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# Wild Grass

Beijing Dance Theater  
Choreography by Wang Yuanyuan

BAM Harvey Theater  
Oct 15—18 at 7:30pm

Running time: 1 hour and 40 minutes,  
including two intermissions

Producer, set and lighting designer  
Han Jiang

*Season Sponsor:*

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*Leadership support for dance at BAM provided  
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## WILD GRASS

*First Movement: Dead Fire*

Music composed by **Su Cong**

He Peixun **Piano**

—Intermission—

*Second Movement: Farewell, Shadows*

Music:

**Biosphere**—"Fall In, Fall Out" from *Dropsonde*

**Kangding Ray**—"Downshifters" from *Automne Fold*; "Odd Sympathy" and "Athem" from *OR*

—Intermission—

*Third Movement: Dance of Extremity*

Music composed by **Wang Peng**

Yang Rui **Violin**

Wang Zhilin **Cello**

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Rehearsal master **Gao Jing**

Ballet master **Wu Yan**

### DANCERS

**Wu Shanshan**

**Huang Zhen**

**Wang Hao**

**Cai Tieming**

**Zhang Qiang**

**Feng Linshu**

**Sun Jing**

**Li Cai**

**Zhou Yubin**

**Kan Weng Ian**

**Gu Xiaochuan**

**Luan Tianyi**

**Qin Ziqian**

**Cheng Lin**

### STAGE CREW

Stage manager **Song Di**

Lighting technician **Liu Hengzhi**

Assistant lighting technician **Pasha Guo**

Costumes **Zhong Jiani**

### COMPANY MANAGEMENT

Artistic director **Wang Yuanyuan**

Producer **Han Jiang**

Tour manager **Jane Chen**

Cameraman **Liu Tang**

### US AGENT

JPH Consultants LLC:

Jane P Hermann, President

E John Pendleton, Company Manager

## SYNOPSIS

*Wild Grass* consists of three short pieces and is inspired by well-known Chinese writer Lu Xun's (1881—1936) poetry anthology of the same name published in 1927.

*In silence I feel full; with speech I sense emptiness. The past life has died. I embrace this death with great joy, for I realize that it was once alive. The dead life has decayed. I embrace this decay with great joy, for I realize that it is not inane. The mud of life lay deserted on the ground; upon it grew not trees but only wild grass. This is my sin.*

—Lu Xun

### **First Movement: Dead Fire**

I dream that I am racing on ice mountains. These are huge ice mountains, whose tops join the icy skies covered with frozen, scale-like clouds. At the foot of the mountains grow icy trees, whose leaves resemble pine needles. All cold. All pale.

This is Dead Fire. It has burning form but no flickering. It stands frozen like corals, with black smoke curdled on its tips that makes you wonder whether it has just emerged from a house on fire—and that is why it looks burnt and dead.

A wisp of black smoke issues from me, rising and twirling like a snake. The ice valley is suddenly surrounded by flowing flames, me in the middle. I look down and see Dead Fire burning, consuming my clothes. I melt and drip onto the icy ground.

### **Second Movement: Farewell, Shadows**

I am but a shadow, about to depart and sink into darkness. But darkness will swallow me, even as light will vanish me. Yet I will not linger ambivalently between light and darkness: I would rather sink into darkness.

Yet I linger between light and darkness; know not whether it is dusk or dawn. Let me raise my ashen grey hand and feign a toast; I shall journey far, far away, unbeknownst to all.

### **Third Movement: Dance of Extremity**

And there remains only the vast wilderness; this dried couple, completely naked, sword in hand, stand in the middle. With dead men's eyes they observe with gusto the withering passersby in a great bloodless carnage. They are eternally plunged into life's giddy, excruciating bliss.

Spiraling above the expansive fields into the imposing firmament is the spirit of the rain... Indeed, that is the lonely snow, the dead rain, that is the spirit of the rain.



Wang Yuanyuan



Gao Jing



Wu Yan



Wu Shanshan



Huang Zhen



Wang Hao



Cai Tieming



Zhang Qiang



Feng Linshu



Sun Jing



Li Cai



Zhou Yubin



Kan Weng lan



Gu Xiaochuan



Luan Tianyi



Qin Ziqian



Cheng Lin

### WANG YUANYUAN

Artistic director; choreographer

Born and raised in Beijing, Wang Yuanyuan is one of China's leading modern dance choreographers. Wang holds degrees from the Beijing Dance Academy and California Institute of the Arts School of Dance. In 1998, she was named resident choreographer of the National Ballet of China and successively staged *Butterfly Lovers*, *Rainbow of the Night*, *Attraction*, *Lost Emotion*, *Fate*, and a Chinese version of *The Nutcracker*. She later choreographed a ballet version of *Raise the Red Lantern* for famed director Zhang Yimou and the dance sequences for director Feng Xiaogang's film *The Banquet*. Her works have been staged around the globe in the US, Russia, Korea, France, Bulgaria, Denmark, Singapore, Australia, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Brazil, and Mexico.

