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HISTORIC PANEL CONVENES AT THE AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL TO DISCUSS THE HISTORY AND STATE OF MODERN DANCE IN CHINA

Durham, NC, May 31, 2018—The American Dance Festival (ADF) will convene a panel titled “**Why Do They Fall Down? The Story of Modern Dance in China**” to celebrate 30 years of modern dance in China. Panelists include Director Emeritus of ADF **Charles L. Reinhart**, **Yang Meiqi**, the founder and former director of the first modern dance company in China, China’s foremost dance expert **Ou Jian-Ping**, **Ralph Samuelson**, former director of the Asian Cultural Council, **Michelle Vosper**, former director of the Asian Cultural Council in Hong Kong, internationally celebrated choreographer **Shen Wei**, and former José Limón Company dancer **Sarah Stackhouse**. The title of the panel comes from a story told by Charles L. Reinhart about Yang Meiqi’s first summer at ADF after she observed a dance class taught by Betty Jones. She was perplexed by the amount of time the dancers were on the floor (something not seen in dance in China at that time). She asked Mr. Reinhart, “Why do they fall down?” He replied, “Why not?” The panel will take place on **Sunday, June 17th, 2:00-3:30pm** at White Lecture Hall on Duke University’s east campus. **The event is free and open to the public.**

In 1984 ADF initiated its first International Choreographers Residency program, hosting 12 choreographers from China, France, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Senegal. Guangdong Dance Academy’s director **Yang Meiqi** was a participant in 1986, and during that summer at ADF she asked **Charles L. Reinhart** to help her establish modern dance in China. In 1987, with the help of the Asian Cultural Council, ADF’s first Institutional Linkage Program began at the Guangdong Dance Academy in Guangzhou. ADF sent **Sarah Stackhouse** for a three-month teaching residency that established the first modern dance program in China. In following years, ADF sent Ruby Shang, Douglas Nielsen, Lucas Hoving, Stuart Hodes, Betty Jones, and Liz Walton, among others, to teach in Guangzhou. By 1990, certificates to the first graduates of the 3-year modern dance program at Guangdong Dance Academy were presented by then ADF Director Charles L. Reinhart and ADF Dean Martha Myers. That same year the Guangdong Modern Dance Company was founded. ADF organized the first US tour of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company in 1997. **Shen Wei**, who was a student at the academy and a founding member of the company, participated in ADF’s International Choreographers Commissioning Program in Durham in 1995. Shen Wei founded his company Shen Wei Dance Arts at ADF in 2000. The company has subsequently performed at the festival on 14 occasions. Shen Wei Dance Arts will perform *Neither* during ADF’s 2018 season. The 2018 ADF season will also feature one of China’s most celebrated performers,

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Beijing-based **Yabin Wang**, who participated in the International Choreographers Residency program in 2010, performing an ADF-commissioned solo in the Wondrous Women program (June 13-14).

“This international art form, modern dance, grows on individual creativity and culture, and now after 30 years in China, it is being taught in over 700 university departments and programs. Not bad, not bad at all,” said ADF Director Emeritus Charles Reinhart.

Charles L. Reinhart became the Director of ADF in 1968. He was Co-Director with the late Stephanie Reinhart from 1993 to 2002 and Director through 2011. Mr. Reinhart is currently a board member of the Theatre Development Fund, ADF, Paul Taylor Dance Foundation, and Shen Wei Dance Arts and is the Founding Director of American Alliance of Artists & Audiences. Mr. Reinhart has been the recipient of numerous awards including Dance/USA's Honors for lifetime achievement in dance (1994), the Capezio Dance Award (1996), the Diaghilev Award (1997), the Dance Magazine Award (2003), which he received along with the late Stephanie Reinhart, and the Arts Presenters' Award of Merit for Achievement in the Performing Arts (2011). Mr. Reinhart and Stephanie Reinhart were awarded an Emmy as Executive Producers of the 2001 PBS Series, *Free to Dance: The African American Presence in Modern Dance*. In 1986, the French government awarded Mr. Reinhart the title of Officier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres for his efforts in introducing French modern dance to the United States. In 2002, he was honored again by the French Government, receiving the title of Commandeur dans l'ordre des Artes et des Lettres.

Yang Meqi has been included in the Roster of Chinese Dance History as one of the Most Outstanding Chinese Dance Educators. She was honored for her Outstanding Contribution to the Art of Dance in China from China's Federation of Literature and the Chinese Dancer's Association and also received a John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award. Ms. Yang served as Director of Teaching and Research and Principal at the Guangdong Dance Academy and has held important positions at the Guangdong ATV Academy for Performing Arts, Beijing Dance Academy, College of Arts & Cultures in Guangdong Province, and the Shanghai Theater Academy. In addition, Ms. Yang has served two terms as Director of the Chinese Dancer's Association, has been Vice Chair for the Dancer's Association/ Guangdong Province, and was appointed as a member of the Guangzhou Municipal Arts Educational Committee. Ms. Yang has served as a judge for the Tao Li Cup National Dance Competition and as a representative of the Jury of Education for the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation.

