

# DANCE | U S A

JOURNAL



**Reforming the Rules of Engagement**

**Legislative Visits Made Simple**

**The Short-Career Syndrome**

**Tips from an Accidental Advocate**

**American Dance Tours in China**

**Diversity in the Back Office**

**National Performance Network Celebrates 25 Years**

Final print issue. Look for our new online publication: *From the Green Room: Dance/USA's eJournal.*

**Dance/USA Staff**

**Andrea E. Snyder**  
Executive Director  
1111 16th St., NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel 202/833-1717  
Fax 202/833-2686  
asnyder@danceusa.org

**Rachel Bell**  
Office Manager/Executive  
Administrator  
rbell@danceusa.org

**Kellee Edusei**  
Membership Manager  
kedusei@danceusa.org

**Amy Fitterer**  
Director of Government Affairs  
afitterer@danceusa.org

**Vicki Kimble**  
Director of Development  
vkimble@danceusa.org

**Betsy Lundgren**  
Communications Specialist  
blundgren@danceusa.org

**John Munger**  
Director of Research  
and Information  
Tel 651/646-8076  
Fax 651/646-7971  
jrmdance@aol.com

**Victoria Smith**  
Research Associate  
vsmith@danceusa.org

**Tom Thielen**  
Director of Finance  
and Operations  
tthielen@danceusa.org

**Project Specific  
Consultants**

**Suzanne Callahan**  
Program Manager  
Engaging Dance Audiences  
Tel 202/955-8325  
Fax 202/955-8324  
Callahan@forthearts.org

**Kim Konikow**  
Event Management  
Tel 435/668-7800  
Fax 866/241-3611  
kim@  
artservicesandcompany.com

**Lisa Traiger**  
Editor, Dance/USA Journal  
lisatraiger@aol.com

**Branch Offices**

**Michelle Burkhart**  
Director, Dance/NYC  
63 Greene St., #60  
New York, NY 10012  
Tel 212/966-4452  
Fa: 212/966-6424  
mburkhart@dancenyc.org

**Peter DiMuro**  
Director, Dance/MetroDC  
1111 16th St., NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel 202/778-1190  
Fax 202/833-2686  
pdimuro@dancemetrod.c.org

**Lois Welk**  
Director, Dance/USA Philadelphia  
1427 Spruce St., Suite 1F  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-4534  
Tel 215/922-5970  
loiswelk@  
danceusaphiladelphia.org

**Lacey Althouse**  
Administrator/Development  
Associate, Dance/NYC  
lalthouse@dancenyc.org

**Danielle Currica**  
Program Associate, External  
Communications, Dance/MetroDC  
danielle@danceusa  
philadelphia.org

