

## **<Totsu-totsu Dance -Like Art, Like Care->**

### **directed/choreographed by Osamu Jareo**

This is the program note for the <Totsu-totsu Dance> performance at George Town Festival in 2025. We hope the following information will help you understand the performance better.

#### **What is Totsu-totsu Dance Performance?**

The <Totsu-totsu Dance> project, which began in 2009 at a special nursing home for the elderly in Maizuru, Japan, is an initiative by dancer Osamu Jareo and the non-profit arts organization torindo. It may be an “exploration” centered on dance, people with dementia, the elderly, and care partners.

In 2020, following the pandemic, we began exchanges with Malaysian artists and The Eldercare Center at the Bagan Specialist Centre, both online and physical. We have sought to deeply understand what it means for people to “connect” with one another, and how those who happen to be in the same room can coexist together, having the interactions between Jareo and people with dementia as a departure point.

Today's performance is composed of various elements discovered through this journey of exploration, including workshops, narratives, videos, dance performances, and music.

#### **[ First Half ]**

In the first half of this performance, we will look back on the workshops we have held so far for <Totsu-totsu Dance> and reexamine the concept of encountering others.

At the beginning, we will hold an online workshop with people associated with the elderly care center in Butterworth, who have been working with us.

It has been four years since we began our collaboration with them through <Totsu-totsu Dance>. Through our encounter, they have adopted their own approach to <Totsu-totsu Dance> into their daily care practices.

Following the online workshop, we hope to share a glimpse of the workshop with the audience at the venue as well.

Since 2022, with new encounters outside of Japan as a starting point, we have begun the endless process of putting <Totsu-totsu Dance> into words, breaking it down, and putting it back into words. The keywords that emerged from this process are “synchronizing breath,” “measuring distance,” “making eye contact,” and “touching.”

We hope you will enjoy the work we have built up together with the many people with dementia, care partners, and artists we have met in various places.

The text that appears on the screen was born from a collaboration with a new project in Malaysia called “Urut-urut.”

Urut-urut is a research workshop developed with care partners of people living with dementia, facilitated by artist Okui Lala and gerontologist Dr. Cecilia Chan. The workshops explore narratives of caregiving through senses, memory, and imagination. The team works as co-authors, collectively shaping the work through shared reflection and lived experience. In this performance, we will introduce two stories and readings by team member Ms. Tan Choon Leong.

[Second Half]

During the middle of the performance, you will see footage of workshops held in Malaysia and Singapore, recorded during the <Totsu-totsu Dance> workshops.

Following this, four dancers will begin exploring the concept of “touching.” No individuals with dementia will be performing on stage this time. However, the dancers will attempt to dance and interact with absent individuals in various ways, drawing on their encounters with specific people (who have since passed away) they have met in the past.

Their stories are abundant. For example, Miyuki-san, whom we met in Japan, who always carried a baby doll. Or K-san, who appeared in a video on stage, whom we met in Malaysia last year, demonstrated movements as graceful as Tai Chi during the workshop, but for her, they were “movements from cooking.” The conversation of Mitsushima-san, shown in the style of Japanese *rakugo* (sit-down comedy by a solo performer), was that of a school principal. Though there are no dance-like movements, the ambiguous yet meaningful dialogue between Jareo(J) and Mitsushima-san(M) is comforting, and it itself feels like a <Totsu-totsu Dance>.

Let's take a moment to introduce the four other artists participating in this performance, aside from Jareo. Megumi Kamimura has been participating since 2022 and has also accompanied tours to Malaysia and Singapore. Chole Tan participated in a workshop held in KL in 2023, while Silver Yee is participating for the first time this year. Additionally, sound artist Kamal Sabran, who is participating in the music aspect, has co-hosted online workshops in 2020 and has collaborated with <Totsu-totsu Dance> in 2022 and 2023.

Each artist has varying depths/lengths of involvement. This performance brings together artists who have encountered <Totsu-totsu Dance> at different points in time.

