

JOINING HANDS FOR NEW SPLENDOR IN A NEW ERA

BDA LAUNCHES DANCE SHOWCASE
TO CELEBRATE CPC'S CENTENARY

Article / E Chen

Pictures / Practice Center of Beijing Dance Academy

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of China's Communist Party. As one of the few Marxist political parties in the world, the CPC has been committed to the cause of saving, developing and ultimately rejuvenating China through the joint efforts of our people. With its diligent, brave people, the Party has made history. In celebration of this historical milestone, the highly prestigious Beijing Dance Academy launched a dance showcase *Dance for the People* in January 2021, featuring 100

best original works selected from the releases of the 67-year-old Academy, as a tribute to the Party's centenary.

CPC and Dance Development in China

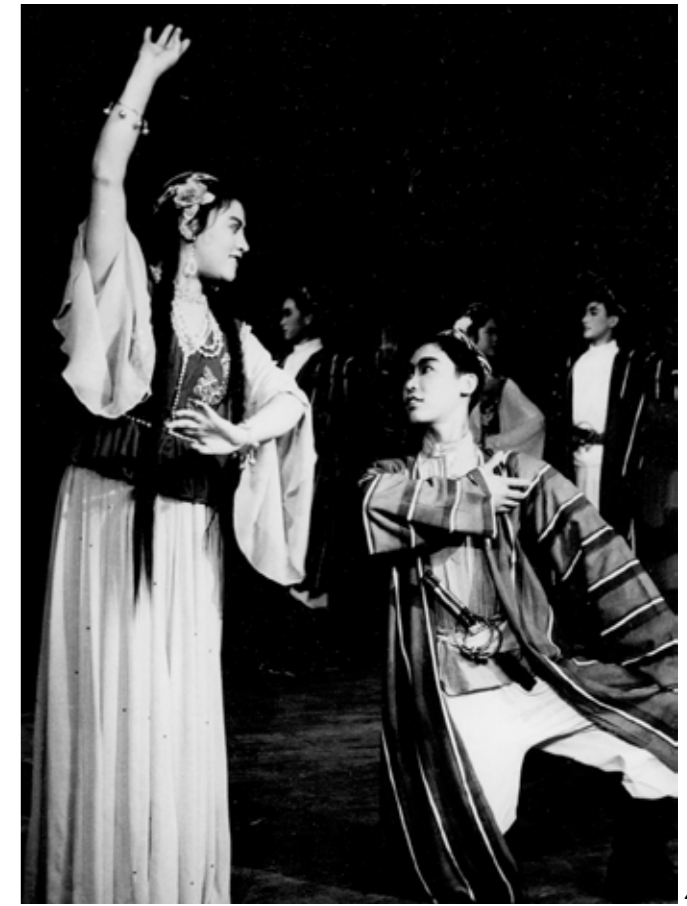
"Art and literature, in capturing the general mood of society, foretell the dawn of a new era," said Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee when speaking of art and literature and its relation with the wider society. Liu Xie, a literature





critic in the Southern dynasties (420-589AD), described the relationship between the two as closely-linked, in his book *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*. It is true that social trends find expression in art and literature, which is in line with the Marxist theory of man's social being determining his thinking. The years that have seen the CPC grow and thrive are also marked by sweeping progress in the country's cultural development. Dance, as the oldest and one of the most exciting forms of art, has made remarkable progress

in terms of professional training and creativity. The founding of Beijing Dance Academy (formerly known as Beijing Dance School) in 1954 was also a memorable event, marking the beginning of a phenomenal growth in the dance profession. From it there emerged a large number of talented dancers and highly-skilled dance professionals, working on both theoretical studies and original choreography. With their creative movements and ideas, they created masterpieces known for their dynamic expression, and contributed to China's distinctive



-
- 1 > *Spring River and Flowers on a moonlit Night*, a solo dance performed by Chen Ailian, won the god medal of the 8th World Festival of Youth and Students
 - 2 > *Reed Flute* won the silver medal of the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students
 - 3 > *Duet Snake Dance*, won the god medal of the 8th World Festival of Youth and Students
 - 4 > *Festive Mood*
 - 5 > *Coral Dance and Amber*



form of socialist cultural development. Beijing Dance Academy is an excellent example of cultural achievement under the leadership of the CPC.

Dance for the People Continuing a Glorious Tradition

The main theme of the “Hundred dances for the CPC’s Centenary” showcase is *Dance for the People*, which is also a national guideline for the development of dance as a form of art. “Literature and art must show compassion. This decides the fate of their creativity,” said Xi Jinping, adding that to achieve success, it is crucial for artists to be able stand in our people’s shoes and have a willingness to serve. He said that this is the only right path to follow, and an artist can obtain great fulfilment from this profession. Mr Jia Zuoguang, a great dancer, is an outstanding example of this. His most celebrated works – *Sabre Dance*; *Oroqen* – were based on his close observation of the daily life of shepherds and warriors, in which activities like riding horses, wrestling, archery, and milking



> 2021 “Dance for the People” special performance - Chapter Two - Chinese folk dance *The Yellow Loess Plateau*, choreographed by Zhang Jigang in 1980s



> Graduation photo of ballet instructor training class in 1954: Dai Ailian, Chen Jingqing, Wang Dingfan, Yi Lina, Bai Li, Qu Hao, Chen Lun



1



2

cows were incorporated in dance movements and helped to forge his unique personal style. His people-centered approach has become a golden rule for dance professionals.

