



» Aug 13

Dance Festival Beijing 2008

The first-ever Dance Festival Beijing 2008 will take place

at Chaoyang Cultural Center's

Nine Theatres during the

Olympics. Beijing Modern Dance Company

as well as artists from the prestigious

National Ballet of China, will be performing

alongside some of the most innovative

dance companies from America including

Odyssey Dance Theater (Salt Lake City

UT), Kim Robards Dance Company (De

CO), and Silver-Brown Dance Company

(New York, NY). Styles will vary from

contemporary ballet and modern dance

to hip-hop. RMB 60-300.

Times vary depending on day. [Chaoyang](#)

[Culture Center/TNT Theater](#) (8599 60

Just as the Games are meant to rise above politics, Kaplan intends that her Booking Dance Festival will "bridge political gaps through cultural connections," much the way the New York Philharmonic's recent North Korean visit chipped away at that country's self-imposed isolation.

As a gesture of good will, Kaplan said that any proceeds from the performances will be donated to Chinese earthquake victims.

She explained that Kim Robards Dance and the Salt Lake City-based Odyssey Dance Theatre were picked from her stable of 28 international troupes for specific reasons. "Kim's company has a very American, contemporary aesthetic, offering beautiful modern dance."

Odyssey includes hip-hop and funk in its repertory - styles that have become increasingly popular in China.

After Kaplan and Alison Friedman, her co-producer in Beijing, came up with the festival concept and selected the American dancers, they had to jump through numerous bureaucratic hoops to make it happen.

The planning and execution of the festival began in January - allowing precious little time to navigate the maze of Chinese agencies. Various permits were hastily requested and submitted, and every stumbling block was patiently overcome.

"I felt that we were climbing a hill a lot," Kaplan noted. "But I'm not a masochist. I'm an optimist."

Not that everything fell neatly into place. Plans for a post-Olympics mini-tour into China's rural regions had to be scrapped, though KRD has been invited to return to China for such a tour next year through the country's Gateway to Music program. And this year's brief visit will be packed with activities, anyway.