

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

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CHAN HON GOH
Spreads Her Wings
振翅的天鵝 吳振紅



Photo by Sian Richards

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CHAN HON GOH Spreads Her Wings 振翅的天鵝 吳振紅

by Geneviève D'Souza and Lisa Uesson

She was born in Beijing, China in 1969, during the rising of a red moon. Her parents named her "Chan," which means to rise, and "Hon" which means red, a colour that traditionally signifies health and prosperity. It is a name that is fitting, given her quick rise to fame and good fortune. Chan Hon Goh has had a glittering, fairy-tale career as a ballerina since joining the National Ballet of Canada in 1988. Her quick ascension within the company landed her the prestigious title of Principal Dancer in 1994--the first of Chinese descent.

A 2005 recipient of the New Pioneers Arts Award, Ms. Goh's invaluable contributions to the cultural and artistic tapestry of Canada will be seen once again on a familiar stage. The upcoming gala presentation of *A Chinese New Year Celebration with Chan Hon Goh*, will be held on January 31, 2009 in the P.C. Ho Theatre at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto (CCCGT).

"The message of what the cultural centre offers in the community is important," says Ms. Goh. It is a meeting place, a place for inspiration, and where the west meets the east."

Established in 1988, the CCCGT is an integral part of the Scarborough community in east Toronto, actively promoting and fostering Chinese culture. It is one of the most technologically advanced cultural centres in North America, offering a variety of activities each year.

A Chinese New Year Celebration will attract over 600 entertainment enthusiasts to the 23,000 square foot venue. The show serves as a "gateway for people to garner enthusiasm to see full productions that are normally two hours long," says Ms. Goh, co-producer and a performer in the show. "It's important that dance is accessible to everyone and goes into the community."

This will be Ms. Goh's third show at the Cultural Centre. As the creative head, she has gathered exceptional talent, selected stimulating repertoire, and configured all of the onstage logistics, making this "a top-notch" show.

1969年一個明月初升的晚上，北京有一名嬰兒呱呱墜地，父母給她取名為振紅。「振」喻意振翅高飛，而「紅」有著健康和美好前程之意。可能是取了這個好名字，為她帶來不少福氣，她很快便成名。自從在1988年進入加拿大國家芭蕾舞團後，吳振紅的事業開始青雲直上。她在團裏發展順利，更在1994年升任為首席舞蹈員，也是第一位獲得這項殊榮的華裔舞蹈員。

我們將有機會欣賞到這位曾獲頒2005年新先鋒文藝獎的舞蹈家，以曼妙的舞姿再次為加拿大文化藝術編織出一幅瑰麗織錦。《吳振紅新春芭蕾舞》於2009年1月31日在大多倫多中華文化中心的何伯劍劇院隆重舉行。

吳振紅說：「文化中心對社區有重大意義，它讓市民能在這裡享受文娛藝術的活動，擴闊文化視野，亦是一個中西文化交流的寶地。」

建立於1988年的大多倫多中華文化中心，是多倫多東部的士嘉堡社區裡一個重要設施，一直積極推動中華文化。中心的設備十分先進，每年為公眾提供各色各樣的活動項目。

這場賀年芭蕾舞表演，就在佔地二萬三千平方呎的文化中心內舉行，將會吸引超過六百位喜愛這項藝術的人士前來欣賞。身兼製作人和舞蹈員的吳振紅說：「我們會帶給觀眾兩小時的精彩演出。透過我們的表演，讓更多人能明白，芭蕾舞藝術是雅俗共賞的。」

這是吳振紅第三次在文化中心裡演出。身為創作總監的她，為了製作出一場高水準的表演，她聘用出色的人才，由目千挑萬選，精心構思舞臺上的設計，誓要令到全場觀眾鼓掌叫好。

Photo credit: Feng Lin

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

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"I'm very appreciative of all the participants and their hard work," says Ms. Goh. "They too see it as a cultural community event."

This year's fundraising gala production is sponsored by Rolex. Ms. Goh is the official Canadian Ambassador and representative of its brand—lasting, precision, trust, and quality—a brand similar to the essence of who she is.

"We discovered the program two years ago when I came as Chan's guest," says Mr. Victor Royce, Chief Executive Officer of Rolex Canada. "We were really impressed so we decided to take the lead sponsorship role to support Chan, the cultural centre, and the Chinese community in Toronto."

The CCCGT has also played an active role in this year's Chinese New Year celebration by handling the fundraising, administration, marketing, ticket sales, and reception details.

"We would like to invite not only the Chinese community, but also other ethnic groups to share the joy and festivities of our traditions and culture," said Dr. Ming-tat Cheung, Chairman and President of the CCCGT.

