

The 5th Anniversary Special



**5 WEIWUYING
ANNIVERSARY**

Full Steam Ahead

National
Kaohsiung
Center for
the Arts





It's You Who Makes Weiwuying!

NOTABLE EVENTS

**Sprouting in 2003,
growing strong in 2023 →**

2003

- Executive Yuan announces a national performing arts center to be built on site of Weiwuying Military Base.

2010

- Construction begins on Weiwuying.

© Chien Kuo Construction Co., LTD.



Weiwuying Circus Platform



Taiwan Dance Platform

2016

- Weiwuying Circus Platform and Taiwan Dance Platform are launched.

2007

- Dutch architectural firm Mecanoo Architects & Co. wins International Floor Plan Competition for Weiwuying's design.

2015

- The Weiwuying Operation and Promotion Group is formed, with Artistic Director designee CHIEN Wen-pin serving as convener.
- Weiwuying Children's Festival and Weiwuying Arts Festival are held.

2018

- Opening ceremony for National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying) is held.

General and Artistic Director
CHIEN Wen-pin



Photo Credit: CHEN Chien Hao,
HUANG Pi Hsien, Kito, LIN Chun-yung



AT WEIWUYING

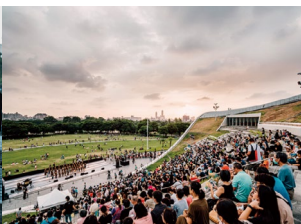


2019

- Public Piano is launched at Banyan Plaza.
- Weiwuying TIFA Contemporary Music Platform and Kaohsiung Local Hi series of events are launched.
- Weiwuying is selected by *Time Magazine* as one of world's greatest places to visit in 2019.

2022

- As one of main venues for Taiwan Lantern Festival, Weiwuying attracts 2.2 million visitors.
- Masters Play and 24 Hours Composer series are held.
- Weiwuying Organ Festival and Weiwuying International Music Festival are launched.



PUCCINI - Turandot



2020

- The Production of PUCCINI's *Turandot* (premiered in 2019) is put on, boasting the largest cast and audience for an opening of any performance in Taiwan during Covid. About 50,000 people watched via official YouTube broadcast.

2021

- VERDI's *La Traviata* is put on as large-scale production during Covid with all-Asian cast, prompting extensive buzz in international media.
- Women of the World Festival is held for the first time in Taiwan at Weiwuying, for which dozens of activities and programs held on implementing gender equality.

VERDI - La Traviata



2023

- Weiwuying embarks on its fifth year of operations, hitting milestone of over 10 million visitors. More history to be made with you...!

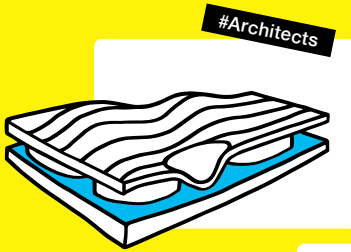
Read More



IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS

Over 1,825 days of operations, we have...

Illustration: Zoe SUN



With a total floor space of

33,000 square meters,

nearly **3** Eiffel Towers' worth of steel

1

form the world's largest performing arts complex

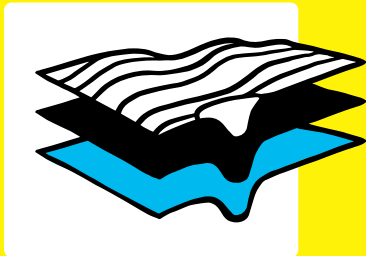
under **1** roof.

2

Over **1,800**

indoor performances means about one show each day on average.

#Artists



The exterior of the

11 -layer roof

consisting of a variety of materials is built of

4,500 panels,

each of which is marked with a serial number.

3

Note: Data up to July 2023

ERS

Always being played by members of the public, our Public Piano has been tuned over

4

52 times

and has had **500** strings replaced.

#Staff



#Public

5

People of ages **1-98**

and over **400** schools have joined and love our art promotion events.