100 Years, 100 Works, 100 Footsteps

Celebrating the CPC's 100th anniversary, the carefully-selected dance performances in the showcase are choreographed by the faculty and students of Beijing Dance Academy, featuring a wide range of works from its founding in 1954 until the present day, and covering major historical periods, some telling stories of the CPC's history. They represent the height of artistic production, combining historical heritage and the socialist culture, epitomizing the school's

effort to faithfully implement the CPC's guidelines on education, and art and literature. In addition, the inclusion of nearly all types of dance in the showcase speaks volumes for the rich profusion of this art form.

The introduction of these works, including their historical context, cultural influence, and professional achievement, presents an excellent opportunity to observe the development of dance in China, and provides a glimpse into the diversity and depth of China's history and culture. It would not be exaggerating to say that they represent the greatest achievements made in the dance profession in the past 100 years, representing the 100 footsteps that the people of Beijing Dance Academy have walked in pursuing

their goal of dance education. "We hope to express our dedication and gratitude to the Party on the eve of its centenary," said Ba Tu, party secretary of the BDA.

Dance History Closely Followed the Development of China

Looking back, the introduction of the training and development of dance as an art form began with the founding of the CPC. The artistic production also draws much inspiration from the heroism and powerful moments from the Party's 100 years of existence, enriching the reservoir of the county's cultural genes. It can be seen that the history of dance in the country closely followed the development of the country. Lotus Dance, Ta Ge, and Stories are exemplars of this.

1-2 > In 1982, Jia Zuoguang, Dai Ailian, Li Zhengyi, Sun Guangyan, Zhang Peifang, Cai Longhai and Zhao Chengxun discussed dance creation and performance

Lotus Dance, choreographed by celebrated dance artist Ms Dai Ailian, is inspired by a diplomatic event following the founding of the People's Republic of China. Dai was asked to create a lotus-themed dance performance to welcome the visiting Indian delegation. She borrowed from the folk dance "Lotus Lantern", popular in eastern Gansu and northern Sha'anxi Province, combining modern with traditional Chinese dance movements to create the widely-acclaimed *Lotus Dance*. It took home a silver medal in the 4th World Festival of Youth and Peace held in Romania's capital Bucharest in 1953.

Cultural heritage is also a good source of inspiration. *Ta Ge*, a masterpiece of Mr Sun Ying, was created through arduous efforts in researching images of ancient women in southeastern China in the Wei and Jin period. The performance depicts a group of girls, clad in green dresses, dancing and singing during a spring outing. Its dance movements draw heavily from both the static forms on brick engravings from the Han dynasty and the rhythmic moves commonly seen in Tibetan dances. The critically-acclaimed dance performance was staged in more than one hundred countries and contributed to the cultural exchange between China and the world.

