Song of Silk

Songs, Instruments, Dance, and Beijing Opera
Presented by
Confucius Institute of Chinese Opera at
Binghamton University, NY

October 2nd, 2011
7:30 PM, Hinton Music Hall
Wright Music Building, MTSU

Sponsored by
Chinese Language Council International (Hanban)

Confucius Institute
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Dear Friends and Patrons of the Arts,

I would like to welcome you to a very special event as part of our Centennial Homecoming Celebration. We are honored to be hosting an exciting evening of Chinese performing arts brought to you by the Confucius Institute at Middle Tennessee State University in conjunction with the Confucius Institute of Chinese Opera at Binghamton University, NY. Tonight's presentation will feature many established and rising stars of Chinese performing arts. As we celebrate our institution's 100th birthday, this evening's program will bring a special sparkling light to our celebration.

MTSU has established strong partnerships with many universities in China. These relationships provide many opportunities for cultural and educational exchange and support a number of unique collaborations for our faculty and students. We are honored to work with our Chinese university partners to promote academic excellence, diversity and cooperation.

I appreciate the long history and rich culture of China and look forward to tonight's fantastic presentation of Chinese art and culture.

Thank you for attending this wonderful program, Song of Silk.

Sidney A. McPhee
President
Middle Tennessee State University
**Program: Song of Silk**

**Cold Breeze through the Pines** 松风寒
Performed by Wang Lifeng on zhongruan

**Hubei Fan** 撇扇  Dance by Jiayan Yong

**Ambush from All Sides** 十面埋伏  Performed by Liang Ning on pipa

**Farewell My Concubine** 霸王别姬
Beijing opera performed by Zhang Jing and Jia Jinsong

**A Moonlit River on a Spring Night** 春江花月夜  Performed by Zhou Wang, Lin Li, Liang Ning, and Wang Lifeng on guzheng, pipa, and zhongruan

**A Ditty from the Yimeng Mountain** 沂蒙山小调
**The Murmuring Stream** 小河淌水

**Beautiful Mood** 美丽的心情
Performed by Hong Zhang, mezzo-soprano and Pej Reitz, piano

**Long Sleeve** 水袖  Dance performed by Guixuan Zhuang

**Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water** 高山流水
Performed by Zhou Wang on guzheng

**New Take on a Tune “Sorrow on River Luo”** 新翻《罗江怨》
Performed by Zhou Wang on guzheng and Huang Zhenyu on Piano

**Cradle on Yak’s Back** 牛背摇篮
Duet dance by Jiayan Yong and Guixuan Zhuang

**Beijing Opera Music Instruments** 京剧器乐系列演示  Performed by Jin Zhiqiang on xiaoluo, jinghu, jingerhu, yueqin, dizi, and suona

**Beijing opera: Sitting in the Palace** 坐宫
performed by Zhang Jing and Jia Jinsong

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**Program Notes**

1. **Cold Breeze through the Pines** 松风寒  The music is based on a classic Chinese poem “Listening to Music” by Liu Changqin of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The poet expressed his sadness and disappointment of not being appreciated by the mainstream.

2. **Hubei Fan** 撇扇  This is a rural folk dance from the Hubei province, and it is known for its distinctive 'flicking' of silk fans.

3. **Ambush from All Sides** 十面埋伏  This is a famous Chinese classical lute (pipa) score, which was composed on the basis of a battle in 202 B.C. between the armies of Chu and Han at Gaixia, by the Wujiang River. Through its passionate and majestic tune, the audience could almost see the fierce, desolate, solemn and stirring scenes of the battle and hear the sounds of soldiers’ shouting, horse galloping, and weapon striking.

4. **Farewell My Concubine** 霸王别姬  The excerpt is set at the end of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC). The Emperor loses control of the kingdom, and several leaders emerge from the chaos to proclaim themselves kings. Among them, two contend for supremacy: Xiang Yu, the King of Chu, and Liu Bang, the King of Han. In a crucial battle, Xiang Yu’s troops are ambushed by Liu Bang’s and gradually run out of food. And when the troops hear their native songs sung by the enemy encamped around them, they are convinced that their homeland has been conquered and their countrymen have joined Liu Bang. Foreseeing his failure, Xiang Yu drinks with his favorite concubine Consort Yu for the last time. After performing a sword dance for Xiang Yu, she commits suicide. Struck by grief from losing the battle and Consort Yu, Xiang Yu fights his way to the Wujiang River and kills himself.

