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.
Unique Undergrad Programs

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.
New Artistic Perspectives

Dramatic Encounters in a Cross-cultural World

Tony Award winner David Henry Hwang talks about his latest Broadway hit!

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 introduced in Europe. RCS produced a new version 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 RSC’s fall 2012 season, “A World Elsewhere,” which the company offered last fall at its Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.
In 2001, UNESCO declared kunqu, the 600-years-old grand opera of China, a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The declaration not only affirms the artistic and cultural distinctions of the genre, but also creates a context for its revival in contemporary and globalized China. Noted for its perfect blending of dramatic literature, soulful singing, and elegant dancing, kunqu now delights young and mature audiences inside and outside China with shows that judiciously blend classical stories and traditional performance practices with contemporary staging interpretations and technologies. The current popularity of kunqu is culturally and historically significant, and demands international attention. Twenty some years ago, kunqu was practically dismissed as a classical but obsolete theatre. In the late 1980s or early 1990s, one notes kunqu performances attracted so little audience that performers on stage could occasionally outnumber audiences watching their shows. Now, kunqu makes hip and cool cultural events. Riding on waves of China’s transformation as a global superpower since the late 1980s, kunqu has risen from the ashes like a phoenix. Supported by national and international institutions as well as individual patrons and audience, kunqu is now the classical opera of globalized China. It affords people not only an artistic encounter with classical China but also an effective means to negotiate Chinese culture and identities. Dramatically and realistically, kunqu parades on stage Chinese characters/roles, revealing Chinese hearts and minds, and eliciting critical reactions from Chinese and non-Chinese audiences.

So it was with great pleasure that the Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan collaborated with the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan to bring grand kunqu performances to Ann Arbor in late September 2012. Featuring Mr. Yu Jiulin and Ms. Shen Fengying, winners of the 2007 Plum Blossom Prize, the most prestigious national honor for Chinese operatic performers, the star-studded performances by the Suzhou Kun Opera Theater of Jiangsu Province were must-see shows. They not only made a memorable milestone in Ann Arbor artistic history, but built a long-lasting bridge of cultural exchange and friendship between China and Michigan.
A Rich Offering of Kunqu and Kunqu-Related Events

August 20 – October 20
Love’s Emotion in Chinese Opera: A Photography Exhibit
Gifts of Art Gallery – University Hospital Main Lobby

Kunqu came alive in the large scale photographs of Xu Zengquan. The viewers experienced the personalities of the characters and the spirit of the dance, opening a window into traditional Chinese culture and history.

September 26
Introduction to Kunqu

This CI-UM Lecture-Demonstration examined how and why Kunqu, the grand opera of China, remains vibrant and compelling after 600 years. Professor ZHOU Qin (周秦) from Soochow University, China presented “Kunqu Performance and Music (昆曲的演出与演唱),” and HAI Zhen (海震) from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts discussed “Kunqu: A Traditional Drama of the Chinese Literati (昆曲：中国文人的戏曲传统).”

September 27
Performance of scenes from Chinese opera

CI-UM presented a free demonstration and performance by Suzhou Kun Opera Theater in partnership with the University Musical Society and the University of Hospital Gifts of Art.

September 27
Symposium on Kunqu as a Cultural Import and Export (by invitation only)

Scholars from around the U.S. and China gathered at the University of Michigan to engage in discussions of topics ranging from the history of kunqu to the commercial operations of kunqu performance.

September 28 program
- “Qintiao 琴挑” (“Zither Seductions”) from The Jade Hairpin
- “Huozhuo 活捉” (“Captured Alive”) from All Men Are Brothers
- “Xiaoyan 小宴” (“Garden Banquet”) from The Palace of Everlasting Youth

September 29 program
Four Scenes from “The Peony Pavilion” (Mudanting)
- “Youyuan jingmeng 游园惊梦” (Strolling in the Garden and the Interrupted Dream)
- “Xunmeng 寻梦” (Pursuing the Dream)
- “Shihua jiaohua 画像取画” (The Portrait Retrieved and Examined)
- “Yougou 幽媾” (Nightly Rendezvous)
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 instrumental music by Wang Fujian, artistic director, of **A Chamber Ensemble of the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra**, presented by the University Musical Society and sponsored by CI-UM

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**, Oakland University, MI

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
Major Programming Achievements in 2012
密大孔院全年重要活动一览

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**: A concert of Chinese and greek seekongs

May 23 | **Peony Blossoms and Pure Melodies**, An evening of Chinese flower songs in the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden

August 20-October 20 | **Kunqu Photo Gallery** at U-M Hospital

September 17 | **Dragon's Blood: Heroes and the Environment in China**, lecture by Mark Bender, Associate Professor of Chinese, Ohio State University

September 26 | **Kunqu Lecture & Demonstration**

September 27 | **Performance of Scenes from Kungqu Opera** - Suzhou Kun Opera Theater performs at the University Hospital lobby

September 27 | **Symposium on Chinese Cultural Import and Export** (by invitation only)

September 28 and September 29 | **Kunqu performances by Suzhou Kun Opera Theater of Jiangsu Province**, jointly presented by UMS and CI-UM

October 24 | **The Place of Literature in Literature of Place: Travel Writing in Imperial China**, lecture by James Hargett, Professor of Chinese Studies, SUNY at Albany

October 27 | Variety Show by **Liaoning University Performance Troupe**

November 12 | **Pipa Lecture and Demonstration** by Min Xiaofen

November 13 | **An Evening with Jon Jang**, Jazz artist, and King-Chávez-Parks Visiting Professor at U-M

November 15 | **From the Real to the Virtual**, lecture by Miao Xiaochun, a multidisciplinary artist

November 19 | **Experimental Theatre in China Today**, lecture by Claire Conceison, Professor of Theater Studies and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Duke University

November 30 | **Environmental Awareness in Taiwanese Performing Arts**, lecture by Nancy Guy, associate professor of music, University of California, San Diego
For over three decades, jazz composer and pianist Jon Jang has given a musical voice to a history that has been silent. A majority of his works represents a chronology of Chinese American history in San Francisco. It was a privilege to invite him to the University of Michigan to be an artist-in-residence, to give lectures as a King-Chávez-Parks Visiting Professor at U-M, and to present a concert of his works.

