

AATF Scholarship Application

Personal Statement

Introduction

As a Chinese American, it is really hard to gain attention as a performing artist, especially in the field of dance. Because of the teachings and traditions valued by typical Chinese families, this art form suffers from the misconception of not being a serious form of education or career choice. Being the first Chinese American to have been enrolled in dance at the *Los Angeles County High School for the Arts* in its 13-year history, I was often viewed as an eccentric character. I was often stereotyped as a music-major, because the music department was so dominated by Asian students. Also, now attending UCI as a Dance Major, I found that the Asian population in the dance enrollment only take up a minute percentage, considering UCI has an average attendance of 60% Asian in the whole school. Therefore, it is vitally important for me to show that dance is as important as or as hard as other fields of study. I wish to become a professional in a dance company, create my own dance school, and be recognized in mainstream society America.

Accomplishments

Dance has been a major part of my life since childhood when I started to learn Chinese folk/ethnic dance and classical ballet. Through daily training, frequent performances, and numerous competitions, I have become a performer in various dance styles: western, eastern, modern, and classical. I've been through many performances and many competitions, including one of most proud of, competing in the 7th National Tao Li Cup (第七届桃李杯) in Chengdu.

China (成都). The training I received has not only shaped me into a performer, but has also induced me to take leadership and learn to be independent. I have founded my own dance ensembles (*Spring Autumn Dance Ensemble I* & *Spring Autumn Dance Ensemble II* “春秋舞集” & “春秋舞集 II”) and my own dance classes (*Mandy's Dance Classes* 吳曉清舞蹈班), have been teaching dance at studios (*Li's Ballet* (張利芭蕾), *Shin Dance Academy*(王馨悅舞蹈), *Yan's Dance Studio* (章小燕舞蹈)) and at local Chinese schools (*Arcadia Chinese School, Ming Yuang Chinese School, Confucius Chinese School*). I have also learned to care for those in need by contributing my talents at numerous fund raising events for charity or non-profit organizations (*Tzu Chi, Hsi Lai Temple, museums, libraries, local schools, homes, community centers, etc.*) In the past eleven years, I had been very involved in ACDA events, including being part of their dance company (ACDA Dance Theatre). These experiences have given me the opportunities to become a true performer, a teacher, a choreographer, a director, and most importantly, develop valuable social skills of dealing with the real world.

Goals from Gaining Scholarship

If I were to receive the scholarship, I won't just use it for school tuition or for other personal spending. I wish to do more by using it to move closer toward my dream, that is, to share the joy of dance with the community and to gain a greater respect for this art form. This scholarship will be used to support the young and very serious dancers in my dance ensembles (SADE & SADE II) to perform more often in the coming years, and help build my fresh start into the professional world. Dance performances are usually expensive because of costumes and accessories, technical supports, training and rehearsals, studio rentals, etc. Only with more opportunities of performing can my group and I harvest from the sweat and tear shed over the

years, and repay more to the community by interpreting Chinese culture and our heritage through dance. This year (2004) as director, I have accomplished to present SADE to mainstream society single-handedly, where my ensemble performed in Music Center's "Holiday Celebration" at the world-class theatre, the *Dorothy Chandler Pavilions* in Los Angeles.

Conclusion

As an artist, I am continually improving myself and finding new means to learn and to create. I don't just go to dance studios and just take class; I have the need to grasp for opportunities and create new projects for myself. Although, I have already grasp great opportunities, such as going abroad to compete in dance and have creating new projects through teaching and choreographing, I need continual financial support to carry on my unconditional love for dance. I hope that this unconditional love for dance would really touch people's hearts with its beauty and grace. After all, the purpose of education is to improve people's lives, and let us be reminded that dance can do the same thing by giving people enjoyment. Without art in the world, there won't be creativity or new ideas, and our spiritual life won't be healthy or progressive, especially in this fast-paced commercial society.

" SADE, founded in 2001, is a dance ensemble made up of young energetic dancers who simply love to dance. Learning and performing new and various styles of chinese dance repertory is SADE's main goal. What is so special about this ensemble is that everything is a collaboration of peers, where each dancer has a role. Through dance, it is the ensembles wish to expand the beauty and elegance to all people of what Chinese dance is and could be.

" SADE II, founded in 2004, shares the same goal as SADE, except that it consists of children under the age of 12. This group is yet another collaboration. Members of SADE are either professional or semi-professional dancers, therefore, some of these dancers are either dance teachers or teacher's assistants. From there, two teachers and an assistant join up to create SADE II, a large pool of talents to present beautiful dancing to everyone.