teacher resource guide Schooltime performance



year of the snake





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 Snake. This vibrant and festive production features impressive dancers, musicians, and acrobats. You'll experience leaping lions, flying dragons and beautiful music played on traditional cultural instruments.

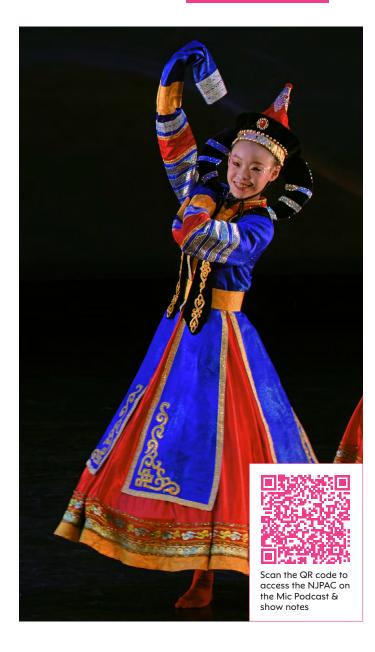
The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company was founded in 1988 by the late choreographer Nai-Ni Chen and her husband, Andy Chiang. The couple shared a vision of creating a company that was "a premier provider of innovative cultural experiences" to reflect the "hope and energy of the immigrant's journey."

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.

The late dancer Nai-Ni Chen (1959 – 2021) came from a rich dance tradition. She began training in traditional Chinese Dance in Taiwan at four years old. At age 18, Nai-Ni was selected by the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to serve on several ambassadorial culture missions to nineteen countries. She came to the United States to study modern dance at NYU, where she studied with Doris Rudko, Ellen Tittler, Bertram Ross and Mary Anthony. In 1988, with encouragement from Mary Anthony, she established the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company with her husband, Andy Chiang.

njpac on the mic podcast

with Andy Chiang & Ying Shi



About NJPAC On the Mic

NJPAC On the Mic invites your students to expand their experience of attending a SchoolTime Performances show. We provide three podcast episodes for each production, suitably aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and New Jersey Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies. With NJPAC on the Mic, the learning begins before — and continues beyond your visit to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center!

How to listen to this episode of NJPAC On the Mic Scan the QR code or visit nipac.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 Chiana

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 Ying Shi

Part 3: Spotlight | *Post-show audio, 9 minutes*

Includes: An interview with Andy Chiang and Ying Shi, discussion starters

Interview guest: Andy Chiang and Ying Shi

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's Hip Hop Arts & Culture program

