

# DOUBLE TREAT IN CHIANG MAI

**Northern Thailand's grandest** dance event is back this Sunday for the 11th consecutive year

PAWIT MAHASARINAND  
SPECIAL TO THE NATION

For Chiang Mai Ballet's 11th Charity Musical Dance Play, the double bill comprises a new adaptation of King Rama VI's "Matthanapatha" ("Legend of the Rose") and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid".

Senator ML Preeyapun Sridhavat, Chiang Mai Ballet's artistic director, explains her choice for "Legend of the Rose": "I feel that Thai students are getting further and further away from Thai culture, so this is our attempt to reintroduce them to Thai literature.

"Also, this story teaches both performers and the audience a good lesson on how sheer perseverance and strong determination can lead one to."

She then draws a link to the famous Danish folk legend. "The little mermaid wanted to have legs like a human being so badly that she agreed to give up her voice. Although she was later saved by a seagull, this was an important life decision and served as a good example for our young performers and audiences.

"And I'm sure both stories, being highly imaginative as they are, will have good effects on the right part of our brains."

ML Preeyapun says that all the choreography has been newly created by herself and her team of dance teachers in various genres, ranging from classical ballet, contemporary dance, jazz dance to Latin, flamenco and hip-hop.

"Of course, 'Legend of the Rose', with mostly classical ballet and contemporary dance movements, has more Asian flavour and 'The Little Mermaid' more European and more jazz dance."



'LEGEND of the Rose' is adapted from a story by King Rama VI.

Preeyapun says the highlights are the three male leads.

Peera Phanlukthao recently finished his PhD in the UK and is teaching dance at Maharakham University. He is portraying the Huntsman in "Rose" and the Sea King in "Mermaid". Multi-award winning young dancer Shan Del Vecchio, who just got accepted into the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in New York City, is performing King Chaiyasen in "Rose" and Prince Eric in "Mermaid".

Another male lead to watch is Japanese dancer Kotaro Tsutsumi, an exchange student at

Chiang Mai University's Faculty of Agricultural Science. He'll Hermit in "Rose" and Sir Grimsby in "Mermaid".

And, as a classical ballet curtain-raiser for the double bill, there will be male solo of "Franz Variation" from "Coppelia" by Tsutsumi and a female solo of "The Dying Swan" from "Le Carnaval des Animaux" by Kularat Saengchanopas."

Chiang Mai academy now has about 400 students, making it

probably the largest private dance school in the country, if not the region. All will be on stage.

This annual production is more than a school show, though, and that's due in major part to Preeyapun's unique artistic vision. Unlike other dance schools, they are not afraid of experiments and do not simply watch foreign dance DVDs and just copy the choreography.

## GOOD CAUSE

- The Chiang Mai Ballet's 11th Charity Musical Dance Play is at Kad Theatre on Sunday at 1:30pm and 7pm.
- Tickets are Bt200 to Bt1,000 at the Kad Suan Kaew information counter. Call (081) 400 8356 or (053) 306 358.
- Proceeds go to the Friends in Need (of "Princess Pa") Volunteers Foundation of the Thai Red Cross Society. Wear shades of gold as a symbol of support for HM the King.