If “touching/feeling” someone is what happens between them, how do artists share their experiences? How can we touch/feel someone who is not here?

We hope you will enjoy this exploration of <Totsu-totsu Dance> at this point in time.

by Takeshi Toyohira (Director of torindo)

### **Director's Comment**

Totsu-Totsu Dance is a dance that unfolds in the moment with elderly individuals one happens to meet that day. Each time I face them, I wonder: Should I make eye contact? How close should I get? How can we touch each other?

Even after all these years of doing this, I never get used to it. Each time, with hesitation, I quietly and carefully - tots-u-tots-u- explore the relationship that might emerge.

With loosened tension, aligned breathing, and a search for a comfortable distance, I timidly meet their gaze and extend a hand. There's no guarantee they'll take it. And the point isn't necessarily to make contact—touching hands or fingers isn't the goal, nor is it the endpoint of the dance. Instead, I surrender to the coincidence of that day, placing myself in a space of uncertain connection, not knowing whether or not they'll respond. I try not to impose my rhythm onto them, nor do I simply fall into theirs.

It's in this openness—or perhaps in the reversal that such openness creates—that I confront the dynamic between self and other, and, inevitably, the experiences of life and death I've come to face through all the people I've danced with so far. We grope for the path of the dance that arises between us, destination unknown. That, I believe, is what makes Totsu Totsu Dance truly unique.

From that chance meeting between one dot and another, a relationship begins, as we attempt to touch one another. Through each hesitant tots-u-tots-u line drawn by those dots, I re-encounter myself and shape the relationship of “us” that began by chance.

Even after the relationship ends, the tactile memory, the lingering trace, the path it carved—these lines remain for me to trace, pondering the essence of what it means to meet and live alongside others. Lately, I've come to feel that this ongoing questioning might be at the very heart of Totsu-Totsu Dance.

by Osamu Jareo (Dancer/Choreographer)

### **Performance Info**

- Date: 6th August, 8PM

- 7th August, 8PM

- Venue: Hin Bus Depot (31A, Jalan Gurdwara, 10300 George Town, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia)

- Duration: 90min

- Directed and Choreographed by Osamu Jareo

- Performed by Osamu Jareo, Megumi Kamimura, Chloe Tan, Silver Yee, Kamal Sabran,

Cecilia Chan, John O'Neil, Tan Choon Leong,  
and Members of the Eldercare Center at the Bagan Specialist Centre

Stage Manager/Lighting Designer: Yasuhiro Fujiwara

Video Designer: Tetsu Kubota

Sound Technical Staff: Eric Teh, Brayden Low, Ahmad Harith

Japanese-English interpreter: Harumi Yamaguchi

Chief Production Manager: Takeshi Toyohira

Production Manager: Sayo Yokota, Mafumi Wada, Megumi Seki

Coordinator in Malaysia: Kyoko Kugai

In cooperation with Hin Bus Depot, EPSON,

Bagan Specialist Centre-Elder Care Centre

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Organised by torindo and the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan

\*Project commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan:

“Promotion of Cultural and Artistic Activities by Persons with Disabilities in 2025”

Japan-Asia-Pacific International Exchange Project: “<Totsu-totsu Dance -like art,  
like care> Created with Persons with Dementia, Elderly Persons, and Carepartners”

\*Official programme of the George Town Festival

Inquiry: [torindoinfo@gmail.com](mailto:torindoinfo@gmail.com) WEB: [www.torindo.net](http://www.torindo.net)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/series.totsutotsu/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/totsutotsudance/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@totsu-totsudance9801>

Links for reports documenting past activities in Malaysia (available in English and Malay  
(2022 only))

FY 2022:

[https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/totsutotsu2023report\\_en.pdf](https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/totsutotsu2023report_en.pdf) (EN)

[https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/TTD2022report\\_ma.pdf](https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/TTD2022report_ma.pdf) (MY)