**Meg Foley**  
Program Associate  
Dance/USA Philadelphia  
meg@danceusaphiladelphia.org

**Erin Foreman-Murray**  
Manager of Operations,  
Dance/USA Philadelphia  
erin@danceusaphiladelphia.org

**Roxann Morgan-Rowley**  
Programs Associate,  
Dance/MetroDC  
rmrowley@dancemetrod.c.org

**Gabrielle Revlock**  
Program Associate,  
Dance/USA Philadelphia  
gabrielle@  
danceusaphiladelphia.org

**Cheryl Sidwell**  
Program Associate, External  
Communications, Dance/MetroDC  
csidwell@dancemetrod.c.org

**Michelle Stortz**  
Program Associate,  
Dance/USA Philadelphia

**Kathryn Tebordo**  
Development Specialist,  
Dance/USA Philadelphia  
Kathryn@  
danceusaphiladelphia.org

**Dance/USA  
Board of Trustees****OFFICERS**

**Paul King, Chair**  
White Bird

**Wayne Hazzard, Vice Chair**  
Dancers' Group

**Rachel Moore, Vice Chair**  
American Ballet Theatre

**Ruby Lockhart, Vice Chair**  
Garth Fagan Dance

**Andrea Snyder, President**

**Amy Lam, Treasurer**  
Lamling Group

**Amy Smith, Secretary**  
Headlong Dance Theater

**AGENTS/ARTISTS  
REPRESENTATIVES' COUNCIL**

**Rena Shagan, Chair**  
Rena Shagan Associates

**ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' COUNCIL**

**Larry Keigwin, Chair**  
Keigwin + Company

**Tom Mossbrucker, Chair**  
Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

**MANAGERS' COUNCIL**

**C.C. Connor, Interim Chair**  
Houston Ballet

**Jack R. Lemmon,**  
Independent Consultant

**Leslie Malmed**  
Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana

**SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS'  
COUNCIL**

**Mark Roxey, Co-Chair**  
Roxey Ballet

**Ruth Birnberg, Chair**  
Boston Dance Alliance

**PRESENTERS' COUNCIL**

**Paul Organisak, Chair**  
Pittsburgh Dance Council

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**Meg Booth**  
Kennedy Center

**Karen "KB" Brown**  
University of the Arts

**Laura Burkhart**  
Independent Dance Consultant

**Richard Caples**  
Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

**Robert Dorf**  
Independent Consultant

**Jodie Gates**  
CaDance

**Gina Gibney**  
Gina Gibney Dance, Inc.

**Guido Goldman**  
First Spring Corporation

**Joanne Robinson Hill**  
The Joyce Theater

**Dwight Hutton**  
Louisville Ballet

**Matthew Keefe**  
Independent Artist

**John Malashock**  
Malashock Dance

**Ken Maldonado**  
Zia Artists

**Victoria Morgan**  
Cincinnati Ballet

**Julie Nakagawa**  
Danceworks Chicago

**Harold Norris**  
H-Art Management

**Paul Organisak**  
Pittsburgh Dance Council

**Mark Roxey**  
Roxey Ballet

**Cookie Gregory Ruiz**  
Ballet Austin

**Charles Santos**  
TITAS

**Rena Shagan**  
Rena Shagan Associates

**Sydney Skybetter**  
Skybetter and Associates

**Anna Thompson**  
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center  
University of Notre Dame

**Eduardo Vilaro**  
Ballet Hispanico

**Septime Webre**  
The Washington Ballet

**Dance/USA Journal**

Vol. 26, No. 1  
Spring 2010

Andrea E. Snyder, *Publisher*  
Lisa Traiger, *Editor*  
hennesseyink.com, *Design*

The Dance/USA Journal is published twice a year by Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance. ©2010-03-17 by Dance/USA, a 501(c)3 organization. All rights reserved. Materials herein may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission from Dance/USA. Printed in the United States.

**Annual Subscription Rates**

\$40 in the United States  
\$50 in Canada  
\$70 overseas

Postmaster: Please send address corrections to Dance/USA, 1111 16th St NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

To contribute information or comment on articles, please contact Dance/USA via email at [danceusa@danceusa.org](mailto:danceusa@danceusa.org) or by mail at the address at right.

**Dance/USA**

1111 16th Street NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone 202/833-1717  
Fax 202/833-2686

Email: [danceusa@danceusa.org](mailto:danceusa@danceusa.org)  
<http://www.danceusa.org>

# 3

## NEWS

Dance Beyond Borders

# 4

## REFORMING THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

A Report on Dance/USA's Engaging Dance Audiences

By Suzanne Callahan

# 7

## TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Lockhart Goes to Washington: Legislative Visits Made Simple

By Ruby Lockhart

**The Short-Career Syndrome: 9**  
A Case for Dancer Professional Development

By Matthew Keefe

**An Advocacy Primer: 11**  
Tips From an Accidental Advocate

By Jen Abrams

**The Hundred Flowers' Long March East: 15**  
Achievements and Challenges of U.S. Dance Tours in China

By Ling Tang

**Diversity in the Back Office: 20**  
A Must for Sustainability

By Ebonie C. Pittman

**Peer Review: 23**  
Origins of the National Performance Network

By Mindy Aloff

**NPN in a Presenter's Words by Carla Perlo 27**

**NPN in an Artist's Words by Jane Comfort 28**

**And From Here, Where To? 15**  
The Next Phase in Artist Focused Presenting and Collaborating  
A Q&A with MK Wegmann, CEO, National Performance Network

THE HISTORICAL  
IMPACT OF ITS  
'COMMUNIST  
BROTHER,' THE  
SOVIET UNION, MADE  
BALLET DOMINANT  
ON CHINESE STAGES  
FOR GENERATIONS.

