

Chinese dance in spotlight

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When dancers from the Lily Cai Dance Company are onstage, they want the audience to feel the performance.

"I want people to see the beauty, feel the beauty, and I want people to see that it's unique," said Lily Cai, the company's founder, artistic director and choreographer.

Cai, who is from Shanghai, moved to California in 1983 and founded the dance company in 1988.

The company will perform *Dynasties and Beyond* on Nov. 4 and 5 at the URS Center for the Performing Arts in Aiken. It is being presented by the Aiken Performing Arts Group.

The company also will conduct educational outreach, said Cathy Traver, the Aiken Performing Arts Group arts administrator.

"Our mission is to improve quality of life in Aiken and provide educational outreach," she said. "We are proud to bring wonderful professional performers to Aiken."

The performance will showcase Cai's interpretation of traditional Chinese elements of dance from different dynasties, starting in 770 BC.

"It's like a museum piece. It gives people an idea of the Chinese old times, the look and its beauty," she said.

The performance will also feature ribbon dancing and a candle dance, called *Candelas*. The dance, which Cai created in the early 1990s, is often the audience favorite, she said.

"I feel that candles are universal props. People from everywhere use candles. When I heard music composed by (Gustav) Mahler, it was a perfect match," she said. "It touches everybody in general."

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