Shen Wei Dance Arts: Second Visit to the Empress

Creative Teachers...Intelligent Students...Real Learning

07108 Youth Education

Teacher Resource Guide
About UMS

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With a program steeped in music, dance, theater, and education, UMS hosts approximately 80 performances and 150 free educational activities each season. UMS also commissions new work, sponsors artist residencies, and organizes collaborative projects with local, national as well as many international partners.

While proudly affiliated with the University of Michigan and housed on the Ann Arbor campus, UMS is a separate not-for-profit organization that supports itself from ticket sales, grants, contributions, and endowment income.

UMS Education and Audience Development Department

UMS's Education and Audience Development Department seeks to deepen the relationship between audiences and art, as well as to increase the impact that the performing arts can have on schools and community. The program seeks to create and present the highest quality arts education experience to a broad spectrum of community constituencies, proceeding in the spirit of partnership and collaboration.

The department coordinates dozens of events with over 100 partners that reach more than 50,000 people annually. It oversees a dynamic, comprehensive program encompassing workshops, in-school visits, master classes, lectures, youth and family programming, teacher professional development workshops, and “meet the artist” opportunities, cultivating new audiences while engaging existing ones.

For advance notice of Youth Education events, join the UMS Teachers email list by emailing umsyouth@umich.edu or visit www.ums.org/education.

Cover Photo: Shen Wei's Second Visit to the Empress by David Wainer
Shen Wei Dance Arts: Second Visit to the Empress
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Power Center, Ann Arbor
121 Fletcher Street

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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About the Performance

Photo by Shen Wei
Coming to the Show (For Students)

We want you to enjoy your time in the theater, so here are some tips to make your Youth Performance experience successful and fun! Please review this page prior to attending the performance.

What should I do during the show?
Everyone is expected to be a good audience member. This keeps the show fun for everyone. Good audience members...

- Are good listeners
- Keep their hands and feet to themselves
- Do not talk or whisper during the performance
- Laugh only at the parts that are funny
- Do not eat gum, candy, food or drink in the theater
- Stay in their seats during the performance
- Do not disturb the people sitting nearby or other schools in attendance

Who will meet us when we arrive?
After you exit the bus, UMS Education staff and greeters will be outside to meet you. They might have special directions for you, so be listening and follow their directions. They will take you to the theater door where ushers will meet your group. The greeters know that your group is coming, so there's no need for you to have tickets.

Who will show us where to sit?
The ushers will walk your group to its seats. Please take the first seat available. (When everybody’s seated, your teacher will decide if you can rearrange yourselves.) If you need to make a trip to the restroom before the show starts, ask your teacher.

How will I know that the show is starting?
You will know the show is starting because the lights in the auditorium will get dim, and a member of the UMS Education staff will come out on stage to introduce the performance.

What if I get lost?
Please ask an usher or a UMS staff member for help. You will recognize these adults because they have name tag stickers or a name tag hanging around their neck.

How do I show that I liked what I saw and heard?
The audience shows appreciation during a performance by clapping. In a musical performance, the musicians and dancers are often greeted with applause when they first appear. It is traditional to applaud at the end of each musical selection and sometimes after impressive solos. At the end of the show, the performers will bow and be rewarded with your applause. If you really enjoyed the show, give the performers a standing ovation by standing up and clapping during the bows. For this particular show, it will be most appropriate to applaud at the beginning and the ending.

What do I do after the show ends?
Please stay in your seats after the performance ends, even if there are just a few of you in your group. Someone from UMS will come onstage and announce the names of all the schools. When you hear your school’s name called, follow your teachers out of the auditorium, out of the theater and back to your buses.

How can I let the performers know what I thought?
We want to know what you thought of your experience at a UMS Youth Performance. After the performance, we hope that you will be able to discuss what you saw with your class. Tell us about your experiences in a letter or drawing. Please send your opinions, letters or artwork to: UMS Youth Education Program, 881 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011.
The Performance at a Glance

Each of these different elements can be the basis for introducing students to the upcoming performance.

Who are Shen Wei Dance Arts?
Hailed by the New York Times as “startlingly imaginative,” Shen Wei Dance Arts seeks a new approach to movement and the body for both performer and audience. With each new work, Artistic Director Shen Wei develops an original physical vocabulary based on movement research. The choreography, at turns representational and abstract, incorporates Eastern and Western aesthetics and strong scenic elements to create a total, hybridic productions. The result is a “fascinating fantasy in movement” (Sunday Morning Herald).

Who is Shen Wei?
Choreographer, dancer, painter, and designer, Shen Wei was born in Hunan, China. He studied Chinese Opera from the age of nine. Shen Wei moved to New York City and formed Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000. For the past seven years, the company has toured worldwide with his work. For each dance and opera work choreographed for his company, Shen Wei also creates the set, costume, and makeup designs.

Choreography
Choreography (also known as dance composition) is the “art of making visual structures in which movement occurs.” People who make these compositions are called choreographers. A choreographer creates a dance by having a vision and then arranging or directing the movements of the dancers. The choreographer must work closely with the dancers, the stage manager and musicians during rehearsals. Although mainly used in relation to dance, choreographers also work in various settings including fencing, gymnastics and ice skating.

Second Visit to the Empress
Second Visit to the Empress is the third in a triptych (a musical term used to mean a group of three compositions, usually by the same composer, which are linked by a uniting theme) of operas, preceded by Pillars of the Dynasty and Visiting the Mausoleum. The first two operas are depicted in summary form in the prologue of the current production.

In Empress, Li Liang stages a coup d’etat and soon controls the inner precincts of the imperial palace. The Empress and the young Emperor are inside and defenseless. The Empress now realizes and regrets her dreadful mistake. After mourning at the late Emperor’s shrine, Duke Xu and General Yang revisit the palace to advise the Empress. She admits her mistake, entrusts to them the care of the young Emperor, and offers to appoint them state advisors. General Yang and his men defeat Li Liang and have him executed. All avoid a potential disaster, and stability is preserved through the persistence of two loyal subjects. The Empress is credited for his wisdom to admit her mistake in time.

What is traditional Beijing Opera?
Among the hundreds of operatic styles found throughout China, Beijing opera has the greatest influence and is therefore regarded as the national form. Symbolism prevails, with pantomime forming the basis of physical storytelling.
Elaborate footwork, intricate hand or facial gestures, and codified body movements symbolize everyday as well as significant actions. Staging is likewise representative; four generals and four soldiers will represent an army of thousands.

**The Characters of Beijing Opera**

Characters in *Empress* assume three of the four role types common to traditional Chinese opera. For the accustomed opera-goer, these roles will immediately communicate gender, age, social status, and profession and moral quality.

*Sheng*, or male roles are subdivided into *lao sheng* (middle-aged or elderly men), *xiao sheng* (young men), and *wu sheng* (men with martial skill). In *Empress*, the latter characterizes General Yang.

*Dan*, or female roles, are subdivided into *qing yi* (of a strict moral code, as is Empress Li in this production), *wu dan* (women with martial skill, like Miss Xu), *hua dan* (vivacious younger women), and *lao dan* (elderly women).

