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NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY *"YEAR OF THE RED FIRE HORSE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION"*

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026, 7 p.m.

1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean, Va. 22101

NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY

"YEAR OF THE RED FIRE HORSE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION"

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026 | 7 p.m.

PROGRAM

DANCERS: YUCHIN "KIKI" TSENG, MADELEINE LEE, MADELYN SARVER, LORENZO GUERRINI, SARAH BOTERO, CALEB BAKER, KATHRYN TAYLOR, ESTEBAN SANTAMARIA, YAO ZHONG ZHANG

MUSICIANS: CHINESE MUSIC SOCIETY OF GREATER WASHINGTON

CHOREOGRAPHERS: NAI-NI CHEN, LAWRENCE JIN, YING SHI, PEIJU CHIEN-POTT, KWIKSTEP, AND ROKAFELLA

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: GRETA CAMPO

LION IN THE CITY

Choreography: Peiju Chien-Pott, Hip-Hop Legends Kwikstep and Rokafella

Music: DJ KS360/Kwikstep

Costume: Peiju Chien-Pott, Rokafella, Javier Valencia of SoHarlem

Dancers: Sarah Botero, Lorenzo Guerrini, Caleb Baker

Aa modern edge to the traditional Chinese New Year celebration! Commissioned by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), this unique version develops a dialogue between contemporary/Chinese movement and Hip-Hop, celebrating the pioneering spirit of collaboration. The Lion Dance itself is a prayer for peace and harmony on earth, symbolized by a child playing freely with a ferocious beast.

HUA YAO DAI DUET

Choreography: Ying Shi

Music: Dai Minority Folk Music

Dancers: Yuchin “Kiki” Tseng, Madeleine Lee

Inspired by the grace and beauty of the Hua Yao Dai ethnic tradition, this duet portrays two young women like blooming flowers by a quiet riverside. Set to the gentle melody of “Flowing River,” the dancers embody softness, elegance, and youthful purity. Their movements ripple like water, revealing a serene world where the river flows lightly and the girls blossom with delicate charm and tenderness.

PEACOCK DANCE

Choreography: Nai-Ni Chen

FROLIC OF SPRING 春嬉

Dancers: XJ Dance Company

MOUNTAIN RAIN IN THE TEA GARDEN

Choreography: Nai-Ni Chen

Music: Taiwanese Folk Tune: Peach Flower Crossing the River

Dancers: Yuchin “Kiki” Tseng, Madeleine Lee, Madelyn Sarver, Sarah Botero, Kathryn Taylor

Taiwan is well-known for its tea culture and the beauty of the tea plantations. Tea gardens in the high mountains grow the best tea in this region. In this dance, girls working in the tea plantation catch a moment to pick up their umbrellas and play cheerfully in the rain. This dance was originally created at the request of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau for their pavilion at the New York Times Travel Show.

BEAUTIFUL NIGHT - CHINESE MUSIC

MONGOLIAN HARVEST

Choreography: Lawrence Jin

Dancers: Lorenzo Guerrini, Caleb Baker, Sarah Botero, Yuchin “Kiki” Tseng, Kathryn Taylor, Madeleine Lee, Madelyn Sarver, Esteban Santamaria

Commissioned by NJPAC, this dynamic work captures the essence of the nomadic Mongolian way of life. Known for its powerful footwork and expressive upper-body movements, the dance celebrates the generous spirit of the Mongolian people and their respect for the great prairie. Inspired by the joyful Naadam Festival, the piece portrays aspects of herders' daily activities including cooking, hunting, and traditions.

INTERMISSION

CAROUSEL

Choreography: Nai-Ni Chen

Dancers: Esteban Santamaria, Caleb Baker, Sarah Botero, Yuchin “Kiki” Tseng, Kathryn Taylor, Madeleine Lee, Madelyn Sarver

Inspired by the dual imagery of playful, dreamlike carousels and the majestic elegance of real horses, this buoyant piece is one of Nai-Ni Chen’s most celebrated abstract works. It explores the flow of energy and the dynamics reminiscent of the brush strokes used in Chinese ink painting, melding childlike wonder with the nobility and pride of equestrian movement—a perfect tribute for the Year of the Horse.

FANTASTIC LEGEND (CHINESE MUSIC)

Musicians: Chinese Music Society of Greater Washington

A broad, lyrical landscape, with long singing phrases, open sonorities (often evoking the spaciousness of the grasslands), and a gentle, flowing accompaniment.

