



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

Newsletter

4TH FLOOR, ROSS HOUSE, 247-251 FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE VIC 3000

E-MAIL: SECRETARY@ACFS-VIC.ORG WEB: WWW.ACFS-VIC.ORG

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December 2024

President's Report

The end-of-year is a very busy and festive time for most organisations, and for the ACFS this is no exception.

In mid-November I attended a mini-conference and trade delegation from Anhui Province which was attended by roughly 120 people and included various business representatives from the province and Victoria, with a notable presence from various vehicle manufacturers located in Anhui and the Australia China Business Council. I ended up meeting with several representatives from their Department of Culture and Tourism and raised the prospect of a dual opera tour between Victoria and Anhui.

A few days later was Geoff Raby's book launch ("Great Game On: The Contest for Central Asia and Global Supremacy") at the University of Melbourne, which was attended by 150 people. Geoff Raby, is the former Australian ambassador to China (2007-2011), and presented a case that Russia and China both had competing strategic interests and a competing history over the central Asia republics, even if they cooperated in other areas. A political realist and far more knowledgeable than most of our politicians on China matters, Raby presented a very compelling argument. The panel of academics engaged in a rigorous, with much debate around where Russia and China's relationship sat on the continuum of a "marriage of convenience" and a "marriage of values", a discussion spurred by UNSW Professor Mimi Zou's deft initiation and use of the metaphor.

On December 3rd members of the ACFS attended the annual Chinese Language and Culture award ceremony held at the Chinese Consulate. This event, held over the past several years, recognises those university students who have excelled in the namesake award and is co-organised by the consulate and the Australia-China Friendship Society, with the awards determined by the Australian Tertiary Chinese Teachers Association. Short speeches were provided by the Consul-General, Xinwen Fang, myself in the role as president of the ACFS (Vic), and Chunming Shan of the ATCTA. Each of us made reference to the importance of language to understanding culture and the importance of understanding to reach a successful relationship between people. Following the awards there were song and spoken performances from tertiary and even high-school students and a dinner - the consulate does put on some rather delicious food.

Shortly after this, I had a radio interview with Jesse Boyd from 3CR, who hosts the Wednesday morning breakfast show (<https://www.3cr.org.au/wednesday-breakfast>) which discussed ACFS's history and structure, travel to China, their economic successes, especially in poverty alleviation, and the often utterly wrong portrayal and predictions of the country by our media who, unsurprisingly, don't want anyone to think that their political economy could be a better model in some cases.

Finally, on Sunday December 15, members of the ACFS attended the Fujian Association's 30th Anniversary Dinner, a large gathering of about 500 attendees with a superb collection of singers and performers. The delegation from Fujian included the Agriculture Minister, Federal and State MP's and

a former ambassador. Congratulations are given to the Association for reaching such a milestone and for putting on such an excellent evening.

All of these are signs of active successes by Victoria's Chinese community, which bodes well for 2025. For our own part, we have our Ken Smith donation, a planned dinner at the end of Chinese New Year, and a concert approximately a month later. With 2025 in our sights we, who offer friendship between Australia and China, must be ever-vigilant against anti-Chinese racism and misinformation and encourage those who are uncertain to take the opportunity to visit; after all, the visa-free travel has now been extended to thirty days for Australians. This an extraordinary change from recent years and a golden opportunity for Australians to take the opportunity to learn about this great country and its history. Now, more than anytime in living memory, is the best time to visit China!

Lev Lafayette
President, Australia-China Friendship Society (Victorian branch)



Fujian Delegation visit Victoria

Invited by ACFS National Body, the Fujian Provincial Political Consultative Conference delegation arrived Melbourne at 15 December 2024. Lead by Director of the Economic Committee of the Fujian Provincial Political Consultative Conference Huang Xiangtan of delegation of 4 people visited Melbourne and Sydney in 4 days.

The delegation visited Victoria Parliament on 16 December. The Victorian Legislative Assembly member of Clarinda Mr Meng Heang Tak bring the delegation visited parliament and invited delegation lunch at parliament.

