

Brooklyn Academy of Music

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Beyond Time

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Nov 19—21 at 7:30pm

Running time: one hour & 15 minutes, no intermission

U-Theatre

Directed by **Liu Ruo-yu**

Composed and choreographed by **Huang Chih-chun**

Set and lighting design by **Lin Keh-hua**

Costume design by **Tim Yip**

Video design by **Hsu Yi-chun**

Season Sponsor:

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of TECO in New York.*

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Beyond Time

U-Theatre investigates the relationship between “man” and “universe” in *Beyond Time*. It explains in a tangible way how the “insignificant self” that searches for mankind’s mysterious power transcends the constraints of intellectual thinking to return to the “unknowns” of the moment.

In this performance, sacred dance movement is featured. Originally rooted in ancient religious dance discovered by Armenian thinker George Gurdjieff, it encodes certain meanings, such as the movement of the planets in the solar system. It is as if the orbit is applied to man, who uses his consciousness to control his own body, like a specially installed machine which precisely follows the preset paths of the orbit in its revolution or movement. Such dance exhibits the pursuit of harmony by individuals from the great universe.

U-Theatre departs from the traditional styles of drum playing by having the performers carry the drums on their backs and using their bodies to convey the sounds, creating rhythm with physical tempo. Drumming on the sophisticated movement of sacred dance also shows the extraordinary stability of U-Performers in their training of physical and inner balance.

The whole performance uses imaging technology to construct a more distinct three-dimensional and multi-layered stage as well as a virtual 4D space through the use of projection and mirrored floors. Light is projected to create a contrast between “substance” and “void,” bringing the audience and performers to enter together a “universe of time and space.”



CAST AND PRODUCTION TEAM

PERFORMERS

Huang Chih-chun	Liu Shu-chih	Yang Meng-ju
Huang Kun-ming	Ou Kui-lan	Niu Li-sha
Su Yin-tsu	Li Yan-huei	Sun I-chin
Huang Kuo-chung	Chiu Shang-che	Ku Wen-chuan
Liu Ping-tsen	Hsu Ching-fang	Tu Yu-fong

U-THEATRE

Artistic director	Liu Ruo-yu
Music director	Huang Chih-chun
Stage manager	Shen Po-hung
Master electrician	Lin Yi-chieh
Sound engineer	Wu Ching-yuan
Technical direction	Su Chun-hsueh
Technician	Chen Kun-kuo, Hung Chih-lung
Video operation	Huang Yu-huei
International promotion manager	Chang Cheng-yi
Production coordinator	Peng Nai-yun

This tour is presented by Anmaro Performing Arts, and proudly supported by Ministry of Cultures Taiwan and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Taiwan.





SCENE ONE — A DOWNPOUR

The clap of thunder has given a clear message
The gusty wind, in its impulsive ways
Chimes in with gusto
The lightning
Dragon-like
And in the high decibel of a baby's cry
All efficiently gathered round
The rolling black waves and sweeping breakers
Splattering on the shore with panache as in the sky
The rain hurtles down, like foaming waves
Falling eagerly
Into the mortal world of bustling dust

No need for the purity of the enlightened eye
Just raise your head and look straight
To where the mountain ranges mingle and meet
But then there is one cloud-girded peak
Like a richly evocative white pocket in a Chinese ink painting
Slowing coming down
In the form of a cascade

SCENE TWO — REFLECTION OF THE MOON ON A THOUSAND RIVERS

I travel in the river of clouds, alone
After an afternoon thunderstorm in the Void
The bright sun's glare
Is frozen into the quiet of early morning

A wind blows
From the direction of the sun, like
The acacia woods' echo
Of the dreamy murmur of the sea waves
Infinite loneliness is beyond measure

I reach out for a star
And throw it at your window

Then you will find, by chance
The forlornness of being alone
Beyond Time

In the moonlight, a soft footfall
It wades through the water that mirrors the moon
And disturbs the magic realm of the pond

SCENE THREE — WADING THROUGH THE AIR

From a leaf I see your graceful demeanor
From the breeze I see you walking to me with
mincing
Steps

