



# BeijingDance / LDTX

artistic director Willy Tsao



## INTRODUCTION

The birth of BeijingDance/LDTX (Lei Dong Tian Xia , literally translated as Thunder Rumbles Under Heaven) in September of 2005 not only caught widespread international attention, but also captured the imagination of many artists in China. BeijingDance/LDTX was born out of a controversial and exciting time of rapid cultural change in China, becoming China's first non-governmental and independent professional dance company.

Founded by veteran choreographers and a new generation of dancers in China, BeijingDance/LDTX is a platform for contemporary creations. Under the artistic direction of Willy Tsao, China's foremost figure in modern dance, and deputy artistic director Li Hanzhong, the company boasts an ensemble of 14 technically exquisite dancers and a diverse repertoire. Based in China's capital, BeijingDance/LDTX serves as both a leader and a catalyst for the modern and contemporary dance and dance appreciation movement. By nurturing young talent and exclusively working with Chinese choreographers, BeijingDance/LDTX pioneers China's most cutting edge choreography.

Since its creation in 2005, BeijingDance/LDTX has traveled extensively throughout Mainland China, Hong Kong, Europe and North America. In addition, BeijingDance/LDTX hosts the annual *Beijing Dance Festival*, which brings the world's most innovative work to the nation's capital. Through performance seasons, educational programs, technique classes, and outreach activities, BeijingDance/LDTX attracts aspiring dancers and artists to contemporary dance and serves as an important voice in the evolution of modern Chinese thought and society.



#### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

##### WILLY TSAO

Willy Tsao has been a major figure in China's modern dance community for over 25 years. Born and educated in Hong Kong, Tsao received his modern dance training in the USA from 1973 to 1977. In 1979, he graduated from the University of Hong Kong with an MBA degree and established the Hong Kong City Contemporary Dance Company.

Tsao has dedicated incessant effort towards the development of modern dance in China. In 1986, he was invited to teach modern dance at the Beijing Dance Academy, and served later as the Artistic Advisor for their Youth Dance Company. In 1987, he became an advisor for the Guangdong Dance School and was instrumental in creating the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the first professional modern dance company in China. He served as their Artistic Director from 1992 to 1998. Tsao has conducted intensive modern dance workshops in many cities in China, including Shanghai, Wuhan, Kunming, Fuzhou, Taiyuan and Daqing. In 1999, he was invited to be the Artistic Director for Beijing Modern Dance Company. In September 2005, he re-established the company under the new name BeijingDance / LDTX.

As a choreographer, his works have been presented in the United States, Canada, Korea, Japan, Israel, Germany, France as well as Beijing, Shanghai, and Taipei in China. Tsao's contribution to modern dance has been widely recognized. In July 1999, he was awarded the "Bronze Bauhinia Star" by the Hong Kong Government for his significant contribution to the development of local arts. Other awards and honors include the "Dancer of the Year Award" from the Hong Kong Artists' Guild (1988), the "Ten Outstanding Young Persons" Award (1990), "The Badge of Honor" from HRH Queen Elizabeth II (1993), and the "Louis Cartier Award of Excellence - Outstanding Choreographer"(1998).



EVENING-LENGTH PROGRAM

THE COLD DAGGER

**Time: 1 hr 15 minutes**

**Choreography:** Li Han-zhong & Ma Bo

**Music:** "Darkwood" composed and performed by David Darling

**Dancers:** The Full Company

*We are all trapped in besieged fortresses, constantly faced with choices and struggles. We react differently as we encounter the unexpected and unknown, and that's exactly how the world maintains its bewitching patterns of balance.*

BeijingDance/LDTX's new work *The Cold Dagger* is an explosive staging of confrontation and humanity. This evening-length work plays with the Chinese idiom that likens life to a game of chess, wherein dancers act as life-sized pieces in an intricately choreographed match of the traditional chinese weigi (go) game. The work is a mesmerizing look at the "game of life"--in which piece and player, strategy and sacrifice, and cause and effect are shown to be one and the same. Set to a score that is both contemplative and unpredictable, composed by the maverick cellist David Darling, *The Cold Dagger* premiered at the Oriental Avant-garde Theatre in Beijing in June, 2006.



## REPERTORY PROGRAM

ALL RIVER RED (RITE OF SPRING) and Other Works

### **THE COLD DAGGER (Excerpt)**

**Time: 10 minutes**

**Choreography:** Li Han-zhong & Ma Bo

**Music:** Henrick Gorecki

**Dancers:** The Full Company

### **THE EAGLE**

**Time: 21 minutes**

**Choreography:** Zi Wei

**Music:** Traditional Mongolian Music

**Dancers:** Four Male Dancers

### **OCTOBER**

**Time: 6 minutes**

**Choreography:** Song Ting Ting and Liu Bin

**Music:** Ilyich Tchaikovsky "Octobre"

**Dancers:** Song Ting Ting and Liu Bin

This collection of short excerpts investigates LDTX's true scope of perspective and technique. *The Cold Dagger* (excerpt) is a climactic 10-minute version of the full-evening work reshaped to a beautiful score by Gorecki. *The Eagle*, featuring 4 male dancers, is choreographed by a native of Inner-Mongolia. The mesmerizing piece uses a contemporary eye to investigate his home province, steeped with history and tradition. Lastly, *October*, is a quirky, calm and soft duet set to the music of Tchaikovsky. This unique combination of work sheds lights on the dynamic perspective of contemporary China: a collection of east and west, traditional and modern, custom and change.