The two-hour show will feature over a dozen well-known performers including NBOC Principal Dancers Aleksander Antonijevic, Sonia Rodriguez, and Piotr Stanczyk and Orlando Ballet Principal Dancers Eddy Tovar and Chiaki Yasukawa. And commissioned specifically for this event, is the world premiere of Canadian choreographer, Matjash Mrozewski's *Finale Defile*.

"It's more than what meets the eye," says Ms. Goh. "I've been meticulous in what I want to see and how it's represented." The program will showcase excerpts from classical and contemporary ballets, including *Cinderella*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Don Quixote*, *Le Corsaire*, and *The Nutcracker*.

"There will be excerpts chosen from various artistic styles," says Ms. Goh. "It's like a little menu tasting and ideal because there's something for everyone."

An active member of the community, Ms. Goh has been an Honorary Advisor to the CCCGT since 1995. She has also fundraised for the Education Foundation of the Federation of Chinese Canadian Professionals since 1999. With strong cultural and artistic roots embedded in her soul, she encourages newcomers to the venue and to the ballet to "invest in the arts because it's lasting and it feeds the soul—walk in with an open mind," she says. Just as she did years ago.

Determined to follow in her parents' footsteps, Ms. Goh walked into the world of ballet, at age 12, with a dream and a mission. Her family is deeply rooted in dance. Choo Chiat Goh (dubbed "The Nureyev of China") and Lin Yee Goh, were former Principal Dancers for the National Ballet of China in Beijing. Four of her father's siblings also pursued a ballet career, most notably her uncle Choo San Goh (1948-1987), a celebrated choreographer in the United States. Seeking a newer way of life, the senior Gohs immigrated to British Columbia in 1977. A year later, they built The Goh Ballet Academy, which is recognized for its prize-winning students and sought-after graduates.

Chan Hon Goh is one of them. She is a gifted classicist, recognized world-wide for her dramatic characterizations, breath-taking artistry, and refined technique. She has danced lead roles in *Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The*

吳振紅說：「我非常感謝所有工作人員的辛勞，他們也認同這次演出有助推廣藝術文化。」

今年的慈善晚會是由勞力士表贊助。吳振紅是勞力士在加拿大的代言人，勞力士持久、精密、值得信任和優質的品質，正與吳振紅的氣質匹配。

勞力士加拿大行政總裁 Victor Royce 說：「兩年前，我們看了吳小姐的芭蕾舞演出，留下深刻的印象。之後，我們就決定支持吳小姐為文化中心和多倫多華人社區，大家一齊促進藝術發展。」

大多倫多中華文化中心在今屆賀年活動中擔當着積極的角色，好比籌款、行政管理、售票和接待等工作。

中心的主席兼會長張明遠醫生說：「除了華人，我們還想邀請其他族裔社群來分享我們傳統的迎春活動。」

在這兩小時的芭蕾舞表演中，將有多位知名舞蹈家攜手參與，其中包括加拿大國家芭蕾舞團的首席舞蹈員安托尼澤維奇、羅德里格絲、斯坦茲克，還有奧蘭多芭蕾舞團的首席舞蹈員托瓦和安川。表演中還特別邀請了加拿大的編舞家梅羅祖斯基，向觀眾展示他精心創作的全球首演作品《Finale Defile》。

吳振紅說：「我們的演出，不光是視覺享受，更要震撼觀眾的心靈，亦是我們對藝術不懈追求的意義。」此外，表演中還加插古典及現代芭蕾舞的片段，其中包括灰姑娘、蝴蝶夫人、唐吉珂德、海盜和胡桃夾子等。

吳振紅接着說：「我們把這些經典片段編織起來，就好像要食家品嚐裡每一道佳餚，總會有適合各類觀眾欣賞的地方。」

1995年吳振紅榮任大多倫多中華文化中心的名譽顧問，並積極推廣社區的文化活動。她從1999年開始就為加拿大華人專業人員聯會的教育基金籌募善款。這位資深的舞蹈家給予新人的意見是：「對這門藝術要投入，它是值得你用時間去鑽研的，同時應抱着開放的心靈去學習。」多年以前，吳振紅就是懷著這般心願入行。

吳振紅在12歲那年便決定走入芭蕾舞的世界發展，這可能是她在一個芭蕾舞的世家成長吧。她的父親吳祖捷被稱為「中國的紐瑞耶夫」，其兄妹四人均是舞蹈家；母親吳令儀是中國芭蕾舞團的首席舞蹈員；而美國著名編舞家吳祖珊（1948—1987）亦是吳振紅的叔叔。吳振紅的家人在1977年舉家移民加國卑詩省，希望體驗新生活。一年後，創辦了吳祖捷芭蕾舞學院，這間學院以培訓出無數國際比賽得獎包括金獎的學生而聞名世界，很多從那裡畢業的學生都成為搶手的舞蹈員。

吳振紅便是在自家的學校中接受舞頭的啟蒙教育。她極

Chan Hon Goh dancing outside the CCCGT



Karen Kain
Artistic Director

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Taming of the Shrew, Madame Butterfly, and Giselle. She's made her dream a reality and accomplished more than just her mission today.

