The Opening Ceremony will contain five beautiful performances from five different regions: Asia-Pacific, Africa, Arab Countries, The Americas, and Europe, showing the great diversity of the performing arts around the world.

By casting these performances, mostly focusing on the traditional form of the local country or region they come from, ITI would like to express its emphasis on the protection of the various cultural heritages of human beings. To overcome the language barrier, the performances are mainly physical.

**Moderators & Comedians**
Faustino BLANCHUT, France & Natalia VALLEBONA, Italy
Faustino BLANCHUT
Faustino Blanchut graduated in Physical Theatre at the Teatro Dimitri Academy - where he received a grant from the Migros Cultural Centre, supported by the Pierino Ambrosoli Foundation. Whilst there he won the Thalen Thesis prize for the best graduation show. He regularly works as a performer and director for various international projects and was guest artist and moderator for the 70th anniversary celebration of the International Theatre Institute ITI in 2018, held in Haikou, Hainan, China. In 2022 he co-directed and choreographed the 2022 Circus Monti programme with Masha Dimitri.

Natalia VALLEBONA
Natalia Vallebona is experienced in several dance practices, some from the street and others more formal, which has led her to develop an artistic niche at the meeting of these two worlds; a junction between poetry and punk energy, between the reading of a body and an instinctive approach to movement. As a performer, she has collaborated with La Fura dels Baus, Thierry Verger, Gabriella Maiorino, Balletto Civile, C&C Company, Ben Fury, Quan Bui Ngoc, Ali and Hedi Thabet, among others. She leads workshops in many European choreographic centres, such as the Charleroi Danse, Teatro stabile di Torino, Codarts, Cirko Vertigo, and other prestigious institutions.

About Faustino & Natalia
Since 2021, Faustino and Natalia are the associate artists of the Italian company Abbondanza Bertoni/Teatro alla Cartiera in Rovereto. In the same year, they created the LOBO Festival, an annual event that takes place every August in Montbrun Bocage in France.
Maalad Art

Performed by Fujairah Maalad Group, Fujairah
Duration: 15 mins

“Maalad”, or “Mawlid”, is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet through the performance of religious songs. This artform began in the UAE with the pilgrimage trips from the UAE to Mecca, and it was the first to be performed by Omar Al-Afghani (1886-1918), who was a student of the Emirati Abdullah Al-Murid. He passed the artform down to his son Abdul Rahim, and the style grew from there. As such, Maalad has roots in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Fujairah.

The late Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan put in place mechanisms to preserve this heritage artform, so it regained its lustre and flourished to be performed not only on the Prophet’s birthday, but also on the anniversary of the Isra and Mi’raj, the night of the middle of Sha’ban, and at weddings.

Maalad became one of the Emirati heritage spiritual artforms; where love and spiritual values are spread and shared. It highlights the personality of the Prophet in a way that stresses social compassion, beauty, and art.

Among the most famous Sufi sheikhs who have performed the Maalad in the UAE are: Sayyid Al-Hashemi, Ahmed bin Hafez, and Abdul Rahman Al-Mansoori. The Burdah of Imam al-Busairi and the poem “Nahj al-Burdah” by Ahmed Shawqi, are the most famous and widely used poems in this artform. The Emirate of Fujairah revived this art, which has been part of its heritage since 2017, under the directives of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Sharqi, Crown Prince of Fujairah.

About Fujairah Maalad Group

Established in 2017 by directives from H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Sharqi, Crown Prince of Fujairah, in order to revive this traditional Emirati art form and introduce it to present and future generations. The group currently has 21 members, all youth.
Jade Rojo Pakal
Performing by Teatro Studio T, Mexico
Duration: 17 mins

In 1952 the tomb of K’inich Janaab Pakal (Pakal the Great, a Mayan leader) was discovered in Chiapas, Mexico, sparking the public’s imagination as to the treasures of biography and art which might have been interred therein. A door to the past was being opened, and a glimpse into the life of a unique ancient statesman was to be found on the other side.

