

La MaMa

Experimental Theatre Club
Presents

H.T. CHEN & DANCERS

Opening The Gate (1993)

Choreography: H.T. Chen

Mott Street (1984)

Choreography: H.T. Chen



Ellen Stewart Theatre
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
Jan 24-26, 2025

OPENING THE GATE (1993)

Choreography: H.T. Chen

Music: Bradley Kaus

Lighting Designer: Stephen Petrilli,

based on Tommy Wong and David Lander

Set Design and Construction: Eric Harriz

Costume Designer: Sylvia Taalsohn

Costume Construction: Joy Mao & Lorraine Lum

Rehearsal Coach: Chao Hui Chou

Performers:

Nicole Arakaki, Yeeli Chen, Karma Chuki, Kelly Guerrero,

Seneca Lawrence, Tsubasa Nishioka, Wayland Quintero,

Yoshi Sanders, Ari Someya, Glenna Yu

Opening the Gate is a ritualistic journey of struggle, perseverance, and the eventual transcendence of the limitations of the ego and the material world. Against the backdrop of Bradley Kaus' electronic score and live drumming, the dancers unrelentingly press forward through their individual and collective struggles and emerge on the other side as lighter, transformed beings. In the world we live in today, marked by uncertainty, upheaval, and persistent challenges, *Opening the Gate* reminds us that despite the darkness, there is always a path forward

MOTT STREET (1984)

Choreography: H.T. Chen

Music: Traditional, Charlie Chin

Lighting Designer: Stephen Petrilli

Video from Chen Dance Center Archives

Digging for Gold

H.T. Chen, Dian Dong, Laurie Eisenhower, Soso Wong

Needle and Thread

Kelly Guerrero, Seneca Lawrence, Ari Someya, Glenna Yu

Some Ol' Day

Nicole Arakaki, Karma Chuki, Kelly Guerrero, Seneca Lawrence,

Tsubasa Nishioka, Yoshi Sanders, Ari Someya, Glenna Yu

Mott Street is the main street in Chinatown, Manhattan. This piece depicts the spirit and rhythm of America's melting pot drawing from oral histories of local residents and members of the ILGWU Local 23-25 garment workers' union.

About the Company

H.T. CHEN & DANCERS is an innovative modern dance company which has created a uniquely Asian-American expression by embodying its cultural heritage. Infusing Western modern dance with the strength and beauty of Asian aesthetics, the Company's dynamic style has enchanted audiences across the United States, Europe and Asia since its inception. H.T. Chen & Dancers received the New York State Governor's Awards for artistic achievement and contributions to communities. Residency and performance highlights include: The Dance Center of Columbia College (Chicago); The Egg Performing Art Center; Miami-Dade Community College (Miami); The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.); Hobby Center, Asia Society (Houston); Painted Bride Arts Center (Philadelphia); in NYC at La MaMa ETC Theatre, the World Financial Center, New York Live Arts, The Joyce Theater.

H.T. Chen (Choreographer) moved to New York City where he studied dance at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, American Dance Center, the Juilliard School and earned an MA in Dance Education from NYU. After choreographing and performing for numerous years at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club and as an actor, dancer and choreographer with the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, Chen turned to presenting his own work, forming H.T. Chen & Dancers in 1978. As a professional choreographer, H.T. Chen was a positive voice for his community, speaking with power and honesty from a distinct perspective, describing his experiences and influences through his work. This important artistic statement combines a repertoire of dances rooted in Chinese legend and folktales which, when fused with Mr. Chen's awareness, enlightens audiences both familiar and unfamiliar with Asian culture.

Dian Dong (Co-Founder and Artistic Director) received a BFA from the Juilliard School, and worked with Anna Sokolow, Lance Westergard, Kathryn Posin, and the national tour of *The King & I*. She and H.T. Chen established Chen Dance Center - a School and Theater in the heart of NYC's Chinatown. Dian designs the educational programs for the company, and in 2021 Chen Dance Center created a K-12 dance curriculum for the NYC DOE titled *Into the Heart of Chinatown - Hidden Voices*.

Stephen Petrilli (Lighting Designer) has designed the lighting for HT Chen & Dancers many times across the U.S. He has also designed for Newport Contemporary Ballet, Anikaya Dance Theatre, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, Prometheus Dance, Pilobolus Dance Theatre and Ailey II. In the theatre world, he has worked with Theatre Workshop of Nantucket, Provincetown Theater, Bridge Rep of Boson, Arlekin Players' Theatre, New York's Pearl Theatre Company and The Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival in his hometown of Pittsburgh. He has a twenty-one year old son, Liam. stephen-petrilli-lighting.com

PERFORMERS

Nicole Arakaki is a freelance artist, born and raised in NJ. She graduated from Montclair State University with a BFA in Dance and a concentration in Dance Education. She is influenced by Cameron McKinney, Chris Ralph, Maxine Steinman, and Stefanie Batten Bland, the latter two of whom she has also performed works by. Nicole has performed pieces by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Carolyn Dorfman, Janice Rosario, Ellenore Scott, Randy James, among other esteemed choreographers at venues such as Montclair's Alexander Kasser Theater, the Gramercy Theater, Theatre Row, and the MMAC Theater.

Yeeli Chen trained in modern dance at The Center for Modern Dance Education, The School of Chen Dance Center and The New School University: Eugene Lang College. In addition to performing and touring with H.T. Chen & Dancers, she is the Associate Director at Chen Dance Center.