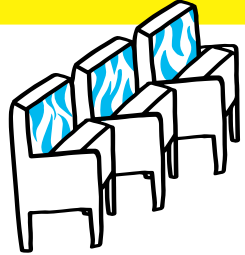
6

Over **10** million

people have enjoyed art at Weiwuying for an average of about

5,000 per day.

#Sponsors



15,000 members

with an average of

7

8 new members each day.

Thanks to everyone who has come!

AN ARTS CENTER for EVERYONE

Photo Credit: Kito, LIN Chun-yung

Weiwyung is in Kaohsiung—which boasts Taiwan’s largest port—a hub of local and foreign goods coming from and going to places all over Taiwan and the world. It is also the first national performing arts center in southern Taiwan, serving as a distribution point of art and culture to the world and a strong link with the local culture.



2022 Weiwyung
International Music
Festival

Music events with an international outlook

Weiwyung has put together numerous events of varying kinds. The live broadcast of the [Vienna Philharmonic New Year’s Concert](#) has been made available in 90 countries, and Weiwyung has been the only venue to broadcast the show outdoors. Meanwhile, for the [Weiwyung Organ Festival](#), which revolves around the “king of musical instruments,” world-renowned organists have been invited as curators and performers to present the multifaceted allure of Asia’s largest pipe organ. Also, Weiwyung has worked with the Pingtung County Government in putting on performances at the Pingtung

Performing Arts Center so that organ lovers may enjoy displays of beautiful music at both venues.

After three years, the 2019-initiated [Weiwyung TIFA Contemporary Music Platform*](#), which deciphered contemporary music from varying angles, evolved into the [Weiwyung International Music Festival](#).

Besides continuing to link Taiwan’s contemporary music to that of the world, it also incorporates classical music so that audiences may gain a better understanding of how the contemporary has evolved.

* As a platform, the event differs from other programs in that performers may engage in exchange with audiences to create new artistic inspiration.





2023 Weiwuying Organ Festival

Vienna Philharmonic -
New Year's Concert Live Broadcast



Building a diversified channel of art exchange

During the Weiwuying Circus Platform, Taiwanese and foreign circus performers engage in creation, production, promotion, and exchange. Circus themes that cover different eras attract audiences to a world of fantasy and acrobatics. The biennial Taiwan Dance Platform brings performances to indoor and outdoor venues at Weiwuying in presenting a variety of dance elements from various cultures and genres. With audio and visual exhibitions, international forums, live performances, and workshops, the platform reflected how the art of dance kept moving during Covid when so many other things had to stop.

Weiwuying is always bringing in new visions from abroad and working hard to promote local art to the world. For instance, the 2019-initiated

“Kaohsiung Local Hi” brims with local culture on stages in both indoor venues and surrounding spaces. The program deals with the aspects of Kaohsiung’s identity as a port city, international viewpoints, historical events, connection with the community, and heritage transmission; depicting Kaohsiung in a way people have never seen it before and as full of the energy of a major metropolis. One such program, Old Boy Theatre’s digital performance *What Is Home?* in 2021, allowed users to look at issues immigrants from Southeast Asia to Taiwan must deal with in their new homes. That same year, in *“Music for the River” Jazz Suite: The Spirit of Love River and Mississippi River*, Vincent HSU used the Love River in Kaohsiung and the Mississippi River in New Orleans to tell the story of music from these areas and recount memories.



2021 Weiwuying Circus Platform Eye Catching Circus - #Since1994

2022 Weiwuying Circus Platform Phare the Cambodian Circus - Influence



衛武營 2020 臺灣舞蹈平台

11.2 → → → 11.8

相遇

臺灣舞蹈平台
TAIWAN DANCE
PLATFORM

Wei Wu Ying
國立高雄表演藝術中心
National Kaohsiung
UNIVERSITY OF THEATRE AND FILM
ARTS CENTER



