



Chih-Jou Cheng

Freelance movement artist

Chih-Jou Cheng is a Taiwanese movement artist and puppeteer who is dedicated to creating artworks that illuminate the challenges and joys of the human experience through collaborative physical theatre.

PROJECT

○ Project leader/Co-producer/Director/Performer

Unfinished Island Songs (DT)

Chicago, USA

A participatory dance theatre work exploring the complex experiences of Taiwanese immigrants through movement, oral history, and physical storytelling. The piece examines home as an evolving question shaped by memory, loss, resilience, and belonging. Developed at Bridge Dance Festival (2023), Bim Bom Tin Can (2024), and Dusk at Links Hall (2025)

- World Premiere at Wirtz Center, Chicago (2026).

○ Project leader/Director

Lost & Found (T)

Chicago, USA

A devised community theatre show featuring four immigrant artists sharing their stories through their chosen media.

- Conducted workshops with the community to foster connection and storytelling.
- Collaborated with the artists to create an original, multi-disciplinary performance.
- Directed and presented at Links Hall as an interactive and immersive theatre experience in Chicago, 2024.

○ Co-Creator/Choreographer

HOUSE OF THE EXQUISITE CORPSE - Blood & Puppet(PP)

Chicago, USA

An interdisciplinary puppetry and physical theatre work exploring truth, guilt, and media manipulation through shifting perspectives. Co-created with a musician, integrating original puppet design, movement, and devised performance.

- Co-created and devised with an original live score
- Designed and built original puppets
- Choreographed movement and puppet performance

○ Project Leader/Director/Choreographer

Arriving at Dawn workshop (PT)

Chicago, USA

A wordless physical theatre work exploring migration and belonging through embodied research, oral history interviews, and the development of the Poetic Body method.

- Workshop presentation at Sheldon Patinkin Theatre (2023)
- R&D supported by the Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio Residency (2024)

○ Project Leader/Director/Choreographer/Performer

Above the Water (PT)

Chicago, USA

Above the Water is a poetic physical theatre piece that incorporates poems, movement, and puppetry to allow the audience and performers to walk together through the shifting complexities and landscapes of the five stages of grief.

- Presented at the Den Theatre in Chicago in 2022
- The project was awarded by the Illinois Arts Council Grant

○ Project Leader/Director

Hold your Hand (T)

Tainan, Taiwan

An oral history community theatre about the people and history of the Yin-Tong Community in Taiwan.

- I led a team to conduct a 10-week workshop with an elderly community to teach them how to express their life stories through theatre.
- Worked with a playwright to create an original play
- Directed and presented at Yin-Tong Community as immersive theatre in Taiwan, 2015

Contact

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Website <https://chihjou-cheng.com/>

Education

2025

Lize Puppet Art Colony puppetry
The Puppet and Its Double company

2021

MA Devised Performance Practice
Columbia College Chicago, USA

2016

Drama Creation and Application
with a minor on early childhood education
National University of Tainan, Taiwan

2017

BA Theatre
with a concentration on
choreography and directing
Otterbein University, USA



Certificate

Community Health Worker
Certificate

Malcolm X - City Colleges of Chicago

Adult Mental Health First Aid
Certificate

Malcolm X - City Colleges of Chicago

Storytelling in Teaching
Certification

National University of Tainan

** performed as an understudy; DT: dance theatre; MT: musical; PT: Physical Theatre; D: Dance Show; P: Play; PP: puppetry; F: Film/TV*



Awards

2025

Princess Grace Fellowship US national

2025

3 Arts Award - Dance Chicago

2024

Princess Grace Honoraria US national

2018

Best Choreography Award

"Night Sky" (Chor.) won the Best Choreography Award and 5 first places, and other awards at the 2018 Ohio dance competition season for Bartelt dancers

2014-16

Scholarship Program of Excellent Teacher Education Taiwan

2014

Modern Dance – 1st Place
2014 National Students Dancing Competition - Southern Taiwan



Grants

2026

Illinois Humanities Project Grant USA

2024

Ragdale Residency USA

2023

YNPN Chicago - Professional Growth Grant

2023

DCASE Individual Artist Grant Chicago

2023

Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio Residency

2023

Chicago Arts & Health for Creative Workers Award

○ Director/Co-Choreographer

Violate.Space (DT)

Tainan & Hsinchu, Taiwan

A Dance Theatre inspired by the abandoned old construction to discuss the stories that intertwine between space and people.

- Presented by Move Space Dance Theatre in Hsinchu, Taiwan, 2014

○ Project Leader/Director

Listen (P)

Tainan, Taiwan

An oral history play that explores the ensemble's collective memories, focusing on the pivotal turning points in their lives through shared stories and lived experiences.

