



April 2012

Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February and March of this year have seen ACFS (Vic) involved in the following events:

On the 25th February 2012 I, along with other Committee members accepted an invitation from the Melbourne Chinese Consulate to attend a wonderful theatrical performance from a visiting group of actors, singers and dancers from Guizhou Province, at the Regent Theatre.

On the 11th of March 2012 our Committee hosted a dinner and reception for a delegation from Beijing Peoples' Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, which was held at the home of Committee member Mr. Richard Lightfoot. The delegation was led by Mr Wu Guangwei, the Secretary General of Beijing PAFFC and comprised representatives from the Beijing Institute of Culture and History and also 4 esteemed painters/artists from Beijing. I have found that events such as this one are invaluable in building and cementing contacts and friendship with our Chinese counterparts. At the conclusion of the evening our Society was presented with a magnificent painting from one of the noted artists in the delegation.

On the 19th of March 2012 I attended the Melbourne Chinese Masonic Society's annual dinner as an invited guest. This was a great opportunity to renew contacts with members of the Victorian Chinese Community.

On the 24th of March 2012 we held a Society Lunch at the No. 1 Steamboat Restaurant in Melbourne. The Lunch was extremely well attended and I thank our guest speaker Mr Geoffrey Warren (Clifton Hill Primary School Principal) who delivered an informative and entertaining speech on the friendship school relationship between his school and a Chinese primary school. To our surprise and delight, we were also entertained with a short recital from multi-award winning opera singer Shu-Cheen Yu, who is performing at the Melbourne Recital Centre on 14th

May 2012.

On a National Level, plans are well underway in organising our National ACFS Conference to be held in Perth in June of this year.

Yours in Friendship
John D. Breheny
President ACFS (Vic) Branch

A Very Special Concert NOT to be missed

An internationally renowned and multi award winning opera singer Shu-Cheen Yu's the "Lotus Moon" concert will be performing at the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall at the Melbourne Recital Centre on 14th of May 2012.

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of formal relations between China and Australia and her 25th year in Australia. The concert has been in planning for the past two years. It will be conducted by Brett Kelly with Melbourne Sinponietta and hosted by Dr Christopher Lawrence from the ABC.





ACFS Hosts a Warm Reception for BPAFFC

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of Sino-Australia diplomatic relations, the Secretary General Wu Guangwei from Beijing Youxie led a group of

one day exhibition, the visitors experienced Chinese calligraphy demonstrations, and received free brochures with information about masterpieces by these artists.



At their final stop in Melbourne, the delegation was welcomed by Mr. John Breheny with a warm speech and a special reception held at one of the ACFS Committee members' house. A beautiful collection of food was presented on the dining table, the guests actively chatted with our members. One of the artists Mr Chen Bao-

researchers and well-known Chinese artists to visit Australia from 7 - 13 March. At their first stop in Perth, the artists in the group held a painting exhibition to promote traditional Chinese art to visitors. During the

di showed our members his amazing ceramics works in his iPad. A beautiful painting by Mr Chen was presented to Mr. Breheny. The reception ended successfully with a group photo.



ART WORKS FROM CHINESE ARTISTS



Carp in Pond/Chen Baodi, born in 1947, a painter of flowers and birds, is a member of Beijing Municipal Institute of Literature and History, Class I artist of the State level. As well as flower and bird painting in liberal style Zhang Baodi is also skilled at fish painting.



Plum and Sparrows/Xia Yongxue, born in 1943, a painter of flowers and birds, and Senior Industrial Artist. He learnt painting from Tian Shiguang, a master painter, and is good at traditional Chinese realistic painting of flowers and birds.



Water Neighbor/Yu Yongmao, alias Yu Shu, born in 1952, is now a member of Beijing Municipal Institute of Culture and History, a member of China Artists Association, Vice Chairman of Chinese Academy of Landscape Painting. He's reputed for landscape painting with imposing manner of magnificence.



Woodpecker/Zhao Ningan, is professor of Chinese Painting Department of Central Academy of Fine Arts, supervisor of master degree of Candidate, but also member of the evaluation committee of Chinese flower and bird painting. Zhao Ningan is good at flower and bird painting.

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People

WIND OF COLOURFUL GUIZHOU - A BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE

On Saturday February 25th I had the great pleasure to accompany the President John Breheny, the Secretary Neil Barker and his wife Bernadette, the Vice-President Tower Liu and his wife Kim to this spectacular at the beautiful Regent Theatre in Collins Street Melbourne. Before the performance we were hosted at a cocktail party by the Deputy Consul General Mr. Fengwen Wang, and other consular staff along with invited guests including members of state parliament, and local council representatives. We also met the Guizhou representatives accompanying the tour.