Karma Chuki born and raised in Thimphu, Bhutan, is a versatile dancer working as a freelance artist in NYC and NJ. In New Delhi and Mumbai, Karma trained students at The Danceworx Performing Arts Academy and toured nationally and internationally with Navdhara India Dance Theatre from 2013-2020. Currently she dances with Rovaco Dance Company, MeenMoves Dance company, and is an assistant to Brice Mousset in his classes and choreography process.

Kelly Guerrero is a freelance dancer, choreographer, and arts administrator. She holds a BFA in Dance and Minor in Business from Montclair State University, where she received a Choreographic Excellence award. During her studies, she danced in works by Stefanie Batten Bland, Martha Graham, Mark Harootian, Larry Keigwin, Fredrick Earl Mosley, Helen Pickett, and Janice Rosario. Currently, she serves as the Managing Director of Dance New Jersey, and dances with The Moving Architects. She is excited to be joining H.T. Chen & Dancers!

Seneca Lawrence, a New Hampshire native, trained at the Boston Ballet School then later received her BFA in Dance Performance from SUNY Purchase. Currently based in NYC, she is a company dancer with H.T. Chen & Dancers, The Painted Ladies, as well as a freelance artist performing and choreographing for works included at the American Dance Guild and Your Move Dance festivals. Seneca is a teaching artist and also an actor, singer, and comedy improviser, who performs throughout the city and has worked on a variety of tv shows, films, and commercials.

Tsubasa Nishioka was born in Japan where he started classical ballet training with Atsuko Yamada, modern dance, then contemporary dance with Fumihito Shimizu. In NYC, Tsubasa was accepted into The Ailey School program under scholarship; performing "Battlefield" by Robert Battle and Elisa Clark in Ailey Sprit Gala 2018 with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at Lincoln Center. Previously he worked with NBA Ballet Dance Company and was a soloist for "Water Flow" by Fumihito Shimizu in Japan, and choreographers such as Jiemin Yang, Matthew Westerby, Winston Brown, Manuel Vignouille, Mitzi Adams, Darshan Bhuller, Omar Roman de Jesus and Marcus Jarrell Wills. He is currently with H.T. Chen & Dancers, i KADA Dance Company, AP Dance, Valerie Green Dance Entropy and J CHEN PROJCT.

Wayland Quintero is an original cast member of “Opening the Gate” and thanks H.T. Chen & Dancers for inviting him back to strike the drum! His background encompasses theater, contemporary dance, northern Philippine gong and dance cultures, and creative movement with children. He earned an MFA in Dance from NYU-TSOA, and a PhD from the University of Malaya (British system). Wayland served as the Filipino Studies Discipline Coordinator at a community college in Hawaii and is currently an NYU Visiting Academic Affiliate. He is a co-founder of the trio ensemble, SLANT, who will perform at the La MaMa Theatre Club, May 2025.

Yoshi Sanders is a dance performer, choreographer, and educator from Massachusetts. Yoshi began his dance training under Shakia Barron in 2013 at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts School in South Hadley, MA. Yoshi is a recent graduate of Vassar College, where he performed in works by various artists including Shannon Gillen, Yoshito Sakuraba, Jennifer Archibald, Desmond Richardson, Stephen Rooks, and Leslie Partridge Sachs. In addition, Yoshi has performed in works by Ido Gidron, Andrea Constanza Martini, Alex Clare and Brian Brooks.

Ari Someya hails from Tokyo, Japan where she started dancing at the Michiko Shiona Dance Studio. After working with Michiko Shiona Company and various other dance artists in Japan, Ari moved to New York City to study at The Merce Cunningham Dance School where she received her certificate in 2007, and performed with Saeko Ichinohe Dance Company. In 2009 she joined H.T. Chen & Dancers, and is an original cast member of *South of Gold Mountain*, *Between Heaven and Earth*, and *Song of the Stone*.

Glenna Yu joined H.T. Chen & Dancers in 2018. She is a movement artist based in Andes, NY, is a co-founder of artist residency/community Pillow Fort Arts Center and a member of the NYS Dance Force. Glenna has worked with BIRDHOUSE under the direction of Raven White, clyde fusei forth/Lokasparśa Dance Projects, Nicole Kadar, Yehuda Hyman/Mystical Feet Company, Isaac Iskra, Rebecca Lazier, and Stefano Nappi. Through her work with Pillow Fort Arts Center and the NYS Dance Force, Glenna is committed to supporting artists and dancers and making dance more accessible in the upstate NY region.

This program is supported by New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Chen Dance Center is grateful to La MaMa ETC Theatre staff and crew. Special thank you to the Board of Trustees, Victor & Lucy Kan, and individual donors.

**A full program with information on this
production can be found on the
HT Chen and Dancers
page of the La MaMa website.**

**In addition you can scan the
QR code Poster located in the theatre
lobby for access to the digital program.**

LA MAMA



RESTORE A BUILDING REMAKE A WORLD



Rendering: 74 East 4th St.

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street underwent an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit www.lamama.org/remakeaworld

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The Downstairs

H.T. Chen & Dancers
Jan 24- 26, 2025
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Kids:
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Feb 6-9, 2025
The Club

No Resevation
Feb 6-23, 2025
The Downstairs

In Through The Doorway Out
Feb 7-9, 2025
Community Arts Space

COMING SOON

The Barbarians
Feb 14- March 2, 2025
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The Dragon's Laugh & Other Tales
Feb 15-16, 2025
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Feb 27-March 2, 2025
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March 7-16, 2025
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March 13 - 23, 2025
The Club