

員劇團

Thunar Circus

《悲傷八曼波》
Melancholic Mambo

Premiered on 12th July, 2019

at the Theatre Terrace, National Theatre & Concert Hall, Taipei, TAIWAN

Contemporary circus

Performance Introduction



Name of performance — *Melancholic Mambo*

Production Team — Thunar Circus

Director — Cheng-Tsung LIN

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1 · Team Introduction : Thunar Circus

Thunar Circus is a contemporary circus group based in Taiwan, taking artistic and poetic approach to the performances. We hope to carry forward the spirit of contemporary circus, develop the creativity of performers, and continuously provide original and circus productions for the national & international stage.

‘Thunar’ is an unlimited free space, in which we experiment and explore the possibilities of contemporary circus art . ‘Thunar’ is an unlimited life, in which all of our actions are connected with our culture. We aim to represent the humanity through acrobatics. ‘Thunar’ is also a collective space, in which artists and audiences connect together and reflect on the society that we’re living. .

Collaborating with artists from different fields, Thunar Circus explores diverse styles and searches new languages for the contemporary circus as well as pursues diverse ways of seeing.

Missions:

- ◎ Dedicating ourselves to making new works of contemporary circus in Taiwan;
- ◎ Promoting the concept of arts without boundary by presenting performances in public space;
- ◎ Establishing a platform for contemporary circus to nurture more circus artists and their works ;
- ◎ Evolving the concept of circus-video;
- ◎ Developing international collaboration and exchange to create more possibilities for circus works ;
- ◎ Applying circus arts in education, social and health projects for further audience.

Director | Cheng-Tsung LIN

Creator/performer in contemporary circus; founder and director of Thunar Circus. With a MA degree in Drama from National Taiwan University of Arts, LIN has devoted himself to the contemporary circus production and the performing arts education.

He is adept in combining everyday objects from the traditional culture with a variety of natural elements and translating them into contemporary circus performances. Interested in exploring and experimenting with contemporary circus, he believes that the human body as well as the objects both come with their unique rhythms and exuberance. When the human body interacts with objects and physical space, our imaginative sense will be awakened in a poetic way, releasing the inborn humanity and affections toward philosophical reflection on modern society.

2. Introduction

Nong Nao Field Research X Circus Creation X Video Art Exhibition X Taiwanese Tent

Nong Nao is an acrobatic performance displayed as part of Taiwan's traditional funeral rites. It is also the oldest ceremonial acrobatic performances. Like a dance of grief, it plays a role of harmonization and sublimation at occasions of mourning. Grief and happiness would be balanced by it. Nong Nao, as circus works, brings poetic joy to difficult times. It allows us to look at the worldliness and desire straight, and face the cruelties and despondency in life with a sense of humor. Nong Nao's acrobatic displays and its use of crotales (a small cymbal) is an attempt to ferry collective sorrow from this shore of heaviness and darkness to a shore beyond where it can be released into light, freedom, and dance.

Engaged in one year of field surveys, research, artistic learning, and creative works, Thunar Circus has come to develop, through the fading *Nong Nao* cultural tradition, a circus body and associated works complete with both traditional and modern elements.

"*Nong Nao*" is a traditional funeral affair rite performance. Generally, on the 21st day after the death, "shaman" would perform crotales (a small cymbal), fireball etc., coupled with humorous improvised narration to entertain "spirits" and "people". It's like a versatile clown interpreting a solemn ceremony for the family of the deceased to say goodbye, meanwhile mediating grief and happiness optimistically.

Mixing traditional *Nong Nao* with contemporary circus together has transformed the dangerous taboo of classical acrobatic and *Nong Nao* skill into different thinking and imagination. Besides circus performers, actors and dancers, Wei Lun Hsu and Wei Xiang Hsu from professional funeral rites company "*Taoyuan Hsu Family Butsudan Store*" were also invited to join the creative work and performance. The close-knit relationship between *Nong Nao* culture and its linkage with audience and performers strengthens that life is about connections between people.