Shen Wei is a choreographer, director, and painter internationally renowned for the breadth and scope of his artistic vision. Admiration for his talent has earned Shen Wei numerous awards including a 2007 MacArthur “Genius” Award, the US Artists Fellow Award, and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Other accolades include Australia's Helpmann Award, the Nijinsky Emerging Choreographer Award, the Algur H. Meadows Prize, Les Étoiles de Ballet Award, Audi-China 2012 Artist of the Year Award, GQ-China 2013 Artist of the Year Award, and the 2013 Chinese Innovator Award from The Wall Street Journal-China. Most recently, he was honored with the Asian Cultural Council's 2017 John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award. Shen Wei began his modern dance training at ADF's program at the Guangdong Dance Academy and became a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company. Upon receipt of a fellowship, he moved to New York City in 1995 to study with the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab and, in the same year, was invited to create work at the American Dance Festival. In July 2000 at ADF he founded Shen Wei Dance Arts. The lead choreographer for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Shen Wei has also created dances for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, and the Dutch National Ballet, and he choreographed, directed, and designed a new production of Carmina Burana for the ballet of Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Italy, with his company performing in leading roles. Recently, his work as a visual artist and choreographer has entered into a new dialogue in a series of performative installations and site-specific works that have been presented at a number of museums and galleries.

Ralph Samuelson has been a leading facilitator of US-Asia cultural exchange since 1976, when he joined the staff of The John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund, predecessor of the Asian Cultural Council. He was director of the Asian Cultural Council from 1991 to 2008 and continues to serve the ACC as Senior Advisor. He has been a consultant to

the Smithsonian Institution, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Asia Society, and numerous other organizations. He also pursues a separate career as a performer and teacher of the Japanese bamboo flute, shakuhachi.

Michelle Vosper is an independent writer and consultant who has devoted her life-long career to bringing artists together from opposite sides of the globe. She lived in Hong Kong for thirty years and from 1986 to 2012 directed the Hong Kong office of the Asian Cultural Council, an American cultural exchange organization which has supported promising young professionals in the visual and performing arts for research trips abroad. In this capacity she met hundreds of leading artists throughout Greater China, an experience which led to the publication of her book *Creating Across Cultures: Women in the Arts from China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan* (2017). The book is a collection of stories about sixteen women in various fields of the arts, including dance educator Yang Meiqi.

Ou Jiang-Ping was a grantee of the Asian Cultural Council in 1988 and a participant in ADF's International Dance Critics Conference in 1993. He has worked as a dance writer, translator, teacher, competition adjudicator, international dance advisor, and radio and television moderator in China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. He is a Director and Research Fellow at the Dance Research Institute, as well as a Supervisor for MA, PhD, and Post-Doctoral candidates of the Graduate School at the Chinese National Academy of Arts. He has conducted research, lectured, presented papers, reviewed performances, and adjudicated competitions in 30 countries. He has contributed to *International Dictionary of Ballet* (St. James Press, 1993), *International Dictionary of Modern Dance* (St. James Press, 1998), *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (Oxford University Press, 2004), and *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue* (Harwood Academic Publisher, 1995). Ou Jiang-Ping has written, translated, and edited books such as *Introduction to the Dance* (John Martin), *Dance in Its Time* (Walter Sorrel), *Dance Aesthetics*, *Dance Appreciation*, *Modern Dance*, *Modern Dance Terminology*, *How to Appreciate Modern Dance?* *Modern Dance: Theory & Practice*, *Chinese Dance History in Early Modern, Modern & Contemporary Periods: 1840-1996*, *Hong Kong Dance History*, and *Foreign Dance History & Appreciation*, *World Art History: Dance Volume*, thus becoming a major force in promoting international dance scholarship and communication. He received the honorary titles of Outstanding Expert in 1998 by the Chinese Ministry of Culture, Extraordinary Dance Artist in 2009 by the Chinese National Dance Artists Association, and Most Popular Dance Critic in the Past 30 Years in 2017 by the Beijing Municipal Dance Artists Association.

Sarah Stackhouse was a principal dancer with the José Limón Company, Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, Louis Falco and Featured Dancers, The Workgroup directed by Daniel Nagrin, and Annabelle Gamson Dance Solos, Inc. As master teacher she has held teaching and choreographic residencies throughout the US, Europe, India, and China. In 2001 she was invited as an American Cultural Specialist to give workshops and lectures in Italy sponsored by the US Department of State. She has taught at The Juilliard School, The American Dance Festival, and Purchase College-SUNY Conservatory of Dance and was Rehearsal Director and Coach for the Limón Dance Company. She was the first teacher sent to China to initiate Charles Reinhart's three-year exchange program with the Guanzhou Dance Academy. In addition to restaging and coaching Limón works on soloists and professional companies around the world, she writes and lectures about Limón, the artist and his works.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

About ADF:

Throughout its 85-year history, ADF has been a nationally recognized leader in our indigenous art form of modern dance. Generations of dancers and choreographers have come to ADF as students, taught as faculty, and created and performed work as professional artists. Each summer, ADF has been the beating heart of the dance world. The best companies in the world premiere work on ADF's stage, much of it commissioned by the festival. Other festivals and season programs are measured against ADF. Over 25,000 people see performances by more than 30 companies each season. The festival has commissioned 427 works and premiered 689 pieces including dances by Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and Paul Taylor. Each summer at ADF, more than 300 students from some 25 countries and 42 states study with ADF's 50 faculty members. They come as kids in leotards with as many doubts as dreams. They leave as dancers and artists—and sometimes even new members of companies. Lives change in those 5½ sweaty weeks. Beyond the summer, ADF maintains year-round dance studios offering movement classes to over 650 participants, provides over 180 free classes to almost 4,000 local dancers, and offers choreographic residences providing artists with the necessary space and time to create. americandancefestival.org.