Shen Wei in "Re-" —Kennedy Center

Below, left to right: Beijing Contemporary Dance Theatre in "Lum" —Han Jiang  
Guangdong Modern Dance Company in "Upon Calligraphy" —Pan Wen Feng  
Brigham Young University's Folk Dance Ensemble performed in China —BYU  
Guangdong Modern Dance Company in "Ambrosia" —Li Jianyang



# THE HUNDRED FLOWERS' LONG MARCH EAST:<sup>1</sup>

## Achievements and Challenges of U.S. Dance Tours in China

By Ling Tang

**A**s the daughter of a Chinese foreign minister in the Qing Dynasty, Yu Rongling traveled with her father to Paris in 1899. For three years she studied with Isadora Duncan, who was performing and teaching there. When Yu returned home, she introduced Western modern dance to audiences in China. In 1925 and 1926, the Denishawn Dance Company toured China twice for a cumulative duration of 40 days. Led by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, the group included Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Ann Douglas, who later became major forces of American dance. "The tour progressed artistically, personally, and even spiritually," according to *Dance Chronicle*. "It was a great education for the Denishawn dancers, and it nurtured thoughts that determined the future course of many lives."<sup>2</sup>

*"I have been asking myself what was the core and meaning of the spiritual life of China and what embodiment did its highest aesthetic feeling take, and by effortless logic I have arrived at White Jade and Kuan Yin ..."*<sup>3</sup> — Ruth St. Denis

While 2009 marked the 30th anniversary of Sino-U.S. diplomacy, dance exchanges between China and the U.S. continue to be a renewable theme. For both countries, cross-cultural dialogues in the arts offer significant potential for strengthening ties between people. Although

in recent years, more U.S. dance companies have appeared onstage in China, due to many circumstances, the road to China is indeed long and full of obstacles. Admittedly, this has as much to do with infiltrating distinct bureaucratic systems as it does with dance excellence. The arts and cultural sector has been one of China's most protected industries — highly regulated, dominated by state ownership, and sheltered from international competition. Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, the system experienced a period of rapid change to be better suited to a higher level of market-driven economy and to be more open to international performing artists.

The unforgettable grand Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics with its huge crowd of performers dressed in fine costumes executing sophisticated, choreographed spectacles in mass unison unabashedly emphasized the nation's strong collectivistic culture. The symbolism of this event made clear that Western performing artists still have some hurdles to overcome



*Beijing Modern Dance Company in "Insect"*  
—Zhang Heping

1 Both "Hundred Flowers" and "Long March" are metaphoric uses of two famous movements of the Chinese Communist Party. "Hundred Flowers" was a brief interlude in China from 1956 to 1957 when the party encouraged a variety of views and solutions to national policy issues. "Long March" was a massive military retreat undertaken by the party's Red Army between 1934 and 1936.

2 Wentink, A. M. [1977]. "From the Orient ... Oceans of Love, Doris': the Denishawn Tour of the Orient as Seen Through the Letters of Doris Humphrey." *Dance Chronicle*, p. 22.

3 Denis, R. S. [1939]. *An Unfinished Life; An Autobiography*. New York and London: Harper & Bros., p. 277.

before solidifying their place in China's artistic landscape.

Of all the Western performing arts, the Chinese seem to feel the greatest affinity for Western classical forms, including ballet, because the audiences are comfortable with dramatic structure — interpreting stories and characters without words or dialogue. Also, the emphasis on beauty and virtue in movement closely aligns with traditional Chinese ideologies. Moreover, the historical impact of its “Communist brother,” the Soviet Union, made ballet dominant on Chinese stages for generations. Back in the 1950s, Russian émigré ballet experts brought Vaganova technique to China and directed

evolved, reaching their zenith — or nadir, depending on one's aesthetics and politics — during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. *The Red Detachment of Women* and *The White-Haired Girl* became the two most legendary of the revolutionary ballets. The essence — “arabesque in peasant's pants with rifle in hands” — influenced Chinese artists and audiences for generations.

