



# Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc). ABN 39 746 574 225

## Newsletter

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**March 2017**



## Chinese Premier Li Keqiang welcomed

Sydney played host on Saturday 25 March to a dinner at the Sydney Town Hall for 540 guests representing overseas Chinese & related organisations. Security was tight as all visitors were screened and credentialed before being allowed to enter the Hall.

The dinner was simple, but interesting, with courses divided with short singing or dancing numbers. This was well-organised and the variety was a good mix.

Premier Li arrived after the first course and delivered his speech almost immediately to rousing applause. He highlighted the wonderful and ongoing work of the overseas Chinese, both in social and business lives, and praised their achievements leading to the strong links of today. It should be noted that the previous day, Premier Li had met with the Prime Minister and all State leaders. Premier Li also thanked the people of Sydney for the hospitality and welcome, before resuming his seat.

At the conclusion of the main course, Premier Li and his entourage left, being mobbed by most of the audience with mobile phones!

Importantly, the lesson is that we are slowly engaging more with China. With contacts such as those we experience here in Victoria with visiting delegations, this will further enhance the relationship. The Chinese leadership recognises the importance of Australia in terms of neighbourly contacts and will continue to send parties to further our mutual goals.

*Anthony Leong*

# CULTURAL NOTES

We have had a veritable feast of culture over summer under the auspices of the Asia- Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts, otherwise known as AsiaTOPA. I hope you managed to catch a few of the varied activities, especially of course, those related to China. Yours truly managed to catch a few performances despite my bereaved circumstances. My beloved husband Dr. Jim Cross passed away on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## Chinese New Year Concert



Conductor /Composer Tan Dun presented us with another spectacular concert this year. Using the theme “East Meets West”, we enjoyed some western musical gems- Falla’s Ritual Fire Dance form “El Amor Brujo’ at the beginning & Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite(1919), at the end. In between, we heard Guan Xia’s world premiere of “Suona Concerto: 100 Birds flying towards the Phoenix”( with

a brilliant interpretation by suona master Liu Wenwen); Tan Dun’s own “Concerto for Piano and Beijing Opera Soprano” piece from “Farewell My Concubine” performed by Beijing opera soprano Xiao Di; and after the Interval, the world premiere of “Song Lines of China” a collaborative piece between Tan Dun and vocalist Tan Weiwei. It was a most enjoyable evening and some of us kept on clapping and waited for generous encores!

## Ballet

In association with the Arts Centre Melbourne, the Australian Ballet & Orchestra Victoria, the National Ballet of China presented the now classic piece, “The Red Detachment of Women”. I had seen this piece performed in China before in a smaller theatre many years ago and well before Beijing’s Centre for Performing Arts (or THE EGG as it is locally known because of its shape),



was built. This performance certainly outshone my previous experience with colourful sets and exceptional dancing. Some people find this piece 'dated' because of its theme. But, this idea seems unreasonable to me because all ballets, unless they are purely abstract pieces, have a storyline which becomes outdated sooner or later. Concentrating on the choreography is a better option- classical dancing never goes out of style.

### Modern Dance

Once again, Tao Ye, choreographer of the TAO Dance Theatre, presented two abstract pieces titled simply "6" and "8". These experimental pieces are hard to describe or interpret- one simply has to see them. With minimal music and repetitive movements the dancers performed torturously angular, precision

movements in unison in the first piece, while in the second piece “8”, the dancers lie on the stage moving their torsos, feet, chests and head whilst keeping their arms mostly rigidly by their sides, for the whole piece. Music punctuated their movements but it was minimal. I was exhausted just looking at it so I wonder how the young performers must have felt! They took their bows silently at the end to appreciative applause. In the audience the evening I attended, were many young dancers and past modern dance performers, absorbing every move. Can hardly wait to see what Tao Ye will come up with next year.

