of a four-company showcase presented by American Dance Abroad, a Pittsburgh-based global dance initiative sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The newly renovated and chic Performance Garage hosted the program Thursday night. Sadly, the show, open to the public, was a sold-out one-night stand, really staged for a half-dozen festival presenters from as many countries and VIPs like our former mayor and governor, Ed Rendell.

Revisiting Pulse

While all the works had deep, even wrenching emotional meanings that evoked various audience reactions, **Kun-Yang Lin's** [Santuario](#), his elegiac dance poem to the 49 dead and 58 wounded victims of last year's Pulse nightclub murders in Orlando, made me weep. They began the dance as clubgoers that night did: to the club mix "Wake Up," bleeding out to a soundscape of confusion, rapid gunfire, and screams, ending in Arvo Pärt's choral music, as composed by **Cory Neale**.

It was Latino night at Pulse, and some of the women dancers fluttered their hands together like flamenco *jaleo*, the clapping that calls people to dance. They landed in heaps as so many must have while trying to escape. In the end, they knelt toward us, arms enchained, undefeated.

For their total commitment to this tragedy, I list all the dancers who had to evince this horror. Many, including choreographer Lin, are immigrants, and the dancers are of every sexual orientation: **Evalina Carbonell, Liu Mo, WeiWei Ma, Grace Stern, Ani Gavino, Nikolai Mckenzie, Keila-Perez Vega, Frank Leone, and Francis Markocki**. I was particularly pleased to see **Mo**, whom Homeland Security almost barred last year. I wrote a letter on his behalf, and it gobsmacks me that he will have to go through the entire process again next year. What kind of people would want to bar this gorgeous talent from our shores? How could they possibly think he's a danger, while the shooter at Pulse was actually an un surveilled American? We should not be bound by ties that blind.

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Diversity highlights the Koresh Come Together Dance Festival

August 20, 2017 | Lewis J. Whittington | Lew's Danceland



Koresh Dance Company's artistic director, Roni Koresh launched The Come Together Dance Festival four years ago as an extension of the dance showcases he has hosted at the company's studios over the years, that has evolved into an ever-expansive collective of regional dance. Despite the success of the first three festivals, Roni and his brother Alon (company executive director) had to skip staging it last year due to lack of funding. They have since regrouped and the 4th annual festival re-convened this week with over 40 regional and national companies performing over five nights of performances and events at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre on Broad Street in Philadelphia. Featuring a deep field in a wide unlimited range of established dance styles and some not so fused disciplines, it is a panoramic view of where dance in America is in ethnic diversity, independent voices and choreographic range. As PHILADANCO director, Joan Myers Brown noted at the last festival discussion of company

artistic directors, Come Together does indeed “Look like America.” Roni and Alon kicked things off on August 16 with a festival champagne toast with the audience in the theater lobby minutes before the curtain went up on opening night. Here are a few capsule review highlights of the first two nights of this year’s festival...

Festival Night One – August 16th

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers | *Santuario* (excerpts) Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers showed excerpts of *Santuario* and this meditative and thought-provoking work honoring the victims of the Pulse Nightclub shootings, premiered last spring and continues to become more eloquent and polished as it deals with very weighty social themes. Lin’s vivid choreographic artistry is both elegiac and a powerful dance polemic.

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