The ACFS Ltd junior president Tower Liu and the former ACFS Victorian branch president Anthony Leong met the delegation and discussed Australia and China economical, cultural exchanged and potential business for both countries.

by Tower LIU

Annual Chinese Language and Culture Awards

As they always do, the Chinese Consulate in Melbourne put on a fantastic turn for this year's language awards, thanks to the Consul Fang Xinwen and staff.

This year's recipients include:

Phuong Nhi Tran; Melvin Salim; Bailey Meath; Alexander Vincent Van Krieken; Zarin Tasnim Mir; Alisha Maree Holt; Minuli Matheen; Laura Hird; Darcy Phoenix King; Eko Ariyono; Aleksandar Rugar; Zack Aldred; Gregor Burns; Milissa Sanders; Liam Xavier Cox. A special mention to Laura Hird who has returned to the awards for a second time.

Some of the students performed a selection of Chinese songs including the ever popular 对面的女孩看过来. Loosely translates to Beautiful girl across the street look over my way, made famous by popular singer Rèn Xiánqí.

Following the presentation, we were all treated to a selection of fantastic Chinese dishes and an opportunity to chat and network.

The Committee has decided as we have done the past to offer each student a one-year complimentary membership to the ACFS. Congratulations to all 15 students on the achievements and may you long continue your language journey.





Commemoration Dr. Sun Yat-sen 158th anniversary

by Tower LIU

This year marks the 158th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The representatives from in the Chinese community in Melbourne held a commemorative event in front of the bronze statue of Sun Yat-sen in Chinatown at 12 noon on Saturday, November 9, 2024.

Consul General Fang Xinwen of the Chinese Consulate General in Melbourne attended and delivered an important speech. He commemorated the great achievements of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in leading the revolution of 1911 and overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. He promoted the common good of the world, revitalized the patriotic spirit of China, and made unremitting efforts for the complete reunification of the motherland and national rejuvenation. Consul General Fang then presented a handcraft wooden statue of Sun Yat-sen to the organizers.

The guests who spoke at this event included newly elected Melbourne City Councillor Kevin Louey. The Chinese Federation represented Vice Chairman Wu Chunjiang (behalf Chairman Chen Yun-guo). Mr Hong Shaoping. The Chinese Masonic Society Lion Dance Troupe performed a lion dance to celebrate the event. The event was co-organized by the Melbourne Chinese Masonic Society, the Chinese Association of Victoria, and the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of Victoria.

Invited by event organizer the ACFS Victorian Branch's vice president Tower LIU attend the commemoration.

CULTURAL NOTES

by Lia Cross, Cultural Scout

Hello members!

I hope you have managed to catch some of the events mentioned in the last Newsletter: "Chinese Art Songs", featuring multi award winning Chinese baritone Liao Chagyong, at Melbourne Recital Centre, saw the Chinese Community come out in force!



Chinese baritone Liao Chagyong

The concert actually began with a full Chinese Choir (over 30 ladies and 21 men) accompanied by a Chinese pianist and a Chinese lady conductor.

My apologies for not mentioning the names of these latter two but, as they were an opening act and not actually mentioned in the program booklet, I don't know their names. Never mind, they were a lovely introduction to the actual concert.

Liao Changyong, demonstrated his versatility and beautifully modulated voice, by singing 16 Chinese Art Songs. The songs were mostly based on songs or poetry from the Tang, Song and Qing Dynasties and were accompanied with a backdrop of the actual poem or song in original calligraphy, an accompanying painting representing the words and an English Translation alongside.

So, even those of us who were not Chinese, were able to follow what was being sung. Excellent!

Several “encores” followed the scheduled program including one popular song in which all those of in the audience who knew the words, joined in!

A great time was had by all, including me, and to my surprise, after I alighted from the stairs, a young lady approached me and asked me to be interviewed about the concert, no doubt for some social media platform.

I accepted and made a brief statement about what I thought. As there were very few non-Chinese people in the audience (others seemed to be mixed culture couples), I guess I stood out as I was on my own!

Tower Liu was there to capture the occasion!

ADVANCE NOTICE

Two events are coming up in February, 2025 to bring in the “Year of the Snake”.

First, the Chinese New Year Concert, which this time will be held at the Recital Centre and NOT Hamer Hall, on February 7th. It will be featuring The Hong Kong String Orchestra making their Australian Debut.

