# teacher resource guide Schooltime performance series

# nai-ni chen dance company

# year of the green wood dragon





# about the performance

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company returns to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center to celebrate another Lunar New Year and the coming of spring 2024 with the Year of the Green Wood Dragon. This festive production features amazing dancers, musicians and acrobats. You'll experience leaping lions, flying dragons, acrobatic dancers and beautiful music played on traditional cultural instruments.

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company was founded in 1988 by the late choreographer Nai-Ni Chen and her husband, Andy Chiang, Executive Director. The couple shared a vision of creating a company that was "a premier provider of innovative cultural experiences" to reflect the "hope and energy of the immigrant's journey."

Sadly, Nai-Ni Chen passed away in 2021. Still, her legacy lives on in the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, which continues to connect Chinese and American communities through dance and education.

### njpac on the mic podcast



#### About NJPAC On the Mic

NJPAC On the Mic allows students to engage their listening skills and deepen their understanding of creative content. This installment features three exclusive, curriculum standard-aligned episodes that supplement Year of the Green Wood Dragon, presented as part of NJPAC's 2023 – 2024 SchoolTime Performances series. This immersive audio experience features a theme song by students in the NJPAC arts education program.

# podcast with Andy Chiang

How to listen to this episode of NJPAC On the Mic Scan the QR code or visit njpac.org/arts-education/teacher-resources to access the podcast and the following show notes:

Part 1: About | Pre-show audio, 6 minutes

**Includes:** An introduction to the performance, artists & venue, welcome message

Welcome message voiced by Andy Chiang, Executive Director, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

Part 2: Connect | Post-show audio, 9 minutes Includes: Reflection questions, a look at the Chinese zodiac and Chinese New Year traditions Opening question voiced by Andy Chiang

Part 3: Spotlight | Post-show audio, 9 minutes Includes: An interview with Andy Chiang, discussion starters Interview guest: Andy Chiang

#### **Additional Episode Credits**

Series producers: Michael Aquino and Dania Ramos

Written and hosted by Dania Ramos

Additional writing by Sharon Adarlo and the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

**Theme and outro music:** NJPAC *TD Jazz for Teens* program

Additional music from Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company productions Year of the Rat & Year of the Ox

**Sound editing, sound design,** & voiceover by Michael Aquino

# inspired ideas in the classroom

		Teacher Focus
Ρ	Prepare for the performance	<ul> <li>If you have</li> <li>15 minutes: Listen to the first podcast episode, NJPAC On the Mic: About, for an introduction to the performance, what to expect at the theater and a welcome message from Andy Chiang, Executive Director of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. Ask students to raise their hands when they see acrobatics, martial arts or a prop in this clip of Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company.</li> <li>30 minutes: Help students locate China on a globe or map. Explain that Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's work is rooted in Chinese customs, beliefs, ceremonies and celebrations. Have students watch a video on the Chinese New Year and an example of the Chinese Dragon Dance.</li> <li>45 minutes: Ask students to read the article on the Chinese dance customs and lead a discuss using the questions in the student section. Have students complete Activity Sheet 1.</li> </ul>
Ε	Experience the performance	Explain that dance is language that expresses ideas and emotions through movement and gesture. Dance can also include props, masks, costumes and sets. Have students watch the following video and lead a discussion on the elements of dance. Preview <b>Activity Sheet 2</b> before the performance.
R	Reflect, respond and read	<ul> <li>Reflect: Remind students that Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is an Asian-American organization that celebrates cross-cultural experiences by merging traditional and contemporary dance. Using the questions in the Student section, lead a discussion on how the arts bring different cultural groups together and why learning about other cultures is important.</li> <li>Respond: Have students listen to NJPAC On the Mic: Connect for a look at Chinese zodiac and Chinese New Year traditions. You'll be prompted to pause the audio twice to allow students to respond to reflection questions.</li> <li>Read: Have students complete Activity Sheet 2 individually. Then, split the class into pairs. Ask partners to identify an answer they have in common and one question they answered differently. If time allows, have students share their answers with the class.</li> </ul>
F	Focus	Have students listen to <b>NJPAC On the Mic: Spotlight</b> for an interview with Andy Chiang, executive director of Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. You'll be prompted to pause the audio to allow students to share responses to the discussion prompts. Explain that Year of the Green Wood Dragon features Chinese traditions that help people feel connected to each other. Many cultural dances provide happiness and help the community satisfy their needs. The Dragon Dance highlights the value of pursuing wisdom, and is said to bring rain that enables a good harvest. Emphasize that different cultures have traditions to celebrate the New Year: some summon good luck and prosperity, while others seek to let go of misfortunes. Facilitate a discussion around students' cultural backgrounds and family traditions, including those related to the New Year.
0	Originate	Divide the class into two groups. Ask students to create two lists of action words: one with words associated with good luck and another associated with chasing bad luck away. Both groups will create two dances: one that incorporates the words associated with good luck (ex. knocking on wood) and another that chases away bad luck (ex. cleaning). Invite students to include dance elements they saw during the performance, including stationary and traveling movements, different levels, shapes, small and big movements, expressions and a connection to the mood or tempo of the music. Have students set their dances to the music selections for good luck and chasing away bad luck.
R	Rehearse	Allow students time to organize and rehearse their dances with the music. They may write notes or make drawings to help memorize the dance steps. With permission, you may videotape students' work for self-assessment and revision. Encourage students to rehearse their dances until they feel confident performing them.
Μ	Make magic	Organize a sharing event in which both groups show their work. Designate a performance area and an area for the audience. Review the expectations for appropriate behavior for performers and the audience. Establish a protocol for audience response. Refer to the <b>Elements of Dance</b> video to refresh students on dance vocabulary when they offer their feedback written on sticky notes. With permission, dances can be recorded and shared with parents and other classes. Collect the notes and stick them on a piece of chart paper. Allow time for students to read the feedback on their group's dance piece.

