



*Original version*

## **International Dance Day Message 2018 – Asia Pacific**

### **Willy Tsao, Hong Kong**

Founder/Artistic Director of City Contemporary Dance Company and BeijingDance

Dear friends of the international dance community,

The world seems to be in constant dissidence and troubles. We have witnessed, especially in recent years, incessant conflicts between countries, races and cultures. As a dance practitioner, I can't help but wonder if art may somehow become an antidote to prevent or counteract some of the disorders that are threatening world peace and harmony

I have been promoting the art of dance in China since late 1980s, trying to convince the general public that dance, especially contemporary dance, is important for a country's development. I believe that the three essential aspects that characterize contemporary dance - individual expressions, innovative ideas and study of human conditions, serve as the fundamental building blocks of a value system upon which modern China will continue to grow and flourish.

In the pursuit of excellence in contemporary dance, we value individual expressions; therefore, we learn to respect different opinions and diversity. We value the search of innovative ideas; therefore, we accept changes and are willing to adapt to new ways of living. We value the need for understanding current happenings and issues as a way to study human existence; therefore, we become more tolerant and understanding while we are face-to-face with each other regardless of any differences.

China, similar to most of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region, enjoys a rich cultural heritage. However, the country had been sealed off from the rest of the world for decades and has only opened up through its reformation and open policy in 1978, exactly 40 years ago. Indeed, there is still a long way to go before the general public in China can comprehend and appreciate in greater depth the value of contemporary dance. On the other hand, I am seeing the emergence of a phenomenon which suggests that young people in China are interested in the contemporary dance art form and are using it as a medium of self-expression. Hence, with a growing connection with international communities and stronger mutual contemporary dance

exchanges, I am confident that China will accelerate to become a significant force for advocating individual viewpoints, championing innovative changes, and fostering tolerance and understanding among nations in this troubled world.

Thank you.