

# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2003

WHAT: Festival of Chinese Arts and Culture

WHEN: Tuesday, March 25 through Thursday, March 27

WHERE: University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or  
go on-line to [www.fineartscenter.com/tickets](http://www.fineartscenter.com/tickets)

***The Asian Dance and Music Program in collaboration with the Chinese Language Program, Springfield Schools, the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures and the International Programs Office Presents: A Festival of Chinese Arts and Culture***

Professor Wichmann-Walczak will present a lecture and demonstration of Chinese Opera characters titled **Beauty in Jingju: Chinese Opera**, this multimedia lecture will be held on Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at Herter Hall Rm 227 on campus at 3:30PM and at the Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield at 7PM, both presentations are free to the public. Jingju is a traditional art form that has been performed in China for hundreds of years. It combines singing, poetry, dance, acrobatics, symbolic movement and elaborate costuming and make-up. Professor Wichmann-Walczak, who is currently the director of the Asian Theatre Program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa is a specialist on the aesthetics of Jingju and their evolution. As the first non-Chinese award-winning performer of Chinese Opera, Professor Wichmann-Walczak will speak about the major characteristics of a Jingju performance that create beauty for

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performers and audiences in China. Using demonstrations and visual aids, she will discuss stylization, convention and synthesis along with the four performance skills of the actor – song, speech, dance/acting and combat. Please join us for this fascinating talk from an expert in the field. Admission is free for both events and all are welcome.

**Forms in Motion:** This event will be held in the morning at the School of Science and Technology in Springfield for the Chinese language students, teachers and invited guests including the Consul from the Taiwanese Consulate in Boston. At 3PM that same day, Zhongwei Shen and Nai-Ni will present their second workshop on **Forms in Motion** in the Fine Arts Center lobby. The workshop will begin with simple Tai-Chi movements to the motion of the brush pen on paper, giving participants the physical and spiritual experience of working with Chinese visual and movement art. Zhongwei Shen is an award-winning master calligrapher and a professor of Chinese Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Nai-Ni Chen is an acclaimed Chinese dancer and choreographer who is known for blending Chinese and American dance traditions in her work. The UMass workshop is free for the public.

On Thursday, March 27 Nai-Ni Chen Dance Co. presents two shows of **A Dragon's Tale** for children of all ages at 10AM and 11:30AM at Bowker Auditorium. **A Dragon's Tale** is a series of dances inspired by traditional Chinese festivals and rituals using fantastic props, colorful costumes and ingenious choreography that displays the excitement of Chinese celebrations and the beauty of Chinese American heritage. In addition to traditional Chinese dance, Nai-Ni Chen incorporates martial arts and acrobatics making the ancient culture accessible for all. Watch a fierce lion transform into a loveable humorous character, experience an eagle in flight and the gentle flutter of a butterfly and walk with nature through a bamboo forest celebrating the diversity of China through an interactive and visually stunning performance. Both morning performances are currently sold out but a few tickets may become available. For ticket information call **413-577-2486. Tickets are \$5.**

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The Chinese arts festival comes to a close on Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 8PM in Bowker Auditorium with an evening dance concert by Nai-Ni Chen Dancers titled **Passage to the Silk River**. Exploring her Chinese-American heritage with a contemporary twist, Nai-Ni Chen and company will perform dances inspired by the spiritual and elegant tradition of Chinese and Zen calligraphy and the free and dynamic world of contemporary dance. Exquisite movements of long flowing scarves and sleeves will imitate the strokes of a calligrapher's brush, as the dancers will appear to connect the bridge between the East and West. When asked about her unique style Chen replied, "I found a thread. "I found a bridge between the ancient art and the current art form. A lot of values in Chinese traditional art I've found are timeless... You can actually apply them to contemporary art." Said Chen. Tickets are \$20, \$15; 17 & under 10; Five College Students: \$10 and \$7 for **Passage to the Silk River**. For tickets call the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS. Or go online to [www.fineartscenter.com/tickets](http://www.fineartscenter.com/tickets). For more information, call 413-577-2486.

China Festival is made possible by the Raymond E. and Mildred G. Clark Foundation Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts and the UMASS Arts Council.

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