2020 Taiwan Dance Platform
B.DANCE *Floating Flowers*



Ishinha *AMAHARA*

Staying true to our foundational goal of bringing art into people's hearts

Before Weiwuying was even built, the Weiwuying Arts Festival was held in 2017, at which the then-40-year-old Japanese theater troupe Ishinha put on its *AMAHARA*, a story of migration and drifting among the islands of Asia. Japanese and Taiwanese performers created and performed a piece integrating music and body movement on an AR stage on the grass of the future Weiwuying grounds. The year before, the soul and playwright-director of the troupe, Yukichi MATSUMOTO, passed away, so the

other members decided to bring the piece to Taiwan in accordance with his wishes, the performance in Kaohsiung being the troupe's final. The image of the ship sailing toward the sunset is still deeply impressed in the memories of many from the audience, so even though the piece will never be performed again, its artistic heritage lives on. Weiwuying has stayed true to our foundational goal, certain that art will keep growing through exchanges and with support. We will keep pressing ahead and serving as a means of connecting the memories of people, art, and the land, making art a fountain of vitality in people's lives.

You Have to See at Least Once

WEIWUYING FLAGSHIP OPERA!

Photo Credit: CHEN Chien Hao, LIN Chun-yung, Mon LEE

Weiwuying puts on at least one opera each year, whether overseas classics or local original creations. We first select a piece and then begin discussions with overseas organizations on co-production, finally hatching an adaptation through the concerted effort of local and foreign artists and theater workers. Our aim is to be recognized by the world as a producer of exceptional large-scale operas.

1

The Creation



4

La Traviata



Paradise Interrupted



Candide

3

2

Steadfast experience in opera

During Weiwuying's planning stage, we decided that opera would be one of the center's main programs. We signed co-production contracts with other nations in 2015 to produce interpretations of PUCCINI's *Turandot* and *Paradise Interrupted* (an installation opera in one act). We then co-produced VERDI's *La Traviata* with the Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival the following year, which received wide acclaim and was reported on in both local and foreign media.

After Weiwuying opened in 2018, it began strongly promoting opera, such as a collaboration with La Fura dels Baus on *The Creation*, performed at the Concert Hall. The stage had a mechanical installation of a nine-meter-tall crane, 36 large balloons, and an aquarium, along with projections, a wind and string orchestra, soloists, and a choir. Weiwuying's first self-production,

Candide, was an operetta based on VOLTAIRE's famous novel which has been made into operas by many of the world's great opera houses. The semi-staged production was the first operatic adaptation of the novel in Taiwan. At the end of that year, *Paradise Interrupted* (an installation opera in one act) went on, which integrated theater art, Western opera, and Kunqu (a Chinese opera form) as a co-production among Weiwuying, Spoleto Festival USA, the Lincoln Center, and the Singapore International Festival of Arts, turning the stage into a poetic, surreal garden brimming with Zen thought.

Always up for a creative challenge

In early 2019, PUCCINI's *Turandot*, which had been in the works for years as a co-production of Weiwuying and Deutsche Oper am Rhein, was performed in Taiwan after showing 26 times in Europe. The piece, consisting of 350 performers and backstage

workers, saw outstanding ticket sales in 2020 in Taiwan after rave reviews for performances elsewhere in Asia the previous year. As it was during the height of Covid, Weiwuying did everything possible to allow for the live performance, making it the world's first large-scale live opera show to go on following the outbreak of the pandemic and reaching 50,000 online viewers. In October 2019, Weiwuying invited the Komische Oper Berlin and 1927 (a British theater troupe) to bring their production of MOZART's *The Magic Flute* to Taiwan for the first time. It integrated pantomime, animation, sideshow arts, dark comedy, and German expressionism in a spectacular presentation of artistic crossover, making a strong impression on audiences. Benjamin BRITTEN's opera *War Requiem* was a co-production of Weiwuying and the English National Opera based on one of the greatest choral works of the twentieth century by the same name. Since it is a strongly anti-war piece, its Asian debut at Weiwuying was arranged for February 28 (a national holiday established based on an incident of violence) as a supplication for peace.