The azure waves have cleansed the wayfarer
To see you
I have flown through the window of the Earth
Travelled eons of time
From an age immemorial
Through the air

In the blooming flowers I see your formless face
You sit on a path washed by the bright sun
Enjoying your inner peace like the quiet fields
Time and Space have met up for tea
As they chat about epochs of the world

We sit, free from thoughts
I reach out, but fail to cup a handful of your
nothingness
The wind in the pine forest on the cliff chants of
your
Fragrance

The past, the present, and the future have been
infused
in one cup of tea

SCENE FOUR — THE ECLIPSE

Resting on the shoal of stars
And suddenly hear you calling, softly
From the other shore of the Milky Way

Ah, it is a song of dawn
The rhythm of the cosmos when Day and Night
meet

So, picking up my oars
I row through the mist of stardust
To sail to your thought-free sea

SCENE FIVE — THE VORTEX

A shadow that comes from a distant past
Sweeps through timeless space
Across the vast realm
On looking back, no trace of eons of time is left
But like a wisp of smoke, it links one century
After another, of happenings
past and present

In the stars' gaze, one glimpse is a millennium
One cursory glance back
And Eternity sends whatever remains of Time
Into your eyes speaking of suchness
And the world now
Has totally, totally disappeared

SCENE SIX — BEYOND TIME

I have been fishing in the air
On the banks of the Milky Way
And by luck caught dance steps out of the water
Like rain, that splashes and tints the amorphous
nebulae

The soundless music continues
Its soundless interpretation
In that infinite nothingness

Beyond Time
The River of Eternity flows with suchness
Flooding the boundless mortal world

All that cosmic vastness
Has been blown into the mustard seed by the
evening breeze
Now all it takes is a casual touch from your
pretty fingers
To release the boundless skies
The love-filled nights

I stand alone in boundless space
Snow is dancing in the silent air
And on the branch — a flaming cluster

Solitude, solitude
The earth is so at peace
At peace
Ah!





U-THEATRE

"Beating drums in a peaceful state of one's own..."

U-Theatre was founded by Ms. Liu Ruo-yu, its present artistic director, in October 1988. A graduate of the theater MA program at New York University, Liu attended professional workshops led by the Polish master of "poor theater" Jerzy Grotowski (1933—98). Deeply influenced and inspired by Grotowski's aesthetic perspective and performance training method in theater, she returned to Taiwan and dedicated herself to the goal of shaping the "U-performers of today," guiding them in the exploration of the body and mind. Hence she established U-Theatre on Lao-chuan Mountain in the outskirts of Taipei, where each new production is created and rehearsed, and debuts are staged.

In 1993, Liu invited Huang Chih-Chun, a professional traditional Malaysian-Chinese percussionist with nearly 20 years of experience, to teach drumming to U-Theatre members. Huang's deeply held conviction that "to play the drum, one must first learn meditation" inspired the adoption of meditation, and later, Chinese martial arts, into the core of the U-Theatre training curriculum. Drumming and meditation, together with theater, have since become essential elements of all U-Theatre performances and constitute its unique performing style.

In its repertoire, the relationship of the individual to the whole community—and by extension, of the group to its audiences worldwide—is portrayed without explicit narrative or the creation of imagined characters. The result is a fascinating and unique mode of contemporary theater that is process based, finely tuned, and performer-reliant.

Uniting the East and West, the ancient and the modern, the spiritual and the physical, U-Theatre has graced world stages and festivals including Barbican Center (UK), Avignon Festival, Biennale de la Danse (France), December Dance Festival (Belgium), OzAsia Festival (Australia), Bergen Festival (Norway), Singapore Arts Festival, Hong

Kong Arts Festival, and the Next Wave Festival at BAM.

In addition to its stage performance, U-Theatre won the 2014 President Prize for Innovation in Taiwan with its efforts in bringing art into the society by collaborating with prisons, high schools, and corporate companies on its curriculum of drumming and meditation to help reformed prisoners and teenagers find hope and strength in life.