*Jing*, or painted-face roles, usually include warriors, heroes, satesmen, or even demons. Jing are divided into *wen jing* (civilians) and *wu jing* (warriors, as is Duke Xu).

*Chou*, the fourth role type, is a clown-like figure and does not appear in *Empress*.

**Makeup**

In traditional Beijing opera, more than one thousand painted facial patterns are used with *jing* types to illustrate age, profession, and personality through color. In traditional opera, each color symbolizes a certain characteristic: red for loyalty and valor, black for a rough, stern or straightforward nature, yellow for rashness and ferocity, white for cunning and deceitfullness, and gold and silver for the deities.

**Costumes**

Costumes are bright and magnificently embroidered. Color connotes social status: yellow for the imperial family, red for high nobility, red or blue for the virtuous, white for elders, etc. Students usually wear blue gowns, generals wear padded armor, and emperors a dragon-like robe. Jeweled girdles and hair ornaments are also common.

**The Music and Instruments**

Beijing opera scoring combines tonal modalities from several regions, including *er huang* from the Anhui tradition, *xipi* from Hubei, and other elements from the Kunshan tradition. A typical orchestra is comprised of four principal instrument groups: bowed and plucked strings, woodwinds, and percussion. The two-stringed fiddles, the *jinghu* and *erhu*, together with the *dizi* and *sheng* (reed pipes), *yueqin* (moon-shaped mandolin), *pipa* (lute), and *suona* (clarinet), comprise the orchestral core. Percussive instruments include drums (such as the *gu*), bells, gongs, and hardwood clappers (*ban*).

While singing in Beijing opera calls predominantly in the *xipi* tradition, dialogue
Yunbai borrows from both the *yunbai* (Hubei and Anhui) and *jingbai* (Beijing) dialects. *Yunbai* is used by main and serious characters and *jingbai* for minor and frivolous roles.

**Modern Dance Influences**

During the performance, you will see choreography which incorporates modern dance elements. The dancers in *Second Visit to the Empress* are described as a characterless, physicalized counterpart to the score, embodying the music through movement. Their movements are meant to be purely abstract, a sort of physical manifestation of the music, and as such, are not meant to “mean something.”

**How *Second Visit to the Empress* is Different than traditional Beijing Opera**

Shen Wei’s main goal in updating this opera was to make it more accessible to contemporary audiences (Chinese or otherwise). He wanted to deliver the best parts of the traditional form in such a way as to capture the attention of today’s audience while maintaining the overall “feel” of Beijing opera. As a result, the version of *Second Visit to the Empress* your students will see is more contemporary than it is traditional. The original opera is very static, with the three main characters rarely moving and focusing more on the singing; when there is movement, it is usually very small gesture. Even the most seasoned opera-goers have found this opera hard to sit through. Shen Wei sought with *Empress* to provide an alternate point of access through modern dance. In this version, the opera singers move quite a bit, and their movements are much bigger, and at times, they interact with the dancers. Traditionally, the stage is also much smaller, and thus does not require as much movement.

The makeup and costuming in the piece are not as literal as in traditional opera as described above. Certain of the current production’s costumes recall those of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), but differ from tradition in that they are a single bright color as opposed to containing lots of colors. In addition, some of the costumes include water sleeves, long flowing sleeves that can be flicked and waved like water, attached to facilitate emotive gestures. These are found in traditional costuming.

Althought *Empress* is traditionally staged using a single stage environment throughout the entire performance, this version employs seven. From a design standpoint, Shen Wei attempted to honor the noblest elements of traditional Chinese arts, taking special notice of water painting. However, there are more Western, modern influences, a reflection of working, studying, and interacting with Western forms in New York and throughout Europe.

**Some Notes for the Students:**

The dancers movements are meant to be purely abstract and are not meant to “mean something.” Guide students to watch and listen to how the movements and the music go together. Ask them to think about the reasons they move the way they do when they hear a certain song and suggest that it’s most likely a response to something they hear or respond to in the song.

While the dancers are providing abstract movement to represent the musical
qualities of the story, the characters (opera singers) are clear storytellers, and their movements are more literal.

Duke Xu is wearing red and has a long white beard, General Yang is wearing green and has a long black beard. Empress Li wears purple, and Miss Xu wears green. (For color photos of the characters, see the CD accompanying this guide).

Students will notice writing on the screen on stage when they enter the auditorium to take their seats. These are Chinese characters written in calligraphy for the title, Second Visit to the Empress.

In the prologue, the three main characters sing behind what’s called a scrim, a screen that can be flown in and out and can be either opaque or translucent depending on where the stage is lit. When the stage is lit behind the screen, the scrim becomes translucent (when the stage is not lit behind, the scrim is opaque and cannot be seen through, as at the beginning of the production before the singing begins). It also has the effect of making the action behind it seems “fuzzy,” much like a flashback sequence in a movie or on TV. The prologue is catching the viewers up on the action that happens before the start of this opera, and is a flashback. The scrim, or fuzziness of the scene, helps convey this.

Whenever there is a scenic element depicting mountains, trees, flowers etc., the action is happening outside the Palace. Likewise, when these set pieces are absent, the story is taking place inside.

When a scene changes, the students will see action happening on stage, like a change in lighting, set pieces entering and leaving, and different screens flying in and out. Go through the plot synopsis and the six scenes which make up Second Visit to the Empress prior to attending the show, and have students think about what the setting is for each, and what sorts of clues they might see.

During a portion of the scenes taking place in the Palace, there are glowing set pieces which the dancers dance on top of. These are meant to be laterns. Shen Wei chose to use the lighting as a way to create a cohesive production; the lighting throughout the entire story seems to glow from within and behind, and often does not appear to be coming from a definitive light source. By placing the laterns on the ground, they became not just a practical light source, but a piece of the set itself, and as such, a part of the overall movement of the production.
Second Visit to the Empress

Photo by David Wainer
Second Visit to the Empress is the third in a triptych (a musical term used to mean a group of three compositions, usually by the same composer, which are linked by a unifying theme) of operas, preceded by Pillars of the Dynasty and Visiting the Mausoleum. The first two operas are depicted in summary form in the prologue of the current production.

**Pillars of Dynasty**
Following the death of Emperor Muzong (1567-72), Empress Li assumes the role of regent, as her infant, the new heir to the throne, is too young to attend to state affairs. Not knowing that her own father, Li Liang, plans to usurp the throne, she announces her intent to appoint Li Liang as interim governor. Two senior courtiers, Duke Xu Yangzhao and General Yang Bo, are strongly opposed, but the Empress is adamant. A fierce argument ensues, and the Duke and General have a falling out with the Empress.

**Visiting the Mausoleum**
Duke Xu and General Yang are devastated that their advice was refused. At the mausoleum, they tearfully pray at the grave of the late Emperor, vowing to save the imperiled country.

**Second Visit to the Empress**
Li Liang stages a coup d’etat and soon controls the inner precincts of the imperial palace. The Empress and the young Emperor are inside and defenseless. The Empress now realizes and regrets her dreadful mistake. After mourning at the late Emperor’s shrine, Duke Xu and General Yang revisit the palace to advise the Empress. She admits her mistake, entrusts them the care of the young Emperor, and offers to appoint them state advisors. General Yang and his men defeat Li Liang and have him executed. All avoid a potential disaster, and stability is preserved through the persistence of two loyal subjects. The Empress is credited for his wisdom to admit her mistake in time.