In 2021, Covid started getting serious in Taiwan, and in September of that year, after two months of being closed,

Weiwuying teamed up with Hong Kong's City Contemporary Dance Company to produce the operetta *María de Buenos Aires*, an interpretation of PIAZZOLLA's groundbreaking classic that was the world's first tango opera. Ticket sales were hot from the first day, and we worked with Public Television Service to stream the performance online. Then, in 2022, 17 years after its semi-staged Taiwanese debut at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, BELLINI's *Norma* made a second appearance at Weiwuying, though this time as a fully-staged classic reproduction. Soprano Hanying TSO-PETANAJ (who has lived in Italy) played Norma, interpreting well the mix of the character's emotions. That same year, we worked with the Belgian Théâtre de Liège in bringing TAIWAN its first-ever performance of VERDI's *Don Carlo*, requiring four 40-foot shipping containers filled with 500 royal court costumes in 16th-century fashion, a thousand props, and nine stage settings to be shipped to Taiwan, perfectly presenting the extravagance of a European court of the time.

In the first half of 2023, the contemporary jazz fusion opera *Portent*, an original creation, debuted at Weiwuying's Opera House. An adaptation of HUANG Lingzhi's novel by the same name, it was the

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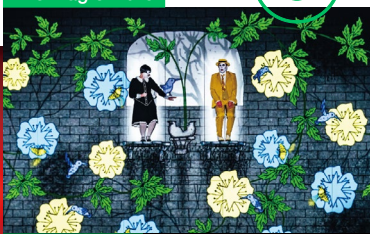
Turandot

5



The Magic Flute

6



War Requiem



7

8



Norma



Maria de Buenos Aires



11

Portent



Don Carlo

10



Der Freischütz

12

The photographs were taken during the premiere at Tiroler Landestheater und Orchester GmbH Innsbruck.

Weiwuying's Opera Programme

| Year | Opera |
|------|---|
| 2016 | VERDI - <i>La Traviata</i> |
| 2018 | <i>The Creation</i> <i>Candide</i> , Leonard Bernstein at 100 <i>Paradise Interrupted</i> (an installation opera in one act) |
| 2019 | PUCCINI - <i>Turandot</i> MOZART - <i>The Magic Flute</i> |
| 2020 | Benjamin BRITTEN - <i>War Requiem</i> PUCCINI - <i>Turandot</i> |
| 2021 | VERDI - <i>La Traviata</i> A. PIAZZOLLA - <i>María de Buenos Aires</i> |
| 2022 | V. BELLINI - <i>Norma</i> VERDI - <i>Don Carlo</i> |
| 2023 | Opera - <i>Portent</i> (contemporary fusion opera) WEBER - <i>Der Freischütz</i> |

product of collaboration between Taiwanese artists and musicians who uncovered new possibilities within a fusion of jazz, traditional Taiwanese opera, and classical music.

Later this year, WEBER's *Der Freischütz*—a German-language Romantic classic that is a collaboration among Weiwuying, the Taipei Symphony Orchestra, and the Tiroler Landestheater und Symphonieorchester—will create a deeply touching spectacle via stage aesthetic with a bit of the supernatural, the dark, and the magical.

Weiwuying has become highly experienced in producing operas (12 to date), not only focusing on creating extremely high artistic value but also always looking to link the differing perspectives of Eastern and Western cultures and to bring together artists and theater workers from Taiwan and abroad within the complex production process, creating opportunities to communicate and work together in depth. By producing operas with international partners, we are reinforcing global visibility for Weiwuying and our programs, expanding the theatrical horizons of our local audiences, and boosting the value of our operas with related events.



The Second Woman

24 Hours Composer series



5F Studio Production:
Bonfire - Absence of Darkness

Really? Weiwuying Has Done All That Too!?

Upon hearing the word “national” in the name of a performing arts center, most people automatically assume its programs are highly formal and conservative. So you might be surprised to see progressive, experimental, and even crazy stuff has been going on at Weiwuying!