In 2014 U-Theatre made its signature Trekking Taiwan project by completing 450 kilometres in 38 days, from south to north on the west coast of Taiwan. A unique physical training method invented by U-Theatre, the "Feet in the Clouds" trekking project aims to increase one's self-awareness through trekking by day and drumming by night. Since 1994 this practice has afforded U-Theatre opportunities to step away from the confines of the theater to reach out to world communities, as far as Tibet and Paris.

LIU RUO-YU (artistic director, founder), born in Taiwan in 1956, was a leading theatrical performer in the early 1980s. She earned her MA in Theater Arts from New York University, and was selected for a year-long master class under Polish director Jerzy Grotowski. In 1988 Liu founded U-Theatre and introduced novel facets of drumming, meditation, and martial arts to create a series of original works integrated with a wide range of elements drawn from music, literature, drama, dance, and ritual. In 2008 Liu was awarded the 12th Annual Taiwan National Award for Arts for Best Art Performer.

HUANG CHIH-CHUN (music director, master drummer), born in Malaysia in 1965, began taking percussion lessons at age six and started formal training under a master of Chinese martial arts at age 10. Huang has matured his skills in both specialties over a period spanning more than 20 years. He toured Europe, the Americas, and Africa for several years as a member of a dance troupe following university graduation. After spending time studying meditation in the early 1990s in India and Tibet, he joined U-Theatre as drum master in 1993, at the request

of U-Theatre founder, Liu Ruo-yu. Huang's approach to the U-Theatre education regimen, which requires students first to learn meditation before taking up percussion, has radically changed the character of U-Theatre and mapped out for the group a path by which to continue to grow and mature. Prior to joining U-Theatre, Huang performed with Taipei Folk Dance Theater and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre.

LIN KEH-HUA (set and lighting design)

Lin Keh-hua is one of the most celebrated lighting and set designers in the Chinese-speaking world. His designs employ Western aesthetics and modern technology blended with Asian philosophy to create a performing space that supports the performers, enriches the content, and is eye-catching to viewers, garnering him increasing recognition among leading choreographers and other performing artists, among them, Ming Cho Lee, Lin Hwai-min, Helen Lai, Lo Man-fei, Wang Chih-mei, Lo King-man, Mui Cheuk-yin, and Tong Kai-fan. Lin is a professor of lighting design at the National Institute of the Arts in Taipei and the foremost theater consultant in Taiwan, and has been the principal designer for the acclaimed Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan since 1981.

TIM YIP (costume design)

Tim Yip began his career by participating in John Wu's 1986 film, *A Better Tomorrow*. Over the past 18 years, Yip has been involved with costume and art design in several movies and theatrical performances and has collaborated with award-winning directors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China, including Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, Ang Lee, Tsai Ming-liang, Tian Zhuang-zhuang, Li Shao-hong, Stanley Kuan, and Chen

Kuo-fu. Yip's achievements have won him global applause and world status. His work has not only merged modern and classic art forms in various fields, but also perfectly combines art and living. In 2001, he was honored with an Academy Award for Best Art Direction and a British Academy Film Award for Best Costume Designer for his work on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Yip's art and costumes have been featured in the world-tour performances of such Taiwanese companies as Cloud Gate, U-Theatre, Contemporary Legend Theatre, Han Tang Yue-fu, and the Tai-Gu Tales Dance.

HSU YI-CHUN (video designer)

Hsu Yi-chun holds a DNSEP (Advanced National Diploma of Visual Arts) from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy, and trained at the Laboratory for the Study of Movement at the Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq. While in France, he worked in video recording, sound installations, film, and original multimedia productions. Some of the themes of his video works are the temporal landmarks of a city and digital time. He is currently working as a video installation artist, visual designer for theater projects, and program coordinator for major projection events. He is also on the faculty of University of Arts and Normal University in Taipei. He was the video and projection content design director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Taipei Deaflympics in 2009. Hsu's recent designs can be seen in the performances of RS Legend, GuoGuang Opera Company, 30 Dance Theatre, Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Taiyuan Puppet Theatre, Tang Mei-yun Taiwanese Opera Company, Théâtre de la Sardine, Taipei Symphony Orchestra, and many others.