To create the atmosphere for the space, *Thunar Circus* set up a red-white-blue Taiwanese tent at *National Theatre & Concert Hall Theater Terrace*. Audience were allowed to walk into the traditional tent that's commonly used in folk custom. Furthermore, '*Hsin Hsin Joss Paper*' store who specialised in joss paper art joined this creation and utilised the joss paper burned for the spirits in traditional funeral rite. The symbols of paper materials, colours, and shapes from joss paper with the field creation of installation artist Chang Chih Chen have transformed *Nong Nao* elements into stage space design. Among life circles, concerns, desires, and reincarnations lie in an ambiguous status corresponding to grief and happiness.

Melancholic Mambo is a combination of installation exhibition and performance, which balances grief and happiness. Ferrying and swinging with the delightful mambo, it presents an authentic attitude towards those moments and vanishments in life.

3. About the work

It is not just an art project; it is a reveal, a cry out of a dying art. Our team spend two years on field research of Nong Nao. We work, play and learn with the professionals of this art. In the colorful tent of this production, we spread the flavors and tunes all over. However faint they are, at the moment of appearing, the sound of cymbals bursts and lingers.

'Nong Nao' is a memory of time. It summons the etiquette and embarrassment of human affairs; it also be driven away by the modern society practice. It becomes a fading light and exhausted sound, a new taboo.

'Mambo' is a memory of body. Just like playing a game, we experience ecstasy and laughter, cruelty and sorrow. Sneer and playfulness swing at the invisible corners, powerful or powerless cleansing and comfort spin with laughters.

'Melancholic' moments appear and disappear in the passing time and space, regardless our lament.

4.Characteristics

I . The performance combines the divinity of rite and hybrid culture of life. Through the transition of skills, it unfolds the modern collective bliss in human field.

II . *Nong Nao* is a traditional skill of funeral affair rite. It has close bonding with etiquette on funeral. Hopefully, the performance can connect those inconspicuous, or even unmentioned cruelties and downhearted conditions.

III . With *Nong Nao*'s continuously spinning and circling, as well as the summon and banishment from the sounds, flame from *Nong Nao* was applied to connect vanishment and nihility of existence in a tunnel-like space.

IV . Under the atmosphere of popular field and ceremony space, *Thunar Circus* mixed traditional *Nong Nao* and contemporary acrobatics, expecting to express profound body language throughout exploration. By learning and transforming *Nong Nao* and exploring styles, aesthetics of acrobatic body languages, *Thunar Circus* has created a new path for contemporary circus.

5. Link between "Performance Video and Audio" and "Theater Website"

Three-minute abridged video and audio version <https://youtu.be/fjsPIJdbePI>

Video and audio link with the full version <https://youtu.be/VKvEKSftC44>

6. Running Time 75 Minutes (no interval)

7. English description for each parts of the performance

- I . Blissful Swing: Life is balanced between sorrow and joy. Those happy moments make us want to dance while during those sad moments, we could sway our bodies from side to side as well. The shouting noise of crotales in the performance Nong Nao is going to guide us to a spiritual world.
- II . Life Fragments: Existence and destruction of life are going parallely. In between conflict and growth, they compete and complete each other.
- III . Depressed Ruthless : We are like floating dust motes, in the gloomy corner and between those incomprehensible axes of time and space, mixed wildly the heaviness and the lightness of impermanence of human being.
- IV . Nong Nao: A piece performance transformed from rituals in traditional funeral. It seems like an ordinary acrobatics, or a humorous dialogue in street performance with absurd plots, which could give comfort to those people in sadness or fear and try to purify their grieved minds.
- V . Desire Paradise: Crotales (a small cymbal) are in the noisy magical realism, desire paradise exist everywhere and it demands everything, as an unreal dream bubble, create an imagination of extreme materialistic. What does Nong Nao purify and drive away ?
- VI . Bridge: A piece performance transformed from the ritual of "crossing bridge" in traditional funeral. The bridge is a passage connecting Yang (world of human) and Ying (underworld of spirits), it metaphors for the time and space of sadness and happiness. The performance is full of blessing words and wisdom sayings from folk literature in the form of humorous dialogue or duet, that guides lost people who are in sorrow to cross the bridge.
- VII . Time Ferryman: In unpredictable future, the ritual "Nong Nao" is always acting as calling and expeling, like homeless people see through the empathy and the consolation in their lives, like an instant light trace of star, fire and moon, like the complexity and etiquette in the human sophiscated world. Yet the performance of traditional funeral ritual is expelled from modern society, left only elapsed light and fading noise, thus it became another kind of taboo in our civilized world.

