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For immediate release:

Shaolin Warriors Bring Martial Arts Prowess to the Mondavi Center Stage

September 5, 2007; Davis, California—Part martial arts, part **Cirque de Soleil**-style spectacle, and part spiritual journey, the **Shaolin Warriors** bring their amazing depiction of a day in the life of the monks at the Shaolin temple in Central China to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** October 7. From the serenity of morning meditation to the stunning physicality of daily exercises to the dramatic excitement of ritual combat, the event offers both an exciting evening of entertainment and a profound insight into one of the world's oldest and most intense spiritual disciplines.

The event will begin at 7 pm in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. The 7 pm start time comes as part of the Mondavi Center's new "Sundays at Seven" program of earlier curtain times for Sunday evening performances. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The program is presented as one of the Mondavi Center's **Global Beat** events.

The Mondavi Center Arts Education Program will also present Shaolin Warriors as part of the 2007-08 **Wells Fargo School Matinee Series** on October 8 at 11 am in Jackson Hall. Performances in this series support the California Department of Education Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards. Teachers, educators, and others interested in purchasing tickets may contact the Ticket Office at 530.754.4689.

The story of the Shaolin Warriors began in 525 A.D., when a Buddhist monk from India named **Bodhi-dharma** arrived at the base of Mount Shaoshi in what would later become the Henan province of central China. There he founded the Shaolin monastery, which would be the headquarters of a Buddhist sect that became known across Asia for its disciplined spiritualism and deadly martial-arts prowess.

Recognizing the importance of self-defense in an era when feudal China was frequently torn by armed conflict, the monks embarked on a long process to develop a system of defense by meditating on the attack and defense movements of animals observed near their monastery. The Shaolin monks called their system of fighting *wushu*, and through centuries of practice and refinement, developed it into a fearsome martial art form—all the while maintaining a philosophy of non-violence and non-aggression, relying on stillness of mind and inner serenity to accomplish feats of incredible skill and difficulty.

Traditionally, Shaolin monks used four major weapons—the cudgel, spear, sword, and broadsword—as protection, in addition to smaller weapons such as darts, daggers, and hooks, which they hid in their clothing.

In addition to the employment of these tools—many of them unique to the Shaolin tradition—the warriors were trained to use virtually any common object as a weapon.

The Shaolin Warrior performers train in martial arts for several hours every day, perfecting the use of these various weapons as well as mastering the rigors of hand-to-hand combat. However, the monks believe it is the daily practice of seated meditation that gives them the strength and ability to concentrate that sustains their demanding physical efforts. Through a practice known as *Ch'an* (the Chinese word for “zen”), they calm the body and focus the mind to a single collected point in order to attain a mental state known as *Samadhi*, or complete mental absorption. It is in this quiet yet highly focused state of mind that they are able to sustain the extreme physical discomfort and pain that enables them to undergo the intense daily training required to achieve mastery.

Produced by **Zhang Yu** and directed by **Li Xining**, the Shaolin Warriors Mondavi Center presentation is in four parts—*Summer, Spring, Autumn, and Winter*—with a short prelude. The various episodes explore the daily life of the monks, with everything from morning meditation and preparation of meals to spectacular displays of gymnastic skill and intensely choreographed swordplay. Performers include **Pengfei Chen, Haohao Song, Qinpei Shi, Long Yuan, Tao Hao, Changbao Feng, Yanfei Zhang, Jie Zhao, Chenxi Wang, Chunpei Song, Kunkun Cao, Zhuo Chen, Hao Lu, Weixiao Ma, Long Chen, Dawei Zhai, Chuanqiang Yuan, Xianwei Liu, Xingchao Fan, Husile Wu, Tiancheng Zhao, and Xin Liu.**

“The Shaolin Warriors offer an unforgettable experience of their unique and intensely spiritual tradition of martial arts, and we look forward to what should be an exciting performance,” said Mondavi Center Executive Director **Don Roth.**

What: Shaolin Warriors
When: Sunday, October 7, 2007 • 7 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$39/\$34/\$24 Adults • \$19.50/\$17/\$12 Students, Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
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