



Zen Qian

## Shen Wei Dance Arts

Saturday and Sunday, September 25-26, 2004  
Zellerbach Hall

### Director and Choreographer

Shen Wei

### Company Dancers

Brooke M. Broussard, Jessica Harris, Kennis Hawkins,  
James Healey, Hou Ying, Alexa Kershner, Tony Orrico,  
Sara Procopio, Kana Sato, Jesse Zaritt

*This performance has been made possible in part by members of  
the Cal Performances Producers Circle.*

*Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation,  
The Wallace Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation for their generous support.*

## *The Rite of Spring* (2003)

Choreography: Shen Wei

Music: Igor Stravinsky; four-hand piano arrangement by Fazil Say

Lighting: David Ferri

Costume and Set Designs: Shen Wei

### **Dancers**

Brooke M. Broussard, Kennis Hawkins, Jessica Harris, James Healey, Hou Ying, Alexa Kershner, Tony Orrico, Sara Procopio, Kana Sato, Shen Wei, Jesse Zaritt

First Performance:

Shen Wei Dance Arts, July 7, 2003, American Dance Festival

*ADF commissioned this work with support from the Doris Duke Awards for New Work; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and additional funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Altria Group, Inc., and the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation.*

## INTERMISSION

## *Folding* (2000)

Choreography and Design: Shen Wei

Music: varied melodies by John Tavener with Tibetan Buddhist Chant

Music editor: Kung Chi-Shing

Lighting: David Ferri

Costume, Set and Make-up Designs: Shen Wei

### **Dancers**

Brooke M. Broussard, Kennis Hawkins, Jessica Harris, James Healey, Hou Ying, Alexa Kershner, Tony Orrico, Sara Procopio, Kana Sato, Shen Wei, Jesse Zaritt

*Folding* was originally created in China for Guangdong Modern Dance Company.



Bruce R. Feeley

*Company members in The Rite of Spring*

## ***The Rite of Spring***

When I first heard Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in China in 1989 I was enthralled by the rich and evocative texture of the score. Over the next twelve years I continued to develop a creative interest in the piece, finally beginning in-depth research of the music in the winter of 2001. I was further inspired when I heard Fazil Say's performance of the two-piano version of the score. With a passion to challenge myself to continue creating work that pushes into innovative artistic terrain, I brought the company into the studio in the fall of 2001.

The Stravinsky score is constructed with both technical complexity and narrative passion. However, in keeping with my interest in abstraction, it is only the melodic and rhythmic qualities of the music, rather than the story it tells, that inform the choice of movement vocabulary. After listening closely to the score, I identified several body systems and movement ideas that matched the quality found within the music. These physical elements formed the basis for movement investigation and construction. Suspension, momentum, spiral, joint, muscle and nerve initiations were explored. These explorations served as a means of generating new movement, highlighting the importance of initiating movement with clarity, specificity and integrity.

I began by asking the dancers to develop and play with different choreographic strategies.

Through a series of structured improvisations and movement research, these strategies were more finely tuned. For example, in one section of the work, the performers play with how the movement or spatial choice of one dancer affects the choices of all the other dancers in the space. The piece in its final form is a set structure within which there is a balance between movement exactitude and movement intuition.

As in unstaged life, alongside that which is definite, there will always exist the coincidental, the uncontrollable, the chance happening.

## ***Folding***

I left China in 1995. When I returned four years later, I temporarily served as Guest Choreographer of Guangdong Modern Dance Company and over the next year, I made *Folding*. During this period I was strongly attached to a feeling about the qualities of the single action of folding – be it paper, fabric, flesh or other. This feeling took me back to China, back to the Guangdong Modern Dance Company and then into the studio. *Folding* links original music of Tibetan Mahakala Buddhist chant with the soft melodies of John Tavener. The large (16m x 9m) hand-painted backdrop sets a surreal scene with a rendition of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese water color painting by Ba Dan San Ren. – *all program notes by Shen Wei*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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**Shen Wei Dance Arts** was established in 2000 and is based in New York City. The company is dedicated to the creation of new dance in the 21st century and was founded upon the fusion of art forms: dance, theater, Chinese opera, painting, sculpture and a unique hybridism of western and eastern cultures. Based upon research in original movement and spiritual beliefs, each new multi-layered work demands the creation of an entirely new physical vocabulary.

At once representational (the human body is not denied) and abstract, Shen Wei's choreography is the moving medium among complementary visual elements in the works he creates. The performance space is best described as a canvas, with dimensionality and negative space serving as both landscape and character in the composition.

