



The Asian Arts & Culture Program at UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center

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WHAT: Cloud Gate Dance Theater of Taiwan presents RICE
WHEN: Wednesday, September 23
TIME: 7:30 PM
WHERE: Fine Arts Center Hall

*“When you’re talking about Cloud Gate, magic is not too strong a word.”
-Time Out London*

The UMass Asian Arts & Culture Program opens its 2015-16 season with an exclusive New England engagement of RICE by the **Cloud Gate Dance Theater of Taiwan** on **Wednesday, September 23** at **7:30 p.m.** in the **UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center Concert Hall**. Ticket holders are invited to attend a post-performance talk by Mr. Lin Hwai-min, the artistic director of Cloud Gate Dance. The performance of this internationally renowned company is made possible through a collaboration of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan) and Five Colleges Inc. Seating is reserved and tickets are \$20 to \$50; Tickets for Five College and GCC students and those 17 & under are \$10 to \$15 and can be purchased online at: fineartscenter.com or by calling the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 1-800-999-UMAS or 413-545-2511. TTY:413-577-3190. The Box Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.

The inspiration for **Rice** is drawn from the landscape and story of Chihshang in the East Rift Valley of Taiwan. Previously tainted by the use of chemical fertilizer, this farming village has now regained its title as “The Land of the Emperor’s Rice” by adopting organic farming and exporting its rice to European Union countries. On the occasion of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan’s 40th anniversary in 2013, choreographer **Mr. Lin Hwai-min**, took his dancers to Chihshang, where they joined the farmers in harvesting the rice. Out of this experience in the field, Lin has created exuberant yet powerful movements woven through Soil, Sunlight, Wind, Water and Fire, and tells the story of the land while contemplating the devastation of Earth. With dancers trained in meditation, Qi Gong, martial arts, modern dance and ballet, his company transforms traditional Taiwanese dance vocabulary into thrilling modern celebrations of motion. Mr. Lin was honored with the prestigious Samuel H. Scripps / American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement last year and is heralded as one of Dance’s original multiculturalists by drawing his inspiration from traditional Asian culture and aesthetics.

Accompanying the dance is a soundscape recorded in situ of rustling grain, sighing wind and pealing thunder that is interspersed with Hakka folksongs (the oldest among the existing Chinese

dialects) drum music by LIANG Chun-mei and ISHII Maki, operatic arias by Vincenzo Bellini and Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in D minor.

A cinematographer spent two years on location capturing the cultivation of rice: flooding, sprouting, harvesting and burning of the field. These video images – of clouds reflected in the water, rice swaying in the wind, and fire ravaging the fields – have become the essential visual elements of the production's background. Immersed in this landscape, the formidable Cloud Gate dancers enact a human drama that parallels the life cycle of rice. It is a work about death and rebirth, devastation and resurrection.

Rice is an international co-production by Sadler's Wells Theatre (London), HELLERAU European Center for the Arts Dresden (Germany), National Theater & Concert Hall, the National Performing Arts Center, R.O.C. (Taiwan), New Vision Arts Festival (Hong Kong), and Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay (Singapore).

Rice is a Spotlight Taiwan event funded in part by the Ministry of Culture, Republic of China and Special patron Dr. Samuel Yin, with additional support from Five Colleges, Incorporated. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre is funded in part by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan). Other funding sponsors include: The Pioneer Valley Hotel Group, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Applewood/Loomis Retirement Communities, Five College Dance Departments and the Massachusetts Preview/Valley Advocate.

For more images and background information about the project please see: our press room at fineartscenter.com/press