

Cal Performances Presents

Friday, October 20, 2006, 8pm
Saturday, October 21, 2006, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

in

Wild Cursive

The Final Chapter of *Cursive: A Trilogy*



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*This tour is made possible by grants from the Council for Cultural Affairs, Taiwan,
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Cal Performances' 2006–2007 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Wild Cursive



Choreography Lin Hwai-min

Music Jim Shum
Liang Chun-mei

Set

Concept Lin Hwai-min

Technical Consultant Austin Wang

Realization Hung Wei-ming

Paper & Ink Chung Rhy Special Paper
Union Chemical Laboratories of
Industrial Technology Research Institute

Lighting Design Chang Tsan-tao

Costume Design Sammy Wang

Commission Yong Lin Foundation
The National Theatre, Taipei, Taiwan

Co-Commission The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago,
with support from The Joyce Foundation and
Alphawood Foundation
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Premiere November 19, 2005, at the National Theatre,
Taipei, Taiwan

Duration 70 minutes without intermission

Wild Cursive is a lyrical dance inspired by Chinese calligraphy.

Cast

I.

Shen Yi-wen Su I-ping Wong Lap-cheong

Chen Chun-li Chiu I-wen Chou Chang-ning
Tsai Ming-yuan Wang Chih-hao Wen Ching-ching

2.

Chou Chang-ning

Chen Chun-li Lin Chia-liang Liu Hui-ling Wong Jyh-shyong
Wang Chih-hao Yang I-chun Yu Chien-hung
Chou Wei-ping Ko Wan-chun

3.

Huang Pei-hua Tsai Ming-yuan

4.

Chen Chun-li Liu Hui-ling Wang Chih-hao

5.

Chou Wei-ping Lin Chia-liang Yang I-chun Yu Chien-hung

6.

Chiu I-wen

Ko Wan-chun Su I-ping
Chou Wei-ping Lin Tzu-chun Liu Hui-ling Wong Lap-cheong

7.

Lin Tzu-chun

8.

Shen Yi-wen Tsai Ming-yuan Wong Jyh-shyong Wong Lap-cheong

9.

Wen Ching-ching

10.

Su I-ping Sung Chao-chiun

11.

The Company

Program Notes

About *Wild Cursive*

Wild Cursive is the result of a long journey into the ancient practice of movement and spirituality.

Under the direction of choreographer Lin Hwai-min, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan has been exploring traditional Chinese body disciplines. *Songs of the Wanderers* (1994), a triumph at the Next Wave Festival in 2000, comes from the practice of meditation. *Moon Water* (1998), topping the list of best dance events of 2003, chosen by Anna Kisselgoff, chief dance critic of *The New York Times*, owes its movement motives to Tai Chi Tao Yin, a Chi Kung exercise that can be traced back more than 2,000 years.

In 2001, Lin Hwai-min further explored the possibilities of Tai Chi Tao Yin and martial arts, and created *Cursive*, its title derived from Chinese calligraphy. After studying Chinese calligraphy masterpieces, Lin found, despite the differences in styles, all the brush works shared one common element: the focused energy with which the calligraphers “danced” during writing. He asked Cloud Gate dancers to improvise by facing blown-up images of calligraphy. The dancers absorbed the energy, or *chi*, of the writer, and imitated the linear “route” of ink, full of lyrical flows and strong punctuations, with rich variations in energy. The exercise produced unimaginable movements, with subtle slow motions and dynamic martial-arts-like attacks. These eventually became the movement material for *Cursive*, a work of stunning beauty that has received rave reviews in Europe and the United States, where it opened the American Dance Festival in 2003.

Cursive II, a sequel to *Cursive*, won both The Age Critics’ Award as well as the Festival Patron’s Award at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 2003. Although both *Cursive* and *Cursive II* were inspired by the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy, *Cursive II*, set to the music of John Cage, is drastically different from its forerunner. Chinese believe there are five shades of black ink. While *Cursive* emphasizes the darker blacks with vigorous attacks, *Cursive II*

explores the lighter shades in a meditative mood, evoking the serene quality of porcelain from the Sung Dynasty.

The conclusion of this trilogy, *Wild Cursive*, was premiered in November 2005. With a movement style developed through the years, and the advanced technical and mental strength of the dancers, Lin approached the work with more confidence and freedom. He drew choreographic ideas from Kuang Chao, or “wild calligraphy,” which is considered the pinnacle in Chinese cursive aesthetics, freeing characters from any set form and exposing the spiritual state of the writer in its expressive abstraction.