Wang Yuanyuan has been invited to serve as guest choreographer at New York City Ballet Choreography Institute, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (School of Dance), Royal Danish Ballet, and Shanghai Ballet. Along with an early award as dancer in the Paris International Dance Competition, she has won Best Choreographer awards in Bulgaria Varna International Ballet Competition (IBC), US Jackson IBC, Moscow IBC, and Shanghai IBC, making her the most celebrated Chinese choreographer on the international scene.

In 2008, she founded the Beijing Dance Theater with a group of renowned Chinese stage artists. The company's first production, *Diary of Empty Space*, premiered that same year, followed by *Stirred from a Dream*, *Haze*, *Prism*, *The Color of Love*, *Martlet*, *Harvest*, *Golden Lotus*, *Wild Grass*, and *Hamlet*.





### HAN JIANG

Producer; stage & lighting designer

Han Jiang graduated from the Central Academy of Drama in 2002 and joined the National Ballet of China as resident lighting designer, where he was responsible for lighting various styles of ballet. He participated in the design of large-scale productions of *Swan Lake* (both the 2003 version and the 2007 version by Natalia Makarova), *Pirates*, *Fairy*, *Giselle*, *Sylvia*, *Peony Pavilion*, and 10 modern dance pieces. He joined performance tours to the US, Mexico, Australia, Russia, the UK, France, and Korea.

In 2003, he began a long-time collaboration with famed director Lin Zhao-hua, when he designed Guo Wenjing's operas *Diaries of a Madmen* and *Banquet* at the First Beijing International Music Festival, both under the direction of Lin. Subsequent joint ventures include the China National Theater's performance of *The Toilet* in 2004, the Beijing People's Art Theater's production of *White Deer Plateau*, as well as *Nora's Children* and *The Master Builder*, staged by the Lin Zhao-hua Drama Studio. In 2007 he designed China National Theatre's production of *Dead or Alive* and the Kunqu Opera's *Peony Pavilion* at the Imperial Granary in Beijing. He has also been commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival to light Lin's recent work *Five Stories by Laoshe*.

Han Jiang has also collaborated with celebrated director Li Liuyi since 2005. The two have worked together on *Confessions* (2005), *The Peony Pavilion* for the National Ballet of China (2008), *Meilan Fanghua* at Beijing's Zheng Yi

Temple (2010), and *Legend of the Golden Lock* by the Chongqing Peking Opera Troupe (2010).

Han's initial encounter with modern dance took place in 2004 when he met Wang Yuanyuan and the two collaborated on *The Ebb of Love* and *Sword Spirit*. Soon afterwards they broadened the scope of their partnership, and produced a number of exceptional dance concerts together: *Unsteady Space* at the Beijing Dance Academy; *Dream Pear* at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts; *Dialogue with Chopin* at the Shanghai Ballet; the main-stage dance drama *Red 1935* (2006); and Wang Yuanyuan's Royal Danish Ballet Production, *The Color of Love*. In 2007, they collaborated on *Stirred from a Dream*, and in 2008, for the inaugural performance of the Beijing Dance Theater, they created *Diaries of an Empty Space*. Han produced three seminal pieces for BDT in 2009: *Haze*, *Prism*, and *Harvest*.

On other fronts, Han has also done extensive design: *Three Kingdoms in the Marketplace* and *The Waves* are two blackbox plays directed by Tang Yu; Han and acclaimed composer Tan Dun came together in the 2008 opera *The Gate*; the 2009 musical *Osmanthus Rain* brought Han to the Guangzhou Opera and Dance Company; the Suzhou Ballet invited him to light its 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Most recently, Han designed for the Northern Kunqu Opera's production *Two Belles in Love* directed by Guan Jinpeng, Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* directed by Li Jianjun, and Jean Paul Sartre's *Huis-clos* directed by Yang Qingyuan.