Ms. Goh was also a Principal Dancer with the US-based Suzanne Farrell Ballet (2000-2006), dancing works by renowned 20th-century choreographer George Balanchine, at The Kennedy Centre in Washington, D.C. Her performances as a guest artist have also propelled her into the spotlight on world stages in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America. And she is recognized as one of the "Great Women of the 21st Century," by the American Biographical Institute. Humbled by the titles, she credits her parents, NBOC Artistic Director Karen Kain, Artistic Coach Magdalena Popa, and the great American Balanchine ballerina Suzanne Farrell, for teaching her how to "illuminate technique."

Ms. Goh is well-known for defying gravity onstage. When she performs a Grand Jeté, flying through the air and landing weightlessly in the arms of her partner, her feather-like swoops leave audiences breathless. Her graceful composure is a quality her dance partners (Rex Harrington, Peter Boal, and Johan Persson to name a few) know well.

But it is her very first dance partner, Chun Che, who captured her heart during rehearsals of a ballet gala performance of *The Butterfly Lovers*, a romantic pas de deux he choreographed for them to dance years ago. The couple married in August 1997.

Together they've made significant contributions to dance while Ms. Goh has developed her talents into multiple artistic channels. Working to have it all as an entrepreneur, an ambassador for charities, and an author, she admits that finding balance is challenging.

"I think balance is especially difficult for women," says Ms. Goh. "We're hard on ourselves to be everything and it's hard to say no. Everything is relevant, especially now that I'm a mom." In February 2006, Ms. Goh gave birth to a son, returning to the studio just eight weeks later with a renewed passion for her busy life.

Year-round performances, daily and lengthy rehearsals, wear and tear on the body, and maintaining a well-rounded life is what life as a dancer is about. Her 2002 autobiography, *Beyond the Dance: A Ballerina's Life* is an honest portrayal. Commitment, sacrifice, and injury are part of that life and, like most serious dancers, Ms. Goh accepted her share of physical pain at the cost of doing something she love.

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為藝術要身心奉獻，受傷視作等閒事，這是任何認真的舞蹈員必會遇上的經歷，她對於自己因訓練而招來滿身傷患，無怨無悔。



Chan Hon Goh and Zdenek Konvalina in *The Sleeping Beauty* Photographer: Cylla von Tiedemann

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Chan, Aveary Che, and Chun Che Photo by Sian Richards

富饒古典舞的天份，舞藝卓越，才華獲行內讚賞，又有個人獨特的表演風格，能爆發出激動人心的藝術感染力。她曾在《天鵝湖》、《羅密歐與茱麗葉》、《胡桃夾子》、《睡美人》、《馴悍記》、《蝴蝶夫人》和《吉賽爾》擔任主要角色。事業上的成就比她預期更理想。

此外，吳振紅在2000年至2006年期間，成為美國的 Suzanne Farrell 芭蕾舞團的首席舞蹈員，曾在華盛頓的 Kennedy Centre 演出二十世紀編舞大師 George Balanchine 的作品。她又在歐洲、亞洲、澳洲和南美洲以客座舞蹈員的身份獻技。美國傳記學院選她為「21世紀的偉大女性」之一，對於這項殊榮，她謙虛地歸功於她的父母、加拿大國家芭蕾舞團的藝術總監 Karen Kain 和導師 Magdalena Popa，還有美國著名芭蕾舞家 Suzanne Farrell，全因他們的栽培，令到她能跳出芭蕾舞的神髓。

當吳振紅在臺上表演凌空飛躍的時候，她在空中彷彿不受地心吸力影響，像羽毛翩翩落下，觀眾反要屏住呼吸地看著。她優雅自若的舞姿，令同台演出的舞蹈家（如 Rex Harrington、Peter Boal、Johan Persson 等）讚嘆不已。

愛情方面，贏得這位天才的芳心的，亦是一位舞蹈家，他的名字是軍軍，兩人在某次的芭蕾舞演出中結識。這一對佳偶在1997年終於步進教堂共諧連理。

夫妻倆人在舞蹈界貢獻良多，而有着多方面才華的吳振紅兼具多重身份，現在的她，既是企業家、又是慈善大使、也是位作家，她承認要保持生活平衡並不容易。

吳振紅說：「今日的女性，要在繁忙的工作中找到平衡是十分困難。我們對自己有很高的要求，很多事也想去，每件事也想到最好，特別現在我當了媽媽，就覺得更是如此。」她的兒子在2006年2月誕生，只不過休息了八個星期，她又讓忙碌的工作繼續滿身。