Selected past and future engagements include the Lincoln Center Festival (2003 and 2004), La Biennale di Venezia (2004), the American Dance Festival (2000-2004), Israel Festival (2004), Dorothy Chandler Pavillion/Los Angeles (2004), Jackie Gleason Theatre/Miami (2004), Philadelphia Live Arts Festival (2004), Jacob's Pillow Festival (2004), the Het Muziektheater/Amsterdam (2003), Centennial Hall/Tucson (2003), Spoleto Festival USA (2003), Bass Concert Hall/Austin (2003), the Holland Dance Festival (2003), Steps Festival/Switzerland (2002) and the Kennedy Center (2001). Upcoming engagements include London's Sadler's Wells, The Esplanade in Singapore, and Het Muziektheater/Amsterdam. For additional information, visit [www.shenweidancearts.org](http://www.shenweidancearts.org).

**Shen Wei (choreographer, dancer, painter and designer)** was born in Hunan, China, and studied Chinese opera from the age of nine. He worked for the Hunan State Xian Opera Company from 1984-1989 and was an original member of the Guangdong Modern Dance company, the first modern dance company in China, as a choreographer and dancer from 1991-1994. He was awarded first prize both for choreography and performance at the Inaugural National Modern Dance Competition in China in 1994. After receiving a scholarship from the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab in 1995, Shen Wei moved to New York City, and founded Shen



Wei Dance Arts in 2000.

Shen Wei has been commissioned by the American Dance Festival (1995, 2000-2004), Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater II, Dances We Dance Company of Hawaii, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company of China, and SUNY Purchase and Hollins University in the U.S.

Shen Wei's *The Rite of Spring* (2002-2003), set to the piano, four-hands version of the Stravinsky score, and *Folding* (2000) have been presented at the La Biennale di Venezia in 2004, The Israel Festival/Jerusalem in 2004, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion/Los Angeles Music Center in 2004, the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts/Burlington in 2004, the Jackie Gleason Theater/Miami in 2004, the Lincoln Center Festival in New York in 2003, the American Dance Festival in 2002-2003, Het Muziektheater Amsterdam in 2003, the Spoleto Festival USA in 2003, the Holland Dance Festival in 2003, Centennial Hall/Tucson in 2003 and the Bass Concert Hall/Austin in 2003. *Folding* also has been presented at Switzerland Steps International Dance Festival in 2002, The Edinburgh Festival Theatre in 2000, the Brighton Arts Festival in 2000 and the Millennium Moves Festival in Germany in 2000. *Near the Terrace* (2000-2001) has been presented at the Kennedy Center in 2001 and the American Dance Festival in 2000-2001; *Behind Resonance* (2001, 2003) has been presented at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and Philadelphia Live Arts Festival (2004), the American Dance Festival in 2003, the Switzerland Steps International Dance Festival in 2002 and the Performing

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Arts Center at SUNY Purchase in 2001. His 2004 work, *Connect Transfer*, premiered at the American Dance Festival and the Lincoln Center Festival.

Shen Wei received a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2000, the American Dance Festival Ben Sommer Fellowship in 2000, and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001. As a guest artist 1996-1999, he performed four works by Martha Clarke.

As a visual artist, Shen Wei's work includes painting, design and filmmaking. He has had exhibits in New York and Hong Kong. His creative exploration of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* directly inspired a series of large-scale paintings first exhibited as part of his company's NY debut at the Lincoln Center Festival in July 2003.

### DANCERS

**Brooke M. Broussard** is a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, and began her modern dance training there. In 2000 she graduated with a BFA in dance from the University of Southern Mississippi where she studied with Patricia A. McConnell and Joelle Van Sickle. Brooke recently performed her own work in New York City at P.S. 122 and CBGB's Art Gallery 313.

**Jessica Harris** received her dance training at the Chapel Hill Ballet School and Carolina Friends School. She has danced with Carolina Dancers, Chapel Hill Dance Theater, Duke University's 15-501 Ballet, The Whirlwind Dance Company, and is the founder of the Carolina Friends School Annual Alumni Dance Project. Jessica is currently completing a degree in dance from Pomona College. She is honored to have the opportunity to dance with Shen Wei.

**Kennis Hawkins** joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2003.

**James Healey** is originally from Grants Pass, Oregon, and graduated with honors from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. James was a scholarship student at both UNLV as well as at the American Dance Festival. Before becoming a founding member of Shen Wei Dance Arts,

he was an acrobat on the Las Vegas strip and an assistant to the Director for Malashock Dance & Company in San Diego, California.

