Greetings! Thank you for your interest in the Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan (CI-UM).

Launched in November 2009, CI-UM promotes the understanding of Chinese arts and cultures on the U-M campus in Ann Arbor and its vicinities, reaching out to a wide range of University and community participants. CI-UM is not only an integral component of President Coleman’s China Initiatives but also a critical part of U-M’s efforts to advance the arts in its internationalized educational programs.

To foster informed and creative dialogues by artists, scholars, students, and community members, CI-UM presents to Ann Arbor a diversity of Chinese artistic activities and expressions, which include, for example, performances of traditional and contemporary music and theatre, exhibitions of paintings, calligraphy and other visual art forms by contemporary artists, youth-driven interpretations of popular culture, international and interdisciplinary conferences, and multinational comparisons of world arts and cultures.

I invite you to attend all of our exciting events, the schedule of which is posted on our Web site (http://confucius.umich.edu). While on the Web site, please feel free to browse videos of many of our past lectures and performances. And as always, your ideas and inquiries are welcome at confucius@umich.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.
Looking Both Ways: A contemporary art exhibition coinciding with the centennial of the Xinhai Revolution

September 28-October 21, 2011

Looking Both Ways was the result of close collaborations between CI-UM, Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Galleries, and U-M North Campus Research Complex (NCRC). Featuring work exhibited at NCRC and EMU Galleries, this special art event sought to raise awareness of contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese Art in Southeast Michigan. In an effort to foster and fuel discussion, dialogue and understanding, this exhibition of contemporary Taiwanese, Chinese, Chinese-American, and American art brought together an international array of artists whose work examined China-related issues ranging from societal and generational change, to personal narratives, to questions of geopolitics and political and economic power structures.

In order to fully engage the audience, a number of lectures as well as weekly curated tours of the exhibits were presented, earning great accolades throughout the local communities. A beautiful exhibition catalogue has been published. Please contact Gregory Tom at gtom@emich.edu to inquire about the catalogue.
Tony Award winner David Henry Hwang talks about his latest Broadway hit!

January 13, 2012

Written by renowned playwright David Henry Hwang and heralded by publications like Time Magazine as one of 2011’s best plays, “Chinglish” captivated its audience with witty lines and comedic exchanges. At the height of the show’s popularity on the Broadway stage, the Confucius Institute at U-M invited Hwang, along with his cultural consultants Joanna Lee and Ken Smith, to travel to the University to talk about his newest hit and the creative processes of a playwright.

Hwang’s previous works have garnered him recognition in the form of multiple Obie awards, Pulitzer nominations and a Tony Award for his best-known play, “M. Butterfly.” For his presentation at U-M, Hwang was joined by Lee and Smith at the front of an overflowing room of students, faculty, community members and just fans in general; and together the three collaborators and friends detailed the long and winding road to creating “Chinglish” and the discussed complexities of cultural and linguistic differences — all with a great deal of humor and wit.

Shakespeare and the Orphan of Zhao

March 12, 2012

The University of Michigan and the University Musical Society have long enjoyed a close and productive relationship with the Britain’s Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). In March, members of Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company, along with colleagues from the LAByrinth Theater Company of New York, returned to Ann Arbor in order to work on the development of plays new to the RSC’s repertoire.

During the much anticipated residency, Gregory Doran, RSC’s chief associate director, directed a workshop on "The Orphan of Zhao," the first Chinese play to be produced in Europe. The adaptation in question is a new one by James Fenton, based on a version by Ju Junxiang that was published in 1615.

Under the direction of Joseph Lam, CI-UM director, professor of musicology at U-M's School of Music, Theatre & Dance, and expert in traditional Chinese music, a day-long symposium took place featuring Chinese drama experts from around the world. This rare meeting of minds and talents especially highlighted creative possibilities of plays being prepared for "A World Elsewhere," a season which the RSC is offering this fall at its Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.
Launched in Fall 2011, this special series of events is a collaborative project between CI-UM and the U-M Modern Greek Program. Both ancient nations, and now both undergoing dramatic socio-political transformations, China and Greece have experienced shared and separate transitions from ancient powers to contemporary societies in flux. This innovative project on Chinese and Greek arts and cultures aims to highlight the two societies in reference to each other and in relations to heightened issues of identity.

