



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

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February 2012

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On Behalf of ACFS (Vic) I extend new years' greetings to all of our members and supporters in this Year of the Dragon.

Our Management Committee has met and drafted an ambitious program of activities for 2012, including:

A thorough review of our Constitution with a view to correcting anomalies and outdated provisions and procedures.

Embracing modern technology like Facebook for our members' convenience.

Organising the ACFS 60th Anniversary celebrations and Yum Chas through the year.

Convening a forum with guest speakers to explore current and future Australian co-operation and engagement.

Participation in the activities surrounding the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and China.

To what extent all of these activities can be realized remains to be seen and no doubt, throughout this year, other opportunities will arise to engender good relations between the peoples of Australia and China.

We look forward to a challenging and interesting year ahead.

Yours in Friendship

John D. Breheny
President ACFS (Vic)

Yum Cha

Saturday March 24th, from 12.30pm at No. 1 Steamboat Restaurant, 1 Lygon Street (cnr Victoria).

An Australia-China Friendship School Relationship

Speaker: The Clifton Hill Primary School Principal Geoffrey Warren will speak about the development of the friendship school relationship between his school and a school in China. This fascinating talk will explore the benefits of such a relationship and look at how the relationship was developed.

Booking: e-mail: acfs.vic@gmail.com or call: 0431 155 139



Make a Date



The Peony Pavilion

The National Ballet of China performs in the State Theatre from 15 – 18th March 2012. Details visit: www.artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183



Yum Cha

Saturday March 24th, from 12.30pm at No. 1 Steamboat Restaurant, 1 Lygon Street (cnr Victoria) Geoffrey Warren talk An Australia-China Friendship School Relationship



Lotus Moon

The Opera singer Shu-Cheen Yu performs A Very Special Concert for a Very Special Year at Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre 7:30pm Monday 14th May 2012 Booking: 03 9699 3333

Chinese Cultural Year

Hosted by the overseas Chinese affairs office of the State Council of P.R.China, and supported by the consulate-general of the People's Republic of China in Melbourne, The Australian Chinese performing artist's association presented a grand performance "Cultures of China, Festival of Spring". The Guangdong Acrobatic Troupe of China was shown in the Victorian Art Centre on the 5th of February.

The show is part of the "Chinese Cultural Year" programme to Australia 2012. This spectacular performance attracted a full house audience. Drawing inspiration from classical dance, traditional Chinese acrobatics and elements of Peking Opera, the Guangdong Acrobatic Troupe of China's extraordinary version of 'Swan Lake' has taken the world by storm since its premiere in 2006.



There is another traditional performance that will come to Melbourne next month. The National Ballet of China are returning to Melbourne in an Australian-exclusive season of one of China's most famous classical love stories. Described as China's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Peony Pavilion* will be performed in the State Theatre from 15 – 18 March 2012. The travelling company also features a large-scale orchestra, the **National Ballet of China Symphony Orchestra**. The performance is making its Australian debut in the official Year of Chinese Culture in Melbourne. Please check out the following details later in this newsletter.



A Very Special Concert for a Very Special Year



2012 is a very special year for an internationally renowned and multi award winning opera singer Shu-Cheen Yu. It is not only her 25th year in Australia but also the 40th Anniversary of formal relations between China and Australia. On the 14th of May 2012 she will be performing at the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall at the Melbourne Recital Centre to show her gratitude and to acknowledge the great support given to her over the years.

The concert has been in planning for the past two years and is designed to celebrate not only the occasion but also to bless the rich cultural diversity and music activities in Australia and China, especially live performance which is so important to us all.

The concert repertoire is intended to be of broad appeal to all ages. It will begin with some of the best loved western classics and is followed by a range of Chinese Folk and Art songs that are unique and charming. They are designed to bring a warm, humorous and mysterious flavor to the evening.

Shu-Cheen Yu has indicated that any surplus from the concert, and from the sales of her CDs will be donated to assist young singers. Shu-Cheen Yu has won scholarships to the National Opera Studio in London, the Metropolitan Opera, and to Vienna and would like more young singers here to have similar opportunities.