8. Production Team (Premiered)

Art Consultant | Kun liang Qiu

Traditional Folk Funeral Rites Consultant | Shi xia Yang

Dramaturge | Ling Chih Chow

Director | Cheng-Tsung Lin

Video Art Creation | Chang Chih Chen

Dance Design | Huai Te Huang

Acrobatics Design | Kuo Wei Chang

Music Designer and Live Music | Snow Huang (S Zenung Huang) 、 Yun Fang Tseng

Lighting Designer | Chi Yang Chiang Costume Design : Hao Tien Tsai

Space Design | Hsin Hsin Joss Paper

Crotales Design | LinWuTongLuo (Gong) 、 Jie Qing Zhan

Props Design | Jie Qing Zhan

Stage Manager | Ching- Hsiang CHANG

Visual Designer | Mirr Lo

Producer | Ying Lv Wang

Executive production | Chun Hui Lin

Circus Actor | Wen Yin Lin 、 Chi Wei Wen 、 Chen Kuan Lin 、 Chueh Kai Kuo 、 Wei Lun Hu 、 Wei Xiang Hu

Stage Photo | Chang Chih Chen、 Yu Quan Lin

Video recording | Amandine Dubois



9. Reviews and Feedback

★ Nominated of “Taishin Arts Award”

★ Lin, Hwai-Min Cloud Gate Dance Theatre Artistic Director,(07/08/2019)

‘It is an accessible non-narrative production. It is like a circus show, also like a street vendor performance. I find it very touching and fascinating.’

★ ‘The most fun show in Taiwan recently’. Show Ryuzanji, Japanese Stage Director (07/25/2019)

★ Qiu, Kun-Liang Professor of Taipei National University of Arts

‘I appreciate Lin’s ideas and methods of art-making. He smoothly transforms the rare folk beliefs to moving contemporary arts.’

★ Chi, Hui-Ling Critic of Performing Arts Review (07/12/2019)

‘This performance is so close to life. It not only shortens the distance between life and death, also the tradition and modern. It is simple but with a lot of messages at the same time: life and death, sorrow and joy, cold and hot, object and puppet, soul and human beings, beauty and ugliness, stillness and movement, darkness and brightness, viewing and playing, new and old, inside and outside. They are almost all binary opposite elements being juxtaposed in a synchronic manner. The connection, dislocation, coordination, communion, and transformation between them present some not fixed or undefinable moments.’

★ Luo, Qian Critic of Performing Arts Review (07/13/2019)

‘There is no death scene in the show. Funeral rites are staged as a performance. Do the sanctity and the purifying function still retain? Do we have shared belief to watch it? Or do we review the long-lost culture in our memories as what Lin tries to recall in Melancholic Mambo?’

★ Cai, Meng-Kai Critic of Performing Arts Review (07/15/2019)

‘The original ritual process is wrapped in dramatic ways to be happy and entertaining. It appears to challenge the boundary of sadness and joy, and offers another perspective regarding life and death. What Melancholic Mambo achieves, however, might be more alarming.’