Student Activity	NJ Student Learning Standards
<ul> <li>15 minutes: Listen to the first podcast episode, NJPAC On the Mic: About. Then, watch the video clip of Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company and raise your hand when you see acrobatics, martial arts or a prop.</li> <li>30 minutes: Watch the video on Chinese New Year and the example of the Chinese Dragon Dance. What did you notice about the dancers in the video? For older students, what did you learn from the text in the video?</li> <li>40 minutes: Read the article on Chinese dance customs and discuss the following questions with the class: What is the significance of the Dragon Dance in Chinese culture? How has its purpose changed over time? Next, complete Activity 1.</li> </ul>	NJ English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1. NJSLSA.SL2. NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 11 NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Re8a Social-Emotional Learning Relationship Skills Sub-competency 16 Social Studies 6.1.5.HistoryUP.7
Watch <b>the video</b> on the elements of dance. You may recognize elements similar to those you saw in the previous dance videos. What dance elements do you recognize? Preview <b>Activity Sheet 2</b> before the performance. During the show, focus on what you see, hear, feel and think as you watch the performance.	NJ English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL2. NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9, 11
<b>Reflect:</b> Think about the following questions: What did you learn about Chinese culture through this performance? Why is it important to learn about other cultures? <b>Respond:</b> Listen to <i>NJPAC On the Mic: Connect</i> and respond to the reflection quotes when prompted. <b>Read:</b> Complete <b>Activity Sheet 2</b> . Review your answers with a partner and identify an answer you have in common and a question you answered differently.	NJ English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1. NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9, 11 NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Cn10a Social-Emotional Learning Relationship Skills Sub-competency 16 Social Studies 6.1.5.HistoryUP.7
Listen to <b>NJPAC On the Mic: Spotlight</b> . Participate in a discussion about New Year's traditions: 1. What traditions does your family practice for the New Year? 2. Make a list of good things that would help a community be prosperous 3. Make a list of unfortunate things that a family or community might want to let go of	NJ Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills 9.4.5.Cl.3, 9.4.5.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.2 NJ English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL2. NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.12prof.Cn11a Social Studies 6.1.5.HistoryUP.7
As a group, create two lists of action words: one with words associated with good luck and another associated with chasing away bad luck. Choose two or three actions from each list and create two dances that incorporates these actions. Include dance elements that you saw during the performance, including stationary and traveling movements, different levels, shapes, small and big movements, expressions and a connection to the mood or tempo of the music. Refer to the <b>Elements of Dance</b> video if you need more examples. Set your dances to the music provided by your teacher.	NJ Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills 9.4.2.Cl.2 NJ Comprehensive Health & Physical Education 2.2.5.MSC.2 NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 2, 6, 10 NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Crla, 1.1.5.Crlb, 1.1.5.Cr2, 1.5.5.Cr2a, 1.5.5.Cr2c
Rehearse your group dances. Combine the parts of your dances so it flows smoothly. Decide if there are going to be solos and/or partner sections. You may choose to have a dance leader who indicates when to change from one part to the next. If available, watch a video of your rehearsal to self-assess and revise your work.	NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 3, 4, 5 NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Cr3a, 1.1.5.Pr6b, 1.5.5.Cr2a, 1.5.5.Cr2c
It's showtime! Share your creative piece with your peers. Explain the reasons for your choreographic choices. Give and receive feedback by responding to the following prompts on sticky notes: 1. What were the strengths of the performance? 2. What were the interesting details of the dance? 3. Do you have any questions about the dance? 4. What were the feelings that dance brought up for you?	NJ Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 6, 7, 8 , 9 NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Pr4a, 1.1.5.Pr4b, 1.1.5.Pr4c, 1.1.5.Re8a



#### NJ Visual & Performing Arts Standards

- **1:** Generating and conceptualizing ideas.
- 2: Organizing and developing ideas.
- **3:** Refining and completing work.
- 4: Selecting, analyzing, and interpreting work.
- 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
- 6: Conveying meaning through art.
- 7: Perceiving and analyzing products.
- 8: Interpreting intent and meaning.
- 9: Applying criteria to evaluate products.
- **10:** Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.
- **11:** Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

### common core state standards

#### NJ Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills 9.4.2.Cl.2

Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work.