As Shu-Cheen Yu indicates "Looking back over the last 25 years, I am so grateful that so many beautiful people supported me and helped me in my career success. When I arrived in Australia I could not even speak English. Since then I have given hundreds of performances here and across the

globe and I have recorded a number of CDs and three of them are with the ABC Classics.



It gives me great satisfaction to think that my ability to perform and present both Western and Chinese music at the highest levels has been a very positive influence on our music industry and our cultural diversity. Also I like to think that I can be a successful ambassador for both Australia and China in both countries."

Further information about her work can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv8RVxOPAE4>, <http://www.melbournerecital.com.au/whatson/buytix?perfid=3918> and www.shucheenyu.com.au

We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office or e-mail to acfsvic@vicnet.net.au

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not always reflect those of the ACFS and its policies. Reliance upon information in this Newsletter requires independent verification of its accuracy or completeness



Celebrate the Year of the Dragon with the National Ballet of China's The Peony Pavilion

The National Ballet of China are returning to Melbourne in an Australian exclusive season of one of China's most famous classical love stories.

Described as China's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Peony Pavilion* will be performed in the State Theatre from 15 – 18 March 2012.

"a ravishing spectacle few will forget"
Wall Street Journal

The Peony Pavilion is a deeply romantic tale of the power of love over death that dates back to the Ming Dynasty. Written at almost the same time **William Shakespeare** was penning his own classic, *The Peony Pavilion* remains one of China's most cherished stories. With magnificent sets, exquisite costumes and a full corps de ballet, *The Peony Pavilion* is a large-scale choreographic fusion of western classical ballet and traditional Chinese dance.

"The Peony Pavilion is based on a Chinese love story and performed in the Western ballet tradition," explains **Judith Isherwood**, Chief Executive, Arts Centre Melbourne.

"It is a ballet company en pointe but with exquisite interventions from Kun opera, which is the lyrical form of Chinese opera. People who like ballet will love it and those who are interested in Asian work will love it as well," she added.

Making its European debut to sold-out audiences at the *Edinburgh Festival*, *The Peony Pavilion* promises to be one Melbourne's dance highlights of 2012. The performance is also making its Australian debut in the official Year of Chinese Culture in Melbourne.

Directed by **Li Liuyi** (*Beijing People's Art Theatre*) with original music by acclaimed composer **Guo Wenjing**, costumes by Academy Award winning designer **Emi Wada**, choreography by **Fei Bo** and featuring the superb dancers of **The National Ballet of China**, the travelling company also features a large-scale orchestra, the **National Ballet of China Symphony Orchestra**.

Composer **Guo Wenjing** states that the ballet's score seeks to fuse Western and Chinese influences, featuring both classical Western music and traditional Chinese music. "I consider *The Peony Pavilion* as an opportunity for experimentation and exploration, so I hope to break through the old rigid form of Chinese ballet music," said Guo.

The National Ballet of China, the only Chinese national ballet company, was founded in 1959 and is based on the finest traditions of Russian classical dance. It has become renowned both for its outstanding productions of the traditional classics and for its inspired blending of Chinese culture and history with classical western elements.

To find out about what's on offer and to buy tickets visit www.artscentremelbourne.com.au, or phone 1300 182 183

NATIONAL BALLET OF CHINA

Founded on 31 December 1959, the National Ballet of China is China's only national ballet company. Its dancers and musicians are all graduates from professional dance academies and music conservatories across China.

Since the day it was founded, the company has received continuous support from the Chinese government. In its early days, Russian ballet master Pyotr Gusev and other Russian teachers helped lay a solid foundation for the company using their experience in the Russian School of classical ballet. For the past 51 years, the National Ballet of China has introduced many outstanding classical ballets and contemporary ballet works to the Chinese audience. At the same time, it has attached great importance to creating a unique fusion between western classical ballet and Chinese culture. They have achieved this by creating their own ballets, which represent the varied characteristics of the Chinese nation.

Today, the company has a broad repertoire and has successfully trained many generations of outstanding artists. Through international cultural exchange, the National Ballet of China has attracted the attention of the international ballet world. Currently, Feng Ying, ballet mistress is the Director and Artistic Director.