**Scene 1**
Prologue: Pillars of Dynasty and Visiting the Mausoleum

**Scene 2**
Empress Li is imprisoned inside the Palace

**Scene 3**
Duke Xu and General Yang revisit the Palace

**Scene 4**
Duke Xu and General Yang’s second visit to the Empress.

**Scene 5**
Duke Xu and General Yang leave the Palace

**Scene 6**
Epilogue
I always picture an old man holding a tea pot, a bird cage or a fan, with eyes half closed and walking slowly or sitting in the park, whistling his favorite phrases and enjoying the cadence of the Chinese Opera music. It is this image and the same joy of music that has led me to choose this work, *Second Visit to the Empress*.

In Chinese Opera it is not the plot which is the most important element, but the presentation of the art form’s collaborative elements: music, singing, dialogue, pantomime, acrobatics, and martial arts. Thus, it is the rich music and singing rather than the story line that has drawn me to *Second Visit to the Empress*. While it might not be the most popular work in the Chinese Opera repertory in China, it is by far some of the best music written in this art form.

In 1978 I was lucky to be selected to study Chinese Opera (Xiang Opera style) at the Hunan State Arts School, and *Second Visit to the Empress* was one of the first operas we learned to sing. Almost every Chinese Opera performer’s training begins with studying this repertory piece. These initial singing lessons are called “the repertory of the opening”. *Second Visit to the Empress* is one of the most difficult and challenging works to sing, often taking years to learn and master.

Since leaving from my work as a Chinese Opera performer in 1989, it has been one of my dreams to one day revise a traditional Chinese Opera. Now, 16 years later I am revisiting this beautiful art form with *Second Visit to the Empress*.

This work features three main characters with very different singing techniques to present the three different characters. I have developed a discrete movement vocabulary to interpret each. Traditionally these three characters were staged in a triangle at center stage, remaining more or less stationary from beginning to end, with the Empress seated in the center and Xu and Yang standing on each side, each character solely concentrating on singing from beginning to the end. It appears the staging may have been this way since the repertory came to exist 200-300 years ago. *Second Visit to the Empress* has always been considered a difficult opera for audiences to sit through, as there is little stage action. The focus of the opera becomes listening to the music and lyrics. Even for audiences who regularly attend Chinese Opera, it is considered a difficult opera to watch. This static approach impacted the form’s accessibility, especially among modern audiences. Sensing an increasing apathy toward the form in China and a relative ambivalence in the West, I have sought with *Empress* to provide an alternate point of access through modern dance. We have done the same with the scenery. Although *Empress* is traditionally staged using a single stage environment throughout the entire performance, this version employs seven.

From a design standpoint, I have attempted to honor the noblest elements of traditional Chinese arts, taking special notice of water painting. There are also, inevitably, more Western, modern influences, as I have had the benefit of working, studying, and interacting with Western forms in New York and throughout Europe.
The creative process for *Second Visit to the Empress* allowed the traditional Chinese Opera performers to develop a connection to the contemporary performing arts and the Shen Wei Dance Arts company members to train for a better understanding of the traditional art of Chinese Opera. A hybrid creative process allows the vocalists to engage with other performing arts and expand their capacity in movement and interpretation. These performers, rigorously trained in the traditional format, have encountered an entirely different process of storytelling. And since the performance of a Chinese opera score is interpretive (these vocalists and musicians explore variations in meter and phrasing with each performance) our dancers, who are accustomed to Western meter and tonalities, are challenged to understand the jazz-like cadence, textures, and irregularities inherent in the performance of a Chinese opera score. With the choreography, I have attempted to create a vocabulary parallel to the internal energy, fluctuations, surging tempi, and polyphonic movement of the vocals.

Musically there have been some changes made. I asked the Music Director to keep and develop the best parts of the score and to edit the parts in need of improvement, while still following the traditional musical form. In keeping with traditional form, we use a full Chinese Opera orchestra complete with 18 different Chinese instruments played by 16 musicians.

My hope is that today's audiences will, by way of this movement, find renewed access to, and appreciation for, this treasure of world culture.

-Shen Wei
Second Visit to the Empress is a landmark of the Beijing opera canon, and this production represents the first known new staging of the work in over 200 years. The opera originated in the Xian region sometime during the early part of the 18th century (artists unknown), prior to the establishment of a nationalized form of opera in Peking during the Qing Dynasty. In 1790, Emperor Qianlong, inspired by the manifold operatic traditions he encountered in his travels throughout China, convened a quartet of companies from four regions, including Xian, from whose collaboration emerged the style we recognize today as Beijing opera. Second Visit to the Empress originally featured Master Chen Der Ling and premiered at the private theater in the Qing Dynasty Palace, where it was given audiences by Empress Dowager Cixi.

Beijing opera is a comprehensive performing art combining music, singing, dialogue, pantomime, acrobatics, and martial arts. Because Empress features an unusually demanding vocal score, each vocalist has been selected for a mastery of roles typified by distinct vocal styles: the wife or attendant (female soprano), the intellectual/philosopher advisor (male soprano), and the military advisor (baritone). The current production also incorporates 16 musicians (on 18 traditional Chinese instruments), as well as a corps of 12 dancers who form a characterless, physicalized counterpart to the score, embodying the music through movement. Zhenguo Liu has adapted the score, enhancing its strengths and editing where necessary while preserving the traditional form.

The production premiered at the American Dance Festival in June 2005. The 2007 version includes 20 minutes of new material (the prologue, which summarizes the first two parts of the opera triptych). The overall vision draws the traditional structure of Beijing opera through the lens of Shen Wei’s choreographic and scenic style.
Members of Shen Wei Dance Arts. Photo by Shen Wei.

Shen Wei Dance Arts
About the Artists

Shen Wei Dance Arts seeks a new approach to movement and the body for both performer and audience. With each work, Artistic Director Shen Wei develops an original physical vocabulary based on movement research. The choreography, at turns representational and abstract, incorporates Eastern and Western aesthetics and strong scenic elements to create a total, hybridic production. Since its inception at the American Dance Festival in 2000, the company has made 4 appearances at the Lincoln Center Festival (2003-2005, 2007), repeated engagements at the American Dance Festival (1995, 2000-2007), and two at the Venice Biennale (2004, 2005). In addition, Shen Wei Dance Arts has appeared in festivals around the world, from Spoleto to Jacob's Pillow, Dublin to Rome, and Montpellier to Hong Kong, Mexico City, and Sydney.

Shen Wei
Artistic Director, Concept, Direction, Choreography, Set, and Costumes

Choreographer, dancer, painter, and designer, Shen Wei was born in Hunan, China. He studied Chinese Opera from the age of nine. From 1984 to 1989, he worked with the Hunan Province Xian Opera Company. From 1991 to 1994, he was an original member (dancer and choreographer) of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the first modern dance company in China, with which he appeared in festivals in Korea, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and India. After receiving a scholarship from the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab in 1995, Shen Wei moved to New York City and formed Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000. For the past seven years, the company has toured worldwide with his work, including Rite of Spring, Folding, Near the Terrace (Parts I and II), Connect Transfer, Map, Behind Resonance, and Re- (Part I). For each dance and opera work choreographed for his company, Shen Wei also creates the set, costume, and makeup designs.