Guizhou is located in southwest China, and is apparently a veritable smorgasbord of picturesque sights and diverse cultural highlights. Guizhou is home to 48 of China's different ethnic groups including the Miao, Yao, Yi, Qiang, and Dong among many others. This diversity contributed to the amazing array of costumes, dance styles, singing and music in the performance. At one stage I thought I may have been in Russia as the dancing was distinctively like Cossack dancing. The precision of the choreography, the beauty of the costumes and the enthusiasm of both the performers and the audience made the evening one of the best performances I have been to in a long time. If encouraging audience members to consider visiting and becoming interested in Guizhou province was an objective of this touring group, they certainly sparked interest from my party, and that was before we knew that Guizhou was the home of Maotai!

Liz O'Connor



Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People



Review: Ballet “Peony Pavilion”

By Anthony M Leong

For far too short a time, the National Ballet of China with the National Ballet of China Symphony Orchestra presented a modern work “The Peony Pavilion” at the Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne.

“Spectacular” is over-used to describe performance, but even that word does not cover the scope of this tour de force. The Peony Pavilion artfully melds the skill, grace and power of traditional Chinese performing arts with Western-style disciplined beauty from the Bolshoi ballet. The result is, well, spectacular. From costuming to athletic prowess, soaring voice to calligraphic streams, the work is almost overwhelming.

The story is one of lost or unreachable love, said by the Guardian to be a classic Chinese “Romeo & Juliet”, but actually not so. The ballet taxes the brain as story and action race between fiction and reality, mortals and immortals and worlds meeting in dream, reality and myth (the Underworld). The climactic “wedding” combines pomp, ceremony and Dante’s Inferno, a frightening and magnetic scene of colour, movement and a grim sense of escalating fear and panic. As the music level rises and the circling

of the entire corps de ballet becomes more frenzied and rapid, there is a sense of a storm between worlds brewing as the laws and rules of humanity and heaven have been bent or broken. The plea of prima ballerina character Du Liniang to established order and authority creates a dilemma for the god of the Underworld (the Infernal Judge), but unlike the synopsis’ conclusion, the ending seems to have too much impending doom to be joyous.

The music score seamlessly combines composers such as Debussy and Ravel with traditional Chinese musical instruments and voice used in innovative ways. The result is a complementary mix of sound matched to movement which is surprisingly smooth and enriches the work. As the story progresses, the music ceases being noticed as one style or another, but part of an entirety.

The staging is far more complex than it first appears, with various types of moving panels, layered flooring peeled back at various stages to change location as well as an extremely clever use of the underside with a framed ‘mirror’ for one scene. The minimalist appearance belies intricate thought put into creating the illusion of different worlds and consciousness. Some items were a little puzzling (hanging mud piles being one!) but representations of the sun/moon and the river drawn with one grand,





swirling sweep of a calligraphy brush were inspired as well as brilliantly artistic.

Unfortunately the season was only three days, which gave little time for more Melburnians to appreciate this outstanding, creative piece. Even though at times challenging (a nice change from normally-simplistic plots!), The Peony Pavilion is a thought-provoking ballet full of vibrancy, life and movement with the staging presence matching the high standard of musical, physical and dramatic performance.

Friendship Schools, Great food and Beautiful Music

ACFS Lunch – March

On Saturday March 24th approximately forty ACFS members and friends were treated to a lunch that satisfied the mind, the soul and the stomach.

Our guest speaker for the afternoon was long time Clifton Hill Primary School Principal Mr Geoff Warren. Mr Warren is well known for his innovative approaches to education and he spoke to the audience about his school's development of a friendship school relationship with the Huiabei Number 1 Model School in China. This relationship involves an opportunity for upper grade students to visit China on the school's annual visit to China in September each year. The school is also currently looking at opportunities for between visit contact including video conferencing. This July marks the first reciprocal visit from the Huiabei school students to the Clifton Hill Primary School.

On the annual visits students stay in a home-stays with parents of the Huiabei School and spend 3-4 days at the school sharing experiences with the Chinese students. Mr Warren indicated in his talk that he was surprised at the high level of achievement

of the students from Huiabei School, and noted that there was a large display of photos of students that have gone to study at Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and Harvard. Mr Warren noted the kind and welcoming nature of their Chinese hosts. He indicated that this program is a valuable experience for students of both schools - broadening their knowledge, skills and attitudes. We thank Mr Warren very much for giving us his time to share his valuable insights.