### Theatre- “Little Emperors” staged at the Becket Theatre- Malthouse

This collaboration between writer Lachlan Phillipott and director Wang Chong was bilingual. True, the subtitles were not always 100% correct as with any translation but the audience had no difficulty following the plot. Although the ‘one child policy’ was the main theme, many other social issues were explored in the play. The “mother” figure was possibly the most forceful presence on stage but all the actors did a very creditable job with the material. The staging was perhaps the most challenging part as the it consisted of a shallow water tank! The players made their movements on and off stage by placing one small chair in front of the other to “walk” on water. By the end of the play, all ended up soaking wet as the plot intensified and chairs were discarded. Mirrors, screens and bright lights were used to complement the effect and although some in the audience may not have comprehended some of the nuances of the play, they certainly appreciated the overall staging.

### Music

The small group “Speak\_Percussion” enchanted the audience in the Salon at the Melbourne Recital Centre with their incredible piece titled “ The Trading Routes: The Silk Road and The Mogau Caves.” A combination of visual as well as musical sounds, the piece tried to depict travelling along the Silk Road. Sand dunes and whispering sands, were brought to life with every possible example of a percussion instrument old and new, adding its sonorous sound while the guzheng played by Mindy Wang, intermittently added a haunting twang. In the background, videos added the delicate colours of the frescos from the Mogau caves evoking past eras of history. Those of us present, were enchanted wondering what new sound would be coaxed from those unusual instruments next. And the musicians, especially David Shea the composer, moved from instrument to instrument so smoothly and unobtrusively that one hardly noticed the transition at all. “Beautiful!” I just closed my eyes and let the music carry me away to lovely memories of my visits to Dunhuang and the

Mogau caves.

Many other performances were held during the AsiaTOPA festival including some especially for children. I hope you managed to attend some and enjoyed them. Don't forget to look out for more China inspired events by scouring cinema , theatre, music and other performance schedules in the months to come. Till next time, best regards to you all.

Lia Cross- ACFS Cultural portfolio, committee member

## **MSO: East Meets West Chinese New Year Concert**

The lunar new year signifies renewal and hope, in which family members young and not as young join together to celebrate a fresh beginning. 2017 is the year of the Fire Rooster; for those seeking something different and new from a usual classical concert, the MSO ensured the new year is off to an auspicious start.

While glimpses of the tradition can be seen in the lion dance performances and the sea of red decorations around the streets of Melbourne, the MSO has elevated the cultural experience with their 'East Meets West' themed Chinese New Year Concert – an annual event since 2014.

Internationally renowned composer and conductor Tan Dun delivered another unique and refreshing concert with the following program –

**Manuel de Falla** El Amor Brujo: Ritual Fire Dance

**Guan Xia** Suona Concerto: 100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix (World premiere)

**Tan Dun** Concerto for Piano, Peking Opera Soprano and Orchestra Farewell My Concubine (Australian premiere)

**Tan Weiwei / Tan Dun** Vocal Concerto: Song Lines of China

**Igor Stravinsky** The Firebird: Suite

This review commences with Tan Dun's concerto Farewell My Concubine, as the first two performances were disappointingly missed due to an erroneous start time advertised on the MSO website.

Farewell My Concubine, a classical Chinese love tragedy described by Tan as 'Chinese Shakespeare', depicted the final evening a defeated Qin dynasty

warlord shared with his lover as they faced their doomed fate at dawn. Tan expressed the romance and anguish of the lover's final moments through a dramatic musical dialogue between the piano (representing the warlord Xiang Yu) and Peking opera singing (representing Xiang Yu's consort Yu Miaoyi).

The result was a unique and visually captivating experience. Pianist Ralph van Raat delivered an energetic and demanding performance, at one point leaning over the piano to manually strike hammers against the strings! In contrast to the piano's rhythmic and bold tunes, Peking opera soprano Xiao Di's hauntingly lyrical singing created an engaging musical dialogue, with members of the orchestra echoing the singing at times. In lavish Peking opera costume and make up, Xiao elegantly performed operatic movements as she sang, with a dramatic acrobatic sword dance in the grand finale. The performance was flawless; the perfect synergy between orchestra, piano and Peking opera singer creating a surreal atmosphere.

Concerto Farewell My Concubine was an innovative and sophisticated cross-cultural composition in its abstract symbolism and artistic presentation. Tan was able to intrigue and engage the audience, breathing new life into musical traditions and ancient stories through a bold combination of distinctive musical disciplines in an unexpected and modern context, and experimenting with new techniques of creating sounds from instruments.