High Flyers

For Sony Yin and Wan Qiuwen, the sky really is the limit! The trailblazing Chinese women, members of Donghai NO.1 Flying Rescue Team, which is under the Ministry of Transport, are China's first—and so far only—two female pilots to fly rescue helicopters. Both Song and Wan were born in Shanghai in 1986, and both graduated from the Navigation Department of the Merchant Marine College, Shanghai Maritime University, in 2008. The similarities do not only end there; both are well known for their extraordinary courage, flying skills and personal charm. Ironically, both women became helicopter pilots by chance; in fact, both had dreamed of being sailors. To say their stories are unique would be an understatement.

Twins of Fate

In 2008, just before Song and Wan completed their university degrees, the Rescue and Salvage Bureau,

under the Ministry of Transport, decided—for the first, and so far only time in its history—to recruit female university graduates. Not only did that development make history in China, it was the start of soaring careers for the two young women.

As they completed their program, Song and Wan, like their classmates, expected to become sailors or find related jobs with marine-based companies. Although they had never dreamed of becoming pilots, they took the bureau's recruiting test, with other classmates, most of whom failed. The two-part test—a physical examination and interview—was extraordinarily different. Finally, only Song, who is 175 centimeters (cm) tall and Wan, who is 167 cm tall, were recruited. When asked about the recruitment test, both women said they were lucky, as they had not expected to become pilots. Song admits she had no idea how a plane could fly. It would be fair to say they became pilots by accident.

Busy Days in Adelaide

After they were recruited, Song and Wan signed





employment contracts with Donghai NO.1 Flying Rescue Team. The team developed customized training for the two young women. In December 2008, after they completed several training sessions, Song and Wan were sent to Australia to attend Flying Training Adelaide (FTA), one of the world's leading pilot-training institutions. They completed a 15-month flight-training program.

Song and Wan, who were friends in university, supported and encouraged each other during their stay in Adelaide. Wan recalls how Song often mimicked flying a plane. "She would always spread her arms and pretend to be flying fast," she says.

Song admits that she wasn't a diligent student, but notes she worked "very hard" during training in Australia. "In Adelaide, I studied even harder than when I prepared for the college entrance exam. Every day, I had class from 8 am to 4:30 pm. At noon, I only had one hour to eat lunch and have a rest. I read books and did homework at night. Before exams, I would study till 2 am."

Song's favorite homework was working out the next day's flight plan. Why? It required her to predict wind direction and speed, as well as the amount of fuel needed for the helicopter. She says flying has given her a sense of achievement that she has not previously experienced.

Song and Wan had to complete dozens of courses; they had to work hard to succeed and overcome hardships, otherwise, they would have been forced out of the program.

Wan encouraged hardships in the beginning, as she needed time to adjust to the program and her surroundings. Song also had some setbacks; she failed two flying tests. "I thought I could pass the flight-operation test, but I was wrong. I didn't know why. Later, I thought I might operate correctly during training, but, in fact, I didn't fully grasp the skills," Song recalls.

During those days, Wan encouraged Song, which helped their friendship grow stronger. In university, they were in the same year, but different classes. However, they knew each other, as both were popular students. Song was a charming and attractive girl while Wan was one of the top 10 singers at the university.

"At that time, we lived on the same floor in the

university's dormitory. When I was reading in the room, I always heard Wan chasing and playing with others. She liked to play. It's so good that we can become colleagues," Song says.

On February 14, 2010, which was Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), Song took her third flying test in a helicopter. Her instructor, who was from Hong Kong, gave her a red envelope with five yuan (77 US cents) to wish her good luck. (In traditional Chinese culture, red symbolizes good luck and auspiciousness, especially during Spring Festival.)

Song passed the test. "That day was the happiest day of my life," she recalls. That night, she, Wan, and other friends went to Chinatown to eat delicious food and to celebrate the festival— and her success.

During their down time, they watched UP! UP! To the sky, a TV series produced by Hong Kong Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) and shot in Adelaide. Song and Wan went to the lawn on which the series' protagonists lay and the court— near their dorm— where the protagonists played basketball." The experience made us feel as if we were present, at the scene," Wan says.

Wan and Song returned to China in 2010, after they had received their commercial certificates to fly helicopters issued by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (CDA) and the Australia Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). They were welcomed at the airport by their colleagues and family members. One person commented: "You're thinner, but more mature."