Shen Wei has received numerous awards. In China he won first prize for both choreography and performance at the 1994 Inaugural National Modern Dance Competition. In the United States, he received a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2000, and, in that same year, the American Dance Festival’s Ben Sommer Fellowship. He was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001, the Nijinksy Award for Emerging Choreographer in 2004, Australia’s 2005 Helpmann Award for Best Ballet or Dance Work, and the 2006 Les Etoiles de Ballet at the Palais des Festival in Cannes, France. He has received commissions from the American Dance Festival (1995, 2000-2006), Het-Muziektheater Amersterdam (2004 and 2007), Lincoln Center Festival (2005), the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2007), New York City Opera (2005), Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater II, Dances We Dance Company of Hawaii, the Margrit Mondavi Center for Performing Arts at the University of California-Davis, and the Guangdong Modern Dance Company.
Shen Wei is also a visual artist whose paintings have been exhibited in New York and Hong Kong; a series of paintings created in conjunction with his ballet Rite of Spring were first exhibited as part of the company’s New York debut at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2003. In October 2006, the paintings toured with the company to the Hong Kong New Vision Festival.

Zhang Jing
Empress Li /Chinese Opera Performer
Zhang Jing is one of the foremost Peking Opera Performing Artists in China. She graduated from the prestigious China Academy of Drama and holds membership in prestigious Chinese Theatre Association (aka Chinese Dramatists Association). She studied Peking Opera under the tutelage of maestro Xiaomei Shen and Jiubao Mei. In 1990, she performed with master artists in the opera Farewell, won the Television Award and starred in the opera Death in Mai Wei Slope, which won five awards in National Outstanding Chinese Opera Performance Exhibition. In the same year, she was given the title of Performing Star of Tianjin City. At invitation, Ms. Zhang became a special artist in Lanfang Mei Peking Opera Theatre in 1995. Together with this group, Ms. Zhang toured extensively to Russia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and other places in Southeast Asia. In 1997, 1999 and 2000, Ms. Zhang performed three times in the CCTV Spring Festival Concert, one of the most significant and important events in China. This concert is broadcasted at prime time on Lunar New Year’s Eve on all television stations in the nation at the same and is relayed to Chinese communities abroad by major Chinese television stations, such as Sinovision in New York.

Deng Mu-wei
Duke Xu /Chinese Opera Performer
Deng Mu-wei is recognized as National First Class Performing Arts, the highest level of professional ranking in the field. As a superb artist, Mr. Deng holds numerous national first class awards, including Chinese Opera Plum Blossom Award, Best Performance Award in National Middle-Aged and Young Peking Opera Performing Artists TV Competition, Golden Award in Langfang Mei Golden Award Competition. In addition to his regular participation in national first level competitions, Mr. Deng also actively performs in the CCTV Spring Festival Concert and other prestigious concerts sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, which is one of the most significant cultural events in China.

He Wei
General Yang/Chinese Opera Performer
He Wei was born in 1957, and is a First Class Opera Performer in China. He graduated from the Hebei Province School of Performance Arts and furthered his studies at the China Traditional Opera Academy in Beijing, majoring in lao sheng(elderly male) roles. He was promoted to the China Chinese Opera company in 1993, performing lead roles in Generals of the Yang Family, Beating Drums and Yelling at Cao, Yang Silang Visits His Mother, and many other famous works. His artistry has been highly acclaimed by the Chinese media, and he has received a variety of awards, including the Best Vocal Performance in the China Broadcast Theater and Vocal Competition in 2001, the First Prize

**Song Yang**  
**Miss Xu / Chinese Opera Performer**

Song Yang studied Beijing Opera at the China Traditional Opera Academy in Beijing starting at the age of 10 and was the principal performer with the Beijing Opera Company performing throughout China. In 1999, she played the lead supporting role of Madam Du as well as ten other minor characters in Chen Shi-Zheng’s 20-hour opera *The Peony Pavilion*, premiered at Lincoln Center Festival and toured in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Milan, Perth and other major festivals around the world. Ms Song has sung solo vocal with the Lyon Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Orchestra and the Singapore Orchestra for Tan Dun’s Gate. In 2003, She played the male general for the Chinese version of *The Orphan of Zhao* at Lincoln Center Festival. Ms Song teaches Beijing Opera movement and martial Arts at China’s Traditional Opera Academy in Beijing and at Cal Arts in Los Angeles.

**Zhenguo Liu**  
**Music Direction, Jinghu**

Zhenguo Liu started his training in jinghu at age eight and was admitted to the prestigious China Theater College. After graduating, he was retained by the college as a faculty member, becoming the youngest jinghu teacher in the school’s history. At age 23, he was selected as jinghu player for Ma Changli, a distinguished master of Beijing Opera. Liu has over 30 years of professional performing and teaching experience and has received much recognition and many awards for his virtuosity. He has taught and performed extensively throughout the East Coast, particularly in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, where he worked with the Philadelphia Chinese Opera Society. In 2004 he established the Zhenguo Beijing Opera House, both in New York and New Jersey, a training program that now enrolls over 100 students.

**Dancers**

**Reid Bartelme**

Reid Barelme was born in New York City. He started his dance training while studying music at Interlochen Arts Academy. He continued his dance education at SUNY Purchase and the Pacific Northwest Ballet School. He has worked with Ballet Met in Columbus, Ohio, and Alberta Ballet in Calgary. Bartelme joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2007.

**Brooke M. Broussard**

Brooke M. Broussard is a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, where she began studying modern dance. In 2000, Broussard earned her bachelor of fine arts in dance from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she studied under Patricia A. McConnell as a scholarship student. In 1999 and 2000 Broussard was awarded scholarships to attend the American Dance Festival where she met Shen Wei. She moved to New York City and became a founding company member of Shen Wei Dance Arts. Broussard has created and performed her own choreography in New York at CBGSs, P.S. 122, and Pianos, as well as for
the Louisiana Dance Festival and NOHspace in San Francisco.

**Lindsay Clark**
Lindsay Clark was born in San Francisco, California. She attended North Carolina School of the Arts and received her bachelor of fine arts from SUNY Purchase. Clark joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2005.

**Andrew Cowan**
Andrew Cowan was born in southern California where he began his dance training at the Idyllwild Arts Academy. He continued his dance training at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, where he received a bachelor of fine arts in dance. Cowan has performed in New York with various companies, including WilliamsWorks and Keigwin+Co. Most recently, he toured in the United Kingdom and Israel with BareBones, performing works by David Massingham, Arther Pita, and Liam Steel. Cowan joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2007.

**Dai Jian**
Dai Jian was born in Hunan Province, China, and is a recent graduate of the Beijing Dance Academy. He majored in performance and choreography and studied Graham technique, Limon repertory, release techniques, and Tai Chi. Dai joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2005. From 2004 to 2005, he performed with the Jin Xing Dance Company. He also studied modern dance at the Guangdong ATV Professional Academy for Performing Arts founded by Madam Yang Meiqi.