Inspired by the spirit of “wild calligraphy,” *Wild Cursive* utilizes paper as its only set. On a stage covered by white marley, streams of white rice paper cascade to the floor with black ink pouring from hidden pipes above and seeping onto the paper slowly and almost invisibly. The ink feathers and spreads in abstract patterns true to the spirit of chance as set forth in *I-Ching, The Book of Changes*. With these traces of time accumulating, an art installation, or “set in progress,” emerges. As the ink breathes through the performance, the lighting design illuminates the transparency of the rice paper, thereby enhancing the power of the flowing black images.

Against and between the layers of rice paper, the Cloud Gate dancers’ exquisitely liquid movements echo the serpentine and meandering lines of the ink. Throughout, the dancers’ breaths, coming from the Dan Tian, the core of their torsos, provide a subtle undercurrent to this constantly shifting feast for the eyes. Their organic vocals and foot stamps further enrich the sounds from the hum of cicadas, gusts of wind, waves breaking on the pebbled beaches, dripping water, rainfall, foghorns and temple bells, creating a natural soundscape.

About the Artists

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

According to legend, Cloud Gate is the name of the oldest known dance in China, a ritual dance originating some 5,000 years ago. In 1973, choreographer Lin Hwai-min adopted this classical name for the first contemporary dance company in any Chinese speaking community: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan.

Cloud Gate's rich repertoire has its roots in Asian myths, folklore and aesthetics, but it brings to these age-old beliefs and stories a contemporary and universal perspective. The company is made up of two-dozen dancers, whose training includes Tai Chi, meditation, martial arts, Chinese Opera movement, modern dance and ballet.

Cloud Gate has been on extensive overseas tours throughout the continents of Europe, Asia, Australia, North America and South America, including engagements at New York's Next Wave Festival, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, Lyon Biennale de la Danse, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Adelaide Festival, Berlin Festival, the festival celebrating the 25th anniversary of Pina Bausch Tanztheater Wuppertal, Sadler's Wells Theatre and the Barbican Centre in London, Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Kennedy Center. In 2003, Cloud Gate opened the Melbourne International Arts Festival with *Cursive II*, winning both The Age Critics' Award and the Patrons' Award; while in New York, *Moon Water* was named the best dance of the year by dance critic Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times*.

At home, Cloud Gate also enjoys high acclaim and popularity. It performs throughout Taiwan, in venues ranging from the lavish National Theatre in Taipei to mid-sized cultural centers in various cities to high-school auditoriums in remote villages. The company also gives free outdoor performances several times a year, drawing audiences of up to 60,000 per performance.

To tour campuses and grass-roots communities and to foster young choreographers in

Taiwan, Cloud Gate 2 was founded in 1999. In 1998, Cloud Gate Dance School was founded to bring the joy of dance to students ages 4 to 84.

In 2003, in recognition of Cloud Gate's contribution to the cultural life of Taipei City, the Taipei City government proclaimed August 21, the premiere day of Cloud Gate's 30th anniversary season, as "Cloud Gate Day" and named Fu-Hsing North Road, Lane 231, home of Cloud Gate's office, as "Cloud Gate Lane." This was the first time Taiwan bestowed the honor of naming a day and place after a living artist and/or artistic group.

Most of Cloud Gate's productions have been made into dance videos. Among them, *Songs of the Wanderers* was filmed in the Netherlands, *Moon Water* was filmed in France, *Bamboo Dream* was filmed in Germany and *Cursive II* was filmed in Switzerland by prestigious European production companies. These productions are available on DVD and have been televised in many countries since their publication.

Lin Hwai-min (*Founder, Artistic Director*)

studied Chinese opera movement in his native Taiwan, modern dance in New York and classical court dance in Japan and Korea. He founded Cloud Gate in 1973.

An internationally renowned choreographer, Lin often draws from traditional Asian culture for the inspiration to create works with innovative forms and contemporary relevance.

A two-time winner of the National Award for Arts in Taiwan, Lin Hwai-min has been awarded honorary doctorates from Hong Kong Baptist University and National Chiao Tung and National Chung Cheng universities in Taiwan, and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Department of Culture of New York City, the Joyce Award of Chicago and the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the so called "Nobel Prize of Asia."

In 2000, Lin was featured as the "Choreographer of the 20th Century" by *Dance Europe* and one of the "Personalities of the Year" by *Ballet International*, and was cited as

About the Artists

the “Best Choreographer” at the Lyon Biennale de la Danse. He was celebrated by *Time* as one of “Asia’s Heroes” in 2005 and honored by the International Society of Performing Arts with the “Distinguished Artist Award” in 2006.