FESTIVAL (DRAGON DANCE)

Choreography: Nai-Ni Chen

Dancers: Yuchin “Kiki” Tseng, Madeleine Lee, Madelyn Sarver, Lorenzo Guerrini, Sarah Botero, Caleb Baker, Kathryn Taylor, Esteban Santamaria, Yao Zhong Zhang

The most spectacular folk dance performed in the Chinese New Year Celebration; the Dragon carries auspicious powers and nature’s grace. The Chinese Dragon is a spiritual and cultural symbol that represents prosperity and good luck, as well as a water deity that nurtures harmony. In this dance, the Dragon descends from heaven and blesses the earth, while colorful ribbons symbolize a prayer for the prosperity of the community.

PROGRAM NOTES

NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is a rare Asian-American-woman-led, professional touring company with programs for educational settings, community organizations and mainstage venues. The Company’s mission is to be a premier provider of innovative cultural experiences that reflect the inspiring hope and energy of the immigrant’s journey. It was founded with the vision that the immigrant’s journey of crossing cultures and adapting to a new home provides endless inspirations and opportunities for creative expressions that can enrich the human experience. Each one of the company’s works is aimed to increase the visibility of the struggle, triumph, despair and joy of this experience. The Company’s productions bring forth issues of identity, authenticity, and equality.

Choreography is developed with dancers from diverse backgrounds, and each rehearsal is an immersive, boundary-crossing journey that contributes to the creative process under the direction of the choreographers.

NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY, CONT'D

Our diverse repertory of Nai-Ni Chen's original works bridge her broad influences of the grace and power of Asian arts and American dynamism. The company also preserves a variety of festive dances from different regions of China, choreographed by guest immigrant artists bearing the tradition.

The Company began to tour in the early 1990s, originally on the East Coast, and later internationally. The dance company is multi-racial and multi-national and has collaborated with a wide range of artists from different disciplines and cultures. Musical collaborators range in genre from new music to jazz to classical; they include Joan La Barbara, The Chinese Music Ensemble of NY, Jason Kao Hwang, Huang Ruo, Kenji Bunch, Tan Dun, Glen Velez, and most recently, the Ahn Trio. Award-winning designers and visual artists such as Myung Hee Cho, Jay Moorthy, AC Hickox, and costume designer Karen Young have also collaborated with the Company. These collaborations provided us the opportunity to develop innovative productions that can carry the timeless essence of tradition, while crossing cultural boundaries without compromising the integrity of the art.

In addition to domestic touring, the company has also performed at international festivals in Mexico, Canada, BVI, Guatemala, Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, South Korea and China with support from: Fund for Mutual Understanding, The President's Committee for the Arts, Arts International and the State Department of the United States. Ms. Chen has received multiple Choreographer's Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Her work has also been commissioned by the Joyce Theater Foundation, the Lincoln Center Institute, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Dancing in the Streets, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The Company is currently in residence at New Jersey City University's A. Harry Moore School for students with disabilities, and in Elizabeth School #26, a school of mostly immigrant children. For more info: <https://www.nainichen.org/>

CHINESE MUSIC SOCIETY OF GREATER WASHINGTON (CMSGW)

The Chinese Music Society of Greater Washington is a vibrant and influential non-profit (501c -3) music and arts organization that was established in Maryland during 1999 by several Chinese American musicians and performing artists. The society is led by Chairman/CEO Duke Tang and Secretary-General Guoyi Fu. The mission of the society is to promote Chinese traditional music and folk performing arts, advance music and dance education, and foster cultural exchange between Asian American communities and other ethnic and mainstream American cultures. Through its efforts, CMSGW continually contributes to both the enhancement of artistic appreciation within the Chinese community and broader cultural dialogue and integration.

Key Programs and Achievements include:

- **Broad Inclusivity:** The society is membership-based and welcomes individuals and institutions from all ethnic backgrounds.
- **Strong Organizational and Coordination Skills:** Excellent capabilities in coordinating cultural and performing arts activities, especially with other arts groups and institutions.
- **Music Education and Exchange:** High-quality music education and cultural exchange to spread and share artistic knowledge.
- **Professional Creation, Adaptation, and Production:** Create, adapt, and produce musical works, including innovative pieces that blend Eastern and Western styles.
- **Cultural Forums and Lectures:** Organizes forums, lectures, and cultural salons to improve cultural and artistic literacy of the Chinese community.
- **Cultural Media Resources:** Provides resources for disseminating traditional Chinese culture and arts to strengthen its cultural influence.
- **Unique Function and Social Impact:** Promotes Chinese music, folk performing arts and their contributions to cultural exchange between the Asian American community and other minority and mainstream societies in the U.S.