★ Lin, Li-Hsiung Critic, PAR magazine Issue 320, August, 2019

‘As looking at fantastic Nong Nao or the twined and twisted bodies in front of our eyes, we move gently with the music. It may not important that whose memory or sadness being triggered by the performance. Yet in this representation of funeral rites and performers’ entanglement, the difficulty of separating oneself and his sorrow seems to be reflected. The audiences might still have to be face their own lives after gently moving with the music, giggling in the show and walking out the theatre (or funeral ceremony).’

10. Performance Stills





LIN Yu-Quan 林育全 2019©

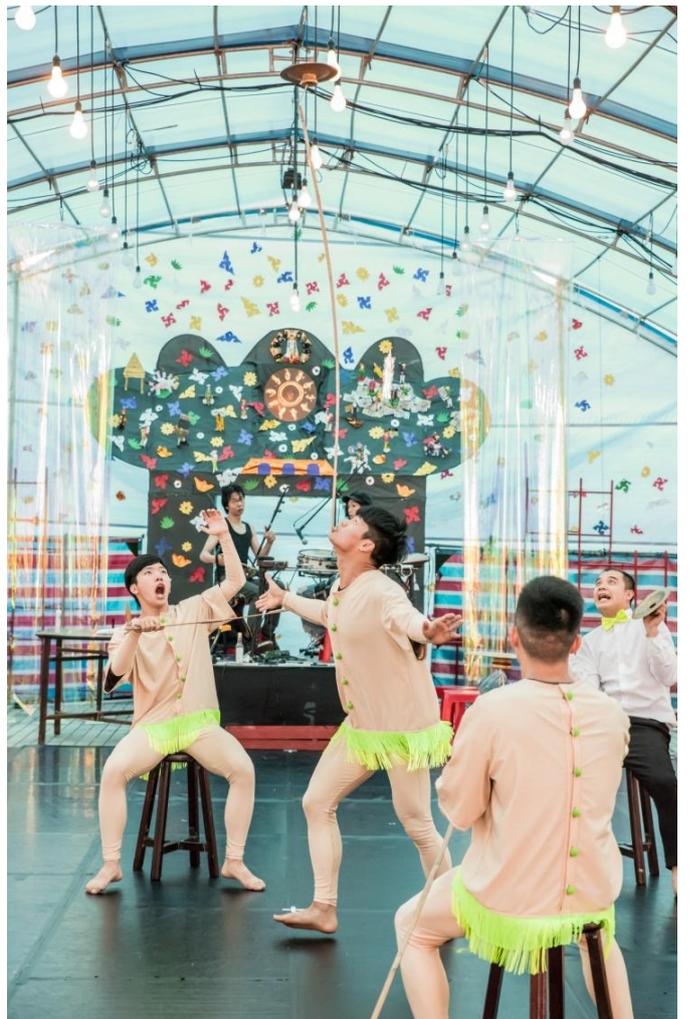
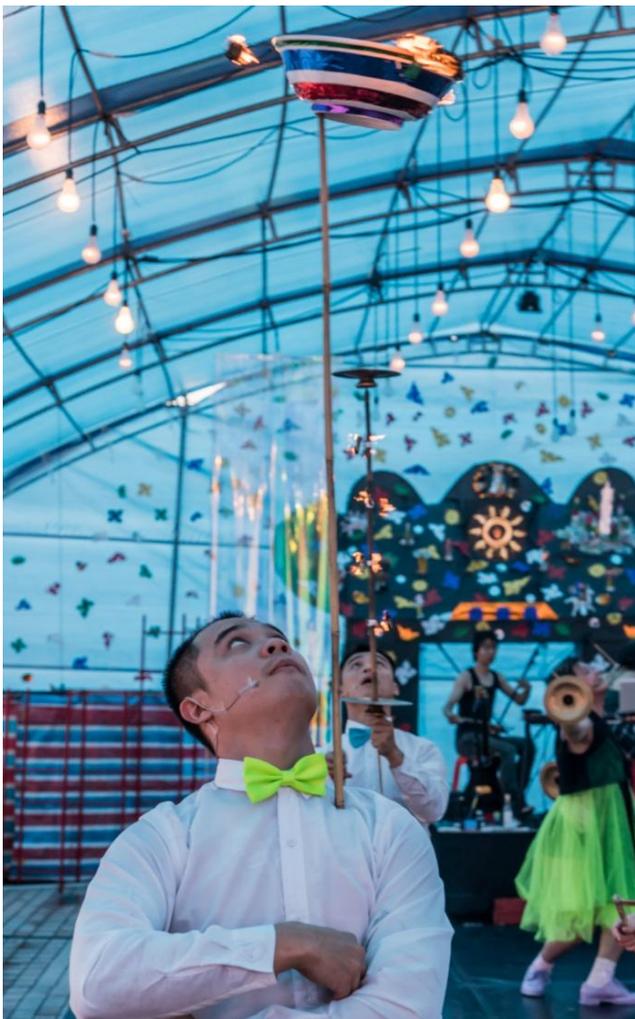