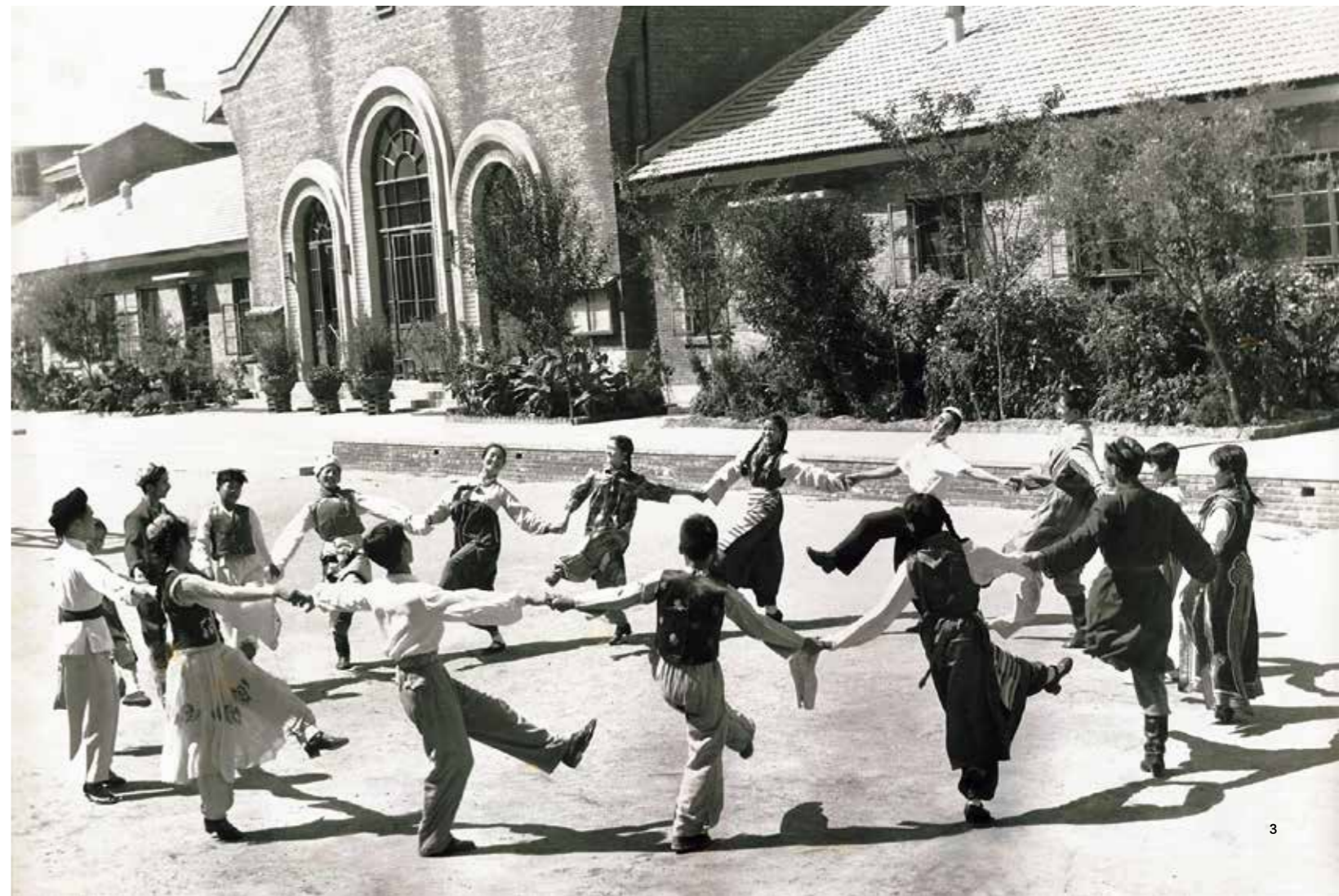
1 > The classical duet *Flying Apsarases*, choreographed by Dai Ailian in 1953
2 > Tao Ran Ting, the location of the Beijing Dance School of the Ministry of culture
3 > People from Beijing Dance School danced around the circle in the festive atmosphere in the 1950s



2



1



3



1



2



3



4

1 > 2021 "Dance for the People" special performance - Chapter One - *Ordos* that is Mr. Jia Zuoguang's work performed by students from Beijing Dance Academy
2 > *Ordos*, choreographed by Jia Zuoguang from 1950s to 1960s, won the first prize of the world youth and student peace and friendship Festival

3 > 2021 "Dance for the People" special performance - Chapter One - *Lotus Dance* that is Ms. Dai Ailian's work performed by students from Beijing Dance Academy
4 > *Lotus Dance*, choreographed by Dai Ailian, won the silver medal of the fourth World Youth and student peace and friendship festival in 1953

> *Yellow River*, a work of Chinese Classical Dance Department of Beijing Dance Academy, choreographed by Zhang Yujun and Yao Yong. It was first performed in 1988, and it has won the "Chinese nation 20th century classic dance" classical works. Dancers explore and approach the truth of history with a pious attitude, and reflect the Chinese classical dance under the blood of national cultural memory from the perspective of Chinese traditional philosophy and aesthetics





1 > A group photo of the cast and crew of the "Dance for People" performance.
2 > The secretary Ba Tu was speaking at the "Dance for People" performance.

The idea of the dance-poetry Stories came from the heroic deeds of Chen Wangdao and nine other people who were generations apart in the newly-founded nation but shared the same belief in the founding values of the CPC – to seek happiness for our people and to pursue the rejuvenation of the nation. It is the aim of this dance choreography to promote the public awareness of the Party's founding values using a variety of dance types including traditional Chinese dance, Chinese ethnic and folk dance, ballet, contemporary and modern dance, ballroom dance, and musicals. It is a testament to the world-class dance education that BDA offers, and it has since received much media attention.

Conclusion

Social consciousness is capable of taking the initiative to respond effectively to the changing times rather than limiting itself to merely reflecting reality and the present era. Literary trends and great artists are important forces of social change and public consensus. "As the CPC's centenary approaches, we should take time to revisit and learn from the classic works and give full play to their role in shaping public opinion," said Ba Tu in a media interview. The finest embodiment of dance traditions and techniques should serve our people and transform our nation's culture. As we celebrate the Party's centenary at this important historical juncture, the beauty of our art will accompany us on this new journey of a new development stage for China.