#### 9.4.5.CI.3

Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one's thinking about a topic of curiosity.

#### 9.4.5.GCA.1

Analyze how culture shapes individual and community perspectives and points of view.

#### 9.4.8.GCA.1

Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect.

#### 9.4.8.GCA.2

Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

### NJ Comprehensive Health and Physical Education 2.2.5.MSC.2

Explain and demonstrate movement sequences, individually and with others, in response to various tempos, rhythms, and musical styles.

#### **FIND THE STANDARDS**

For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy

NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS socialstudies.org/standards

NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS nationalartsstandards.org

#### NJ English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1.

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### NJSLSA.SL2.

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### NJSLS Arts Standards Dance 1.1.5.Cn10a

Describe feelings and ideas evoked by a dance that are observed or performed and examine how they relate to personal points of view and experiences.

#### 1.1.5.Cr1a

Use a variety of stimuli (e.g., music, sound, text, objects, images, notation, experiences, observed dance, literary forms, natural phenomena, current news) to build dance content.

#### 1.1.5.Cr1b

Solve multiple movement problems using the elements of dance to develop dance content.

#### 1.5.5.Cr2a

Experiment and develop skills in multiple artmaking techniques and approaches, through invention and practice.

#### 1.1.5.Cr2b

Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates non-verbally.

#### 1.5.5.Cr2c

Individually or collaboratively represent environments or objects of personal significance that includes a process of peer discussion, revision and refinement.

#### 1.1.5.Cr3a

Revise movement based on peer feedback and selfreflection to improve communication of artistic intent in a dance study. Explain movement choices and revisions.

#### 1.1.5.Pr4a

Perform planned and improvised movement sequences with increasing complexity in the use of space. Establish relationships with other dancers, increasing spatial awareness and design (e.g., diverse pathways, levels, patterns, focus, near/far).

#### 1.1.5.Pr4b

Perform planned and improvised movement sequences with increasing complexity in the use of time/rhythm by accurately transferring rhythmic patterns from the auditory to the kinesthetic and responding immediately to tempo changes.

#### 1.1.5.Pr4c

Perform planned and improvised movement sequences and dance combinations applying a variety of dynamics and energy (e.g., fast/slow, sharp/smooth, strong/gentle, tight/loose.)

#### 1.1.5.Pr6b

Rehearse a dance to improve group awareness, unison movement, consistency, and attention to detail.

#### 1.1.12prof.Cn11a

Analyze and discuss the role of dance in a global society. Examine genres, styles, historical time periods, societal changes and perspectives and how those changes impact dance in relation to the ideas and perspectives of the people from whom the dances originate.

#### 1.1.5.Re8a

Interpret meaning or intent in a dance or phrase based on its movements. Explain how the movements communicate the main idea of the dance using basic dance terminology.



#### Social-Emotional Learning

NJSEL Relationship Skills Sub-competency 16 Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

#### **Social Studies**

#### 6.1.5.HistoryUP.7

Describe why it is important to understand the perspectives of other cultures in an interconnected world.

## vocabulary

#### **Acrobatics**

The performance of gymnastic feats, such as walking on a tightrope or swinging on a trapeze. Acrobatics requires excellent balance, agility and coordination. In China, this ancient art form traces its roots to the Xia Dynasty 4,000 years ago.

#### Characteristic

A feature or quality that typically belongs to a person, place or thing and serves to identify it.

#### Chinese zodiac

The Chinese zodiac is a classification system based on the lunar calendar that assigns animals and related personality traits. It is similar to the Western zodiac, which aligns symbols with star constellations. The Western zodiac is broken down into twelve months, and the Chinese zodiac follows a twelve-year cycle.

#### Choreography

The art or practice of designing combinations and sequences of movements of physical bodies. The person who creates the steps, combinations and patterns of a ballet or dance is called a choreographer.

#### Erhu

A traditional Chinese two-stringed violin or fiddle played with a bow. The erhu dates from the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 AD).

#### **Cross-cultural**

Cross-cultural events and works focus on comparing cultures and identifying differences and similarities. Cross-cultural interactions help to develop important interpersonal skills. Working with people from other cultures develops empathy, acceptance and tolerance to other cultures' ideas, talents and experiences.

#### Culture

The customs, arts, social institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group.