After the interval, Tan introduced Song Lines of China as the product of his search for tradition at a time when traditional cultures are at risk of vanishing into universal modernity. Drawing inspiration from Australian Aboriginal song lines and Chinese folk music, Tan collaborated with Chinese popular and folk singer Tan Weiwei to re-interpret and preserve folk music from different regions of China.

What followed was exhilarating. Tan Weiwei entered the stage joyously beating Chinese cymbals, setting up a lively atmosphere as her powerful, lofty voice filled the concert hall. Musicians and audience alike were swept away by the raw emotions of the folk-inspired interpretation. Tan Weiwei commanded the stage with her pop celebrity presence, perfectly complimented by an animated drummer and the splendorous sounds of the full orchestra. Tan Dun matched her energy, stepping from the conductor's podium to conduct amongst the orchestra.

The intended effect was well received. The gentleman sitting next to me leapt from his seat and erupted into thunderous applause as shouts of 'bravo' echoed in the hall. Such enthusiasm and participation is not often seen at

a classical concert. The Tan team had found a perfect medium in pop music to revive Chinese folk and western classical music traditions that seem to be losing their appeal to the younger generation of audiences. Music--like other cultural traditions--cannot be meaningfully preserved in stagnation. Tan took the audience on a journey in search for 'tradition', and we all re-discovered it within our souls.

Stravinsky's Firebird Suite was a well-performed but somewhat puzzling conclusion to the concert, following the unorthodox Chinese themed pieces which defied the classical genre. As I sat pondering the programming choice, Tan Dun farewelled the audience with his well wishes for the year of the Fire Rooster. Puzzle solved.

The MSO's partnership with Tan Dun and the rapturous audience response was the quintessential Chinese New Year festivity. Like family coming together for the lunar new year, the East meets West Chinese New Year Concert was a celebration of the traditional meeting the excitement of the contemporary, in ways bold and experimental, yet highly accessible to a diverse audience. In traditional Chinese culture, the Rooster signifies the announcing of the dawn, with those born in the year of the Rooster thought of as having the ability to know the future. The MSO's embrace of both Chinese music and the unique approach of these artists showed the audience that the vision for the future of this event is exciting.

*Amy Chen*

## **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FRIENDSHIP CAMP - SHANGHAI**

JULY 18 - 28 2017

Each July the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanghai Youth Federation sponsor an International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp in Shanghai.

This Camp plays an instrumental role in deepening mutual understanding and exchange between young people who will spend ten days together to experience Chinese culture whilst interacting with young people of many different nationalities and ethnicities.

Activities during the ten day camp will include Calligraphy, Chinese Language, Song and Dance, Chinese Food, and a one overnight homestay with local volunteer families to give young people exposure to various customs of Shanghainese.

Our ACFS National committee has received an invitation for **(5) Australian students from 15 to 17 years of age** to attend this camp in Shanghai with an appropriate chaperone. Successful youth participants will need to pay for their own international travel expenses, while the Shanghai hosts will cover the cost of the event, board and lodging, and local transportation.

2017 Camp details will be uploaded to the website soon, along with the Application forms. In the meantime you can view the 2016 detailed information brochure, rules of the 2016 camp, and camp program from our ACFS website <http://acfs.com.au/2016-international-youth-friendship-camp-shanghai>

Photos and videos of previous camps can be found on the SA branch site <http://acfssa.org.au/shanghai-youth-camp/>

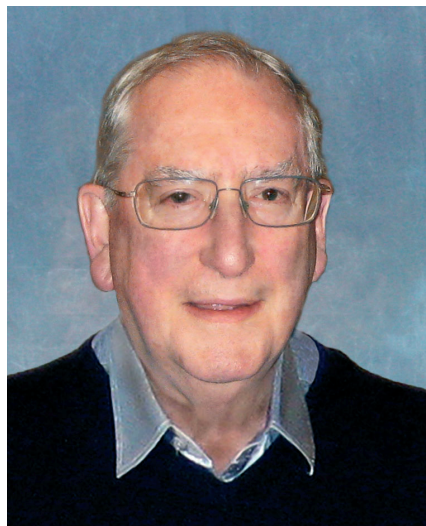
Student applications will close on Friday 14 April 2017.