The official collaboration between American and Chinese modern dance companies was launched in 1986 when Chinese dance educator Yang Meiqi and Charles Reinhart, American Dance Festival (ADF)'s co-director, established a training program in China. In the succeeding four

went on to form China's first modern dance company, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company (GMDC), in 1992. Today, GMDC has been hailed by *The New York Times* as “one of the big success stories of international dance.” The company's former members, such as Shen Wei and Sang Jijia, have become internationally recognized.

San Francisco-based choreographer Margaret Jenkins is among many who taught workshops at GMDC. Over the past two years, she initiated a dance exchange between GMDC and her Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. After completing the first section of *Other Suns* in 2007, Jenkins and her eight dancers spent five weeks in

Guangzhou rehearsing and performing the next segment of the work in collaboration with GMDC dancers and Deputy Artistic Director Liu Qi in 2008. The two companies finalized and assembled the trilogy in San Francisco in September 2009, prior to its world premiere at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, followed by a U.S. tour.

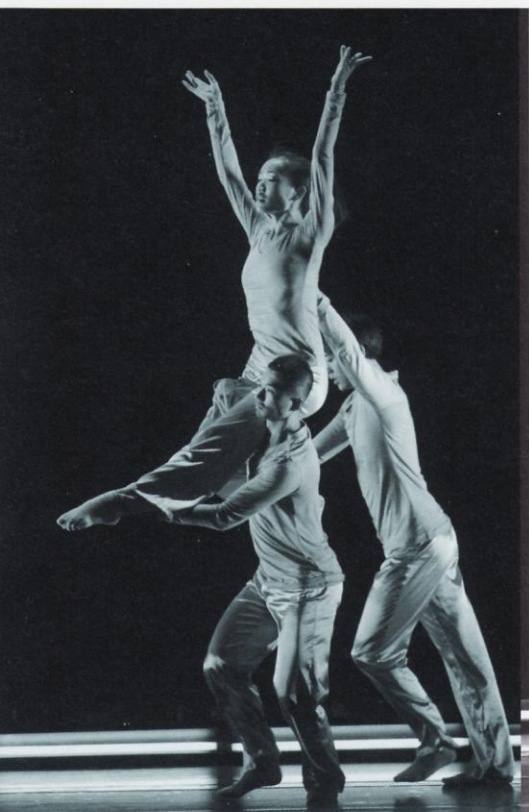
*“It is in the conversation — both through movement investigation and the more quotidian daily interactions — that the most profound impact of cultural exchange takes place. We strive to stay ready for the surprises, to be able to surrender to what a new place, culture and people can offer us*

*and how we might strengthen the dialogue among each other and, by extension, our countries.”*

— Margaret Jenkins

Established companies like GMDC and Beijing Modern Dance Company have

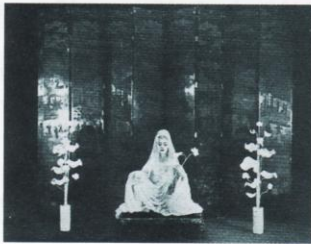
**“THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SUPPORT ITS ARTISTS' TOURS ABROAD AND, AS A RESULT, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET OUR COMPANIES TO CHINA. THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO GO, UNLESS THEY CAN RAISE CORPORATE SPONSOR MONIES TO UNDERWRITE THEIR EXPENSES, A DIFFICULT TASK FOR MOST.” —RENA SHAGAN, RENA SHAGAN ASSOCIATES, INC.**