The series first took off with a talk by Alexander Beecroft’s talk on the significance of China and Greece for the theory of world literatures, followed by two popular movie nights for students. In the Winter 2012 term, the series shifted gears with a talk on Chinese-Greek connections in archaeology and popular culture and a roundtable discussion on the themes of identities and transitions, culminating in a gala celebration and a concert of Chinese and Greek songs. The Chinese-Greek collaborations are set to continue in the new term with programs loosely based on the themes of heroes and heroism. Please visit the Confucius Institute Web site (confucius.umich.edu) in the fall for more information.

CI-UM sponsored the February 10 performance of the Chamber Ensemble of the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra at the Power Center, presented by University Musical Society, and funded in part by Arts Midwest’s Performing Arts Fund, the Chinese Ministry of Culture, and the US Major University Presenter’s consortium. In conjunction with this important concert and in an effort to provide additional academic context to the rich concert program, CI-UM invited Joys Cheung (PhD ‘08), Visiting Assistant Professor at the Chinese Civilisation Centre, City University of Hong Kong, to give a talk on the day before the concert. Entitled “Making Harmoniousness: ‘Silk and Bamboo Music’ and Chinese Modernity Politics in Shanghai,” Cheung’s talk focused on the development and discourses of “Silk and Bamboo” music as a constitutive force of Chinese musical modernity. Cheung carefully described the positions of defenders in the politics of Chinese musical modernity and how these individuals drew from “Silk and Bamboo” music and ideals to maintain a refined Chineseness in the rapidly changing soundscape of modern China, while also embracing selected Western musical practices to pursue their modernity interests. Developments of the genre after 1949, especially in the past two decades, were also discussed.
“When Shall West Lake be Without Song and Dance?” An interdisciplinary conference on Southern Song Chinese arts and culture (1127-1279)
西湖歌舞几时休：南宋文化学术会议

October 7 & 8, 2011

Over a lovely autumn weekend, CI-UM was honored to host renowned scholars from different disciplines who presented papers on diverse Southern Song arts. Presenters and discussant included Beverly Bossler, Ronald Egan, Linda Feng, Charles Hartman, Linda Johnson, Ellen Laing, Joseph Lam, Hui-shu Lee, Xinda Lian, Shuen-fu Lin, Gang Liu, Christian de Pee, Martin Powers, Ben Ridgway, Stephen West, and Zhang Hongsheng, representing a multitude of disciplines and international institutions.

Additionally faculty and graduate students from U-M and other institutions were also invited to attend the fascinating and lively discussions.

A Concert of Ci Songs and Qin Music from Southern Song Dynasty
南宋音乐会

October 8, 2011

Another CI-UM exclusive! With pride and enthusiasm, the Institute presented an intellectually provocative and musically expressive concert of ci 词 songs and qin 琴 (seven-string zither) music from Southern Song China (1127-1279) – the truly artistic culmination of the two-day conference on the same period. Performed by four leading musicians from Hong Kong, this concert offered American audience an unprecedented opportunity to intellectually and musically engage with 12th- and 13th-century Chinese music by Jiang Kui 姜夔 (1151-1221), Guo Chuwang 郭楚望 (fl. 1200) and Mao Zhongmin 毛仲敏 (fl. 1230). The “authentic” sounds of the music, needless to say, vanished more than eight centuries ago. Cultural memories and verifiable representations of the music, nevertheless, have been continuously and extensively documented by verbal descriptions and notated scores.