The Camp is being coordinated by the South Australian Branch of ACFS so if you would like further information, please contact:

email : [acfssatours@gmail.com](mailto:acfssatours@gmail.com) or phone Pat O'Riley on 0488 668 547

## **VALE JIM CROSS**

24/3/1937 – 6/1/2017



Jim was a keen supporter of the ACFS and attended a number of our events over the years.

He was an eminent academic and Mathematician at the University of Melbourne for many years, after studying and working at institutions in other parts of the world.

Our condolences are passed to Lia, Jim's wife and partner and to their family and loved ones.

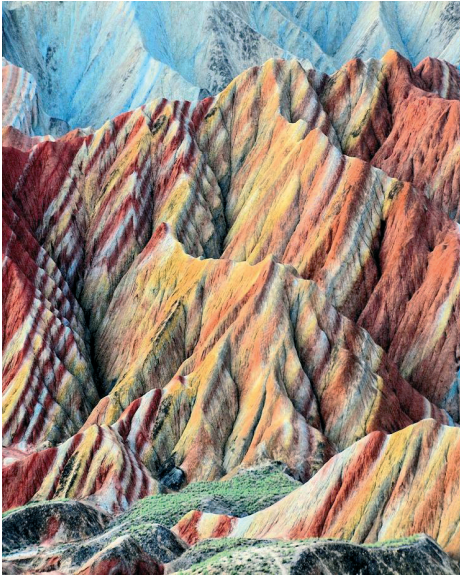
The ACFS was represented at the funeral service by Anthony Leong, Tower Liu and Robin Matthews.



# Australia China Friendship Society

*Photography Tour with Tower Liu*  
Departing on 31 Aug 2017

10 day tour to Guangzhou, Lanzhou, Zhangye, Kangle Grassland, Pingshanhu Valley.



**Day 1:** 31 Aug Australia ⇨ Guangzhou

Depart from Australia on China Southern Airlines day flight to Guangzhou. Overnight at Hotel Pullman Guangzhou Baiyun Airport.

Sydney flight **CZ326 1045/1830** from Sydney to Guangzhou

Melbourne flight **CZ344 1030/1810** from Melbourne to Guangzhou

Brisbane Flight **CZ382 0955/1655** from Brisbane to Guangzhou

Perth Flight **CZ320 0830/1630** from Perth to Guangzhou

Adelaide flight **CZ664 1000/1740** from Adelaide to Guangzhou

**Day 2:** 01 Sep Guangzhou ⇨ Lanzhou Meal: B/L/D

Today you return to the Guangzhou airport to board your flight **CZ3205 0850/1200** for Lanzhou.

After arrival, afternoon visit to the Yellow River and city sights including Waterwheels Park. Stay 1 night at Lanzhou Sapphire Hotel 4\*

**Day 3:** 02 Sep Lanzhou ⇨ Zhangye Meal: B/L/D

Today drive approx. 6 hours to Zhangye. Along the way, enjoy the landforms and stunning scenery of hills and grassland and the Gobi Desert. You will also visit the famous Great Buddha Temple to see China's largest reclining Buddha. Stay at Zhangye Xiaolajiao Hotel for 4 nights.

**Day 4:** 03 Sep Zhangye Meal: B/L/D

Today you will visit the famous Zhangye Danxia Landform Geological Park. The multi-coloured rock formations have been included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

**Day 5:** 04 Sep Zhangye Meal: B/L/D

Drive 50 km to Su'nan Bingou Danxia Landform. Hike with the group to capture the beautiful landforms and visit Kangle Grasslands. Bingou Danxia Landform is considered to be the best scenic landform in China. In 2000, Bingou Danxia Landform was nominated by National Geographic Magazine as one of the top ten magical geographical wonders of the world.

**Day 6:** 05 Sep Zhangye Meal: B/L/D

Drive 65 km to Pingshanhu Valley and hike with the group to photograph unique sights. Visit Pingshanhu Grand Canyon which is one of the most beautiful geomorphologic landscapes in Zhangye.

**Day 7:** 06 Sep Zhangye Meal: B/L/D

Morning visit to Pingshanhu Valley and the Marshland Park. Capture more beautiful images.