Brilliant Pilots

December 22, 2010, was a very important day for Wan; she performed her first rescue as a full-fledged helicopter pilot.

At 8 am, the rescue alarm rang; Wan at once felt excited and nervous. By 8:31 am, the helicopter was hovering over the rescue site— which was on the sea. After locating the fishing boat, the crew began the rescue.

With excellent flying and rescue skills, the team quickly lifted the wounded man, and his companion, into the helicopter. By 10:30 am, the helicopter was back at Shanghai Gaodong Helicopter Airport and the injured man was being transported, by ambulance, to a nearby hospital. Guo Zhengwei, the team's captain, praised Wan for her excellent performance.



On December 27, 2010, Song and her colleagues were dispatched to rescue a fisherman, who had fractured a leg during an accident, on Donghai Sea. Within an hour, the team had reached the site. Song, the assistant pilot, was responsible for monitoring the instrument panel during the rescue. The rescue was a success.

As member of a rescue team, Song and Wan often witness serious wounds, substantial loss of blood and, sadly, death. It takes a toll on both physically. During one rescue, Wan almost vomited when she smelled the strong odor of both fish and human blood. "I forced myself to ignore the feeling ... Now, I'm accustomed to such feeling and sights," Wan says.

Both Song and Wan say they have a new outlook on life, perhaps because they witnessed many deaths and serious injuries. They both say they can no longer idle away the hours doing meaningless things. "I feel that being alive is so good after every rescue," says Wan.

Both Wan and Song have noticed changes in each other's personality; for example, Wan has noticed that Song is more genial and low key. Song, meanwhile, has noticed that Wan is more mature, steady and prudent. "We get on well with each other, and we share common views in many things," they say.

Goal: Becoming a Captain

On April 30, 2011, Song was given a special assignment—to represent the team during an interview to be aired on China Central Television (CCTV)'s program The Evening of Work Models of 2011. Given her extraordinary height and attractive features, she won the admiration of the audience.

Since the program was broadcast, Song has become popular on-line, and her team has become well known. When talking about that interview, Song says she never expected to become a celebrity. She says she hates to be the center of attention. She has since refused all requests for interviews, but has talked to journalists when requested by her superiors.

Some media outlets have reported that Song hopes to become captain within five years. Wan says Song could achieve that goal sooner. Wan is also working hard to reach her aspirations, as she doesn't want to wait for good luck.

January 2012 [Women of China]

Chinese Food

STEAMED CHICKEN WITH CHOPPED SALTED CHILLIES - DUO LA JIAO ZHENG JI

Do not be deceived by the simplicity of this dish. It is fantastic served as a topping for noodles and although the "chilli" content might look intimidating, the heat is in fact gentle and subtle.

First make Hunanese Chopped Salted Chillies (duo la jiao)

250g of fresh red chillies
35g salt

Wash and dry the chillies. Cut off the stems and coarsely chop with the seeds (you should wear gloves doing this). Place in a bowl, add 30g of the salt and mix thoroughly. Place in a glass jar and cover with the remaining salt. Seal and refrigerate. These chillies will keep for months.

Now for the Zheng Ji:

280g of boned chicken thigh fillets cut into bite sized chunks.
1 Tsp of finely chopped fresh ginger
1 Tbsp of Chinese cooking wine or dry sherry
1 ½ Tbsp chopped salted chillies
Chopped spring onions

METHOD

Put chopped chicken into a pot of boiling water and return to the boil. Drain. Place the blanched chicken in a heat proof bowl with the ginger, wine and chillies and mix well. Place the bowl in a steamer and steam on high heat for 20-30 minutes. Garnish with the spring onions. ENJOY!



THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

PRESIDENT: Mr John Breheny

VICE PRESIDENT: Mr Anthony Leong
Mr Tower Liu

SECRETARY: Mr Neil Barker

TREASURER: Mr Dong Chen

COMMITTEE: Ms Louise Clayton
Mr Richard Lightfoot
Ms Robin Matthews
Mr Phil Parker
Mr Sean Murtagh
Mr Robert Wang

ACFS (VICTORIA) Inc. A0038007M ABN NO. 39 746 574 225

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00

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