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PANCHA – Flowers Don't Bloom All The Time

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By Cheryl Tan, edited by Teo Dawn

"You're not a victim for sharing your story. You are a survivor setting the world on fire with your truth. And you never know who needs your light, your warmth, and raging courage." – Alexandra Elle, author, wellness consultant and creative

Maya Dance Theatre (MDT < <https://www.mayadancetheatre.org> >) returns this year with the third instalment of their PANCHAseries, **Flowers Don't Bloom All the Time**. After the success of PANCHAs's second instalment in May 2017 – "When the flames blaze the caged body, I surrender; I am." and, 'Anwasha – Beyond the darkness!', this next project aims to be a voice for people who deal or dealt with domestic and sexual violence under the choreography and direction of critically-renowned Artistic Director of MDT, **Kavitha Krishnan**.

PANCHA, a series of five dance theatre productions, draws attention to contemporary social issues centred around female archetypes in relation to nature's elements – wind, fire, earth, water and space. In each of its previous PANCHA productions, MDT addressed important issues plaguing society, including women in the patriarchy and the pain of mother who have lost their children at war.

This third instalment is centred around domestic and sexual violence and the element Earth, an element that Kavitha uses to draw parallels to the concept of groundedness, safety, security, and home.

"When the creation process began on the third element of PANCHA (Earth), the analogy of earth as home kept presenting itself. For me home is where we find the comfort of familiarity, it is what we know and where we feel safe. Unfortunately, this is not universal- for some, the home is where the most heinous acts are perpetuated by the people who were meant to keep them safe and protected," explains Kavitha.

PANCHA-Flowers Don't Bloom All the Time (Trailer 1)



'Flowers' features both Singaporean and Indonesian artists and was conceptualised first in Singapore and subsequently was crafted in the Indonesian arts centre Rumah Banjasari, in Solo Indonesia, where artists in MDT Singapore visited Indonesian counterparts to develop this heavily- collaborative piece.

This August, the piece will open at Centre 42, a space familiar to regular theatre-goers as a performance as well as rehearsal space. Look again from the outside though, and this building goes beyond a conventional performance space, taking on its original function as a house. This emboldens the highly important sense of domesticity of the piece, which poses the question: what happens when we find ourselves used and abused by people we trust in a space that was supposedly safe?

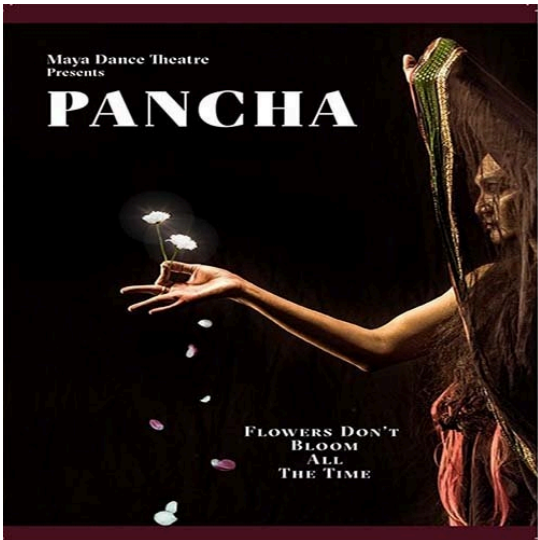
This production aims be the voice to victims of such crimes who are often left traumatised and are further subjected to social stigma. They are left with several unanswered questions and the constant feeling of betrayal and guilt. As such, the practitioners at MDT spoke to senior counsellors

from the **Singapore Council of Women's Organisations** (SCWO) and **AWARE**, who connected victim survivor **Devika Satheesh Panicker** with MDT. Devika shared her personal experiences and strategies to cope in the aftermath of abuse. Character inspiration and development for this piece include grown men, women, children, and the very poignant and often neglected narrative of how sometimes the ones who have abused us have themselves also been abused. This in particular adds another dimension to the heart-wrenching narrative of the cyclical nature of pain.

Holding fast and true to MDT's beliefs of trans-cultural works and is built on the intermingling of different cultures and traditional art forms to produce one single product, this production prides itself in the many talents it has on board from Indonesia as well as Singapore.

Additional Programmes

Through this project, MDT hopes to create long-term impact and awareness on the subject of violence against women and children. To achieve this end MDT has organised several initiatives under 'Project: Flowers Don't Bloom, which will help continue the discussion through several activities ranging from film screening, talks, photographic and visual exhibitions.



'Flowers' will be presented as a site-based dance theatre production at **Centre 42** between **15th – 18th August 2018**. Tickets are available [here < http://flowersdontbloom.peatix.com/>](http://flowersdontbloom.peatix.com/).

For more information on the production of 'Flowers Don't Bloom All the Time' as part of the Project: Flowers Don't Bloom and its awareness initiatives, please contact Imran Manaff at 96352960 (Mobile) or Imran@maydancetheatre.org

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