#### Folk dance

A folk dance reflects the life of the people of a country or region. They are communal dances originating in rural areas and were performed for pleasure or cultural pride. Some examples of folk dances include Irish jigs, Virginia reel, square dances, circle dances, jarabe Tapatío, huayno, bomba, cha-cha-cha and tarantella.

#### Hongbao

A traditional Chinese gift of money presented in a red envelope.

#### Immigrant

A person who migrates from one country to another, usually for permanent residence.

#### Lunar

A term relating to the moon or of the moon derived from luna, the Latin word for the moon. It was embodied in Ancient Rome as a woman wearing a crescent crown on her head and driving a chariot with horses or oxen.

#### **Martial arts**

Martial arts are codified systems and traditions of combat practiced for many reasons, such as self-defense, competition, entertainment, preserving a nation's intangible cultural heritage, physical, mental and spiritual development, and military and law enforcement applications.

#### Pipa (pronounced pee-paa)

A four-stringed lute, similar to a guitar. It is a Chinese musical instrument with over 2,000 years of history.

#### Prop

A prop, formally known as theatrical property, is an object that actors or dancers use during a performance or screen production that is not part of the set or costume.

#### Symbol

A thing representing something else, especially a material object representing something abstract.



Websites NJPAC's Arts Education programs

About NJPAC njpac.org/about

Year of the Green Wood Dragon NJPAC Resources njpac.org/education-program/nai-ni-chen-resources/Nai-Ni Chen Dance

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company nainichen.org/programs

Chinese Zodiac chinesenewyear.net/zodiac

15 Fun Facts about Chinese New Year chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/new-year-facts.htm

Chinese Immigrants in the United States migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states

FTW Magazine | "A Traditional Chinese New Year" fwtmagazine.com/a-traditional-chinese-new-year

ThoughtCo | "Celebrating on Chinese New Year's Day" thoughtco.com/chinese-new-years-day-687469

Elements of Dance | Elements of Dance elementsofdance.org/begin-here.html

10 Disappearing Chinese New Year Traditions chinahighlights.com/festivals/chinese-new-year-disappearing-tradition.htm

Spotlight on Nai-Ni Chen: "Not Alone – A Modern Dance Performance at Aljira" aljirablog.tumblr.com/post/100252879993/spotlight-onnai-ni-chen-not-alone-a-modern

PBS | State of the Arts Unity: Choreographer Nai-Ni Chen Remembered: pbs.org/video/unity-choreographer-nai-ni-chen-remembered-vo2hxg

MIT | Slice of MIT A Computer Scientist Applies Systems Thinking to Dance: alum.mit.edu/slice/computer-scientist-applies-systems-thinking-dance

Chinese Customs and Traditions: Dragon Dance https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese\_Customs/ dragon\_dance.htm

2023 Chinese Zodiac Dragon Prediction thechinesezodiac.org/year-of-the-dragon

#### Videos

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company YouTube channel youtube.com/@dragonxlion

Traditional Chinese Instrumental Music youtube.com/watch?v=vuCe77vBYQM

Chinese Dragon Dance Folk Life youtube.com/watch?v=vi95ZTEHoL8

National Geographic | Hong Kong's Dazzling Fire Dragon Dance youtube.com/watch?v=04CGkm6-wDc

Dragon Dance Prop Master youtube.com/watch?v=lal6XwgooxM

Culture Trip | Mesmerizing Chinese Dances You Should Know theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/8-mesmerizingchinese-dances-that-you-should-know

#### Books

Chinese New Year (On My Own: Holidays Series) by Judith Jango-Cohen Carolrhoda Books (2005)

New Year (A Lunar New Year Book for Kids) by Mel Zihan (Author), Qin Leng (Illustrator) Aldana Books (2021)

All About China: Stories, Crafts and Games for Kids by Allison Branscombe & Lin Wang Tuttle Publishing (2018)

Celebrating Chinese New Year by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith and Laurence Migdale Holiday House (1998)

The Chinese in America: A Narrative History by Iris Chang Penguin Books (2004)

Chinese Dance: In the Vast Land and Beyond Wesleyan (2016)

Celebrating Chinese New Year: History, Traditions, and Activities - A Holiday Book for Kids by Eugenia Chu Rockridge Press (2021)



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#### NJPAC Arts Education performances team:

Collaborative Learnina

Rosa Hyde, Treasure Borde, and Kendall Lipham. On the Mic is an NJPAC Arts Education production, produced in partnership with CM Studios. CM Studios producers: Michael Aquino and Dania Ramos. NJPAC and CM Studios are located in Essex County, New Jersey, situated on the traditional territory of the Leni Lenape people.

### the arts in your school

**In-School Residencies:** NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

### study the arts at njpac

Saturday Programs: NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org. Or visit njpac.org/education

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Charitable Foundation



Turrell Fund

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