

## 2018 Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Festival Artistic Director Billy Chang

Billy Chang, as most people know him, is the first Taiwanese dancer to join the “Cirque du Soleil.” In 2008, he flew about 12,200 kilometers away from Taiwan to the snowy Montreal, Canada in search of his dream in the role of Yao (“Fire”) of *Dralion* of the Cirque du Soleil. *Dralion* is a blending of the Oriental aesthetic *Dragon* and the Western kinetic *Lion*, with Gaya (“Earth”), Océane (“Water”), Yao (“Fire”) and Azala (“Air”) representing the basic elements of nature. His fierce fight as Yao with Océane was impressive.

In late June 2017 at the invitation of the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society (TCCS), Billy Chang and the “12 Little Grandmas and Sisters” of Wenhsian Elementary Schools promised to bring in Taiwanese folkdance to the Canadian National Day parade. His passion, energy, and smile soon made him conversable with the moms and sisters in the TCCS training of “12 Grandmas and Sisters.” He became concentrative and rigid in the training of every dance step, movement, and posture. His dedication to arts is self-disciplined and ascetic. When the music was on, he danced and swayed, twisted and turned gracefully as the Grandma Chen Jingu. You could never tell that it was a man behind a masked lady.

He said, “Performing arts is not a profound art. The origin of dance is that humans use their limbs to worship ancestors, give thanks to all creatures and objects, and communicate with nature. Likewise, performing arts is an expression with your body and heart. You will find that life is so fascinating.

In the interview video clip, Chang talked smilingly and proudly that he decided to return to his hometown because of the YKK zipper on his shoes and Made in Taiwan. “Taiwan is an island full of vitality. Why can’t I?” Now he is the founder of Natural Kind Inspiration Garden, which was initiated by arts to co-exist with nature. He aspired to bring the common goodness, common living, and common creation to Taiwan in any form of artistic presentation. As of June, Chang hosts a program *Talk on Arts* on a television channel in Taiwan to talk with various artists and groups from diverse perspectives and explore an artistic alternative based on his rich and remarkable experiences.

Possible with the delicate and sensitive heart of an artist, He is also very much motivated by the aboriginal art taken from natural resources. This time, he has become the mastermind and artistic director behind the 2018 TCCF when he guided TCCS director Monica Tsai to visit the Taiwu Ancient Ballads Troupe of Paiwan tribe next to Taiwu Mountain.

TCCF features the performances of Taiwan Ancient Ballads Troupe and Taiwanese Melodic Ballads Concert on July 8 and the opening performance of “Twelve Grandmas and Sisters” directed and starred by Billy Chang at the Opening Ceremony on July 14. Do not miss this Arts Feast. For details and schedule, please visit the TCF official site at [www.tccfestival.ca](http://www.tccfestival.ca) or call TCCS at (604) 267-0901.