Lin Hwai-min has been the subject of full-length television documentaries in Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and, most recently, in the Discovery Channel’s *Portraits Taiwan: Lin Hwai-min* and Opus Arte’s *Floating on the Ground*. Many of his choreographies have been recorded for DVD. Among them, *Cursive II*, *Moon Water*, *Bamboo Dream* and *Songs of the Wanderers* were filmed and produced in Europe.

His dance works have been restaged by dance companies and universities in the United States and Europe. In 2004, his production, *Smoke*, was restaged by the Zurich Ballet, the first time that work had been performed by a classical ballet company. Lin’s opera direction credits include *Rashomon* in Austria and *Tosca* in Taiwan.

An acclaimed writer, Lin holds a master of fine arts degree from the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa. His novella *Cicada* is a best-seller in Taiwan, and several of his short stories have been translated into English and published in the United States. His biographies, *Legend of Lin Hwai-min and Cloud Gate* and *Hwai-min as a Young Man*, are popular sellers in the Chinese-speaking community.

Devoted to the arts and education, Lin founded the Department of Dance at Taiwan’s National Taipei University of the Arts in 1983 and served as its chairman for five years. In 1993 and 1994, he was the founding dean of the university’s graduate dance program. In 1999, he gave workshops in Cambodia, assisting local dancers to organize teaching materials of Khmer classical dance for children.

Since 2000, Lin has also been serving as the Artistic Director of Novel Hall’s New Dance Series, introducing internationally renowned avant-garde groups and artists, one of the latest being Jerome Bel in June 2006, to dance lovers in Taiwan.

In 2003, Lin donated his prize from the Executive Yuan Culture Award, the highest honor of its kind in Taiwan, as the seed money for the Wanderers’ Fund, which supports local young artists to travel in Asia.

Lee Ching-chun (*Associate Artistic Director*) graduated with a master’s degree in dance studies from City University of Laban Centre, London, in 1999. In 2004, she received the National Award for the Arts from Taiwan National Culture and Arts Foundation.

A member of Cloud Gate since 1983, Ms. Lee takes leading roles in all of Lin Hwai-min’s works, including *Wild Cursive*, *Cursive II*, *Cursive*, *Smoke*, *Bamboo Dream*, *Burning the Juniper Branches*, *Portrait of the Families*, *Songs of the Wanderers*, *Nine Songs* and *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. She has also danced in Helen Lai’s *The Rite of Spring* and *Invisible Cities* in 1994, 1995 and 1996, worked with the British choreographer Lea Anderson and participated in the French Bicentennial Celebration in 1989, and performed with Dance Arts Company in London in 1990.

Her choreographic works include *Woman and Man*, *Man and Woman* for Cloud Gate and *While White Is Revealing* for Spotlight Dance Company, both of which premiered in 1996. In 1999, collaborating with Canadian stage designer Tania Etienne, she choreographed and performed the dance solo work *Courtyard of Pearls*. In 2006, she choreographed *Blossom* and *Moonlight Sonata* for Kaohsiung City Ballet Company.

Serving as Rehearsal Director of Cloud Gate for nine years, Ms. Lee was appointed as the Associate Artistic Director in 2003. In 2004 and 2005, she worked with Lin Hwai-min to restage his works *Smoke* and *White*, for Zurich Ballet in Switzerland and Introdans in the Netherlands, respectively, to great acclaim.

Ms. Lee is also Chief Consultant for Cloud Gate Dance School and has helped to create and develop class syllabi for students of all ages.

About the Artists

Born in 1957, **Jim Shum** (*Music Design*) is best known in Hong Kong and Taiwan for his creation of experimental sound for films. He started making Super-8 films while in high school. His short films took top prizes in the Hong Kong Independent Short Film Festival in 1979 and 1980.

After a number of 16mm short films, Shum made his first feature, *SAND*, in 1986. His films have been shown extensively in major international film festivals. In 1981, together with Danny Yung and Edward Lam, he founded the avant-garde theatre group Zuni Icosahedron and began composing electronic music and video art pieces for Zuni productions.

Shum composed his first film score in 1983 for a futuristic kung fu movie, *Health Warning*, by Kirk Wong, using only video arcade electronic beeps and bumps, sandblasted together with dark, distorted guitar. Later, he created other film scores using scream and moan, cybernetic noise, detuned musical instruments, fragmented trashy kung fu punches, recycled MIDI samples and collected sound bits.

Shum has been nominated and awarded multiple times in both Hong Kong and Taiwan for film awards for best sound and music. From 1988 to 1992, Shum extended his formal experimentation with sound into the visual world, making numerous music videos of Taiwanese pop singers for Rock/UFO/Warner Records. In 1994, he took over the distribution of ECM Records in Taiwan. While in Taiwan, he recorded a series of music from local ethnic artists—indigenous, traditional and ceremonial—and released the series on his own label, Olala! Music. Shum continues to record and produce music for local bands and artists and to work extensively on sound and music for advertising films.

