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TAI Body Theatre

Papak

11.30 Sat. 15:00

12.01 Sun. 15:00

Weiwuying Crown Hall 3F (East Terrace)

Duration is 40 minutes without intermission.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Synopsis

"papak" is a Truku term that refers to "foot," primarily used to describe the feet of animals. The word itself also resembles the sound of feet stepping on the ground.

The sound of stomping plays a significant role in "foot-scripts." The quality of the stomping sound is derived from the weight of the dancer, while the intensity of this weight depends on the condition of the individual stepping.

Since 2013, "foot-scripts" have been developed as a foundational body training method for TAI Body Theatre and as a starting point for exploring the relationship between the body and language in performance. In the production Papak, we revisit the relationship between "foot-scripts" and our bodies. When "foot-scripts" transition from a body training method to a performance, how can they retain their openness and diversity? How can the "foot-scripts" present their own contextual narrative on stage?

Foot-scripts: A Body Training System by TAI Body Theatre

During a train journey, as Watan listened to the rhythmic sounds of the train colliding with the tracks, his feet began to move in rhythm. These sounds, combined with the movement of his feet, sparked his inspiration and marked the beginning of the "foot-scripts." Over the following week, Watan recorded 66 sets of these "foot-scripts." Through collaboration and co-creation with dancers from the troupe, the collection has now grown to 82 sets.

As a unique body training system of TAI Body Theatre and a method of choreography, "foot-scripts" have the idea of collecting and notating but do not aim for uniformity or precision among individuals. The freedom and gaps within this recording method allow each practitioner/dancer to adjust the movements according to their personality, physical characteristics, body habits, and internalize them into their body.

Article

By WEI Wan-jung (OISTAT executive director)

In Crown Hall East, two performances create a striking dialogue: *Papak* explores our personal histories through movement, while *A Dancer's Odyssey* examines dance through cultural memory.

A Dancer's Odyssey, created by Jan MÖLLMER, begins with a simple yet profound question: "I became a dancer because..." Working with six dancers from Kaohsiung, MÖLLMER traces their origins - from birthplaces to their first encounters with dance - weaving together a tapestry of personal journeys. True to its title's epic implications, the piece extends beyond individual narratives. In an era of political complexity, MÖLLMER suggests these personal stories carry particular resonance, offering powerful connections across divides.

Papak, a TAI Body Theatre production choreographed by Watan Tusi, introduces the innovative concept of "foot notation." Similar to musical scores that guide musicians, foot notation maps the dancers' paths across the stage. This unique training method, developed by TAI Body Theatre, transcends individual indigenous traditions. The word "Papak" itself carries multiple meanings - human feet, animal feet, or the sound of footsteps. Breaking from the conventional conservatory dance styles, the piece reveals Watan Tusi's years of artistic research. As a scholar-choreographer known for his thoughtful approach, Tusi sees dance as more than movement - it's a lens through which communities understand their experiences. The piece weaves in the history of the Truku people, from their forced migrations to their weaving traditions. Each step in *Papak* resonates with cultural meaning.

About the Company



TAI Body Theatre

TAI Body Theatre was founded in 2013 by Truku choreographer Watan Tusi. In its early days, the dance company utilized an iron-clad hut situated under the Nongbing Bridge in Hualien City for rehearsals. It served as an experimental space to explore new body vocabulary inspired by indigenous cultures.

“TAI”, originating from the Truku language, means “to see” or “to observe”. This selected term signifies Watan's gaze and contemplation of traditional indigenous culture, artistic director Watan pondered the following question: “In addition to traditional rituals or tourist performances, are there any new possibilities for indigenous music and dance?”

Since 2013, Watan has found inspiration in the sound of trains as they traverse rails and the rhythmic movement of his feet. Gradually, he has discovered the profound connection between the movement of his feet and the earth beneath them. So far, he has meticulously documented over 80 styles of foot-scripts. Through each process of creative deconstruction and reorganization, novel bodily expressions and dance forms have emerged. The dance troupe employs traditional ritual music and dance as fundamental physical training for its members. Body movements then evolve from the TAI concept and its intricate foot-scripts. The performances by TAI Body Theatre encompass a wide range of styles. They delve into themes ranging from indigenous literature to the intertwining of body and music, as well as contemporary life and environmental conflicts within indigenous communities. The troupe has graced art festivals worldwide, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the UK; the Jogja International Performing Arts Festival in Indonesia; the Wuzhen Theatre Festival in China; the Delhi International Arts Festival in India, and the YIRRAMBOI Festival in Australia. In 2016, the troupe received a nomination for the Taishin Arts Award for their performance *Dancing Under the Bridge*. They also won two first prizes at the Pulima Art Award for their productions “*Terrace on the Hill*” and “*Weaving on the Moon*”.

Creative and Production Team

Artistic Director and Choreographer | Watan Tusi

Co-creator | Ising Suaiyung

Performers | Piya Talaliman, Qulai • Tjivuljavus

lrimilrimi kupangasane, Ansyang.Makakazuwan, Fotol • Arik, niwa panay

Executive Producer | LIN Chih-yu, apu'u yakumangana



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Weiwuying Online Questionnaire

