

***Unwrapping Culture* returns to Vancouver and Nanaimo this summer 2017.**

**Co.ERASGA (Vancouver) and Pichet Klunchun Dance Company (Thailand)**

**Conception, Performance and Choreography by:**

Alvin Erasga Tolentino and Pichet Klunchun

Lighting design by Mark Eugster

**Nanaimo: July 8 at the InFrinGinG festival with Crimson Coast Dance.**

<http://www.crimsoncoastdance.org/infringing>

**Vancouver: July 11-14 @ the 29<sup>th</sup> Dancing on the Edge Festival.**

<http://www.dancingontheedge.org>

Co.ERASGA is pleased to announced the return of *Unwrapping Culture* to Vancouver and Nanaimo as part of BC's summer dance festival 2017.

After it's acclaimed world premiere in Canada and South East Asia in 2015-16, we are thrilled to bring you back this playful and thought provoking dance performance to truly experience!

*Unwrapping Culture* brings together two international exceptional male dance artists: Canada's own Alvin Erasga Tolentino, and Pichet Klunchun, an outstanding exponent of the Thai classical dance style of Khon, who is known internationally for contemporizing this ancient form. The recreation of this bold performance combines the technique, theatricality and storytelling elements of Khon to create a devastating critique of the corruption of authentic Thai culture by the forces of global commercialization. Passionate and bitingly funny – the riveting duet immerses the audience in the conflict between traditional and modern.

#### **Artist Bios**

**Pichet Klunchun** bridges traditional Thai Classical Dance language with contemporary sensibility, while keeping the heart and wisdom of the convention. He trained in Thai Classical Mask Dance, *Khon*, from age 16 with Chaiyot Khummanee, one of the best *Khon* masters in Thailand.

After receiving his degree in Thai Classical Dance at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, he pursued theatre both as dancer and choreographer at high-profile occasions, such as the

opening and closing ceremonies of Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998. Subsequently, he also worked with contemporary dance.

He is the only artist in his class to continue dance as a career today, and has earned domestic notoriety for his efforts in contemporising *Khon*. He has participated lately in several intercultural performing arts programs as a Thai representative and as an international dancer-choreographer in North America, Asia and Europe.

On December 9, 2008, he received '**Routes' ECF Princess Margriet Award for Cultural Diversity** from European Cultural Foundation. The purpose of the award is to honor artists and thinkers in the field of cultural diversity for helping to combat fear and disrespect of 'the other'. The Award is an initiative of the ECF in cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, generously supported by the Association of Charity Lotteries in the European Union (ACLEU) and the Rabobank.

In 2012, Pichet has recently received another award from the **French Ministry of Culture "Chevalier of the French Arts and Literature Order"** for his contribution to the influence of Culture in France, in Thailand and all over the world.

In April 2014, Pichet was recently awarded **the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award by the Asian Cultural Council** which is the award given to an individual from Asia or the United States who has made a significant contribution to the international understanding, practice, or study of the visual or performing arts of Asia. This award for outstanding professional achievement commemorates the deep and long standing interest of John D. Rockefeller 3rd in [Asian art](#) and [culture](#) and given to individuals active in their field.

### **Alvin Erasga Tolentino**

As one of Canada's leading Asian Canadian contemporary dance artist, **Alvin Erasga Tolentino** is a choreographer, dancer, teacher and visual artist. Tolentino's solo and ensemble work spans global audiences with collaborative works and presentations in venues and festivals in such countries as far as France, Belgium, Italy, Philippines, Uruguay, China, Venezuela, Japan, Italy, Germany, Thailand and Singapore. Contributing close to three decades in dance for Vancouver and international stages, Tolentino was a sought after dance interpreter in the works of Karen Jamieson, Kokoro Dance, EDAM, Mascall Dance, Lola Dance and Kinesis Dance. In 2000 Tolentino founded Co.ERASGA cultivating his own vision for contemporary dance creations. Tolentino has created a body of critically acclaimed multiple full-length creations that includes; *SOLA*, *BATO/Stone*, *Minori*, *Volt*, *Field*, *SHE SAID*, *OrienTik/Portrait*, *BODYGlass*, *ADAMEVE*, *Paradis/Paradise*, *Shadow Machine*, *EXpose*, *Shifting Geography* and *Colonial*.

*Unwrapping Culture* is supported through The Dance Centre's Artist-in-Residence program. A co-production with the MAI (Montreal Arts Interculturel), Alliance Française-Bangkok, Pichet Klunchun Dance Company and Co.ERASGA, supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Vancouver, and the BC Arts Council.

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