*Jade Rojo Pakal* attempts to retell this story from a perspective cleansed of western revisionism. What emerges is a vital celebration of the native culture and its history, embodied by the biography of Pakal the Great.

As a biographical aide to those coming to the story anew, Pakal worked in the Mayan government from the tender age of 12 right up to his death at the age of 81. He had a great reputation for intelligence and generosity, and his reputation is one of a civilizing force — creating a culture and art out of the unforgiving terrain of the jungle.

About Teatro Studio T
Teatro Studio T is the bedrock of what is now called Teatro La Libertad, which is located in the city of Xalapa, Veracruz, México. The centre takes in students and artists from all over the world, and they are encouraged to share their knowledge of their own nations’ theatre traditions. Their goal is to look for the essential in art from the Eastern and Western theatre forms, encompassing all from the sacred to the pagan. The group performing *Jade Rojo Pakal* follow these precepts.
**Journey of life**

Performed by The Wild Donkeys, France  
Technician, Light Design, and Video Effects: Sébastien SIDANER  
Mask & Costumes: Serge NICOLAI

Duration: 12mins

A man and a woman, on the journey of life. Amidst urban solitudes, lonesome wanderings, they meet, love each other, live a life, and leave each other for the big trip and meet there again to live their love in eternity.

A physical theatre performance, inspired by the work of the Théâtre du Soleil, the Theatre Complicite of Simon McBurney, and from Robert Lepage who were all partners of work. Serge Nicolai explores the intimacy of relationships between men and women, the humanity of everyday relationships through the transposition of visual, musical, and aesthetic theatre. The projected videos from Sebastien Sidaner, will accompany this journey of life as visual and emotional partners.

**About The Wild Donkeys**

The Wild Donkeys are a collaborative and international theatre group who have worked in stage and film since 2012. In parallel with the activity of creation and distribution, the teaching of theatre, the transmission, the raising awareness and educational actions have always been a strong focus in the company’s work. Olivia Corsini and Serge Niclai offer numerous courses and workshops throughout the network nationally and internationally and regularly deepen a theatrical approach which is on the edge artistic commitment and pedagogical reflection.
**Dragon Dream**

Performed by the Vietnam Centre of ITI  
Directed & written by LE QUY Duong  
Duration: 17 mins

The piece is an imaginative story reflecting the urgent problems facing the world such as child abduction, noise pollution, poverty, ocean disputes, and war. In the performance, Têu, a popular character in Vietnamese water puppetry, joins Dragon Thang Long on a journey around the world to solve these problems and send messages of peace and solidarity.
Renaissance

Performance by
Abdoul Kader OUDRAOGO, Burkina Faso
Charles Nomwendé TENDREBOGO, Burkina Faso
Nongodo OUDRAOGO, Burkina Faso
Djigui OUATTARA, Burkina Faso
Zénaïde SOUBE, Togo
Fatoumata Drame, Guinea

Duration: 12 mins

Renaissance is a multidisciplinary show that unfolds like a journey through the ages. A journey that takes place in Africa, the cradle of humanity, and crosses time and space, exploring moments of happiness, questioning the wanderings of the present while drawing the prospects for a more peaceful, fairer, and more humane future.

At the heart of this global renaissance, the Woman, Queen Mother of Humanity, points the way forward by recalling the moral of this popular African tale: “Let’s not stop at childishness if we want to be for our world as centres of peace”.

The show RENAISSANCE is an invitation to question our humanity and to consider the need for us to be actors and messengers of peace for our world.

About the artistic team of the Burkina Faso Centre of ITI

The artistic team of the ITI Centre of Burkina Faso is made up of artists from different cultures and different generations. Six artists from three African countries, Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, and Togo unite to express their dreams, their apprehensions and their outlook on a world facing multiple challenges. Created in 1987, the Burkina Faso ITI Centre collaborates actively with the Training Centre for Research in Living Arts (CFRAV) which has become, over the years, a school of theatrical training of reverence in Africa. A member of the ITI-UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts, the CFRAV maintains important academic and artistic collaborations with universities, schools, and training institutes in all regions of the world.