The four Hong Kong musicians of this unique concert have comprehensively read the sources of Southern Song Chinese music, and systematically formulated their research and musical conclusions. By performing Southern-Song Chinese music not only as sounds but also as cultural-historical expressions of medieval China, they aesthetically and sonically reclaimed/imagined a site where they and their audience can “authentically” experience Southern Song Chinese music and culture - much to the delight of everyone present that magical evening.
September 8 – October 21 | “Looking Both Ways” Contemporary Art Exhibition

September 9 | The U-M Symphony Band Musiks in China: A Case Study of Music as Cultural Discourse, lecture by Joseph Lam, CI-UM Director

September 19 | After Orientalism: Current French Scholarship on Chinese Arts and Culture, Roundtable Discussion by Francois Picard


September 26 | Shanghai Jiao Tong University Wind Ensemble

October 7-8 | When Shall West Lake be Without Song and Dance, an interdisciplinary conference on Southern Song Chinese arts and culture (1127-1279)

October 8 | Concert of Ci Songs and Qin Music from Southern Song Dynasty

October 9 | Midwest Confucius Institute Directors Forum

October 10 | Confucius Institute Open House

October 20 | Beijing Chamber Ensemble

October 31 | The Shanghai Bubble of 1921: Ideas of Economics, Freedom, and Sovereignty, lecture by Bryna Goodman

November 8 | The Sound of Nostalgia and Memories in the Nation: Introduction to Traditional Mongolian Music by Sunmin Yoon

November 9 | Lecture on Mongolian music was organized in conjunction with performance by Inner Mongolia’s AnDa Union, presented by University Musical Society and sponsored by the Confucius Institute at U-M.

January 13 | CHINGLISH: A New Comedy on the Misadventures of Cross-cultural Communication: Tony Award winner David Henry Hwang (M. Butterfly) talks about his latest Broadway hit!

January 21 | Mandopop Concert by Mandarine Invasion Band

January 24 | Ning Wu Du and Helen Sim, duo piano

January 25 | Screening of opening ceremonies of the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games
January 27 | “Observations of contemporary Chinese art and my own work,” lecture by XU Weixin, artist and professor, Renmin University

February 1 | Lecture on traditional calligraphy by Professor ZHENG Xiaohua, Renmin University

February 9 | Making Harmoniousness: “Silk and Bamboo” Music and Chinese Modernity Politics in Shanghai,” lecture by Joys Cheung, Visiting Assistant Professor at the Chinese Civilisation Centre, City University of Hong Kong

February 10 | Lecture on Chinese music is organized in conjunction with performance by Chamber Ensemble of the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Wang Fujian, artistic director, presented by University Musical Society and sponsored by the Confucius Institute at U-M.

February 20 | Chinese-Greek Connections in Archaeology and Popular Culture, lecture by Min Li (PhD ’08), Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, UCLA and Lauren Talalay, Curator of Education, U-M Kelsey Museum

February 22 | Sima Qian’s Narratives on Assassins, lecture by Chi-hsiang Lee, Dean of College of Humanities, Fo Guang University, Taiwan

March 7 | Qin lecture-recital by Shuishan Yu

March 27 | The Pleasures of the Peony in Chinese Art, lecture by Roslyn Hammers (PhD ‘02), Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts, University of Hong Kong

March 30 | Roundtable Discussion and Gala celebrating "The Classical in Modern Times: A Year on China and Greece" – a collaborative project of the Confucius Institute at U-M and the Modern Greek Program

April 7 | Singing Histories: Concert of Chinese and Greek Songs
Meishi Chinese Gourmet Cooking Series
Accolades are pouring in from this program, in which undergraduate students at U-M learn about Chinese culture and enjoy authentic Chinese food. With over 60 students attending six Meishi classes spread throughout the Winter 2012 term, this event is an unmatched way for students to learn to cook easy and healthy Chinese cuisine while immersed in Chinese culture – right in their own dorm’s community kitchen. Co-hosted by the CI-UM and Arts in Residence, this popular, hands-on event also creates a fun environment for residents to socialize.