Margaret Jenkins Dance Company and Guangdong Modern Dance Company in “Other Suns” —Bonnie Kamin

full-length classical productions of *Le Corsaire*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Esmeralda*, *Fountains of Bakhchisarai*, and a new ballet, *The Maid of the Sea*, based on traditional Chinese dance forms. The unique Chinese ballet themes later

years, ADF sent faculty to teach modern dance classes to students and teachers in Guangzhou and brought Chinese dancers and choreographers to the U.S. in an effort to expand Sino-American dance exchanges. The Chinese graduating class



spurred contemporary dance community growth. In 2005, a law change allowed individuals to establish private organizations. Willy Tsao, one of the foremost figures in modern dance in China, was the first to take advantage of it by founding a private modern dance company and thus, Beijing Dance/LDTX was born. Under the artistic direction of Willy Tsao, LDTX presents an annual dance festival that inspires local dance companies and international cultural exchanges. Battery Dance Company of New York was one of the six companies that participated in the first festival in 2008. The Beijing performance of *Prism* in August 2009 marked the first international collaboration for the newly founded Beijing Contemporary Dance Theatre (BCDT). "This exchange offers a

fantastic learning opportunity for both sides," says Wang Yuanyuan, the artistic director of BCDT. "The arts can serve as great diplomacy — a direct field for understanding and compassion between peoples." A native of Beijing, Wang holds her MFA in dance from the California Institute of Arts and was one of the choreographers of the National Ballet of China's acclaimed *Raise the Red Lantern*, which completed its U.S. tour in 2005.

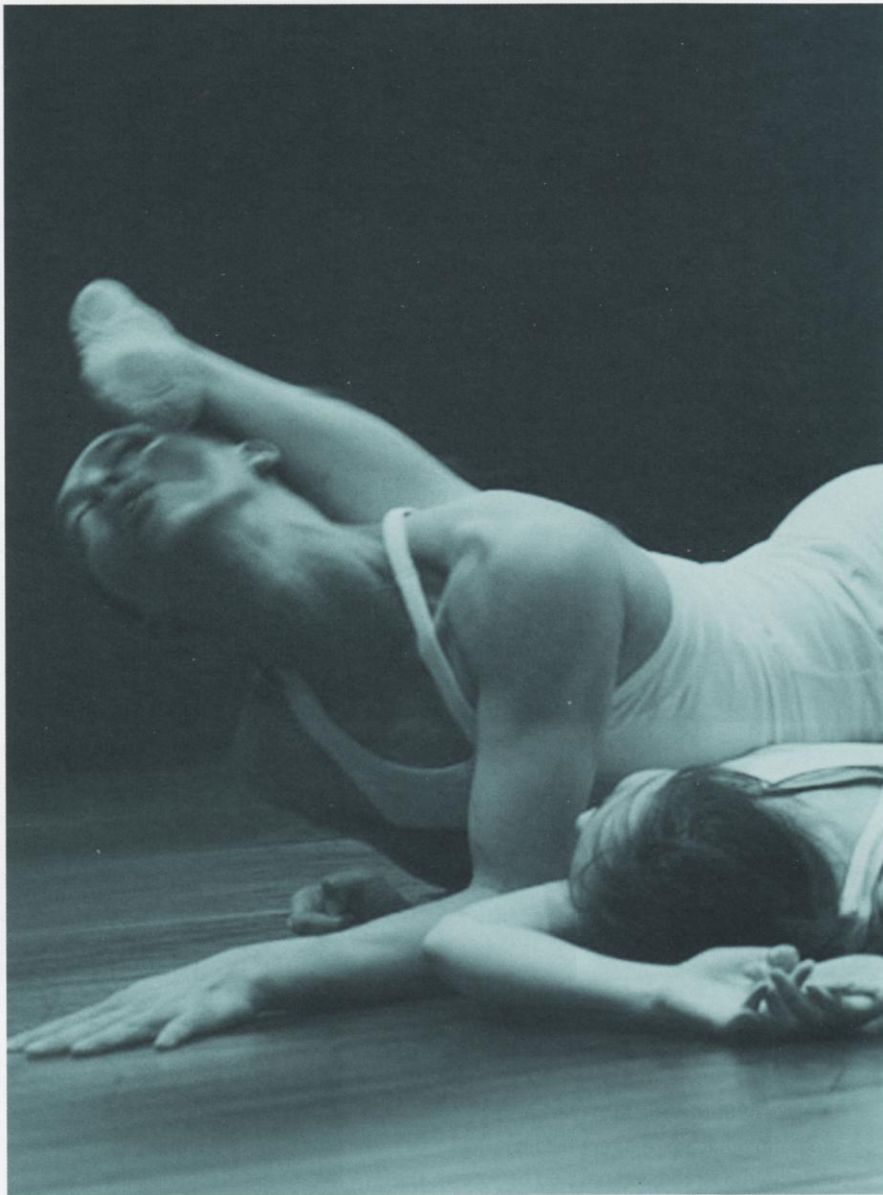
Besides collaborating directly with Chinese dance troupes, U.S. repertory companies may tour in China by following the Department of State's *Administrative Regulations on Commercial Performances* (in effect since 1997). Three basic steps include seeking a Chinese presenter,