**Hou Ying** was born in Jilin, China, and is a graduate of the Jilin Arts Institute. After graduation she studied Chinese dance at Beijing Dance Academy and worked for the Beijing Police's Art Troupe. She danced with the Guangdong Modern Dance Company from 1994-2002 and also choreographed many works for that company. She won first prize in choreography at the Ninth Belarussian Vitebsk Modern Dance Competition and received an Asian Cultural Council 2002 Fellowship.

**Alexa Kershner** began her dance training in Pasadena, California, with Philip and Charles Fuller and Cynthia Young. She received a BFA from SUNY Purchase.

**Tony Orrico** is originally from the southwest suburbs of Chicago and began dancing at Illinois State University under the direction of Laurie Merriman. He received his MFA in 2003 from the University of Iowa, where he performed for Charlotte Adams and Dancers, and danced in work by other artists such as Jeffrey Bullock, Alan Sener, Peggy Baker and Lar Lubovitch. In 2002 his work *Compulsion* was presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and at the American Dance Festival.

**Sara Procopio** is originally from Syracuse, New York. She began her dance training at the Center for Ballet & Dance Arts and received her BA and MALS degrees from Hollins University (Roanoke, Virginia). While at Hollins, she co-founded the Hollins Dance Project under the artistic direction of Donna Faye Burchfield and also studied extensively at the American Dance Festival. Sara would like to thank her family and friends for their tremendous love and support.

**Kana Sato** was born and raised in Sendai, Japan, where she trained in Japanese dance forms. She holds a BFA in dance from California State University at Long Beach and has received awards and scholarships from Orange Coast College, CSULB, and the American Dance Festival. Kana deeply thanks Ms. Chizuko Kajika, Linda Sohl-Donnell, Judy

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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Allen, Susan McLain, Keith Johnson, Linda Tarnay, and Donna Faye Burchfield for where she is in her life, and her family for who she is.

**Jesse Zaritt** grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts, and graduated from Pomona College (Claremont, California), where he studied extensively with Laurie Cameron. After attending the American Dance Festival during the summer of 2000, he moved to Roanoke, Virginia to join the Hollins Dance Project, in residence at Hollins University. Jesse thanks his family for their loving support.

## LIGHTING AND TECHNICAL DIRECTION

**David Ferri** (*lighting designer*) was born in Pennsylvania. He received a BFA in Photography from Rochester Institute of Technology. He was resident lighting designer/technical director at PS 122 (NYC) from 1985-1991, where he designed for countless artists including Eric Bogosian and Viveca Vasquez. He was Production Manager for Pina Bausch's 1996 and 1999 American West Coast tours. For the last seven summers he has been the Production Manager for the American Dance Festival. He received a 1987-1988 Bessie Award for his design of Doug Varone's *Straits*, and a 2000-2001 Bessie Award for Sustained Achievement in Lighting Design.

**Scott Bolman** (*technical director and lighting supervisor*) has designed lighting for regional and off-Broadway theater, including *Taming of the Shrew* and *Fighting Words* (Yale Repertory Theater), *Fran's Bed* (staged reading, Long Wharf Theater) and the current off-Broadway hit, *The Moonlight Room* (Beckett Theater). Past design work for dance includes the NYC Butoh Festival, *Rate of Exchange* (David Dorfman) and *Attracted to Accidents* (KT Niehoff; U.S., Canada, Japan, Ecuador).

*This presentation of Shen Wei Dance Arts is made in association with Lisa Booth & Deirdre Valente, Lisa Booth Management, Inc.*

### Shen Wei Dance Arts—Staff

Shen Wei, Artistic Director  
Vivian Chiu, Executive Assistant

Sara Procopio, Artistic Associate and Rehearsal Director  
Fran Kirmser, Development Director  
James Healey, Rehearsal Director  
Scott Bolman, Lighting Supervisor and Technical Director  
Kirsten Leon, Stage Manager  
Kana Sato and Alexa Kershner, Wardrobe Support  
Brooke M. Broussard, Make-up  
Michael Robinson/Nowhere Graphic Design

Board of Directors: Paul Kellogg (Chairman), Shen Wei (President), Caroline Cronson, Stephanie French, Lawrence W. Greene, Helen Little, Thomas Shiah, Patricia P. Tang

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Legal Services provided by Lawrence W. Greene.

Shen Wei Dance Arts is represented by IMG Artists.

SHEN WEI DANCE ARTS is a not-for-profit organization. Your interest and support are welcome. Contact: Vivian Chiu, Shen Wei Dance Arts, 135 William St. #11B, New York, NY 10038 USA. Tel: 212-962-1113. [www.shenweidancearts.org](http://www.shenweidancearts.org).

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