Afternoon “Tea Salon” with an Artist
Also co-hosted by the CI-UM and Arts in Residence, this popular program is designed to give undergraduate students an opportunity to interact with a Chinese artist in a relaxed, informal, and fluid setting. The idea is to expose students to Chinese arts by bringing the experience directly to undergraduate students, and all Tea Salons are held in the lobby of undergraduate residence halls so there would be a flow of students passing by who can engage with the artist directly or just quietly observe. Traditional Chinese tea and pastries are provided to give the students an extra reason to linger and chat.
Elegant Musical Gatherings for U-M Undergrads

The Confucius Institute is administering a course every Fall and Winter term on Chinese instrumental music performance through the Residential College at the University of Michigan. Students are given individual lessons on Chinese musical instruments, which include but are not limited to the erhu (fiddle), dizi (flute), pipa (lute), and percussion. Students learn not only basic techniques in playing the instruments which are provided, but also standard compositions of the repertory. Having mastered the basic techniques, students have presented their talent and skills in end-of-semester recitals that were warmly received by faculty, friends, and family. Some of the classic Chinese songs performed at the recitals were “Jasmine Flower,” “Horse Racing,” and “Feng Yang Flower Drum.” Residential College students interested in this class are welcome to consult the LS&A Course Guide for more information on RCHUMS 252.
Learning about Each Other through Music 音乐的桥梁

Shanghai Jiao Tong University Wind Ensemble Performs in Ann Arbor on U.S. Tour

September 26, 2011

Just a few months after the U-M Symphony Band performed in China, including a concert at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), the SJTU Wind Ensemble repaid the visit by putting on a great show of music from Chinese and Western traditions at the Power Center in Ann Arbor. Hosted by CI-UM with support from U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance, the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and College of Engineering, members of the ensemble also enjoyed touring the U-M campus and spending time with members of the U-M Symphony Band (as many friendships were struck during the U-M students’ visit to Shanghai in the summer).

U-M Symphony Band’s China Tour

The University of Michigan Symphony Band, led by Michael Haithcock, Director of University Bands, toured China in May 2011 with violin soloist Xiang Gao.

The Symphony Band, comprised of woodwind, brass and percussion instruments and considered one of the leaders of the modern wind band movement in America, brought its artistry to Hangzhou, Shanghai, Xi’an, Shenyang, Beijing and Tianjin. Thanks to generous sponsors like the U-M Office of the President, the Provost’s office, CI-UM and Hanban, U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance student musicians thoroughly took advantage of the opportunity to perform in China’s great cities and concert venues, while learning about Chinese cultures and society firsthand and making friends whenever they went.
a. An AnDa Union singer (image courtesy of UMS).
b. Partial display of CI-UM fliers and brochures.
c. XU Weixin, artist and professor, Renmin University, in his studio.
d. Cover of Looking Both Ways exhibition catalogue.
e. Looking Both Ways exhibition at U-M North Campus Research Complex (photo by The Michigan Daily).
f. (L-R): Joseph Lam, director of the Confucius Institute at U-M, greets David Henry Hwang and Hwang’s cultural consultants Ken Smith and Joanna Lee.
g. (L-R): David Rolston, Associate Professor of Chinese Literature at U-M; Lloyd Hutchinson, RSC Ensemble Member; Gang Tian, Chinese opera percussionist; Bing Luo: Chinese opera actor; Joseph Lam, Director of the Confucius Institute at U-M; Gregory Doran, RSC Chief Associate Director; and Yi Qian, Chinese opera actress.
h. Members of the Chamber Ensemble of the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra (image courtesy UMS).
i. Watching the Deer by a Pine Shaded Stream, Ma Yuan, (1127-1279), collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art.
j. Hong Kong musicians who performed in the ci and qin concert (R-L): SOU Sitai, Sunny Chung, CHEUNG Lai-chun, and CHAN Chun-miu.
k. Beijing Chamber Ensemble.
l. Lester Monts (first on the right), Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, is a special guest in one of the Meishi Chinese Gourmet cooking classes and prepares scallion pancakes.
m. Liyan Sun, a well-known mezzo-soprano trained in the Chinese and Western vocal traditions, leads an impromptu group singing of a Chinese tune at a Tea Salon event in Markley Residence Hall.
n. Residential College students play Chinese instruments at an end-of-semester recital.
o. Members of the U-M Symphony Band play at Hanban headquarters in Beijing.
p. Members of the U-M Symphony Band and members of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Wind Ensemble pose for group picture at a picnic in Ann Arbor.
q. The kitchen is ready for a cooking demonstration sponsored by CI-UM.
The Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan (CI-UM)

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