For instance, *The New Member*, Taiwan’s first “Boys love” rock musical, showed at the 2016 Weiwuying Arts Festival. In *The Second Woman* (2018), a woman engages in 100 intimate moments with as many amateur male actors over a period of 24 hours in a dimly lit room, shattering the conventional boundaries between performer and audience. In 2022, Weiwuying hosted the world premiere of *Deep Lake Man*, a musical adaptation of a short story in the book *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*,

in which a fisherman and a water ghost become the most intimate of friends. For the show, members of the audience were given eye masks so that they could just rely on their ears to fully experience the surround sound system.

Also in 2022, 5F Studio Production brought us the immersive experience *Bonfire – Absence of Darkness*, integrating technology and art to allow the audience to walk onto the stage and interact with an audiovisual installation divided into several sections so they could watch the performance while having their senses stimulated. For the *24 Hours* Composer series, we have invited over 100 outstanding musicians and groups to play symphony and jazz music for 24 hours straight and even allowed attendees to sleep at Weiwuying, making it an experience unlike any other.

Photo Credit: CHEN Chien Hao, Latun Photography, Mon LEE

Fun for All Ages at Weiwuying!

Since its establishment, Weiwuying, which prides itself on being an arts center for everyone, has worked hard to attract people of all ages to help them find something they like and something new in our programs and events. For example, we have the **Masters Play** series of concerts that break down the traditional boundaries between classical and pop music with famous vocalists and orchestras working together to reinvent golden pop oldies and bringing back memories of times past. Another program with a pop music flair is the outdoor **Swing Party** during our annual anniversary celebration, at which pop musicians perform and turn the night into a festive bash!

The **Weiwuying Children's Festival**, which goes on every summer, is a great time for children and adults alike hosted by Weiwuying's Lulu and friends. The

performances, workshops, and parades bring the performing arts closer to kids in a fun way. Besides family programs, we also have **Art-Fun-Play**, a program in which kids engage in theater-based games, art appreciation, and reading activities so that they can learn about performance while their parents are watching Weiwuying programs.

Weiwuying Artist-in-Residence CHOU Shu-yi is embarking on his second year of bringing the performing arts to the streets with ***Bolero in Kaohsiung***. We have invited young local dancers and other dancers from around Taiwan to try out for our dance team that performs at train stations, art galleries, schools, temples, and other public areas in 38 districts over a three-year period. As we get to know the city by traveling through it, we're showing people of all ages the vitality and features of modern dance.

Weiwuying Children's Festival



100% Kaohsiung



FreeSteps - Swinging Years

Amateur on an International Stage? Why Not?

Just because you've never performed doesn't mean you can't take the stage and earn your 15 minutes of fame! At Weiwuying, we've not only put on tons of great shows but also have done away with the conventional idea that non-professionals can't take the stage. By allowing anyone to show their stuff, we're helping them find hidden potential and showing them they are indeed part artist!

During the Weiwuying anniversary, *Let's Opera* allows amateurs a chance to take the stage and display their talent for opera singing, and we're always surprised and touched by the talent we uncover. *100% Kaohsiung*, put on by the

German theater troupe Rimini Protokoll, made its Chinese-speaking-world debut in 2020. The troupe invited 102 Kaohsiung locals to express themselves on stage, relating their fortune and fate in life and personal values through all kinds of interconnected questions and improvisation. Also, HORSE's *FreeSteps—Swinging Years* was a workshop for nearly 100 people of ages 50+ led by dancer SU Wei-chia, who led them in performing a group dance and relating parts of their life stories in any format they wished at the Opera House. As can be seen, Weiwuying has held to its foundational goal of being connected to the public.



Inclusive Arts Project



Learning Arts Together



Weiwuying Family Day

Nurturing Art in the Heart and Soul

Weiwuying is open as a platform for performance and for the public to learn about art. Seeing people of differing social groups and identities interacting and enjoying art to the fullest here is what we at Weiwuying love most.