5. **A Moonlit River on a Spring Night** 春江花月夜  This is one of the most famous Chinese traditional music works since the late 19th century. The beautiful musical harmony paints a tranquil scene of a river in springtime and gives a vivid impression of ripples over the water.
6. **A Ditty from the Yimeng Mountain** 沂蒙山小调 This is a folksong from the Shandong Province, China. Everybody likes Yimeng Mountain because it is so pretty: a gentle breeze sweeps over sheep on the green mountain, red sorghum decorates people's happy life.

7. **The Murmuring Stream** 小河淌水 This is a folksong from the Yunnan Province, China. The moon came out, bright and bright; my boyfriend is in the remote mountainside. You are like the moon in the sky, my dear; ah, the murmuring stream is clear and clear. A cool breeze up the green mountain, my dear, do you hear my call again and again?

8. **Beautiful Mood** 美丽的心情 Wind sends the doves to the starry sky; the moon shines upon our happy dancing. Let our dreams grow auspicious wings; let beautiful moods follow us everywhere.

9. **Long Sleeve** 水袖 This is a Chinese classical dance using flowing sleeves that incorporates the concept of yin and yang and elements of Beijing opera and tai chi.

10. **Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water** 高山流水 There is a beautiful story behind the music: Bo Ya, a prominent qin player during the Spring and Autumn Period (771 to 403 BC) befriended Zhong Ziqi, a woodcutter, because Ziqi was the only person able to appreciate the haughty mountains and the running streams that Bo Ya tried to “describe” in his music. One day, after learning of Ziqi’s death, Bo Ya was so sad that he shattered the instrument and vowed never to play again, since no one else could understand his music like Ziqi did.

11. **New Take on a Tune “Sorrow on River Luo” 新翻《罗江怨》**

“Sorrow on River Luo” is a guzheng tune from Shanxi area. Zhou Yanjia and Huang Zhenyu, two composers, put a new spin on the old tune.

12. **Cradle on Yak’s Back** 牛背摇篮 This is a Tibetan dance. Tibet is in western China, north of the Himalayas. In Tibet, yaks are very important to the society and economies of local people. Throughout their history and in their religion, the Tibetan people have worshipped the yaks. This piece incorporates the slow, swaying movements of the ox.

13. **Beijing Opera Music Instruments** 京剧器乐系列演示 A Beijing opera orchestra is divided into two groups. One is called wen chang, whose main function is to accompany actor’s singing. Wen chang is dominated by a stringed instrument called jinghu and is supplemented by plucked instruments such as yueqin and pipa. The other is wu chang, whose main function is to accompany acting, recitation, dancing and acrobatic fighting on stage. Wu chang usually plays percussion music instruments, such as drums, wooden clappers, gongs and cymbals.

14. **Sitting in the Palace** 坐宫 “Sitting in the Palace” is an excerpt from a famous jing ju (Beijing opera) play, Silang Visits His Mother. The play is set in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), when the kingdom alternated between warfare and diplomacy with the Liao people in the northeast. In a battle against the troops of Liao, General Yang Silang’s father and brothers are killed. Captured by Liao armies, Silang does not reveal his true identity to anyone. The empress of Liao later betroths her daughter to Silang. Silang and the princess love each other very much and later have a son. One day, Silang hears his mother, a general, is in a fortified city of Liao to wage war. He is very eager to see his mother after 15 years; however, he cannot pass the guarded gates unless he gets a golden arrow from the empress. Silang then reveals his true identity to the princess and asks her for help.
**About the Performers**

**HUANG Zhenyu 黄枕宇** received a bachelor’s degree in piano, and later a master’s degree in translation of music literature and the theory and technique of electronic music. Teaching at the Central Conservatory of Music, Huang published several academic papers on music. He has also composed music for movies, including *When Ruo Ma Was Seventeen* (2004) and *The Red Awn* (2007).