### COMPOSERS

#### **SU CONG**

Composer, *Dead Fire*

Su Cong's compositions for opera, TV, and radio have been performed at numerous festivals and concerts and featured in works by Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Last Emperor*), Jackie Chan, Wayne Eagling, Janusz Glowacki, Hans Neuenfels, Masapiro Shinoda, John Dew, Muhai Tang, Andy Lau, and many others. He has received more than 30 awards, among them an Academy Award for best original music score (*The Last Emperor*, 1988), a Grammy award for the soundtrack of *The Last Emperor* (1989), 2nd prize of the ISCM International Composition Competition in memory of the 100th anniversary of the death of Franz Liszt, and others. Su graduated with a master's degree in composition in Beijing and Munich. From 1989 to 1991 he gave lectures on music theory and music analysis to the opera directing class of August Everding and on film and ballet music at the Munich State Musikhochschule. Since 1991 Su has been professor of media music at the State Film Academy in Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

#### **BIOSPHERE**

"Fall in, Fall Out"  
*Farewell, Shadows*

Biosphere, born Geir Jenssen, is a composer of electronic music born in Norway in 1962. In 1991, he assumed the name Biosphere with the release of the album *Microgravity*, and established himself as a pioneer of ambient techno music. He is now an important figure in the field of microsound/experimental ambient music. His *Patashnik*, *Substrata*, and *Shenzhou* albums are considered to have transformed the world of ambient music. Biosphere blends the concrete with the abstract to create works of minimalism, and produces ambiances beyond description through loops and repetition.

#### **KANGDING RAY**

"Downshifters" "Odd Sympathy" and "Athem"  
*Farewell, Shadows*

Kangding Ray (David Letellier) was born in France in 1978, and lives and works in Berlin. He evolved as a guitarist and drummer in bands whose influences ranged from noise-rock to jazz, before buying a sampler and moving on to electronic music. Kangding Ray's music reflects his wide musical background, and a particular way of merging beats and atmospheric soundscapes into slowly evolving compositions. Kangding Ray combines machines with real instruments in a subtle and rhythmic suite, integrating noises, walls of distortion, massive bass lines, voices and field recordings, blending techno grooves with dark textures, always on the edge between experimental music and club culture.

#### **WANG PENG**

Composer, *Dance of Extremity*

Wang Peng studied music composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in China and the Musik Hochschule Lübeck in Germany. His works have been performed in China and internationally, and have received critical acclaim. Wang has also worked extensively across genres and fields, from modern, ethnic, and dance music, to music for films and TV.



### BEIJING DANCE THEATER

Beijing Dance Theater was founded in 2008 by artistic director/choreographer Wang Yuanyuan. Collaborating with renowned directors, composers, and visual artists, BDT showcases contemporary Chinese stage art around the world.

BDT has built a repertoire of 10 different works, which represent the creative team's critical reflections on various facets of contemporary society. The repertoire includes: *Stirred from a Dream*, a dance/drama adapted from the Kunqu opera *Peony Pavilion*; *Diary of Empty Space*, an energetic triple bill and the company's opening performance; *Haze*, a contemplation in a time of crisis; *Prism*, a triple bill featuring works by choreographers from Sweden, Denmark, and Canada; *The Color of Love*, a sensual exploration of the emotional landscape of women in their 20s, 30s and 40s; *Harvest*, a collection of Wang Yuanyuan's short dance pieces; *Martlet*, which depicts life in Beijing; *Middle*, a collaboration with French choreographer Anthony Egea that blends the movements of ballet, hip-hop, and tai chi. BDT has toured *Haze* to international venues including BAM, Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and Sadler's Wells in London. Over the course of four years, BDT has also toured to over 30 cities in more than a dozen countries including Germany, Iceland, France, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Serbia, Italy, the Netherlands, Mexico, Columbia, and Ecuador. *Prism* won the 2013 Best Modern Dance Ensemble, awarded by LUNAS, the Mexican National Concert Hall.

In 2011, BDT opened *Golden Lotus* (commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival) to critical acclaim at home and abroad. It was

followed in September 2012 by the premiere of *Wild Grass* in Suzhou and Shanghai, subsequently invited to tour to Europe in May 2014 and to BAM and five major US cities. BDT created a new mainstage production inspired by Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and director Feng Xiaogang's *The Banquet* in 2013. BDT's *Hamlet* has been scheduled for a domestic tour of 50 performances in 2014.

### DAMU ARTS (Co-producer)

Established in 2004, Damu Arts is an active participant in contemporary Chinese theater and dance, working in theater design, production and as backstage technicians. The company is an association of both young and established independent artists and designers devoted to multimedia performance and environmental visual design.

Damu Arts has received acclaim in a wide range of areas, such as theater, dance, immersive performances, large-scale events, spatial planning, and multimedia collaborations. It has organized and participated in productions within China and internationally, closely collaborating with leading artistic groups and artists, including: the Hong Kong Arts Festival (*Five Acts of Life—Lao She's Short Stories*); Lin Zhaohua Theatre Studio (*Nora's Daughter*); Beijing People's Art Theatre; National Ballet of China; Beijing Dance Theater; composer Tan Dun; and theater director Meng Jinghui. Damu Arts productions have been performed at major festivals around the world including BAM's Next Wave festival, the Venice Biennale, Berlin and Vienna's theater festivals, Hfstival, and many more. Damu Arts begins to produce original drama in the 2011—12 season.