**Jessica Harris**
Jessica Harris received her dance training at the Chapel Hill Ballet School and Carolina Friends School. She has danced with Carolina Dancers, Chapel Hill Dance Theater, Duke University’s 15-501 Ballet, and the Whirlwind Dance Company and is the founder of the Carolina Friends School Annual Alumni Dance Project. Harris joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000.

**James Healey**
James Healey is originally from Grants Pass, Oregon. He began his career as a gymnast, which led to an introduction to dance through his high school drill team. Healey continued his path in dance as a scholarship student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the American Dance Festival. After graduating, he became an acrobat on the Las Vegas strip, moved to California for three years with Malashock Dance & Company in San Diego, and proudly became a founding company member of Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000.

**Hou Ying**
Hou Ying was born in Jilin, China, and is a graduate of the Jilin Arts Institute. She studied Chinese dance at the Beijing Dance Academy and worked for the Beijing Police’s Art Troupe. She danced with the Guangdong Modern Dance Company from 1994 to 2002 and also choreographed many works for the company. She won first prize for choreography at the 9th Belarussian Vitebsk Modern Dance Competition and was a recipient of an Asian Cultural Council 2002 Fellowship. She joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2002.
**Sara Procopio**
Sara Procopio is originally from Syracuse, New York. She began her dance training at the Center for Ballet and Dance Arts and received her bachelor's and master's degrees in liberal studies from Hollins University. While at Hollins, she co-founded the Hollins Dance Project under the artistic direction of Donna Faye Burchfield and also studied extensively at the American Dance Festival. Procopio joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000.

**Joan Wadopian**
Joan Wadopian is from Asheville, North Carolina. She holds a bachelor of fine arts from the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase and has worked with SYREN and the Kevin Wynn Collection. Wadopian joined Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2005.

**Musicians**

**Cheng Lin Huang**
**Jing Erhu, Dizi**
Cheng Lin Huang is a graduate of the Shanghai Chinese Drama School, where he studied under Kong Jin, Zhao Jigeng, and Dai Jinfu. He is a master of various instruments including the two-stringed fiddle, flute, Chinese clarinet, and moon-shaped mandolin, among others.

**Hong Wei Niu**
**Xiaoluo**
Hong Wei Niu was admitted to the prestigious Hebei Arts School in 1990 and became a principal percussionist with the Hebei Bangzi Opera Group in 1993. In 2001 he was recognized by the fifth annual Hebei Province National Beating Music Competition and in 2003 won the Gold Prize at the China National Beating Music Competition.

**Kejun Liu**
**Da Gerhu**
Kejun Liu is a member of the prestigious China Dramatists Association. He studied at the Hebei Arts School and Hebei University, majoring in music theory and composition, graduating with high honors in 2000. In 2002 he held a solo concert at the esteemed Hebei Arts Center.

**Li Fang Xu**
**Zhonghu**
Li Fang Xu studied at the Shengyang Conservatory of Music in composition, jinghu, yueqin, and erhu. For the last 20 years, she has taught and performed widely throughout the United States.

**Li Ping Zhang**
**Bangu**
Li Ping Zhang graduated from the music department at China Music Drama School and was awarded the first prize in percussion three times at the Folk Music Competition held by China Central Radio Station. In China he has served as conductor for the Youth Peking Opera Troupe in Beijing.
Shaoqiang Zhang
Daluo
Shaoqiang Zhang began his studies at age nine with his grandfather, a famous Chinese percussionist. In 1996 he was admitted to study with the esteemed Hebei Bangzi Opera Group. Since 2002 he has been performing as a principal member of the Hebei Bangzi Opera Group.

Shi Rong Huang
Jiu Yingluo
Shi Rong Huang graduated from the Shanghai Traditional Opera School in 1996 and has performed in more than 50 Beijing and Kunqu operas as percussion conductor, including Cao Cao and Yang Xiu. He won first prize at the National Opera Gala sponsored by the China Cultural Department.

Yi Zhou
Pipa
Yi Zhou is a graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in China. A recipient of many awards, he has toured Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Italy as a soloist with the Chinese National Music Group. In 1998 he was invited to perform and lecture throughout the United States.

Yun Xie
Sheng, Dizi
Yun Xie graduated from the Tianjin Music Conservatory and has worked at the City of Tianjin Opera House. From a very young age, he studied with the well-known performer and educator Liu Guanyue.

Jimmy Zhao
Erhu
Jimming Zhao began his music training at the Children’s Palace in Dalian, a school for the musically gifted. Later he studied under Ming-Yuan Liu, a famous composer and zhonghu virtuoso. After arriving in the United States, he became principal of the zhonghu section in the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, as well as the erhu and banhu soloist and concertmaster. He has since focused on teaching and education, founding the Zhao Zhi Min Chinese Music School in 2000 and the Overseas Chinese Music Ensemble in 2003.

Zhao Shun Guo
Daruan
Zhao Shun Guo graduated from the Tianjin Music Conservatory and was a soloist with the Tianjin Provincial Dancing and Singing Troupe. He won Best New Composition in a competition held by China Central TV in 1987 and first prize in pipa at the national competition of ethnic musical instruments in 1991.

Zheng Ping Zhao
Yueqin
Zheng Ping Zhao graduated from the Shanghai Opera Academy, specializing in Beijing Opera. He is a master of more than 10 musical instruments and has more than 30 years of stage experience, performing in over 1000 shows in major cities in China and abroad. He has performed, lectured, and taught
classes throughout North America.

**Zhiyong Zhou**

**Raubuo**

Zhiyong Zhou is a principal performer with the acclaimed Hebei Bangzi Opera Group. Zhou graduated from the Hebei Arts School in 1990 with a degree in Hebei Bangzi (a form of Chinese opera from the Hebei province). In 2002 he was rated as a first-class percussionist in China, the equivalent of a Grammy award in the United States.
About Chinese Opera
History of Chinese Opera

Chinese Opera is a popular form of drama and musical theatre in China. There are numerous regional branches of opera with its original root starting in the dynastic periods. Chinese Opera is not a derivative of Western opera, but is rather a distinct form of musical theater.

Dynastic Periods

In general, Chinese opera dates back to the Tang Dynasty with Emperor Xuanzong (712–755), who founded the Pear Garden, the first known opera troupe in China. The troupe mostly performed for the emperors' personal pleasure. To this day operatic professionals are still referred to as Disciples of the Pear Garden. In the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), forms like the Zaju (variety plays), which acts based on rhyming schemes plus the innovation of having specialized roles like Dan (female), Sheng (male), Hua (painted-face) and Chou (clown) were introduced into the opera. The dominant form of the Ming and early Qing dynasties was Kunqu, which came from the Wu cultural area, and evolved a longer form of play called chuanqi. Chinese operas continue to exist in 368 different forms now, the best known of which is Beijing opera, which assumed its present form in the mid-19th century and was extremely popular in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911).