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

Sound editing, sound design and voiceover by Michael Aquino

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company: Year of the Snake

inspired ideas in the classroom

| | | Teacher Focus | Student Activity | NJ Student Learning Standards | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| P | Prepare for the performance | If you have 15 minutes: Have students listen to 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. 30 minutes: Locate China on a globe or map. Explain that the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's work is rooted in Chinese customs, beliefs, ceremonies, and celebrations. The company's founder, Nai-Ni Chen, who sadly passed away in December 2021, wanted to explore the possibilities of connecting Chinese culture with American culture and other diverse communities. Share the following videos on Chinese New Year Celebrations and a Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Performance clip. Allow time for students to share their observations and opinions about the videos. 45 minutes: Emphasize that Chinese dance includes a diversity of forms, which have evolved from ritual dances to communicate with deities, celebration dances, like the Dragon Dance and the Lion Dance; court dances and regional folk dances. Mention that these dances often blend skillful tricks and cultural props with classical dance to evoke historic relics, paintings, and aspects of Chinese opera. | 15 minutes: Listen to the podcast episode NJPAC On the Mic: About. 30 minutes: Locate China on a globe or map. Learn about Nai Ni Chen Dance Company's vision. Share what you know about China, the Lunar New Year traditions and Chinese dance. Watch two videos about Chinese New Year Celebrations and a Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Performance. Discuss your observations and opinions about the videos. 45 minutes: Learn about the diverse forms included in Chinese dance. | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.5.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.2 English Language Arts NJSLSA.R7., NJSLSA.SL1., NJSLSA.SL2. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9, 11 NJ Social-Emotional Learning Social Awareness Sub Competency 9 Relationship Skills Sub Competency 16 Social Studies NJSLS-SS 6.2, NJSLS-SS 6.1.2 NJSLS-SS 6.1.5, NJSLS-SS6.3 | |
| E | Experience the performance | Remind students about audience expectations for the theater, including consideration towards the performers and their fellow audience members. Before the performance, hand out Activity Sheet 1 and review elements of dance and music they'll be seeing during the performance. Encourage students to observe these elements and ask them to record during or following the performance. | Before the performance, review the elements of dance and music on Activity Sheet 1 . During the performance, observe your feelings and thoughts that you will record on Activity Sheet 1 . | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.5.GCA.1, 9.4.8.Cl.4, 9.4.8.GCA.1 English Language Arts NJSLSA.R7., NJSLSA.SL2. Visual & Performing Arts, NJ Social-Emotional Learning & Social Studies (Same as above) | |
| R | Reflect, respond and read | Reflect: Have students listen to NJPAC On the Mic: Connect for a look at Chinese zodiac and Chinese New Year traditions. Continue the discussion by asking what new information was learned about Chinese dance and the Lunar New Year during the performance? Read: Have students read about the Chinese Zodiac: 12 Animals. Students can learn more about the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's Year of the Snake performance by listening to an interview with Andy Chiang in NJPAC On the Mic: Spotlight. Respond: 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 about the role of the performing arts in bringing cultures together. | Reflect: Listen to NJPAC On the Mic: Connect. Share your answer to the following question: What new information did you learn about Chinese dance or The Lunar New Year during the performance? Read: Learn more about the Chinese zodiac animals. Listen to NJPAC On the Mic: Spotlight. Respond: Share your answers to the following questions: 1. How do the arts bring different cultural groups together? 2. Why is learning about other cultures important? 3. How do you learn about other cultures in your life? 4. What arts experiences have helped you learn from other cultures or people from those cultures? | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.5.Cl.3, 9.4.5.GCA.1, 9.4.8.Cl.4, 9.4.8.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.2 English Language Arts NJSLSA.R7., NJSLSA.SL1. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8, 11 NJ Social-Emotional Learning & Social Studies (Same as above) | |
| F | Focus | Explain that the dances they saw in Year of the Snake feature Chinese traditions, beliefs and values. Many cultural dances provide happiness and help the community satisfy their basic needs. The Dragon Dance is said to bring rain and a good harvest. The dance also highlights the value of bravery and pursuing wisdom. Emphasize that different cultures have different 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, focusing on those related to the New Year. Document the traditions. | Participate in a discussion about New Year's traditions: 1. Think about how your family celebrates the New Year 2. Make a list of good things that would help a family or a community be prosperous 3. Make a list of unfortunate things that a family or community might want to let go of or prevent | 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 English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 10, 11 NJ Social-Emotional Learning & Social Studies (Same as above) | |
| 0 | Originate | Divide the class into two groups. Ask students to create two lists of action words, one on the theme of promoting good luck and another associated with chasing away bad luck. In small groups, have students complete Activity Sheet 2 to create two dances with the following music selections: good luck music, bad luck music. Each dance should incorporate two actions from the good luck category and the bad luck category, and incorporate a beginning and ending shape. Invite students to include dance elements they saw during the show. | In your group, create two lists of action words, one on the theme of promoting good luck and another associated with chasing away bad luck. Choose two action words from each list. Use Activity Sheet 2 to create two dances that incorporate these actions and have a beginning and an ending shape each. Include dance elements that you saw during the performance. Set your dances to the music provided by your teacher. | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.5.Cl.3, 9.4.8.GCA.1, 9.4.8.GCA.2 English Language Arts NJSLSA.R7. NJSLSA.SL1. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 2, 6, 10 NJ Social-Emotional Learning & Social Studies (Same as above) Comprehensive Health & Physical Education 2.2.8.MSC.3, 2.2.12.MSC.3 | |
| R | Rehearse | Allow students time to organize and rehearse their dances with the music. With permission, you may videotape students' work for self-assessment and revision. Encourage students to rehearse their dances until they feel confident performing them. | Rehearse your group dances until they flow smoothly. 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 according to your plan on Activity Sheet 2 . | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.8.GCA.2 English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 3, 5, 6 NJ Social-Emotional Learning Relationship Skills Sub Competency 16 Social Studies NJSLS-SS 6.3 Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Same as above) | |
| M | Make magic | Organize a sharing event in which all 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 elements of dance mentioned on Activity Sheet 1 to refresh students on dance vocabulary when they offer their feedback (orally or in writing). If using written notes, you can collect the notes and post them on separate charts of paper for each dance group. Allow time for students to read the feedback on their group's dance piece. With permission, dances can be recorded and shared with parents and other classes. | 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: 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 the dance brought up for you? 5. What similarities did you find between the dance and Nai-Ni Chen's video or live performance? | Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills 9.4.8.GCA.1 English Language Arts NJSLSA.R7., NJSLSA.SL2. Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 6, 7, 8, 9 NJ Social-Emotional Learning Social Awareness Sub Competency 9 Relationship Skills Sub Competency 16 Social Studies NJSLS-SS 6.3 Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Same as above) | |



