

# Let your Dreams take Flight

It's all up in the air at the Padang for the Arts Fest opener as 40 people will dance while in a giant 'net'

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**H**EIGHTS do not scare financial services consultant Raymond Ling.

The 24-year-old thrill seeker is one of 40 Singaporeans taking part in the opening act at this year's Singapore Arts Festival.

Titled *Dreams In Flight*, the free three-day show at the Padang from tomorrow until Sunday features a large wheel 7m in diameter, with lithe acrobats performing within, fireworks and a giant "net" made up of synchronised dancers suspended in mid-air.

The show was conceived by Spanish performance troupe La Fura Dels Baus for the arts festival.

The big opening night tomorrow will also feature roving performances from 7pm onwards by groups involved in the festival's free outreach programme.

Making an arresting sight at the Padang



PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

**CITY CIRCLE:** Members of La Fura Dels Baus get the wheel rolling for tomorrow's show at the Padang.

will be a giant net that holds 40 Singapore volunteers arranged in rows. Dressed in shiny white spacesuits, these people will be performing choreographed movements while in the air.

Mr Ling says: "I asked to be placed on the highest point but I didn't get it. I'm not afraid of heights. I went bungee jumping in New Zealand when I was 15."

Such courage and enthusiasm is exactly what La Fura Dels Baus' artistic director Miki Espuma, 48, is looking for.

He says: "We're always up for young and brave people. The first feeling they'll get is fear, but we'll do a lot of rehearsals."

"When they're finally up on the net, they'll enjoy it as they'll get the best view of the city."

Asked what was the inspiration for this ambitious production, he says with a laugh: "We want to talk about the relationship between our real lives and our dream lives."

"Of course it's also an excuse to use psychedelic lights, music and actors in a big-scale production."

He adds that the participation of the host country's audiences in his performances is of paramount importance. He has taken the human net to countries like Lebanon, Italy, France and the United Kingdom.

"In Lebanon, our volunteers were Lebanese army members as it was too much of a difficulty to get civilians. When you work with 40 people from a particular place, you create a relationship between two cultures."

The volunteers, though, are busy making sure they don't flub it in front of an expected 6,000-strong crowd at the Padang.

Mr Ling says: "The moves are quite straightforward and the main point is to make sure everyone does it at the same time. If one of us forgets the steps, everyone will notice."

Another volunteer, Miss Jane Alethea Seet, 22, a third-year student at Management Development Institute of Singapore, says: "I'm most excited to interact with people on the ground and see how they react to us."

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> *Dreams In Flight* will be performed at the Padang from tomorrow till Sunday at 8pm. Admission is free.