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For immediate release:

Shaolin Warriors Will Wow Audiences at Young Auditorium

On Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. Cultural Affairs presents the *Shaolin Warriors* at Young Auditorium. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts. Tickets are available by calling 262-472-2222, or purchase on-line at www.uww.edu/youngauditorium.

The Shaolin Buddhist monks are the ultimate practioners of the art of Kung Fu. With a combination of Zen philosophy and physial discipline they have created a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience, performing feats so astounding one would think they are cinematic special effects! These Kung Fu masters began training at an early age to gain deadly martial arts prowess and these amazing physical abilities are brought to the stage for his spectacular glimpse into the ancient mystical culture of the *Shaolin Warriors!* The *Washington Post* declared "The Shaolin Warriors combine the agility and grace of gymnasts with the showmanship of *Cirque du Soliel* performers."

Nearly fifteen hundred years ago, in their original Shaolin Temple in the Henan province of mainland China (southwest of Beijing), the Shaolin monks originated the art of Kung fu. Training daily for many hours in a practice of Buddhist meditation known as Ch'an or Zen, the monks have cultivated remarkable skill in focusing and directing the life force, or energy, which they refer to as *ch'i*. The Shaolin Warriors will feature 23 monks in a choreographed theatrical performance portraying a typical day at the temple, from dawn to dusk. The audience will experience the serenity of morning meditation, chanting, exercises, and amazingly synchronized fighting rituals often employing an array of traditional Shaolin weaponry.

Kung Fu, Gong Fu in Chinese, means "skill." It is an ancient combat art as well as a form of disciplined exercise. The basic moves include stances, punches, and kicks. When used as a form of meditation, movements would coordinate with breathing and the student would learn to identify and work with *ch'i* (life force). Kung Fu develops self-control, muscular coordination, and preparedness. The power of the practitioner exists in his or her ability to defend against near impossible odds and situations. The various movements were based on the fighting tactics of animals: examples include the Tiger, Crane, Dragon, Leopard, Monkey, and Cobra.

It is sometimes confusing for Western audiences to connect the Buddhist teachings of non-violence and the discipline of Kung Fu practiced in the monasteries. The martial arts master will make an important distinction: the Shaolin practitioner is never an attacker, and she or he will use skill to avoid conflict. The Kung Fu expert may parry an attack; however, if the assailant is intent upon violence, the monk will end the assault with a decisive lock hold or knock out. The art may also be understood symbolically, as a means to combat the wayward self, to restrain ego and develop psychological control.

Shaolin Warriors toured North America with great success in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2007, and have successfully toured Australia and New Zealand in 2003, 2004 and 2007. To date, Shaolin Warriors has entertained 600,000 audiences throughout the world garnering rave reviews.

Come and see the amazing physical discipline and excitement of the *Shaolin Warriors* at the Young Auditorium. Tickets are \$34/\$25/\$19 gen. public and \$17/\$12.50/\$9.50 for UW-W Students and available by calling 262-472-2222, or purchase online at www.uww.edu/youngauditorium.

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