CHOREOGRAPHERS

Lawrence Jin began his training in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, and graduated from the Beijing Dance Academy in 1986. He received the Best Performance Award at the National Taoli Cup Dance Competition, the highest honor in Chinese dance, and later served as Principal Dancer with the Beijing Youth Dance Company. After moving to New York in 1990, he studied at the Martha Graham School and later joined the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company as a principal dancer, touring internationally for a decade. Since returning to New York, he has taught at FA Dance School (an associated school of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company) and has served as a judge for Chinese dance competitions across the U.S.

Ying Shi is a choreographer and director of traditional dance preservation from Beijing, China. Ying received her bachelor's degree in Chinese dance from the Beijing Dance Academy and her master's degree from the School of Arts at Peking University. Her extensive experience teaching Chinese classical dance includes the Ailian Chan Dance School (Beijing), the Beijing Dance Academy and the Tsinghua University Dance Troupe. As a young dancer, she was a member of the Nanchang Song & Dance Troupe in the Jiangxi Province. She joined the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company in 2013 and established her own school in 2019. She is the gold medal award winner of the Overseas Taoli Cup Professional division.

Nai-Ni Chen (1959-2021) was a legendary choreographer who came to the US in 1982 and worked professionally in the NJ/NY area for over thirty years. She built a diverse repertoire of over 80 original works and toured major venues in the US and around the world, including 12 international festivals. Nai-Ni was a cross-cultural choreographer who aimed to bring audiences across cultural boundaries. She developed a unique movement and choreographic style which reflected the grace and splendor of the Chinese cultural traditions that she studied in Taiwan in her youth and the dynamic spirit of modern dance that she acquired in New York from luminaries such as Mary Anthony, Bertram Ross, Doris Rudko and Patricia Rowe. She received multiple Choreographer Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Nai-Ni Chen, Cont'd

She had been a principal affiliate of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and was a resident artist of the Harlem School of the Arts. Her contribution to the immigrant cultural experience has been honored by OCA and the International Institute. She was commissioned by the Joyce Theater Foundation, the Lincoln Center Institute, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Towson University, Dancing in the Streets, New Jersey Ballet, Ballet Met, and the Cleveland Dancing Wheels.

GUEST ARTISTS

Becky Nussbaum is a NYC based Lighting Designer with a background in dance and theatre. Her design work has been seen all around NYC, Chicago, and overseas. Selected design collaborations include; Purchase Dance Company's last four seasons (which includes brand new commissioned works by Michelle Thompson Ulerich, Loni Landon, Nattie + Hollis, Christopher Rudd, and more), Sal LaRussa Dance Theater, Nimbus Dance, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Young Choreographer's Festival, Spark Movement Collective. Recent tours with Martha Graham Dance Company as their Lighting Supervisor both domestically and internationally. Upcoming: Purchase Dance Company Fall 2024 season, including two brand new works. beckynussbaum.com.

Bayarjargal Chogsom (Baagii) was born and raised in Ulaanbaatar Mongolia and moved to New York City in 2003. At a young age, he found his passion playing the traditional Mongolian instrument: Horse-Head Fiddle (Morin Khuur). Baagii studied the Morin Khuu under the legendary Mongolian musician Soyol- Erdene Tserendorj. Later, in New York City, his high school music teacher helped him develop his musicianship and he became a member of the school's orchestra where he performed numerous concerts, and solo performances which helped him to achieve his success as a musician. He has played at many different cultural events for organizations including: The United Nations, The Asian Society, Columbia University, Tibet House, Javits Center, National Geographic Channel and numerous Mongolian cultural related events. His goal is to master the Morin Khuur and help the world discover the greatness of this wonderful instrument.

DANCERS

Sarah Botero is from North Bergen, NJ. She started dancing at the age of 3 at a local dance school, where she trained in various dance styles. Sarah became a dance major at High Tech High School in New Jersey and in her senior year, joined The Ailey School Junior Division on scholarship. Sarah then went to SUNY Purchase College's, Conservatory of Dance and earned her BFA. She continued her training as a professional scholarship program recipient at The Ailey School. Sarah also has choreographic aspirations; she began choreographing in high school and continued her composition studies in college. Recently, her work was presented in the American Guild Festival.

Madeleine Lee grew up in Los Angeles, California where she trained at Julia Bourlina's School of Classical Ballet. After attending LA County High School and moving to New York, Madeleine graduated from The Ailey School Scholarship Program as well as the Martha Graham 2 training program.