CHOREOGRAPHING/DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

○ **Regina (PT)**

Movement Director

Daughterboy Collective; present at International Chicago Physical theatre Scratch Night

○ **Out With It (PT)**

Chicago, IL

Movement Director/puppet movement coaching

Chicago, IL & Ohio

Rough House Puppet Arts.; Director: Claire Saxe

○ **The Little Mermaid (MT)**

Puppet movement coaching

Chicago, IL

Drury Lane Theatre; Director: Scott Weinstein; Choreo.: Kasey Alfonso

○ **Comfort Women/Silent Clamor(PT)**

Choreographer/Movement Director

Chicago, IL

Alien Theater Company; Director: Ji Won Jeon

○ **Newsies (MT)**

Co-Choreographer

Chicago, IL

Music House School of Performing Arts; Director: Máire Witt O'Neill

○ **The Addams Family (MT)**

Asst. Choreographer

Westerville, OH

Otterbein Summer Theater; Choreographer: Stella Kane

○ **My Fair Lady (MT)**

Asst. Director

Westerville, OH

Otterbein Summer Theater; Director: Lenny Leibowitz

○ **Agape workshop (PT)**

Movement Director

Chicago, USA

At Urban Theatre Company; Director/Playwright: Daphne Agosin

Language

Mandarin	
English	
Taiwanese	

Reference

Tom Lee
Co-Director of Chicago Puppet
Studio & Puppet Lab,
Email: tlee668@gmail.com

Alice da Cunha
Artistic Director of Chicago
Physical Theater Festival.
Email: alice@physicalfestival.com

Performing Experience

- Left Hand of Darkness (PP)**
Puppeteer
NYC & Chicago USA
International Puppet Festival: created by Tom Lee & Edward Einhorn
- RHYNOCERON (PP)**
Puppeteer
NYC & Chicago USA
Puppetopia 2025 at HERE Art Center & International Puppet Festival: created by KT Shvak
- Seen/Unsee (DT)**
Devised Dancer
Chicago USA
With Ishti Collective at Chicago Cultural Center
- What Happens in the Wood (F)**
Devised Dancer
Oregon, IL USA
irector: Thomas Miller; Choreographer: Luzzo
- Little Amal the Walk (PP)**
Community Lead Puppeteer
Chicago, USA
Chi. International Puppet Theater Fest; Dir. Blair Thomas
- The Polar Express (MT)**
Dancer/Performer
Chicago, USA
Union Station Rail Events Productions
- The King and I (MT)**
Ensemble, Ballet Dog, u/s Uncle Thomas*
Chicago, USA
Drury Lane Theatre; Choreo. - Darren Lee; Dir. - Alan Paul
- Nuwa in Fairyland (P)**
Actor: Nuwa
Chicago, USA
Lifeline Theatre; Playwright: Brandon Zang; Director: Ilesa Duncan
- The Dream King (PT)**
Lead Puppeteer/Undercover*
Chicago, USA
Teatro Vista; Dir. - Alice da Cunha & Sandra Marquez
- Little Handsome Devil (PP)**
Heart Puppeteer
Cancun, Maxico
Chi. International Puppet Theater Fest; Dir. - Tom Lee & Rowan Magee
- Angel Island(DT)**
Devised dancer
Chicago, USA
Presented at Berger Park Cultural Center by Is/Land dance co.
- Khecari new project (D)**
Devised dancer
Chicago, USA
Presented at Boundary Park by Khecari dance co.
- Saturdays - Disney (F)**
Featured/Skill roller skate dancer
Chicago, USA
Produced by Disney TV; Director: Charles Stone III; Choreographer: Himerria Wortham & Dylan Morton

Special Skills

Music: Piano(basic);
Dance: Tap(I), Musical Theatre Dance,
basic Chinese Folk/Martial Art Dance,
Modern,
Puppetry,
Stage Combat (basic),
Living Statue,
Roller Skating,
basic Partner Acrobat

Performing Experience

- **The Hero Within (MT)**
Dancer Chicago, USA
Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Dir. - Tor Campbell
- **Miranda (MT)**
Tiger/Stella Chicago, USA
Impostors Theatre; music/book -Dominick Alesia
- **A Chorus Line (MT)**
Connie Wong (Lead) Chicago, USA
Metropolis Theater; Dir.- Robin Hughes; Choreo.- Christie Kerr
- **Anything Goes (MT)**
Luke Chicago, USA
Metropolis Theater; Dir. - Robin Hughes; Choreo. - Christie Kerr
- **The Promises from the Sea (P)**
Rocky (Lead) Tainan, Taiwan
Tainan Municipal Cultural Center; Dir. - Rey-Fang Hsu