

January 21 - February 5, 2023

## Legendary Dancer/Choreographer Zhongmei Li to join the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company in Celebrating the Lunar New Year

Company: Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company  
Venue: Various Locations  
Location: Newark, NJ

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Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company will begin its celebration of the Lunar New Year of the Black Water Rabbit at four different venues around NYC:

January 21 & 22, 2023 at 2pm

Victoria Theater's Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Stage

Tickets: \$27-\$35

[njpac.org/event/nai-ni-chen-year-of-the-black-water-rabbit](http://njpac.org/event/nai-ni-chen-year-of-the-black-water-rabbit)

January 28, 2023 at 3pm

Hostos Community College's Hostos Center for Arts and Culture

Tickets: \$5-\$12

[https://mpv.tickets.com/schedule/?agency=HCAV\\_PL\\_MPV&orgid=56451#/?view=list&includePackages=true](https://mpv.tickets.com/schedule/?agency=HCAV_PL_MPV&orgid=56451#/?view=list&includePackages=true)

January 29, 2023 at 7pm

Mainstage at Tilles Center for the Performing Arts of Long Island University

Tickets: \$32-\$52

[ticketmaster.com/naini-chen-dance-company-brookville-new-york-01-29-2023/event/00005CEDF1346B60](https://ticketmaster.com/naini-chen-dance-company-brookville-new-york-01-29-2023/event/00005CEDF1346B60)

February 5, 2023 at 3pm

Colden Auditorium Stage at Kupferberg Center for the Performing Arts at Queens College in Flushing

Tickets: \$15

[kupferbergcenter.org/event/lunar-new-year-of-the-water-rabbit](http://kupferbergcenter.org/event/lunar-new-year-of-the-water-rabbit)

The celebration of the Lunar New Year is a global event and a community event. The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is joined by immigrant artists in this colorful and fantastic production that brings culture, arts, imagination, joy and community together. This year, the Company is re-staging Nai-Ni Chen's iconic work, *Mirage*, inspired by the choreographer's journey to the Silk Road with music created by Glen Velez. Dancing the soloist role will be Ms. Zhongmei Li. Ms Li is widely recognized for her performances in the Joyce theater and major venues across the United States. She is a regular guest dancer of the Santa Fe Ballet and has appeared as master teacher in dance conferences and competitions in the Chinese American community in the last decade, often working in collaboration with Nai-Ni Chen.

Ms Li will join the company on the Hostos, Tilles and Kupferberg Center stage.

A New York City tradition for more than a decade, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company returns to Hostos Center to welcome the coming of the Spring of 2023, after a long absence since 2017. This year is the Year of the Black Water Rabbit. The performance will be a spectacular experience for all ages, combining traditional Chinese celebration with modern flair. This year, to honor the 50th Anniversary of Hip-Hop, the Company will present a new Lion dance to the Chinese Drum, Cymbal integrated Hip Hop rhythm. The steps of the lion have also been choreographed to include Hip-Hop dance movement with a contemporary attitude. The new work is a collaborative effort from Company's Director of New and Contemporary Dance, PeiJu Chien-Pott, assisted by H+ | The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory's Yvonne H. Chow, Lion Dance Master Henry Lee, and Hip-Hop legends Kwikstep and Rokafella.

The Company will also be performing one of its most festive dances in its repertory, YungGe (Harvest Song) from northern China, a beautiful and elegant Peacock Dance from the Southern Yunnan Province, a powerful martial art solo Spear Dance and the perennial favorite, the majestic Dragon Dance.

Besides these traditional dances, a Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company presentation will not be complete without new and innovative contemporary works. This year, the Company will present Movable Figures, a dance inspired by Southeast Asian Shadow Puppetry that was originally commissioned by the Morningside Dance Festival and Mirage, a dance inspired by the unique dance style of the Uyghur people residing in the XingJiang region of China.

The Company dancers, acrobats and musicians will be performing in festive costumes in red, gold, blue and purple colors symbolizing their prayer for a peaceful and harmonious New Year with plenty of prosperity and good fortune for everyone to enjoy and share.

#### About Zhongmei Li

"Zhongmei Li moves like mist across the stage," wrote New York Times dance critic Jennifer Dunning. "Off stage, she looks like a small, fragile-boned bird but there is steel in those bones."

Zhongmei began her professional dance training at the age 12 at the Beijing Dance Academy, China's foremost dance institution. There, she studied Chinese classical and folk dance, martial arts, and classic ballet before becoming a principal dancer with the Chinese Youth Dance Company, winning four national dance titles and performing throughout Asia. In 1990, Zhongmei came to the United States where she studied at both the Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham schools. Since then, she has created and performed Chinese dance programs at the Joyce Theater in New York and theaters across the country as well as in The King and I on Broadway. She earned a master's degree in fine arts-dance at the Tisch School at New York University, and she is a regular guest performer with the Aspen Santa Fe ballet.

#### About Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company:

"Chen's phrases, part exoskeletal rigidity, part boneless grace, embodied an epic dignity." - Village Voice

Choreographer/Dancer Nai-Ni Chen (1958-2021) was a unique artist whose work crosses many cultural boundaries. Each of her dances reflect her personal vision as an immigrant and an American female artist with deep roots in the Asian culture. From this very personal perspective, she created new works that reflect current issues with global influences. Some of her works were developed in collaboration with renowned artists such as the Ahn Trio, Glen Velez, Joan La Barbara, Jason Kao Hwang, Tao Chen, Tan Dun and the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York.

Bridging the grace of Asian elegance and American dynamism, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is a premier provider of innovative cultural experiences that reflect the inspiring hope and energy of the immigrant's journey. The company's ground-breaking works have focused on themes from ancient legends that reflect issues of the present time to purely abstract, contemporary dances influenced by a mix of cultures Nai-Ni Chen experienced in New York. An Asian American company that celebrates cross-cultural experience, the Company's productions naturally bring forth issues of identity, authenticity, and equality.

The Company has presented at some of the most prestigious concert halls such as the Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center in New York, and the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center in Florida. The Company appears annually at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Queens College, the College of Staten Island and on Ellis Island. Internationally, the Company has presented at international festivals including Open Look Festival in Russia, the Silesian International Contemporary Dance Festival, the Konfrontations International Festival in Poland, the Chang Mu International Dance Festival in Korea, the Meet in Beijing International Arts Festival in China, and the Tamaulipas International Arts Festival in Mexico.

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company has received more than 20 awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and numerous Citations of Excellence and grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Advancing Dance Education, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is currently in residence in New Jersey City University pioneering a program with the University's A Harry Moore Laboratory School teaching dance to urban children with disabilities. For additional Company information, visit their website, [www.nainichen.org](http://www.nainichen.org); write to Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, P.O. Box 1121, Fort Lee, NJ 07024; or call (800) 650- 0246.

Programs of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company are made possible by the generous support of our Board members, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF), the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, The New Jersey Arts and Culture Recovery Fund administered by the Princeton Area Community Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Hyde and Watson Foundation, E.J. Grassman Trust, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, New Music USA, the Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, Dance/NYC Dance Advancement Fund, the Rapid Response Program of American Dance Abroad, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' Cultural Exchange Fund, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, PSEG, Proskauer, WAC Lighting, and the Glow Foundation and the Dragon and Phoenix Foundation.

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<https://www.njpac.org/event/nai-ni-chen-year-of-the-black-water-rabbit/>

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Schedule

January 21, 2023: 2:00pm  
January 22, 2023: 2:00pm  
January 28, 2023: 3:00pm  
January 29, 2023: 7:00pm  
February 5, 2023: 3:00pm

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