Kiki (YuChin) Tseng was born and raised in Yilan, Taiwan. She received a full scholarship to train at the Harid Conservatory in Florida where she received vigorous training in classical ballet technique and later graduated summa cum laude from SUNY Purchase's Dance and Arts Management programs. She received the 2021 Outstanding Senior Award for Dance, which celebrates high achievement of artistry, academic studies and citizenship. Kiki became a member of the Martha Graham 2 Company, where she had the privilege to perform many historical works by Martha Graham and has performed professionally with Buglisi Dance Theatre and Mason Lee Dance Theater.

Madelyn Sarver is originally from Roanoke, Virginia and holds a BFA in Dance with a minor in Psychology from Adelphi University. Upon moving to Manhattan, she has danced for Thingseelsee's Dance/Theater, The Heraclitus Project, Nanm Dance Company, and Alison Cook Beatty Dance. Madelyn is a current member of the Paul Taylor Outreach Ensemble at the Taylor School as well as an apprentice with the Jon Lehrer Dance Company. Additionally, she is a certified Pilates instructor.

DANCERS, Cont'd

Kathryn Taylor received her BFA from the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase with a minor in Asian Studies. She was a recipient of the Study Abroad Grant, affording her a semester's study at the Taipei National University of the Arts. Previously, she danced professionally with Martha Graham 2, Dance Ensemble Singapore, and Revelations Dance. She owns a small handmade dance-wear business called Fire Ox Dancewear and loves making K-pop dance covers.

Lorenzo Guerrini is from Florence, Italy. He started his career as an actor and later earned a Performing Arts Management degree from the University of Florence. He started dancing at 21 in the same school where he used to work as an administrator and went on to receive his Bachelor's in Contemporary Dance from ACTS / Ecole de Danse Contemporaine de Paris. In 2021, Lorenzo moved to New York to attend the Martha Graham School where he received the Armgard von Bardeleben award for excellence in Graham studies. He later joined Martha Graham 2 and has also danced with other contemporary choreographers, including Jessi Obremski and Nicole Von Arx (NVA&Guest).

Caleb Baker came from a background in hip hop and began his technical dance journey at 19. He trained at the Academy of Ballet Arts Studio, studying Vaganova ballet technique and Russian character. He later graduated from the Hillsborough Community College Dance Program. Caleb has traveled and studied at multiple summer programs including the Alonzo King Lines Ballet and the American Dance Festival summer pre-professional programs. Since graduation, Caleb has performed professionally as a member of REVolutions Dance Company, at Busch Gardens, with Motion Ministries Inc., and in commercial works such as the BET's First Wives Club.

Esteban Santamaria is from Colón, Panamá. He graduated summa cum laude with a BFA in dance from the Universidad de Panamá and from The Ailey School. Esteban performs with the Martha Graham Dance Company in Europe and previously was a professional dancer with the Ballet Nacional de Panamá and Martha Graham 2.

DANCERS, Cont'd

Yao Zhong Zhang is from Shanghai, China, where he graduated from the Shanghai Kuan Opera School with a major in the Male Warrior Role. Mr. Zhang performed with the Shanghai Kuan Opera Theater for ten years before moving to New York. He has been a member of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company since 2000 and also performs with the Tong-Ching Chinese Opera Company.

DIRECTORS OF THE NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY

Greta Campo - Artistic Director began dance training in her native Milan at the Carcano Theater. It was there where she was first introduced to Martha Graham's work and at age 19, she moved to NYC to attend the Martha Graham Professional Training Program. After a few months in the program, she joined Martha Graham 2 where she performed many ensemble and solo roles and graduated from their teacher training program. She later performed with the Martha Graham Dance Company, both nationally and internationally. Ms. Campo has been with the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company since 2012. She teaches many of the company's programs, including dance classes in public schools for students with disabilities, college level masterclasses, and NNDC's signature Kinetic Spiral classes. Additionally, Ms. Campo works with Buglisi Dance Theater and received the Rising Star Award from Fini Dance Festival.

Candace Jarvis - Rehearsal Director is originally from Brampton, Ontario and is a professional dancer based in New York City. She has been with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company for eight years. Ms. Jarvis graduated as a Certificate Student from The Ailey School and since has gone on to perform within multiple artistic communities. Choreographic collaborators include: Amy Hall, Anthony Rodriguez, Tracy Inman, and Norbert De La Cruz III. Ms. Jarvis recently began working in the underground ballroom scene where she has danced in events featuring artists and companies such as Madonna, Billy Porter, TRINA, Marc Jacobs Moose Knuckles Canada, Barefoot Wine, and Melissa Shoe Company.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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