NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What: Nomad: The River
    Yin Mei Dance

When: February 24 at 8PM

Where: Bowker Auditorium at UMass

Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets
Press release text and press-quality images are also available on our
website at www.fineartscenter.com/press

Contact: Sheila Siragusa at 413-577-2486 or 413-545-1980

Movement/Theater Artist Yin Mei’s Nomad: The River has shocking resonance
about the violence of the Cultural Revolution and her transcendent journey.

War has never served to ensure peace. The history of civilization shows repeated
eamples of human tragedy, agony, terror and destruction, and the lingering effects on
peoples mind and psyche. Asian Arts & Culture program and New World Theater at the
Fine Arts Center have joined forces to present the innovative and personal experiences of
renowned dancer/choreographer Yin Mei growing up during the Chinese Cultural
Revolution in a work titled, Nomad: The River. Scheduled for 8:00 PM in Bowker
Auditorium at UMass, general admission is $20, $15, with Five College student
admission $10, $7. Further information about the performance and associated events is
available by calling the Asian Arts and Culture office at 413-577-2486, or online at

Ranjanaa Devi and Andrea Assaf, at AACP and NWT respectively, share a commonality
of vision in highlighting original and cutting edge work by artists of color in their
programs. The voices of these creative and eloquent artists are vital to new American
audiences. Further, both presenters are committed to addressing issues that are relevant
to the realities of our audiences.
Nomad by Yin Mei has particular resonance for our communities during this time of increased political unrest and government involvement in our daily lives.

*Nomad: The River* was commissioned by the Bessie Schönberg/First Light commissioning program of Dance Theater Workshop. In an interview with Cathy Edwards, DTW’s Artistic Director, Yin Mei describes her work on the project:

Yin Mei: In making this work, I was inspired by the notion of a spiritual journey. But my emphasis was not on the goal or endpoint of that journey – heaven, nirvana – nor even on the journey per se, but rather on what *provokes* it: what sets it in motion. I wanted to look at why someone becomes hungry for spiritual knowledge. More specifically, I wanted to look at how my own childhood – a childhood shaped by the mass insanity of the Chinese Cultural Revolution – engendered that desire in me. The predicament is that of the child witness to brutality: one who sees, who takes in, but who does not act. Seeing one's parents humiliated and divided one against the other; seeing the parents of friends commit suicide; witnessing executions of "counterrevolutionaries" – for a child, such horrific events are beyond comprehension. They burrow inside, they feed on the self.

Remembered violence retains a quality of unreality, of distance – as in a nightmare. Unprocessed images of violence and degradation do their damage through repetition, creating a species of psychic claustrophobia, fostering an inner restlessness. The urge to escape – to seek peacefulness, rest, calm, whether in dreams or reality – becomes irresistible, though it may ultimately prove futile.

The two rivers that inspired this work – the Ganges in India and the Yellow River in China – represented for me different ways of reacting to, and possibly transcending, this dilemma. The link to the theme of the journey was intuitive, not literal. I was fascinated by the idea of contrasts and perspective shifts: escape/immersion; movement/stillness; intimacy/distance; anger/calm; presence/absence; violence/transcendence.
YIN MEI was born in China and started her professional career in traditional Chinese dance during the Cultural Revolution. Before coming to the United States to study modern dance on a grant from the Asian Cultural Council, she was a member of a leading Chinese dance company. Yin Mei now choreographs and performs her contemporary work worldwide, having forged a dance style employing Chinese energy direction and spatial principles as a means of creating dance within the rubric of Western dance-theater.


Yin Mei received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2004 and a Choreography Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2002. A longtime practitioner and teacher of Tai Chi and a student of the I Ching, her research into Chinese contemplative practice was recognized with a Contemplative Practice Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies.

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**Nomad: The River Yin Mei Dance**

**February 24 at 8 PM in Bowker Auditorium, UMass**

General Admission: $20, $15, Students: $10, $7

For tickets call FAC Box Office 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS

[www.fineartscenter.com/Asian](http://www.fineartscenter.com/Asian)

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