The lunch was held at the No.1 Steamboat Restaurant in Carlton and the guests were treated to a banquet of interesting dishes, including one of my favorites crispy salmon skin. The staff were most attentive and the venue perfect for our group as we were able to occupy one whole side of the venue - allowing the presentation and impromptu music performance to be easily heard by all.

Yes you heard correctly, the audience was also treated to an impromptu performance by opera Singer Shu-Cheen Yu who attended the lunch. Among the songs was a beautiful rendition of Danny Boy. Shu-Cheen Yu is performing in her own concert of best loved song – the Lotus Moon Concert on 14 May at the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall.



The lunch was a pleasant afternoon of food for the mind, body and soul.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next lunch.

Neil Barker ACFS Secretary



Silk Road by China Orient Express

In ancient times, the Silk Road was China's link with central Asia and Europe. There is no better way to retrace this epic route than by the privately chartered China Orient Express train, it unveils the mystery and excitement of this legendary route as it tracks through desolate mountains and deserts, through bustling bazaars and crumbling mud-brick towns. Some of the highlights of this trip include the Heavenly Lake in Urumqi, ancient ruins in Turpan, the World Heritage Site - Mogao Grottoes, the western end of the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors, the Shaolin Temple and the Forbidden City. The 13 days tour starts at \$3,488, including all airfares/taxes ex Melbourne twin share. The trip is in early September - the golden season to travel the Silk Road. Strictly limited spaces are still available. For inquiries call Travman Tours Toll Free on 1800 338 007.

Chopsticks are an important part of Chinese culture. Their popularity, throughout Asia, has a long and rich history. They come in all shapes and forms, from golden engraved chopsticks with calligraphy to disposable bamboo. Regardless of the forms they take, chopsticks have become an important part of Chinese culture - and history.



Behind Chopsticks

Chopsticks, which originated in ancient China, were widely used throughout East Asia. It is widely known that Chinese invented chopsticks, but the reason behind that invention is not commonly known. Actually, chopsticks were strongly advocated by Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher. Chinese, who are influenced by Confucianism, believe that chopsticks reflect gentleness and benevolence, which are morals taught by Confucius.

Chopsticks initially looked like tweezers, with connected ends, but now they are separate utensils. Although chopsticks are still widely used throughout Asia, they are not all the same; for example, Chinese chopsticks are different from their Japanese counterparts. Japanese chopsticks tend to be shorter, rounder and sharp at one end, while Chinese chopsticks are longer, rectangular and straight at the end.

Chopsticks can be made from various materials, including bamboo, plastic, wood, bone, metal, jade and ivory. Bamboo is the most popular material because Asia has an abundance of bamboo, and because bamboo is easy to split and resistant to heat.

Metal chopsticks are less common. At one time, it was believed that silver chopsticks would turn black when in contact with poisoned food, although that myth has since been disproved. Although metal chopsticks are durable and easy to clean, they do not hold food as well as chopsticks made from wood or bone. Also, metal chopsticks tend to be more expensive and they tend to become hot. People use ivory, jade and gold chopsticks as luxury items.

Using Chinese Chopsticks

China is famous for its food, but eating Chinese food is not so enjoyable when the wrong utensils are used. Using two slim and slippery sticks to pick up rice and vegetables may look like a difficult task; yet, there are foreigners who are as competent as Chinese when using chopsticks.

Using chopsticks can be quite a challenge when you are used to forks and knives. Maybe you will drop some food, especially if you hesitate when putting the food to your mouth. It is difficult to teach someone how to use chopsticks. As with all new skills, practice makes perfect - so practice

Chopstick Etiquette

Chinese cuisine is the product of a rich cultural heritage. It is now widely available - and popular - throughout the world. Chopsticks, traditionally, are tools for eating Chinese cuisine. As a result of their long history of usage, defined chopstick etiquette has been developed. There are certain customs regarding the polite use of chopsticks. The following customs reflect Chinese culture and spirit:

- Never stick your chopsticks upright in your rice

- It is impolite to tap chopsticks on the edge of one's bowl; in old days, beggars made that noise to attract attention

- Don't point chopsticks at someone

- It is poor manners to play with your chopsticks

While there are some more dos and don'ts to using chopsticks, it is important to note that etiquette varies from country to country. For most young people in China today, these customs may not be so important, but it is still good to know some rules of chopstick etiquette.

Chinese Culture

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

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