到各地表演、每天長時間的排練、調理損耗的身體、還要保持生活平衡，這就是舞蹈員的生活了。她在2002年出版的自傳《Beyond the Dance: A Ballerina's Life》就很詳實地講述舞蹈員的生涯。為藝術要身心奉獻，受傷視作等閒事，這是任何認真的舞蹈員必會遇上的經歷，她對於自己因訓練而招來滿身傷患，無怨無悔。

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Behind her steely elegance is a generous personality who awards scholarships and donates to dance competitions, festivals, and charities like the Build-A-Ballet Fund.

吳振紅除了忙於芭蕾舞事業，她對慈善工作也是不遺餘力，例如設立獎學金、贊助舞蹈比賽和藝術節，及捐助 Build-A-Ballet 這類慈善組織。

"Before the age of 25, I had three stress fractures in my feet," says Ms. Goh. "It was possibly due to the lack of proper support in my dance footwear."

So in 1998, Ms. Goh and her husband, Che, founded Principal by Chan Hon Goh®, the only Canadian manufacturer and distributor of pointe shoes and dance slippers, designed by dancers and intended to help prevent dance-related injuries. The company received the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs Award (ACCE) for the most innovative product in 2005.

But it's not all business for Ms. Goh. Behind her steely elegance is a generous personality who awards scholarships and donates to dance competitions, festivals, and charities like the *Build-A-Ballet Fund*. She is also the Smile Ambassador for Smile China, a program that provides medical services to poor children with facial deformities in China. And she is Honorary Patron for the Canadian Arthritis and Autoimmunity Research Centre Foundation, a charity close to her heart.

Now at the pinnacle of her technical and expressive powers, Ms. Goh plans to continue her creative and cultural work long after she is ready to hang up her ballet slippers. It will be a while before she stops dancing like a dream.

For now, the show must go on and the community will soon gather to celebrate the Year of the Ox. *A Chinese New Year Celebration with Chan Hon Goh* is sure to transport the audience from reality to a new world, a new beginning, and a new moon rising.

她回憶著說：「我的腳部可能缺乏適當的保護，過度的壓力造成三處地方骨折，那時候我仍未滿25歲呢，假如當時有一雙好的舞鞋，或許能避免受傷。」

這番「傷痛」經歷，激發起吳振紅和軍軍決意在1998年開設Principal by Chan Hon Goh®，那是加拿大唯一製造和銷售足尖鞋和跳舞鞋的公司，這類芭蕾舞鞋由舞蹈員親自設計，目的是減低舞蹈員在練習時的受傷機會。該公司在2005年獲頒創業協會(ACCE)的「最具創意產品獎」。

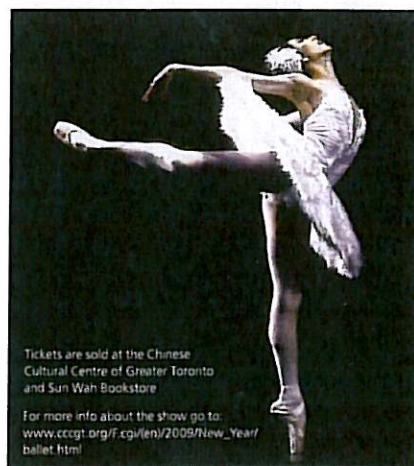
吳振紅除了忙於芭蕾舞事業，她對慈善工作也是不遺餘力，例如設立獎學金、贊助舞蹈比賽和藝術節，及捐助Build-A-Ballet這類慈善組織。還有，她也是「微笑中國」的微笑大使，該團體專為面部畸形的貧困兒童免費提供矯型手術。同時，她亦是加拿大關節炎及免疫研究中心基金會的名譽贊助人。

吳振紅的專業造詣現正處於高峰，不過她已著手計劃在未來掛靴後，仍能繼續她的創作和文化工作。可喜的是，暫時我們依然有不少機會可欣賞到她在臺上的風采。

今個牛年，《吳振紅新春芭蕾舞》肯定會為觀眾帶來新朝氣，振奮人心，令大家滿堂歡慶迎新歲。☑



L-R: Victor Royce, Chief Executive Officer of Rolex Canada. Chan Hon Goh. Dr. Ming-tat Cheung, Chairman and President of the CCCGT



Tickets are sold at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto and Sun Wah Bookstore

For more info about the show go to: www.cccgt.org/F.cgi/en/2009/New_Year_ballet.html

Chan Hon Goh in Swan Lake. Photographer: Lydia Pawelak