FY 2023:

[https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/totsutotsu2023report\\_en.pdf](https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/totsutotsu2023report_en.pdf)

FY 2024:

[https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/totsutotsu2024report\\_en.pdf](https://torindo.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/totsutotsu2024report_en.pdf)

## Performers Profile

### Osamu Jareo (Choreographer, Dancer / Japan)

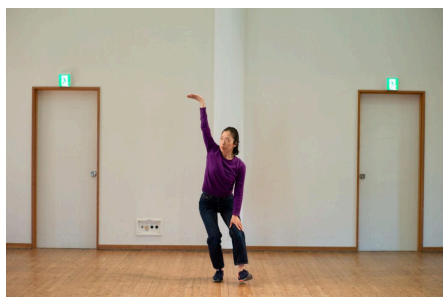


Osamu Jareo's work is rooted in the belief that illness and disability are transformations that occur as part of life. Drawing from interviews and research with diverse communities—including a German theater company of performers with disabilities, elderly residents in Maizuru and abroad, and people living in evacuation shelters in Miyagi—he creates dance works that emerge through dialogue and shared experience.

In addition to choreographing and performing in films by directors such as Ryusuke Hamaguchi and Chikako Yamashiro, he has participated in numerous exhibitions and arts festivals as an invited artist.

(Artist photo by Toshie Kusamoto)

### Megumi Kamimura (Choreographer, Dancer / Japan)



Megumi Kamimura has been choreographing and presenting her own works since 2004, performing both in Japan and internationally. She frequently collaborates with visual artists, creating performance works that transcend conventional definitions of dance.

Kamimura is particularly interested in the body as it responds to and is moved by specific environments and contexts. In 2022, she established Studio Yungura in Kokubunji, Tokyo, and

launched the collective Project Yungura with multiple artists. She has been a Saison Fellow II from 2021 to 2024, and has been a participant in Totsu Totsu Dance since 2022. (Artist photo by Nahoko Morimoto)

### Chloe Tan (Dancer / Malaysia)



Chloe Tan, a graduate of ASWARA with a Diploma in Dance (2014), works across dance, physical theatre, and shadow play. She is curious and drawn to works that explore the stories the body carries and the quiet power it holds. Chloe sees the body and movement as a way of making sense of the world—one that helps us listen more closely to ourselves and each other. She currently facilitates dance/movement therapy sessions while working toward accreditation as a dance/movement therapist with the Dance/Movement Therapy Association of Australasia (DTAA).

Recent performances include *A World in The City* (2024), *Switchblade Operation: The Longing* (2023), *Rivers in The Sky* (2023), *Adaptation* (2022), and *Dead Water* (2022).

### **Silver Yee (Dancer / Malaysia)**



Silver Yee is a movement-based artist whose work spans contemporary dance, dance theatre, site-specific performance and dance film. Her creative process is rooted in collaboration and a deep curiosity for the body in space and time. Through movement research, she investigates how embodied practices shape personal and collective meaning.

### **Kamal Sabran (Sound Artist / Malaysia)**



Kamal Sabran is an artist-designer-producer-musician-researcher based in Ipoh Perak.

He is particularly interested in the intersection of art, health, and well-being, and has carried out projects such as healing art initiatives and soundscapes for people living with Alzheimer's disease. He has received numerous awards, including the 'ASEAN New Media Artist Award' from the Indonesian National Art Gallery. He is currently working as a lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang.

### **Urut-urut (Research workshops / Malaysia)**



Urut-urut is a series of research workshops developed with care partners of people living with dementia. Facilitated by artist Okui Lala and Dr. Cecilia Chan, the workshops explore narratives of caregiving through senses, memory, and imagination. The team works as co-authors, collectively shaping the work through shared reflection and lived experience. In Totsu-totsu Dance – like art, like care, we feature two stories and readings by our team member, Ms. Tan.