Serving as Cloud Gate's Company Accompanist since 1991, **Liang Chun-mei** (*Music Design*) was appointed as the Company Music Consultant in 2001. A music accompaniment professor at the Dance Department of the Taipei University of the Arts since 1991, Liang is active in both the

performing arts and pop music. She is often engaged by the pop music industry for music instrumentation and arrangement, and she is also one of the most popular young music directors/producers and accompanists for Taiwan's up-and-coming dance and theatre companies.

A graduate of Chinese Cultural University, Taiwan, Liang further pursued her education in Applied Music at UCLA School of Music in 1990. While in the United States, she studied music arrangement and composition at the Live/Electronic Music Concert Workshop and had her compositions performed in Texas and in Tokyo, Japan. As the winner of the Tokyo Live/Electronic Music Competition, her works were once again presented in Japan in 2002.

In 2000, Liang was invited by Beijing Dance Academy to participate in the "Music Accompaniment for Chinese Classical Dance Forum." In the same year, she was invited to be the music producer for Young Asian-Pacific Choreographers' Workshop, under the auspices of the World Dance Alliance and held in Taiwan. In 2001, she was engaged as the music producer for the Cloud Gate 2 Young Choreographers' Workshop, and was invited to do the music arrangement and perform for the audio CD of the book *Introduction to the Arts* by the renowned artist and writer Chiang Hsun. In 2003, along with others, Liang produced a modern dance music accompaniment CD, *The Wave*, published by the award-winning Ja Wei Audio & Visual Company. In 2005, she was invited by Diabolo Dance Theatre to serve as music director and to compose choreographic music for their new dance work, *The Game of DIABOLO Dance*.

Acclaimed "a master painter in light" by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, **Chang Tsan-tao** (*Lighting Design*) holds an MFA degree in Design and Technical Production from the City University of New York's Brooklyn College. Germany's *Süddeutsche Zeitung* has acclaimed, "Chang Tsan-tao is, without argument, the best lighting designer that theater currently knows." France's *Le Figaro* raved, "I was literally taken by Chang

About the Artists

Tsan-Tao's sumptuous lighting; he created dazzling fireworks."

Chang has designed for opera, dance and theatre productions in Taiwan. His major lighting design achievements include Lin Hwai-min's *White* (2006), *Wild Cursive* (2005), *The Road to the Mountain* (2004), *Smoke* (2002), *Cursive* (2001), *Bamboo Dream* (2001), *Moon Water* (1998), *Songs of the Wanderers* (1994) and other important works in Cloud Gate's repertoire. He has also worked as the lighting designer for Diabolo Dance Theatre, Golden Bough Theatre, Sun-Shier Dance Theatre, Taipei Crossover Dance Company and Godot Theatre Company, and he designed the lighting for Ming Hua Yuan's *Chi Kung the Miraculous Taoist Monk* (1990), which was performed at the Beijing Asia Games.

In 1990, he served as the lighting director for *The Kingdom of Desire*, presented by the Contemporary Legend Theatre on its overseas premiere, at the National Theatre of London. In 2002, he was the lighting designer for National Symphony Orchestra's presentation of the opera *Tosca*, directed by Lin Hwai-min.

Chang has worked closely with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan since 1982. At present, he is the company's Technical Director, Resident Lighting Designer and Lighting Director.

With an MFA degree from the State University of New York's Purchase College, **Sammy Wang** (*Costume Design*) currently serves as Director and Associate Professor for the Department of Theatre Design and Technology at the National Taipei University of the Arts (formerly the National Institute of the Arts). Besides *Wild Cursive* and *Smoke* by Lin Hwai-min, Wang's other achievements in costume design include *Body Images* by Lo Man-fei and the Chin Chung-lien Solo Dance Exhibition.

From modern theatre and traditional plays to operas, the richness in variety and imaginative power of Wang's designs has made him Taiwan's hottest stage design talent. Over the years, he has been invited by Taiwan's leading performing

arts groups to take charge of set and lighting design, including Performance Workshop, Godot Theatre Company, Ping-Fong Acting Troupe, Lan Ling Theatre Workshop, the Taipei City Symphony Orchestra, the Taiwan Provincial Symphony Orchestra, the Yayin Group, Ming Hwa Yuan Taiwanese Opera Company and Green Ray Theatrical Company.

In 1993, Wang's set design for Purchase College's *Camino Real* received an invitation from the second Asian Theatre Design Exhibition in Tokyo. Wang also provided art design expertise for the 1994 film *The Red Lotus Society*.

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

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