Intermission

**All River Red (Rite of Spring)**

**Time:** 38 minutes

**Choreography:** Li Han-zhong, Ma Bo

**Music:** “Rite of Spring”, composed by Igor Stravinsky, performed by Philharmonic Orchestra

**Dancers:** The Full Company

Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* premiered in 1913, signifying the dawn of a new era in music. This music has inspired many western choreographers, and now, BeijingDance/ LDTX’s Chinese choreographers offer their unique version, *All River Red*. The work reflects how contemporary dance has been developing in 20<sup>th</sup> century in China against all odds. *All River Red* shows not so much a comfortable fusion of East-meets-West, but a direct and violent confrontation between those adhering to tradition and those aspiring to innovation.



## CHOREOGRAPHERS

LI HAN-ZHONG & MA BO

**ALL RIVER RED (RITE OF SPRING) & THE COLD DAGGER**

LI HAN-ZHONG Deputy Artistic Director / Choreographer

A native of Yunnan (China), Li Han-zhong graduated with a bachelor 's degree from the Division of Chinese Ethnic Dance at the Beijing Dance Academy in 1991. Upon graduation, he joined the Guangdong Modern Dance Company where he performed as a dancer, and served as an artistic assistant and choreographer. He toured with the company to the United States, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Korea, Singapore, and the Philippines. In 1996, he received the Asian Cultural Council Scholarship to study at the American Dance Festival for three months.

Li has been invited to choreograph new works for a variety of international dance institutions including the Center for the Arts, Adelaide (1998 and 2000), Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Taiwan (1999), and the American Dance Festival's International Choreographers Showcase (1999). Li joined the Beijing Modern Dance Company as Deputy Artistic Director in March 1999 and continues to serve in that capacity for BeijingDance /LDTX.

MA BO Choreographer / Dance

Born in Mizhi, Shanxi Province, Ma joined Shanxi Provincial Song and Dance Theatre in 1985. She received a bachelor's degree from the Beijing Dance Academy in 1991, and soon after joined the Academy as a faculty member. Ma has performed with Guangdong Modern Dance Company and went on to perform with Beijing Modern Dance Company in 1999. She has collaborated with choreographer Li Han-zhong on previous modern dance works.



## CHOREOGRAPHERS

LIU BIN and SONG TING TING

### OCTOBER

LIU BIN Choreographer/ Dancer

Liu is a founding member of BeijingDance/LDTX. Liu Bin was born in Shanxi Province and studied at the Provincial Arts School there. He then studied in the Folk Dance Division at the Beijing Dance Academy Affiliated High School. In 1998 he joined the Fujian Provincial Song and Dance Company and in 2002 began his modern dance career with the Beijing Modern Dance Company. In 2005, he became a founding member of LDTX. His choreography includes “Play with You”, “Twi and Twa”, “The Snail” and others.

SONG TING TING Choreographer/ Dancer

Song is a founding member of BeijingDance/LDTX. A Shanghai native, she trained at the Shanghai Educational University, Arts College, Department of Dance. After graduation, she taught at the Affiliated High School of the Shanghai Educational University. Song Ting-ting joined the Beijing Modern Dance Company and 2002 and then became a founding member of BeijingDance/LDTX. Her choreography includes, “Play with you”, “Comma”, “Fried to Eat, or Boiled to Eat?”, “the Snail” and other works.

ZI WEI

### THE EAGLE

ZI WEI Choreographer/ Dancer

Zi Wei is a founding member of BeijingDance/LDTX. Zi Wei is from Endorse, Inner Mongolia. He danced at the Inner Mongolian Erdorse Dance School and then joined the Inner Mongolian Erdorse Song and Dance Company. In 1999, Zi Wei joined the Beijing Modern Dance Company and later became a founding member of LDTX. His choreography includes “Float-Flow” and the “The Eagle”.



## CRITICS SAY

"Throughout the performance, the audience appeared spellbound by the movement onstage. It wasn't until the performance was over that the spell was broken, with the audience yielding at the feet of the company."

*--El Norte*

"The company doesn't merely dance splendidly, it dances ferociously."

*-- LA Times*

"This is the spirit of what modern dance should be, it makes one immensely hopeful for what comes next."

*-- Philadelphia Metro*

"The audience was in awe"

*-- The Tampa Tribune*

"The intricate contact and interaction between the dancers, building towards the final conclusion of the piece, demonstrated the incomparable power of modern dance to touch the human heart."

*-- China Cultural News, Weekend Culture*

"Not only was the dance movement rich and profound, the music and artistic design also stood out as innovative and challenging."

*-- People's Daily News*