

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is a global association of more than 500 arts management leaders from 56 regions, who come together with the shared goal of strengthening and developing the arts internationally. We achieve this by building leadership ability, by recognizing and discussing field-wide trends and new developments, and by deepening global exchange through the arts. ISPA members include presenters, performing arts organizations, artist managers, competitions, funders, consultants and other professionals working in the performing arts. Founded in 1948, 2022 marks ISPA's 73rd anniversary. [View Historical Timeline](#)

ISPA is:

- A meeting place – we hold two congresses every year – one in New York and one in a different global city
- A resource for expanding personal and professional networks
- **Where professionals learn** about performing arts in different regions of the world
- Where arts leaders **keep up to date** on issues, challenges and solutions from fellow colleagues around the world
- Committed to facilitating emerging, mid-career and established leaders in their careers both locally and internationally

MISSION

The mission of the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is to strengthen the performing arts globally through the advancement of leadership, the exchange of ideas, and by fostering a diverse and engaged membership.

VISION

To be a leading global network of diverse cultural professionals, reflecting the entire ecosystem of the performing arts. This network will strengthen communities, and further develop and promote the appreciation and recognition of the importance of the arts to society. [View Strategic Plan](#)

VALUES

As an organization we aspire to uphold a set of commonly held values as follows: 1) Professional Integrity and Excellence; 2) Collaboration and Cooperation; and 3) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

ISPA MEMBERSHIP

ISPA membership is more than 400 strong including organizations from 57 countries on five continents. The entire ecosystem of the performing arts community is represented in ISPA including producing companies, artist managers, presenters, festivals, funders, and consultancies. [View List of Current ISPA Members](#)

ISPA CONGRESSES

Twice each year international arts leaders convene to exchange and develop ideas, strengthen and nurture relationships, and rejuvenate their passion for the arts. ISPA congresses link individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, disciplines, sectors and aesthetics with the common goal of celebrating their inter-connectedness and advancing the performing arts on a global scale.

Traditionally, one congress is held in New York City each January. The second congress, usually held in June, is hosted by a different ISPA member community from around the globe. The first mid-year congress was held in London in 1987. The format and objectives of the congress are similar to the New York Congress with the added opportunity of learning about the artists, culture, and cultural organizations in the host region.

Recent International Congress locations include Seoul, South Korea (2012), Wrocław, Poland (2013), Bogotá, Colombia (2014), Malmö, Sweden/Copenhagen, Denmark (2015), Melbourne, Australia (2016), Montréal, Canada (2017), Leeuwarden-Friesland, Netherlands (2018), and Guadalajara, Mexico (2019).

[View Past Congresses](#) | [View Upcoming Congress Schedule](#)

ISPA CONGRESSES IN NUMBERS

- 72 Annual New York Congresses; 32 International Congresses; 1 Virtual Congress
- Virtual Edition: 2021 ISPA Congress – 551 delegates from 56 regions
- New York 2020 ISPA Congress – 670 delegates from 57 regions
- Guadalajara 2019 Congress – 450 delegates from 30 regions
- New York 2019 ISPA Congress – 640 delegates from 51 regions
- Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 ISPA Congress – 310 delegates from 46 regions
- New York 2018 ISPA Congress – 607 delegates from 53 regions
- Montréal 2017 ISPA Congress – 420 delegates from 31 regions
- New York 2017 ISPA Congress – 560 delegates from 51 regions
- Melbourne 2016 ISPA Congress – 400 delegates from 30 regions
- New York 2016 ISPA Congress – 535 delegates from 55 regions
- Malmö/Copenhagen 2015 ISPA Congress – 400 delegates from 39 regions

PITCH NEW WORKS

Pitch New Works is a forum for creators and arts professionals to share and discover new performing arts projects at ISPA congresses. Twice a year, ISPA holds a public call for applications from which ten submissions are selected to be presented at the following ISPA congress. [View roster of past Pitch New Works projects](#)

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

ISPA's Fellowship Program was created to provide emerging and mid-career performing arts professionals with the opportunity to expand their international networks through membership and attendance at ISPA Congresses. The Fellows represent all disciplines, genres, and types of arts organizations. In 2020, there were 56 Fellows from 24 countries participating. [View Fellowship Program Details](#)

COMMUNITY BUILDING PROGRAM

ISPA's Community Building Program provides support to new members by easing their transition into the broader network at an ISPA Congress. New members are paired with a current member who welcomes them to the congress and facilitates their participation in ISPA's extensive network of arts professionals. Through participation in ISPA's Community Building Program, both new and current ISPA members increase their network connections. In many cases, the relationship extends far beyond the congress program.

ISPA CONVENES

In response to the global pandemic, ISPA introduced this new program to connect members in the absence of in-person events. ISPAconvenes is a monthly video call among and lead by ISPA members. It is a place for members to socially connect, discuss timely topics, and further their network — virtually and ongoing. Participants are invited to actively engage in the conversation often using small group breakouts.

GENIUS BAR

Also new since the pandemic, the Genius Bar is the ultimate connector between ISPA members — virtually and year-round. Members sign-up with an issue they are grappling with or an opportunity they want to explore. The members are then paired with another member who has relevant expertise for a one-on-one 30-minute discussion.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

ISPA undertakes a number of diverse programs, both ongoing and ad hoc, that facilitate a presence for the organization and its membership globally. These programs are done in partnership with local organizations and complement work that is currently occurring in the region. They typically, but not exclusively, take the form of curated conversations and/or networking opportunities.

ISPA LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

ISPA's leadership consists of a Board of Directors (25) that represent the membership's diversity, eight Committees, which support the Board, and CEO David Baile.

- Chief Executive Officer | David Baile
- Board Chair | Tisa Ho (Executive Director, Hong Kong Arts Festival)
- [View ISPA Board of Directors Listing](#)
- [View ISPA Committee Member Listing](#)
- [View ISPA Staff Listing](#)

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