**JIA Jinsong 贾劲松** received a master’s degree in Beijing Opera from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts (NACTA) in 2004, and he has been teaching at NACTA since. A winner of national performance competitions, Jia specializes in playing *laosheng* (middle-aged and elder male) characters. He is currently teaching Beijing opera courses in the capacity of visiting lecturer of theater at Binghamton University.

**JIN Zhiqiang 金志强** started to work as an instructor and performer at NACTA since 1993, and he received a master’s degree in Music from NACTA in 2010. Jin is a versatile musician who plays Chinese bamboo flute, *jinghu*, *suona*, and other Chinese music instruments. He is currently a visiting associate professor of music at Binghamton University.

**Jia Yan YONG** began studying and performing ballet with the Shanghai Little Swan Ballet Troupe while in China. After arriving in New York, she danced at the Joffrey Ballet School. She has studied under Yin Mei, Joseph Mills, Diane Sichel, and Patrick Widrig. Yong has performed at the Queens Museum of Art, Downtown Dance Festival, City Center, Lincoln Center Out of Doors 2007, and Solstice in Times Square. She was also a guest instructor at Hunter College.

**Hong ZHANG 张泓** holds a master of music degree in voice performance from Binghamton University, and a bachelor of music degree in voice performance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Currently a senior lecturer of Chinese at Binghamton University, she is the founder and director of Song of Silk. Her recent performances include solo concerts at Purdue University, Elmira College, SUNY College of Optometry, Western Michigan University, the University of Michigan, and Portland State University.

**ZHANG Jing 张晶** graduated from NACTA and taught Beijing opera at NACTA since 2001. Zhang studied *qingyi* (demure female) roles with the Beijing opera master Mei Baojiu, who is the son of the legendary Beijing opera maestro, Mei Lanfang. Author of many articles on the art of Beijing opera, Zhang performed and lectured in many countries, such as Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Russia, Spain, Finland, and the United States. She is currently a visiting professor of Beijing opera at Binghamton University.
LIANG Ning 梁宁 is a *pipa* (Chinese lute, four-stringed plucked instrument) player. She has been teaching at NACTA since 2000, and received a master’s degree in music from the Central Conservatory of Music in 2007. She has won at many national *pipa* competitions and serves as judge at *pipa* competitions.

Pej REITZ is currently on the faculty of Binghamton University and Ithaca College School of Music. She holds degrees in piano performance with accompanying emphasis from Boston University, the New England Conservatory and Binghamton University. She has accompanied throughout the United States and in England and Austria, and has performed in concerts with clarinetist Timothy Perry in South America, France, Belgium and Japan.

WANG Lifeng 王利峰 specializes in *sanxian* (a three-stringed fretless plucked instrument) and *zhongruan* (Chinese moon guitar, a plucked stringed instrument) performances. He has been teaching at NACTA since 2000, and received a master’s degree in music from NACTA in 2007. Having recorded several CDs on *sanxian* music, Wang also toured and performed at many places, including Hong Kong and Macau.

ZHOU Wang 周望 graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music (CCM) in Beijing, China, and has been teaching at CCM since. As an experienced and highly praised *guzheng* musician, Zhou has recorded several CDs and published articles on *guzheng* and *guzheng* teaching. She also toured and gave lectures at many countries, including the United States and Japan.

ZHUANG Guixuan graduated from the Beijing Dance Academy in 2009, majoring in Chinese Folk Dance performance. While studying at the Shandong Province Song & Dance Academy, Zhuang frequently represented his school in international performances. Zhuang danced in the Mongolian dance piece, Wolf Totem that won second place in the 8th Taolibei National Dance Competition. He has also participated in the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony piece, Silk Road, and in the 2007 celebration marking the 10-year anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China.

**About the Confucius Institute at Middle Tennessee**

The Confucius Institute at Middle Tennessee State University was established in partnership with Hangzhou Normal University of China, with the sponsorship and authorization of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), under the Ministry of Education, China.

The mission of the Confucius Institute at Middle Tennessee State University (CIMTSU) is to enhance the understanding of Chinese language and culture, facilitate engagement with China and create opportunities for exchange and collaboration between communities in Tennessee and China. The Institute seeks to become a hub for China-related activities and a resource center for Chinese language, history, contemporary society and culture.