

Friday 15 May
Sadler's Wells Digital Stage

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Moon Water

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

World-renowned Cloud Gate Dance Theatre was Taiwan's first contemporary dance company. Revered around the world, Cloud Gate first visited Sadler's Wells in 1999, and since then has continued to stun audiences with its unique choreography, transforming ancient aesthetics into a modern celebration of motion.

Moon Water, or Shui Yuei, is a metaphor of two things. One is a Buddhist proverb: "Flowers in a mirror and moon on the water are both illusory". The other describes the ideal state of Tai Chi practitioners: "Energy flows as water, while the spirit shines as the moon". Premiered on 18 November 1998 at the National Theater in Taipei, Moon Water by founding director Lin Hwai-min was brought to Sadler's Wells in 2002, returning once more in 2008.



MOON WATER, PERFORMED BY CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE OF TAIWAN © LIU CHEN-HSIANG

Artistic Team

Choreography
Lin Hwai-min

Music
Selections from Six Suites for Solo Cello by J.S. Bach

Set Design
Austin Wang

Lighting Design
Chang Tsan-tao

Costume Design
Lin Ching-ju



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Music from Six Suites for Solo Cello performed by Mischa Maisky used with permission from the copyright owner
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About Moon Water

Topping the New York Times list of the Best Dance in 2003, Moon Water has been presented by festivals and venues around the world, receiving rave reviews since its premiere in 1998.

Moon Water owes its movement motives to Tai Chi Tao Yin, a Qi Gong exercise that can be traced back for more than 2000 years. The choreographer "has extended and transformed the movement of t'ai chi exercises into an expressive dance vocabulary" (The New York Times). "The grace of it, in a way, is balletic, but its evasion of the norms of gravity, its total fluidity, suggests that there is a new book of the human dancing body waiting to be written with t'ai chi training" (The Daily Telegraph). Dance Europe said of the piece, "Moon Water presents a distinct and mature choreographic language. The importance of this evolution in Asian dance is no less profound than the impact of Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt on European classical ballet".

The most surprising element of Moon Water is its choice of music. Lin Hwai-min harmonises this contemporary work with Bach's Six Suites for Solo Cello recorded by the renowned cellist Mischa Maisky. The dancers, as described by The Times, "reach inside the music of Bach from the core of their own bodies". Ballet International lauds that "Bach's cello suites and Lin Hwai-min's t'ai chi blend together as if they had waited for each other for hundreds of years."

A monochromatic production, the stage floor of Moon Water is black with white brush strokes reminiscent of ripples, while mirrors hang in mid-air, reflecting the dancers in white billowy costumes. Towards the end, water seeps onto the stage, and the wall of mirrors reflect the water and the soaked dancing bodies. "The entire stage is transformed into a mirrored cabinet. Reality and appearance melt inseparably into each other. In an unforgettable final image, the dancers seem to move as though on clouds in a celestial landscape—magically removed from all worldliness" (Ballet International).

"Mr. Lin has accomplished what creative artists rarely succeed in doing today: challenging the audience with a work unlike any other," says The New York Times. "Moon Water is not about meditation but is a meditation in itself."



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Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

Cloud Gate is the name of the oldest known dance in China. In 1973, choreographer Lin Hwai-min adopted this classical name and founded the first contemporary dance company in Taiwan and in the greater Chinese-speaking community. In 2020, Cheng Tsung-lung succeeded Lin as the company's Artistic Director.

Dancers receive training in meditation, the ancient breathing exercise Qi Gong, internal martial arts, modern dance and ballet. Manifesting in breath-taking choreography, the company transforms ancient aesthetics into a thrilling and modern celebration of motion.

Cloud Gate has toured worldwide with frequent engagements at Next Wave Festival in New York, Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, Moscow Chekhov International Theatre Festival in Russia, the Movimentos International Dance Festival and the Internationales Tanzfest NRW founded by Pina Bausch in Germany. International press describes the company as "Asia's leading contemporary dance theatre" (The Times) and "one of the best dance companies in the world" (FAZ). Cloud Gate was the winner of Outstanding Company at the 2018 National Dance Awards, UK.

Lin Hwai-min

Founder & Choreographer

Lin Hwai-min founded Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan in 1973 and has led the company to international prominence through his thrilling creations that transform Asian aesthetics into contemporary celebration of motion.

Among the honours which Lin Hwai-min has received are Samuel H. Scripps / American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement; the John D. Rockefeller Award, New York; the Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters, France; and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Movimentos Dance Festival, Germany. He has also been celebrated by Time magazine as one of "Asia's Heroes".

At the end of 2019, Lin Hwai-min stepped down as the Artistic Director of Cloud Gate and handed the reins of the company to Cheng Tsung-lung.



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