So as to give people more opportunities to encounter art, Weiwuying started launching a variety of events in 2019, such as the [Inclusive Arts Project](#)—an effort at cultural equality that is welcomed by people with varying disabilities. We make it easier for some people to learn about Weiwuying through the use of sign language, assistive devices, and Braille; audio descriptions are provided during performances; and

workshops are arranged. [Weiwuying Wonderland](#) invites members of the public to dance, do yoga, watch films, and listen to music at Banyan Plaza. For [Arts Talk](#), famous artists are invited to talk about their experiences with and knowledge of music, theater, and film. On [Weiwuying Family Day](#), parents can bring their kids to the theater for games that involve the senses. Also, [Learning Arts Together](#) and the [Theater Arts and Education Project](#) are chances to connect with schools to nurture students' capacity to appreciate arts and let them see how it feels to take the stage. All of these events are aimed at cultivating seeds of creativity and allowing participants to artistically shine.

WE CAN DO SO

Some Thoughts from General and Artistic Director CHIEN Wen-pin

Art

Time flies. Since Weiwuying officially opened nearly 2,000 days ago, its team has continually worked to bring together performance groups from Taiwan and abroad, put on programs that audiences enjoy, nurture talent, and accumulate experience in production; so, many people have gradually come to like spending time at Weiwuying. As people grow more familiar with the center and its goals, Weiwuying has become a major icon and landmark in southern Taiwan. Nonetheless, General and Artistic Director CHIEN Wen-pin says: **“We haven’t done enough in promoting art; there’s still a lot to do.”** He believes an arts center must operate for at least a decade to firmly establish a foundation and exert influence in both its city and on the international stage, so the Weiwuying team needs to keep at it.

When the Weiwuying Operation and Promotion Group was formed in 2015, CHIEN decided on “making Weiwuying an arts center for everyone” as its developmental direction, and that holds true today. To him, that implies two meanings: first, Weiwuying operates for the public to help them develop artistically in diverse ways, and second, Weiwuying is energized by the members of the public who go there. That includes you and me as well as architects, artists, workers, supporters, and people who tell us they appreciate what Weiwuying does and offer criticism alike—all of them are part of Weiwuying. He explains, **“I want Weiwuying to grow with the people and have a good time with them, and when they’re unhappy with something, I welcome their suggestions. I want this kind of interaction going on.”**

Culture



MUCH MORE!

• Interviewer: Enjo LIU • Text: Arya.S.H • Photo Credit: PJ WANG



Khi-sè

Khi-tsit

Khi-hun

Interaction

WU Nian-jen once told him that Weiwuying has “three kinds of *Khi*”: the first is the strong *Khi-sè* (demeanor) of the architecture, the second is the *Khi-hun* (atmosphere) people experience while here, and the third is the boost in *Khi-tsit* (class), people take with them when they leave. Weiwuying encourages people to come to see performances, but they must also make opportunities for artists and the public to naturally engage, such as through workshops, forums, street fairs, after-parties, and mobile diners. Only by nurturing the interactive relationships between artists and the public can we close the distance between them and naturally bring art into people’s daily lives.

Since opening, Weiwuying has gathered large crowds and also experienced the daunting effects of Covid. Though the team took such challenge head on by launching online connections, outdoor broadcasts of events, and even maintaining some in person programs. Finally, in early 2022, it was part of the Taiwan Lantern Festival, officially welcoming back post-lockdown crowds. They are so pleased that all those efforts not only encouraged people but also allowed Weiwuying to gain a name for itself on the world stage. CHIEN says that since Covid restrictions have mostly loosened, his team is looking to comprehensively expand the types of performance at the center and further enhance the artistic vocabulary there to show the wonder of art to different types of people. He believes that Weiwuying’s future will be formed by the public and that **“We can’t stop because there is so much potential for growth.”** Such confidence and determination mean that Weiwuying is to keep taking action and moving forward. If you’ve never been to Weiwuying, you really should try it out—you may just fall in love with this place. Come join us in being part of Weiwuying’s growth!



_____ because of Weiwuying. please fill in the blank



#WorldClassPerformances #ChanceEncountersWithArtists #MovingToKaohsiung
#StartingAnUnforgettableJourney #GreatPlaceToExercise

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National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WU YING

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