



Press Contacts:

Louise Chu: 646.431.3383, chul@verizon.net

Yeeli Chen: 212.349.0126, yeeli@chendancecenter.org

Lisa R. Chow: 480-962-4584, Lisa@DesertDanceTheatre.org

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**DESERT DANCE THEATRE presents H.T. CHEN & DANCERS'
DANCE-THEATER EVENT "SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN"
PERFORMANCES MARCH 27- 28
at TEMPE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

New York, NY, February 20, 2015 - CHEN DANCE CENTER (CDC), the nation's largest Asian-American dance institution, announced that **H.T. CHEN & DANCERS'** dance-theater event, **SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN** will be presented by **DESERT DANCE THEATRE** (DDT) on Friday, March 27th and Saturday, March 28th at 7:30pm. at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 West Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, Arizona 85281. The production will be the highlight of the company's week-long residency of community outreach activities, school performances and movement workshops from March 23-28, 2015.

Led by CDC's Associate Director **Dian Dong** and company dancers, the workshops feature traditional Chinese Ribbon Dance, contemporary dance, and fitness demonstrations. Families are encouraged to participate. For schedule/ updates: www.DesertDanceTheatre.org.

In 1850, news of "The California Gold Rush" reached southern China before most Americans had learned of it and thus began an exodus of 300,000 Chinese immigrants to "Gold Mountain." "**SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN** draws from rich oral histories and documented experiences of the first Chinese settlers lured to America by the promise of gold and a better life in the southern states before World War II," stated CDC's Artistic Director, **H.T. Chen**, who has given poetic voice to Asians in America.

In 2011, endorsed and encouraged by Chinese community heritage museums and family associations in the US, Ms. Dong and Mr. Chen journeyed extensively

for three years throughout the southern states interviewing immigrants and descendants collecting material that inspired this invigorating and insightful production. The contemporary sound score blending traditional Chinese music with Deep South Blues is by James Lo. The multi-generational cast will include **DDT** dancers and Tempe's local talent in the roles of elders and children.

The week-long (March 23-28, 2015) AZ residency and presentation of *South of Gold Mountain* by H.T. Chen & Dancers was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Lisa R. Chow, **DDT's** artistic director, company manager, choreographer, performer and educator, acknowledges, "This dance production is close to my heart because the story is about my own family's arrival. They landed in Mississippi, where I was born and raised. So I can really relate to the shared stories from various people in that region."

Mr. Chen was the Artistic Advisor of 1999's "A3: Asia, Arizona, and the Arts" for ASU Public Events and in 2000, **H.T. CHEN & DANCERS** premiered "Bian Dan" for A3 in Tempe. Addressing acculturation and the generation gap, it featured twenty-five local residents (Chinese seniors, children, and local dancers including Ms. Chow). "That project led to researching and developing **SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN**," said Ms. Dong. "H.T. found similarities between southern US communities and village life in China where people helped each other endure hardships and were deeply connected despite rural isolation. Lisa felt strongly that our history and legacy must be shared with Tempe's Asian community, especially with its younger generation. And we look forward to working with **DDT** and providing the opportunity to let talented kids shine in the spotlight."

SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN's next stop on its tour to Asian communities is the Wright Center at Samford University, in Birmingham, AL, from April 13-19. The project is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts' "National Dance Touring Program," the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For more info: http://www.chendancecenter.org/index.php/about_us/latest_news/sgm_tour/

H.T. CHEN & DANCERS, formed in 1978, performs innovative pieces blending contemporary dance with traditional Asian aesthetics. CHEN DANCE CENTER opened in 1988 as the first professional performance space in New York City's Chinatown. The creative hub for its touring dance company, it offers a thriving, community driven performing arts school and an intimate, black box performance space. For more information, please visit: www.chendancecenter.org/

DESERT DANCE THEATRE was founded in 1979 by four ASU dance graduates. Under the artistic direction of Lisa R. Chow and Step Raptis, it presents an eclectic dance repertory, ranging from classical, comical, abstract and theatrical. The company offers a variety of programs to schools and communities that are inspiring, entertaining and educational, including: master classes, lecture demonstrations and performances. Their most successful educational program, “Sister Moses: The Story of Harriet Tubman” is offered as a school field trip throughout Phoenix. For more info: www.DesertDanceTheatre.org.

SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN will be presented by **DESERT DANCE THEATRE** (DDT) on Friday, March 27th and Saturday, March 28th at 7:30pm. at Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA), 700 West Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, Arizona 85281. Tickets: \$18 Adult, \$15 Senior, \$13 Student, \$12 Group of 10+, \$10 Friends of Desert Dance Theatre (FDDT); TCA Box Office: 480-350-2822 (480-350-2TCA) or www.tempe.gov/tca (Service and convenience fees will be applied).

For information: Desert Dance Theatre, [480-962-4584](tel:480-962-4584) or www.DesertDanceTheatre.org

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Stills of **SOUTH OF GOLD MOUNTAIN** are available upon request. For event coverage and/or interviews with H.T. Chen, Dian Dong, or Lisa R. Chow: please contact:
Chen Dance Center/Louise Chu [646.431.3383](tel:646.431.3383), chul@verizon.net;
Yeeli Chen [212.349.0126](tel:212.349.0126), yeeli@chendancecenter.org;
Lisa R. Chow: [480-962-4584](tel:480-962-4584), Lisa@DesertDanceTheatre.org