**Day 8:** 07 Sep Zhangye ➡ Shandan Meal: B/L/D

Drive 130 km from Zhangye to Shandan and take photos in Yanzhishan, Shandan County. This area is highly rated as a national AAAA tourist scenic zone. Overnight at Shandan Xingbo Hotel.

**Day 9:** 08 Sep Shandan ➡ Lanzhou Meal: B/L/D

Drive 60 km to the Army Horse Farm and more opportunities to take photos of the vast landscape and animals. The Farm consists of a total area of 2,192 square kilometres and is an important historic place to raise horses and station troops. It is reputed to be one of the largest horse farms in the world. Program includes a visit to the ancient Great Wall before your return to Lanzhou. Overnight stay at Lanzhou Sapphire Hotel 4\*.

## Option 1:

**Day 10:** 09 Sep Lanzhou ✈️ Guangzhou ✈️ Australia. Meal: B

Today you will be transferred to the airport for flight [CZ3206 1250/1545](#) to Guangzhou then connect with your China Southern flight bound for Australia.

**Day 11:** 10 Sep Australia Arrive in Australia in the morning. Non member price: \$3750.00 per person

ACFS Member price: \$3650.00 per person,  
Single supplement: \$510.00

## Inclusions:

1. Twin share 4\* hotels as mentioned in the itinerary or similar.
2. Fully inclusive tour with English speaking guide, entrance fees, meals as per itinerary
3. China Southern Airlines economy class airfare departing from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth to Lanzhou via Guangzhou including taxes and fuel surcharges.
4. Travel by luxury, air-conditioned coaches whilst in China.
5. Chinese tea and one glass of soft drink included in all lunches and dinners.
6. All tipping.
7. CBT travel wallet and travel bag.

## Exclusions:

1. China Visa application fees.
2. Personal expenses.

3. Travel insurance (Strongly recommended).

## Option 2 (Extra):

**Day 10:** 09 Sep Lanzhou ✈ Beijing Meal: B

Depart Lanzhou on flight no: CA1287 at 9.30. Arrive Beijing at 11.45am

Met at the airport and transferred to Tianan Rega Hotel 4\* for 3 nights. The rest of the day is at leisure.

**Day 11:** 10 Sep Beijing Meal: B,L

- Hutong Rickshaw tour including lunch with a local family. "Photograph the locals" and includes a guided tour with a Beijing professional photographer or a lecture by a member of the Beijing Photographers Association.

**Day 12:** 11 Sep Beijing Meal: B

Today is at leisure. Photograph and capture the spirit of Beijing - take this opportunity to participate in a BPAFFC sponsored annual photo contest open to foreigners only.

**Day 13:** 12 Sep Beijing ✈ Guangzhou ✈ Australia Meal: B

At leisure until transfer to the airport for your China Southern flight bound for Australia via Guangzhou.

**Day 14:** 13 Sep Australia

Arrive in Australia in the morning.

Non member price: \$4385.00 per person,

ACFS member price: \$4285.00 per person

Single supplement: \$705.00



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

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr /Mrs/Ms/Other) .....

Given Names .....

Address ..... P/code.....

Phone ..... Email .....

### VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00          Single \$30.00          Concession \$15.00

Corporate on Application

I/We support the Society's aims: ..... Signature/s

I/We enclose the sum of \$ ..... for my/our membership subscription.

Pay directly into the ACFS *Victoria Branch* Account,  
Commonwealth Bank          BSB: 063-019, Account number: 10040625

Please put your name in the subject line & email REFERENCE to  
[acfs.vic@gmail.com](mailto:acfs.vic@gmail.com)

You may send cheques to the Treasurer at the ACFS office address  
YOUR DONATION WOULD BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

PRESIDENT: Anthony Leong

COMMITTEE: Amy Chan

VICE PRESIDENT: John Breheny  
Tower Liu

Wai Ching Chan

Lia Cross

Damon Feng

SECRETARY: Robin Matthews

TREASURER: Dong Chen

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 [acfs.vic@gmail.com](mailto:acfs.vic@gmail.com)

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- Ross House 247 Flinders  
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## **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.