Counterclockwise from top: Beijing Dance/LDTX in "The Cold Dagger" —Zhang Heping  
Ruth St. Denis in "White Jade" from "An Unfinished Life" —Dance Horizons, 1969  
American Ballet Theatre's Nancy Raffa teaches a workshop at a residency at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing —Gao Shang  
Margaret Jenkins Dance Company and Guangdong Modern Dance Company in "Other Suns" —Bonnie Kamin

signing a performance contract, and obtaining a performance license.

The first and most critical task is to seek an appropriate Chinese presenter who issues an official invitation, applies for a performance license from a municipal, provincial, or the central government, and completes all operational

## AMERICAN ARTISTS ULTIMATELY MUST REMAIN ACUTELY AWARE THAT WORKING WITH CHINA IS A PEOPLE BUSINESS.



requirements. A presenter may be either a performance venue or an agency. For instance, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, which is equivalent to The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., presented the Martha Graham Dance Company and Jennifer Muller/The Works in 2008, and American Ballet Theatre and The Limon Dance Company in 2009. The Shanghai Grand Theatre and the Beijing Poly Theater presented the San Francisco Ballet from September to October 2009. Some tours are arranged by agencies. The China Performing Arts Agency (CPAA), under the Ministry of Culture, has the responsibility to implement cultural exchanges under government agreements while also presenting and producing commercial programs. Among the American dance companies it has presented are the Houston Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Company, and New York City Ballet, along with a few musicals. Various small, private agencies and promoters are often more efficient and flexible, but also more likely to encounter administrative and financial obstacles. It is wise to ask the presenter to provide a verifiable list of previously hosted performances before finalizing a relationship.

Unlike most Western presenters, Chinese presenters mainly cover local board, lodging, transport, and provide a symbolic per diem instead of paying performance fees. This is true especially for artists whose names are unfamiliar to Chinese audiences. In those cases, presenters are typically less willing to gamble solely on ticket sales to break even. They might instead present the performance as a cultural exchange event to solicit support from the

*Counterclockwise from top: Beijing Contemporary Dance Theatre in "Map of Me (and you)" —Han Jiang*

*Carla Maxwell, artistic director of The Limon Company, at a press conference during the company's China premiere at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing —Su Guanming*  
*American Ballet Theatre rehearses "Don Quixote at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing —Cecily Huang*



## DIVERSITY IN ARTS

government. In addition, for presenters who do not own theaters, income from ticket sales would generally be used to cover theater rental costs. For instance, there are more than 80 theaters in Beijing. Except for a few major ones that do their own programming, the rest operate mainly as rental venues.

"The U.S. government does not support its artists' tours abroad and, as a result, we have not been able to get our companies there. They cannot afford to go, unless they can raise corporate sponsor monies to underwrite their expenses, a difficult task for most," said Rena Shagan of Rena Shagan Associates, Inc. On one hand, dance companies should continue advocating for the increase of cultural exchange funds. On the other hand, dance companies should be more creative with marketing and fundraising. American Ballet Theatre announced its 2009 China tour with a unique, ten-day travel package to Shanghai, Xi'an and Beijing. The package, including a tax-deductible donation to the company, was able to attract a group of ABT's loyal board members and supporters. Because cultural consumption correlates with the overall economy, metropolitan areas like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen generally have more mature arts markets. Rarely, however, do modern dance companies receive invitations to second-tier cities due to the lack of audience appreciation for the genre. A great deal also depends on branding. For instance, marketing a performance as "contemporary ballet" or "modern dance," "emerging artists" or "masters" might have different effects on attendance. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater was advertised as a contemporary ballet company more often than as a modern company during a recent tour.