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當代馬戲演出 × 雜耍創作展覽 × 民間系統雜技

生命的圓滿皆是擺盪於悲傷與快樂之間
且以一場愛流，伴著鏡鼓與吶喝
擺盪悲傷到搖擺愛動的輕盈彼岸

劇團
2019
戶外帳篷劇場

Melancholic Mambo

從「弄鏡」的鏡鼓與吶喝
笑看生命的片刻與消逝

7.12 五—19:30
7.13 六—14:30
六—19:30
7.14 日—14:30

國家兩廳院戲劇院生活廣場 (愛國東路側) 戶外帳篷劇場

劇團

悲傷
曼波

從「弄鏡」的鏡鼓與吶喝
笑看生命的片刻與消逝

歷時一年多的田野查訪與創作發展，導演林正宗從「弄鏡」這項民間喪葬儀式裡的雜技性表演，探究身體與儀式關係，與影像創作陳長志攜手帶領觀眾走進圓劇團的帳篷劇場，進行一場「悲傷」曼波」，以另一種態度來看待生命俗事的過去與未來。

導演：林正宗
演出人員：林文尹、溫其偉、林秉寬、郭爵愷、桃園許厝港許家班班德壇
合作共創弄鏡團體：桃園許厝港許家班班德壇、彰化水靖齋家民俗特技團

藝術顧問：邱坤良
表辭科編：周俊之
戲劇構作：周俊之
舞後展覽製作：陳長志
舞後設計：黃偉德

馬戲動作設計：張國華
燈光設計：江怡序
服裝設計：蔡浩天
鏡鼓設計：林文尹、黃介卿
舞台空間設計：新馬戲文化

現場音樂聲音設計：蕭思真、曾麗芳
道具設計：詹介卿、彰化水靖齋家民俗特技團、桃園許厝港許家班班德壇
舞台監督：張景明
視覺設計：羅文芳
製作人：王榮輝、行政宣傳：林香華

主辦單位：劇團
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協辦單位：臺灣當代文化實驗場 | 彰化水靖齋家民俗特技團 | 桃園許厝港許家班班德壇
場地合作：國家兩廳院 | 贊助單位：天之群
支持創作：臺灣當代文化實驗場2018Creator、道野研發 / 創作計畫 | 臺北表演藝術中心創意節目前期展演計畫
文化部扶植青年藝術發展計畫 | 羅曼菲舞蹈獎助計畫 | 雲門劇計畫獎助創作

演出場次：7.12 (五) 19:30 | 7.13 (六) 14:30、19:30 | 7.14 (日) 14:30
演出地點：國家兩廳院戲劇院生活廣場 (愛國東路側) 戶外帳篷劇場
票價—900元、學生600元 (需憑證入場)
兩廳院售票系統—02-33939888 | www.artsticket.com.tw
◎ 兩廳院之友、誠品會員、國泰世華卡友享九折優惠



MASHUP- Video Art Exhibition : Chang Chih Chen