In Beijing opera, traditional Chinese string and percussion instruments provide a strong rhythmic accompaniment to the acting. The acting is based on allusion: gestures, footwork, and other body movements express such actions as riding a horse, rowing a boat, or opening a door. Spoken dialogue is divided into recitative and Beijing colloquial speech, the former employed by serious characters and the latter by young females and clowns. Character roles are strictly defined. Elaborate make-up designs portray which character is acting. The traditional repertoire of Beijing opera includes more than 1,000 works, mostly taken from historical novels about political and military struggles.

Republic of China (1912 - 1949)

In traditional Chinese theater, no plays were performed in the vernacular Chinese or without singing. But at the turn of the 20th century, Chinese students returning from abroad began to experiment with Western plays. Following the May Fourth Movement of 1919, a number of Western plays were staged in China, and Chinese playwrights began to imitate this form. The most notable of the new-style playwrights was Cao Yu (b. 1910). His major works — Thunderstorm, Sunrise, Wilderness, and Peking Man — written between 1934 and 1940, have been widely read in China.

In the 1930s, theatrical productions performed by traveling Red Army cultural troupes in Communist-controlled areas were consciously used to promote party goals and political philosophy. By the 1940s, theater was well established in the Communist-controlled area.
People’s Republic of China (1949 - Present)

In the early years of the People’s Republic of China, the development of Beijing opera was encouraged; many new operas on historical and modern themes were written, and earlier operas continued to be performed. As a popular art form, opera has usually been the first of the arts to reflect changes in Chinese policy. In the mid-1950s, for example, it was the first to benefit under the Hundred Flowers Campaign. The Hundred Flowers Campaign, also termed the Hundred Flowers Movement, is the period referring to a brief interlude in the People’s Republic of China from 1956 to 1957 during which the Chinese Communist Party authorities encouraged a variety of views and solutions to ongoing problems, launched under the slogan: “Let a hundred flowers bloom, let the hundred schools of thought contend.” However, there is debate amongst historians about the campaign being a political trap, alleging that Mao persecuted those who had views different from the party. The ideological crackdown following the campaign’s failure re-imposed Maoist orthodoxy in public expression.

Similarly, the attack in November 1965 on Beijing deputy mayor Wu Han and his historical play, Hai Rui’s Dismissal from Office, signaled the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, most opera troupes were disbanded, performers and scriptwriters were persecuted, and all operas except the eight “model operas” approved by Jiang Qing and her associates were banned. Western-style plays were condemned as “dead drama” and “poisonous weeds” and were not performed.

After the fall of the Gang of Four (a group of Communist Party of China leaders in the People’s Republic of China who were arrested and removed from their positions in 1976, following the death of Mao Zedong, and were primarily blamed for the events of the Cultural Revolution), in 1976, Beijing Opera enjoyed a revival and continued to be a very popular form of entertainment both in theaters and on television.

Following the Cultural Revolution, Western-style theater experienced a revival. Many new works appeared, and revised and banned plays from China and abroad were reinstated in the national repertoire. Many of the new plays strained at the limits of creative freedom and were alternately commended and condemned, depending on the political atmosphere. One of the most outspoken of the new breed of playwrights was Sha Yexin. His controversial play The Imposter, which dealt harshly with the favoritism and perquisites accorded party members, was first produced in 1979. In early 1980 the play was roundly criticized by Secretary General Hu Yaobang - the first public intervention in the arts since the Cultural Revolution. In the campaign against bourgeois liberalism in 1981 and the antispiritual pollution campaign in 1983, Sha and his works were again criticized. Through it all Sha continued to write for the stage and to defend himself and his works in the press. In late 1985 Sha Yexin was accepted into the Chinese Communist Party and appointed head.
Beijing opera or Peking opera is a form of Chinese opera which arose in the late 18th century and became fully developed and recognized by the mid-19th century. The form was extremely popular in the Qing Dynasty court and has come to be regarded as one of the cultural treasures of China. Major performance troupes are based in Beijing and Tianjin in the north, and Shanghai in the south. The art form is also enjoyed in Taiwan, and has spread to other countries such as the United States and Japan.

Beijing opera features four main types of performers. Performing troupes often have several of each variety, as well as numerous secondary and tertiary performers. With their elaborate and colorful costumes, performers are the only focal points on Beijing opera’s characteristically sparse stage. They utilize the skills of speech, song, dance, and combat in movements that are symbolic and suggestive, rather than realistic. Above all else, the skill of performers is evaluated according to the beauty of their movements. Performers also adhere to a variety of stylistic conventions that help audiences navigate the plot of the production. The layers of meaning within each movement must be expressed in time with music. The music of Beijing opera can be divided into the Xipi and Erhuang styles. Melodies include arias, fixed-tune melodies, and percussion patterns. The repertoire of Beijing opera includes over 1,400 works, which are based on Chinese history, folklore, and, increasingly, contemporary life.

In recent years, Beijing opera has attempted numerous reforms in response to sagging audience numbers. These reforms, which include improving performance quality, adapting new performance elements, and performing new and original plays, have met with mixed success. Some Western works have been adopted as new plays, but a lack of funding and an adverse political climate have left Beijing opera’s fate uncertain as the form enters the 21st century.

Origins
It is regarded that Beijing opera was born when the Four Great Anhui Troupes came to Beijing in 1790. Beijing opera was originally staged for the court and came into the public later. In 1828, some famous Hubei troupes came to Beijing. They often jointly performed in the stage with Anhui troupes. The combination gradually formed Beijing opera’s main melodies. Beijing opera is generally regarded as having fully formed by 1845. Although it is called Beijing opera, its origins are in the Chinese provinces of Anhui and Hubei. Beijing opera’s two main melodies; Xipi and Erhuang originated from Anhui and Hubei operas. Much dialogue is also carried out in an archaic dialect originating partially from those regions. It also absorbed music and arias from other operas and musical art forms. Some scholars believe that the Xipi musical form was derived from the historic Qin-qiang opera, while many conventions of staging, performance elements, and aesthetic principles were retained from Kunqu, the form that preceded it as court art.
Thus, Beijing opera is not actually a monolithic form, but rather a coalescence of many older forms. However, the new form also introduced its own innovations. The vocal requirements for all of the major roles were greatly reduced for Beijing opera. The Chou, in particular, rarely has a singing part in Beijing opera, unlike the equivalent role in Kunqu opera. The melodies that accompany each play were also simplified, and are played with different traditional instruments than in earlier forms. Perhaps most noticeably, true acrobatic elements were introduced with Beijing opera. The form grew in popularity throughout the 19th century. The Anhui troupes reached their peak of excellence in the middle of the century, and were invited to perform in the court of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom that had been established during the Taiping Rebellion. Beginning in 1884, the Empress Dowager Cixi became a regular patron of Beijing opera, cementing its status over earlier forms like Kunqu. The popularity of Beijing opera has been attributed to the simplicity of the form, with only a few voices and singing patterns. This allowed anyone to sing the arias themselves.