After having chosen a reliable local presenter, and the two sides have agreed on cost, performance details and responsibilities, they need to sign a contract. It is important to note that performance contracts in China only take effect upon the issuance of a performance license by the relevant government office. Obtaining government approval for

performance content might be new to U.S. artists but is common and important in China. The Chinese presenter should submit to the relevant government office the invitation letter, the signed contract, supporting program materials, etc. The license review process may take between a few weeks and several months as the application may be passed on from one department to another. Planning a performance tour with a large company may take a full year or even longer.

In China, many opportunities are available to participate in arts festivals. "Meet in Beijing" is a large-scale international arts festival held every April that has provided opportunities especially for some U.S. university-affiliated performing troupes, including the Brigham Young University's International Folk Dance Ensemble, Ball State University's Singers, and Perdue University's All-American Marching Band. Echoing "Meet in Beijing," the Shanghai International Arts Festival is a state-level festival held annually from October to November. The New York City Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater participated in past festivals. Usually, the festival committee will also be happy to recommend the overseas artists to reliable Chinese presenters for commercial touring. For instance, the "Burn the Floor" troupe participated in the Shanghai International Arts Festival, then also gave commercial performances in Beijing.

There are, of course, other creative ways to arrange dance tours in China. For instance, New York City-based booking agent Jodi Kaplan and China-based producer Alison Freidman co-presented the Booking Dance Beijing Festival which coincided that the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The five-day dance showcase featured three dance companies from Beijing — the National Ballet of China, the Beijing Modern Dance Company, and TAO Dance Theater — alongside two U.S. dance companies, Odyssey Dance Theatre and Kim Robards Dance. In addition, a few U.S.

## RESOURCES TO CONNECT WITH CHINA

**Guangdong Modern Dance Festival:** [www.gdfestival.cn](http://www.gdfestival.cn)  
**Meet in Beijing Arts Festival:** [www.meetinbeijing.org.cn](http://www.meetinbeijing.org.cn)  
**National Centre for the Performing Arts:** [www.chncpa.org](http://www.chncpa.org)  
**U.S. Embassy in China:** [www.beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/eeperformer.html](http://www.beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/eeperformer.html)  
**Shanghai Grand Theater:** [www.shgtheatre.com](http://www.shgtheatre.com)  
**Shanghai International Arts Festival:** [www.artsbird.com](http://www.artsbird.com)  
**The Ministry of Culture:** [www.ccnt.gov.cn/English/index.html](http://www.ccnt.gov.cn/English/index.html)

colleges offer Chinese dance courses and exchange programs, such as Bucknell University, Brigham Young University, and New York University, just to name a few.

American artists ultimately must remain acutely aware that working with China is a people business. *Guanxi*, meaning individuals' social capital within their group of friends, relatives, and close associates, is among many elements that Westerners might come across while interacting with Chinese counterparts. Intermediaries may prove helpful to facilitate the process — arts managers and consultants who are not only bilingual, but experienced with distinct arts and cultural environments of both countries. Last, but not least, broader relations between China and the West will certainly drive the creation of a more productive and competitive arts market; it will also increase the urgency for effective legal and business policies. Mao's movement of "letting a hundred flowers bloom" from the 1950s is still perfectly sound today in promoting meaningful arts exchanges. The long march East may be arduous, but the journey is certainly worth the effort.

*Ling Tang trained as a traditional Chinese dancer in Wuhan, China, and came to the United States in 2002. She holds a B.A. in dance and intercultural performing arts from the University of Maryland, College Park, and is pursuing her M.A. in arts administration at Teachers College, Columbia University. She spent the summer of 2009 in China for her master's thesis research, where much of this story was also explored.*



Special thanks to Dr. Judith Lynne Hanna of the University of Maryland and Professor Joan Jeffri of Teachers College, Columbia University for advising on the content of this article.