curriculum standards

NJ Visual & Performing Arts Standards

- 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas.
- 2: Organizing and developing ideas.
- **3:** Refining and completing 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.

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

common core state standards

Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills

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.CI.4

Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.

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.

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education 2.2.8.MSC.3

Create and demonstrate planned movement sequences, individually and with others, based on tempo, beat, rhythm, music, and physical activities (e.g., creative, cultural, social, aerobics dance, fitness).

2.2.12.MSC.3

Design, lead and critique rhythmic and physical activity that includes variations in time, space, force, flow, and relationships (e.g., creative, cultural, social, aerobics dance, fitness).

English Language Arts

NJSLSA.R7.

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

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.

NJ Social-Emotional Learning

Social Awareness Sub Competency 9

Demonstrate an awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others' cultural backgrounds

Relationship Skills Sub Competency 16

Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others

Social Studies

NJSLS-SS 6.2 World History/Global Studies

All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures

NJSLS-SS 6.1.2 HistoryUP.2

Use evidence to demonstrate how an individual's beliefs, values, and traditions may change and /or reflect more than one culture.

NJSLS-SS 6.1.5. History UP.7

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

NJSLS-SS6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century

All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living 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 12 months, and the Chinese zodiac follows a 12-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

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

Erhu

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

Folk dance

A folk dance reflects the life of the people of a country or region. They are communal dances origintating 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

Hongbad

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

Opera

An art form that tells a story through live music, acting, and singing

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

Ritua

A religious or formal ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order

Symbo

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

resources

NJPAC

About NJPAC

NJPAC's Arts Education programs nipac.org/arts-education

NJPAC Resources | Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company: Year of the Snake njpac.org/education-program/nai-ni-chen-dance-company year-of-the-snake-resources

Website

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

Chinese Zodiac Animals chinesenewyear.net/zodiac

2025 Chinese Zodiac Dragon Prediction thechinesezodiac.org/year-of-the-dragon

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

A Traditional Chinese New Year

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

Mesmerizing Chinese Dances You Should Know theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/8-mesmerizing-chinese-dances-that-you-should-know

Elements of Dance

10 Disappearing Chinese New Year Traditions chinahighlights.com/festivals/%20chinese-new-year-disappearing-tradition.htm

Spotlight on Nai-Ni Chen:

Not Alone - A Modern Dance Performance at Aljira aljirablog.tumblr.com/post/100252879993/spotlight-on-nat-ni-ni-nen-not-alone-a-modern

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

Chinese Dance: Ancient Art Form Across Time and Space

Scholastic | New Year's Traditions Around the World scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/new-year-traditions-around-world.html

New Year's Traditions Around the World sandiegofamily.com/things-to-do/seasonal-happenings/new-years-traditions-around-the-world

9 New Year's Traditions From Cultures Around The World worldstrides.com/blog/2016/12/9-new-years-traditions-cultures-ground-world world wo

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

Videos

PBS | State of the Arts - Unity: Choreographer Nai-Ni Chen Remembered

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Compnay's Year of the Pig Celebration

Chinese New Year Traditions and Celebrations.
Lunar New Year. How Is Chinese New Year Celebrated?

Chinese Music

youtube.com/watch?v=Q_h7XszYtsw

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

Dragon Dance in Shanghai youtube.com/watch?v=p\$2AX2441XY

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=I1l6Xwg0oxM

Books

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

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

All About China: Stories, Crafts and Games for Kids by Allison Branscombe & Lin Wang. 2018

Celebrating Chinese New Year

by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith and Laurence Migdale. 1998

The Chinese in America: A Narrative History by Iris Chang. 2004

Chinese Dance: In the Vast Land and Beyond by Wesleyan. 2016

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



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NJPAC Arts Education performances team:

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 nipac

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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Turrell Fund







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