Beijing opera was initially an exclusively male pursuit. The Qianlong Emperor had banned all female performers in Beijing in 1772. The appearance of women on the stage began unofficially during the 1870s. Female performers began to impersonate male roles and declared equality with men. They were given a venue for their talents when Li Maoer, himself a former Beijing opera performer, founded the first female Beijing opera troupe in Shanghai. By 1894, the first commercial venue showcasing female performance troupes appeared in Shanghai. This encouraged other female troupes to form, which gradually increased in popularity. As a result, opera artist Yu Zhenting petitioned for the lifting of the ban after the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. This was accepted, and the ban was lifted in 1912, although male Dan continued to be popular after this period.

**Beijing opera after the Chinese Civil War**

After the Chinese Civil War, Beijing opera became a focal point of identity for both involved parties. When the Communist Party of China came to power in mainland China in 1949, the newly formed government moved to bring art into line with Communist ideology, and “to make art and literature a component of the whole revolutionary machine”. To this end, dramatic works without Communist themes were considered subversive, and were ultimately banned during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Among the eight model plays eventually retained during that time were five Beijing operas. Notable among these operas was *The Legend of the Red Lantern*, which was approved as a concert with piano accompaniment based on a suggestion from Jiang Qing, wife of Mao Zedong. Performances of works beyond the eight model plays were allowed only in heavily modified form. The endings of many traditional plays were changed, and visible stage assistants in Beijing opera were eliminated. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s, traditional Beijing Opera began to be performed again. Beijing opera and other theatrical art forms were a controversial subject both before and during the Twelfth National People’s Congress in 1982. A study carried in the People’s Daily revealed that over 80 percent of musical dramas staged in the country were traditional plays from the...
pre-Communist era, as opposed to newly written historical dramas promoting socialist values. In response, Communist party officials enacted reforms to curb liberalism and foreign influence in theatrical works.

After the retreat of the Republic of China to Taiwan in 1949, Beijing opera there took on a special status of “political symbolism”, in which the Kuomintang government encouraged the art form over other forms of opera in an attempt to claim a position as the sole representative of Chinese culture. This often occurred at the expense of traditional Taiwanese opera. Due to its status as a prestigious art form with a long history, Beijing opera has indeed been studied more and received more monetary support than other forms of theater in Taiwan. However, there has also been a competing movement towards advocating native opera to differentiate Taiwan from the mainland. In September of 1990, when the Kuomintang government participated in a state-sponsored mainland cultural event for the first time, a Taiwanese opera group was sent, possibly to emphasize “Taiwaneseness.”

Modern Beijing opera

During the second half of the 20th century, Beijing opera witnessed a steady decline in audience numbers. This has been attributed both to a decrease in performance quality and an inability of the traditional opera form to capture modern life. Furthermore, the archaic language of Beijing opera required productions to utilize electronic subtitles, which hampered the development of the form. The influence of Western culture has also left the younger generations impatient with the slow pacing of Beijing opera. In response, Beijing opera began to see reform starting in the 1980s. Such reforms have taken the form of creating a school of performance theory to increase performance quality, utilizing modern elements to attract new audiences, and performing new plays outside of the traditional canon. However, these reforms have been hampered by both a lack of funding and a sensitive political climate that makes the performance of new plays difficult.

In addition to more formal reform measures, Beijing opera troupes during the 1980s also adopted more unofficial changes. Some of those seen in traditional works have been called “technique for technique’s sake”. This has included the use of extended high pitch sequences by female Dan, and the addition of lengthier movement sections and percussion sequences to traditional works. Such changes have generally met with disdain from Beijing opera performers, who see them as ploys to gain immediate audience appeal. Plays with repetitive sequences have also been shortened to hold audience interest. New works have naturally experienced a greater freedom to experiment. Regional, popular, and foreign techniques have been adopted, including Western style makeup and beards and new face paint designs for Jing characters. The spirit of reform continued during the 1990s. To survive in an increasingly open market, troupes like the Shanghai Jingju Company needed to bring traditional Beijing opera to new audiences. To do this, they have offered an increasing number of free performances in public places.
There has also been a general feeling of a shift in the creative attribution of Beijing opera works. The performer has traditionally played a large role in the scripting and staging of Beijing opera works. However, perhaps following the lead of the West, Beijing opera in recent decades has shifted to a more director and playwright centered model. Performers have striven to introduce innovation in their work while heeding the call for reform from this new upper level of Beijing opera producers.

**Training**

Becoming a Beijing opera performer requires a long and arduous apprenticeship beginning from an early age. Prior to the 20th century, pupils were often handpicked at a young age by a teacher and trained for seven years on contract from the child’s parents. Since the teacher fully provided for the pupil during this period, the student accrued a debt to his master that was later repaid through performance earnings. After 1911, training took place in more formally organized schools. Students at these schools rose as early as five o’clock in the morning for exercises. Daytime was spent learning the skills of acting and combat, and senior students performed in outside theatres in the evening. If they made any mistakes during such performances, the entire group was beaten with bamboo canes. Schools with less harsh training methods began to appear in 1930, but all schools were closed down in 1931 after the Japanese invasion. New schools were not opened until 1952.

Performers are first trained in acrobatics, followed by singing and gestures. Several performing schools, all based on the styles of famous performers, are taught. Some examples are the Mei Lanfang school, the Cheng Yanqiu school, the Ma Lianliang school, and the Qi Lintong school. Students previously trained exclusively in the art of performance, but modern opera schools now include academic studies as well. Teachers assess the qualifications of each student and assign them roles as primary, secondary, or tertiary characters accordingly. Students with little acting talent often become Beijing opera musicians. They may also serve as the supporting cast of foot soldiers, attendants, and servants that is present in every Beijing opera troupe. In Taiwan, the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of China runs a national Beijing opera training school.
There are four main character types in Beijing Opera. For colored photos of some the character types, see the CD accompanying this guide.

**Sheng**
The Sheng is the main male role in Beijing opera. This role has numerous sub-types. The laosheng is a dignified older role. These characters have a gentle and cultivated disposition and wear sensible costumes. One type of laosheng role is the hongsheng, a red-faced older male. The only two hongsheng roles are Guan Gong, the Chinese God of War, and Zhao Kuang-yin, the first Song Dynasty emperor. Young male characters are known as xiaosheng. These characters sing in a high, shrill voice with occasional breaks to represent the voice changing period of adolescence. Depending on the character’s rank in society, the costume of the xiaosheng may be either elaborate or simple. The wusheng is a martial character for roles involving combat. They are highly trained in acrobatics, and have a natural voice when singing. Troupes will always have a laosheng actor. A xiaosheng actor may also be added to play roles fitting to his age. In addition to these main Sheng, the troupe will also have a secondary laosheng.

**Dan**
The Dan refers to any female role in Beijing opera. Dan roles were originally divided into five subtypes. Old women were played by laodan, martial women were wudan, young female warriors were daomadan, virtuous and elite women were qingyi, and vivacious and unmarried women were huadan. One of Mei Lanfang’s most important contributions to Beijing opera was in pioneering a sixth type of role, the huashan. This role type combines the status of the qingyi with the sensuality of the huadan. A troupe will have a young Dan to play main roles, as well as an older Dan for secondary parts. In the early years of Beijing opera, all Dan roles were played by men. Wei Changsheng, a male Dan performer in the Qing court, developed the cai ciao, or “false foot” technique, to simulate the bound feet of women and the characteristic gait that resulted from the practice.