Audience members at the evening concert were treated to compelling interpretations of pieces such as “Golden Snake Dance”, “Flower Drum Song”, and “East is Red”. The centerpiece of the program was A Portrait of Sun Yat-sen, one of Jang’s most acclaimed compositions that has both an English-language version and a Chinese one. The concert also featured renowned artists Min Xiao Fen (pipa, vocals), Andrew Bishop (ensemble director, soprano saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet), Robert L. Hurst III (double bass), Michael Gould (multiple percussion), William Lucas (trumpet), Adam Unsworth (French horn), and Yuma Uesaka (tenor saxophone, flute). The concert can be viewed in its entirety at http://confucius.umich.edu/videos.php.
**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.

**Taking Chinese Cultures on the Road**

Since a mobile China Culture Learning Center was established in Fall 2010, CI-UM has been able to promote its resources for Chinese culture and language learning donated by Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) among communities in Southeast Michigan area. During the past eight months, CI-UM staff has taken the mobile China Culture Learning Center along with selected Chinese textbooks and cultural reference books to several local Chinese Schools in Ann Arbor, Canton, Novi, and Troy as well as in the State Chinese Competition among Michigan Chinese Schools. Over 3,000 community members, including K-12 students, parents, and Chinese teachers have come through the exhibitions and/or had a hands-on experience at the China Culture Learning Center. Some have even started to make direct contact with Hanban for book donations and other supporting resources for learning Chinese language and cultures.

CI-UM has also donated textbooks from Hanban to the Oakland Intermediate School Districts—which was the first county in the U.S. to teach Chinese in all of its 28 school districts. To help U-M Symphony Band members to learn Chinese and about China for their May trip to China in 2011, CI-UM provided cultural reference books to the U-M School of Music, Theater & Dance and set up a China Culture Learning Center at the School's library. Through these activities, CI-UM maintains its focus on promoting the understanding of Chinese arts and cultures and helps to advance Hanban’s objectives of enhancing Chinese language learning opportunities worldwide.
From the Real to the Virtual

CI-UM was honored to invite acclaimed Beijing-based multidisciplinary artist Miao Xiaochun (缪晓春) to give a talk on his artistic endeavors. Entitled “From the Real to the Virtual,” the presentation covered many of Miao’s well-known works, which, according to the artist himself, presented “more and more the duality of real and virtual not likely to be separated from each other.” Through a series of slides, Miao demonstrated how his recent works expanded from their two-dimensional origins into a rich virtual space complete with enhanced depth and volume; the resulting imagery retains the semblance of the historical work, but is freed from past temporal associations to become ephemeral and utterly contemporary. Miao’s presentation at U-M was also made possible by Dennos Museum Center, Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City, MI.

Experimental Theatre in China Today

Claire Conceison (康开丽), Professor of Theater Studies and Asian & Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, is not only a scholar of contemporary Chinese theatre, but also a noted translator, director, and biographer - she recently authored “Voices Carry: Behind Bars and Backstage During China’s Revolution and Reform,” a collaborative autobiography of Ying Ruocheng (水流云在: 英若诚自传). In her much-anticipated lecture sponsored by CI-UM, Conceison provided a brief overview of theater’s development in mainland China and introduction to some of the most influential playwrights and directors, including Yu Rongjun (喻荣军) in Shanghai and Meng Jinghui (孟京辉) in Beijing. Accompanied by photographs and video clips, this presentation explained how forces such as politics, globalization, and commercialization have shaped performances on stage in contemporary China, and how artists like Yu and Meng have renewed the popularity of theater for young urban audiences.
Photo Captions:

a. Kunqu performance by Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre from the “Garden Party” scene of the Palace of Eternal Youth.

b. Tony Award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang discusses themes of translation and identity.

c. Jon Jang, a composer, pianist, and public intellectual, performs “An Evening of Chinese-American Jazz”.

d. 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.

e. 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.

f. (L-R) Joseph Lam, director of the Confucius Institute at U-M, greets David Henry Hwang, 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, i, j, k, l, m, & n. Kunqu performance by Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre.

o. Hai Zhen explains Kunqu history.


r. U-M Residential College students play Chinese instruments at their end-of-semester recital.


A Heartfelt Thank You to Jen Zhu

As part of the leadership team that established the CI-UM office, Ms. Jen Zhu served as the assistant director for communications and programming at CI-UM since its inception in 2009. She oversaw CI-UM’s communications, marketing, and publication projects for the last three years. Her contributions have been indispensable to CI-UM’s success. She will remain as China Initiatives Coordinator at U-M and embark on new challenges. We’re grateful to Jen for her wonderful years at the Confucius Institute; and we wish her all the best!
Confucius Institute
at the University of Michigan
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