Second, as part of ASIA TOPA, the MSO will present a specially commissioned piece called “Milestone”, comprising a special collaboration between friends; celebrated Chinese - Australian artist William Yang and Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin.

The date for this performance at Hamer Hall is February 20th, 2025.

Get your tickets now or you will miss out!

Before I finish, I’d like to take this opportunity to wish our ACFS members a very Happy and Safe upcoming festive season and hope that you have enjoyed my reports throughout the year.

Cheers!

Lia Cross- Cultural Scout and committee member

AUSFENG PRESENTS

LUNAR NEW YEAR CONCERT

2025 新春音乐会

香港弦樂團

HONG KONG STRING ORCHESTRA

Artistic Director 藝術總監 | Yao Jue 姚珺

AUSTRALIAN DEBUT

CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE



HAPPY
CHINESE
NEW YEAR
欢乐春节



Spring Festival Overture Li Huanzhi
Variation on the The Pastoral Rearr. By Xia Liang
Serenade for Strings, Op. 11 Dag Wirén
China Blossom Medley Arr. By Ronald Fu
The Four Seasons (Excerpts) Antonio Vivaldi
Joseph Koo's Medley Arr. by Ronald Fu



Adelaide Her Majesty's Theatre • 31 Jan

Sydney Opera House • 2 Feb

Canberra Theatre Centre • 5 Feb

Melbourne Recital Centre • 7 Feb



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Celebrate The Year of The Snake in 2025

Lunar New Year Concert with the Hong Kong String Orchestra

The internationally acclaimed Hong Kong String Orchestra will make its highly anticipated Australian debut to welcome the Year of the Snake with an unforgettable celebration of music at four capital cities of Australia.

The Hong Kong String Orchestra, renowned for its fusion of Eastern and Western musical elements, will present several Australian premieres during its tour. The concert will open with the lively and joyful “Spring Festival Overture” to celebrate the arrival of the Lunar New Year. A highlight of the evening will be a violin solo performance of Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons” (selected movements) by Artistic Director Yao Jue, which explores the connection between the natural world and human emotions. The orchestra will also present the “Blossoms Shanghai Medley” and “Gu Jiawei’s Classic Hits Medley,” featuring iconic tunes from the beloved Hong Kong TV drama *Blossoms Shanghai* and well-known Hong Kong pop songs, evoking memories of the golden era of Hong Kong music. Other classical works on the program include “Variations on a Shepherd’s Theme” and Tchaikovsky’s elegant “Serenade for Strings.” “Her technical dexterity was that of a virtuoso and her vibrato imparted luster to her bright intense sounds.” - The Strad Founded by Virtuoso Yao Jue SBS, BBS, JP., Hong Kong String Orchestra (HKSO) strives to groom home-grown musical talent. Over the past ten years, the Orchestra has touched the lives of music lovers through its concert series and overseas exchange tours. And has achieved significant recognition locally and internationally for its “music uniqueness fusing Eastern and Western influences”. The Year of the Snake is traditionally a time for reflection, introspection, and careful planning. This performance will embody those qualities, offering a musical journey that invites the audience to reflect on the past, seek wisdom, and embrace the opportunity for renewal and transformation in the year ahead. Don’t miss the opportunity to witness the Hong Kong String Orchestra’s Australian debut, with performances in Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, and immerse yourself in a truly unforgettable evening of world-class music celebrating the Year of the Snake.

Venue: Melbourne Recital Centre Date: 7 February 2025 Tickets: VIP \$118 / A \$98 / B \$78 / C \$58*
Booking: www.melbournerecital.com.au

*A transaction fee may apply, Concessions are available to holders of an Seniors Card, Pensioners, students.10% discount for group + 10 Tickets on sale now, visit www.ausfeng.com.au

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.

THE ACFS VICTORIAN BRANCH

PRESIDENT: Lev Lafayette
VICE PRESIDENT: Tower Liu
SECRETARY: Edith Wilson
TREASURER: Ian Parker
COMMITTEE: Lia Cross, Joe Montero, James Doery, Charlotte Hall

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 secretary@acfs-vic.org

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) 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 secretary@acfs-vic.org

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

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People