

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **BURNING IN CHINA**



Further information: Gary Moore, 802-456-8917
gary.moore@vermontcollege.edu

Burning In China, a new play reawakening the Chinese dream of democracy that was crushed at Tiananmen Square, will come to the 14th annual New York International Fringe Festival, August 13-29. Playwright Gary Moore's drama about an American drawn into the rebelling Chinese students' longing for freedom is set by its director, Oscar-nominated cinematographer Caleb Deschanel, as a stage blend of video and drama. Actor Jeff LeBeau stars in this production by the Vermont-based Dark Light Theater.

As recounted in *Burning In China*, Gary Moore's reticent adult students at Shanghai International Studies University began to open up when he helped them create a performance for a university arts festival. *The Great Emancipator Meets The Monkey King* – the first hip hop performance in the People's Republic of China – was born. But Pandora's box was open.

According to *Burning In China* director Deschanel, "This play brings to life a time of rising expectations for liberty and reform in China. The rap opera that Gary and his students performed for a cheering New Year's Eve audience of 1700 won the praise of the Communist authorities. But times were changing, and all across China mass

demonstrations soon rose up to call for more freedom as protesters adapted Lincoln-like language in inventing their slogans.” Soon professor and students alike were beyond themselves into dangers of self-expression they had never imagined.

After the fevered rising of the movement to its violent end in Tiananmen Square, circumstances forced Moore to leave China. His students, some themselves fleeing the crackdown by their iron-fisted government, begged Moore to tell their story when he reached the outside world. Dramatic but filled with humor and warmth, *Burning In China* gives audiences a truly human look inside one of the major ideological struggles of the twentieth century. *Burning In China* is a multi media-experience that integrates little-seen footage of urban China that Deschanel himself shot in 1988.

Director and cinematographer Caleb Deschanel earned Academy Award nominations for his work on *The Right Stuff*, *The Natural*, *The Patriot*, *Fly Away Home*, and *The Passion of the Christ*. In addition to his camera credits, Deschanel has directed stage and television drama along with two films, one of which was the quirky *succès d'estime* *The Escape Artist*.

Actor Jeff LeBeau is a veteran of leading roles in *The Last Pitch* (American Renegade), *Agency* (Coast Playhouse), *Hurlyburly* directed by David Rabe (Geffen Playhouse), *Translations* (Capital Rep., NY), *Harry Black* (Ensemble Studio), *The Chain* and *Hot n' Throbbing* directed by Anne Bogart (Circle Rep., NY), *Force Majeure* (Theatre 808/Actors Circle), and *The Trial Of The Catonsville Nine* (Stella Adler, LA). Jeff was a member of New York City's Circle Repertory Company, and is now a member of The Road Theatre Company in Los Angeles.

Playwright Gary Moore is the author of four full-length plays, including the verse drama *Beaver Falls* and two Lincoln-themed works -- *Long Lankin's Curse*, and *The Tongue Of Their Gladness*. His new novel *Abe Ascending* is represented by the literary agency of Zachary Shuster Harmsworth. Gary has performed and lectured in the U.S., Canada, Turkey and the People's Republic of China. He is Academic Dean at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, in Montpelier, Vermont, and is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

FringeNYC, in its 14th season, will bring more than 200 plays to New York this year between August 13 and 29. Information and tickets are available at www.FringeNYC.org. or 866-468-7619.