**Jing**
The Jing is a painted face male role. Depending on the repertoire of the particular troupe, he will play either primary or secondary roles. This type of role will entail a forceful character, so a Jing must have a strong voice and be able to exaggerate gestures. Beijing opera boasts 16 basic facial patterns, but there are over 100 specific variations. The patterns and coloring are thought to be derived from traditional Chinese color symbolism and divination on the lines of a person’s face, which is said to reveal personality. Easily recognizable examples of coloring include red, which denotes uprightness and loyalty, white, which represents evil or crafty characters, and black, which is given to characters of soundness and integrity. Three main types of Jing roles are often seen. These include dongchui, a loyal general with a black face who excels in singing, jiazi, a complex character played by a skilled actor, and wujing, a martial and acrobatic character.

For more information about the face makeup of the Jing character, see lesson plan 2. For photos, see the CD accompanying this guide.
Chou
The Chou is a male clown role. The Chou usually plays secondary roles in a troupe. Indeed, most studies of Beijing opera classify the Chou as a minor role. The name of the role is a homophone of the Mandarin Chinese word chou, meaning “ugly”. This reflects the traditional belief that the clown’s combination of ugliness and laughter could drive away evil spirits. Chou roles can be divided into Wen Chou, civilian roles such as merchants and jailers, and Wu Chou, minor military roles. The Wu Chou is one of the most demanding in Beijing opera, because of its combination of comic acting, acrobatics, and a strong voice. Chou characters are generally amusing and likable, if a bit foolish. Their costumes range from simple for characters of lower status to elaborate, perhaps overly so, for high status characters. Chou characters wear special face paint, called xiaohualian, that differs from that of Jing characters. The defining characteristic of this type of face paint is a small patch of white chalk around the nose. This can represent either a mean and secretive nature or a quick wit.

Beneath the whimsical persona of the Chou, a serious connection to the form of Beijing opera exists. The Chou is the character most connected to the guban, the drums and clapper commonly used for musically accompaniment during performances. The Chou actor often uses the guban in solo performance, especially when performing Shu Ban, light-hearted verses spoken for comedic effect. The clown is also connected to the small gong and cymbals, percussion instruments that symbolize the lower classes and the raucous atmosphere inspired by the role. Although Chou characters do not sing frequently, their arias feature large amounts of improvisation. This is considered a license of the role, and the orchestra will accompany the Chou actor even as he bursts into an unscripted folk song. However, due to the standardization of Beijing opera and political pressure from government authorities, Chou improvisation has lessened in recent years. The Chou has a vocal timbre that is distinct from other characters, as the character will often speak in the common Beijing dialect, as opposed to the more formal dialects of other characters.

For more information and to view video of each of these character roles, visit: http://www.novelhall.org.tw/arthur/chineseopera/ehome.htm

For colored photos of the character types, see the CD accompanying this guide.
Performance Elements
Beijing opera performers utilize four main skills. The first two are song and speech. The third is dance-acting. This includes pure dance, pantomime, and all other types of dance. The final skill is combat, which includes both acrobatics and fighting with all manner of weaponry. All of these skills are expected to be performed effortlessly, in keeping with the spirit of the art form.

Aesthetic Aims and Principles
Beijing opera follows other traditional Chinese arts in emphasizing meaning, rather than accuracy. The highest aim of performers is to put beauty into every motion. Indeed, performers are strictly criticized for lacking beauty during training. Additionally, performers are taught to create a synthesis between the different aspects of Beijing opera. The four skills of Beijing opera are not separate, but rather should be combined in a single performance. One skill may take precedence at certain moments during a play, but this does not mean that other actions should cease. Much attention is paid to tradition in the art form, and gestures, settings, music, and character types are determined by long held convention. This includes conventions of movement, which are used to signal particular actions to the audience. For example, walking in a large circle always symbolizes traveling a long distance, and a character straightening his or her costume and headdress symbolizes that an important character is about to speak. Some conventions, such as the pantomimic opening and closing of doors and mounting and descending of stairs, are more readily apparent.

Many performances deal with behaviors that occur in daily life. However, in accordance with the overriding principle of beauty, such behaviors are stylized to be presented on stage. Beijing opera does not aim to accurately represent reality. Experts of the art form contrast the principles of Beijing opera with the principle of Mo, mimesis or imitation, that is found in western dramas. Beijing opera should be suggestive, not imitative. The literal aspects of scenes are removed or stylized to better represent intangible emotions and characters. The most common stylization method in Beijing opera is roundness. Every motion and pose is carefully manipulated to avoid sharp angles and straight lines. A character looking upon an object above them will sweep their eyes in a circular motion from low to high before landing on the object. Similarly, a character will sweep their hand in an arc from left to right in order to indicate an object on the right. This avoidance of sharp angles extends to three dimensional movement as well; reversals of orientation often take the form of a smooth, S-shaped curve. All of these general principles of aesthetics are present within other performance elements as well.
Beijing opera stages have traditionally been square platforms. The action on stage is usually visible from at least three sides. The stage is divided into two parts by an embroidered curtain called a shoujiu. Musicians are visible to the audience on the front part of the stage. Traditional Beijing opera stages were built above the line of sight of the viewers, but some modern stages have been constructed with higher audience seating. Viewers are always seated south of the stage. Therefore, north is the most important direction in Beijing opera, and performers will immediately move to “center north” upon entering the stage. All characters enter from the east and exit from the west. In line with the highly symbolic nature of Beijing opera, the form utilizes very few props. This reflects seven centuries of Chinese opera tradition. The presence of large objects is frequently indicated through conventions. The stage will almost always have a table and at least one chair, which can be turned through convention into such diverse objects as a city wall, a mountain, or a bed. Peripheral objects will often be used to signify the presence of a larger, main object. For example, a whip is used to indicate a horse and an oar symbolizes a boat.

The length and internal structure of Beijing opera plays is highly variable. Prior to 1949, zhezixi, short plays or plays made up of short scenes from longer plays, were often performed. These plays usually center on one simple situation or feature a selection of scenes designed to include all four of the main Beijing opera skills and showcase the virtuosity of the performers. This format has become less prevalent in recent times, but plays of one act are still performed. These short works, as well as individual scenes within longer works, are marked by an emotional progression from the beginning of the play to the end. For example, the concubine in the one act play The Favorite Concubine Becomes Intoxicated begins in a state of joy, and then moves to anger and jealousy, drunken playfulness, and finally to a feeling of defeat and resignation. A full-length play usually has from six to fifteen or more scenes. The overall story in these longer works is told through contrasting scenes. Plays will alternate between civil and martial scenes, or scenes involve protagonists and antagonists. There are several major scenes within the work that follow the pattern of emotional progression. It is these scenes that are usually excerpted for later zhezixi productions. Some of the most complex plays may even have an emotional progression from scene to scene.
Due to the scarcity of props in Beijing opera, costumes take on added importance. Costumes function first to distinguish the rank of the character being played. Emperors and their families wear yellow robes, and high ranking officials wear purple. The robe worn by these two classes is called a *mang*, or *python robe*. It is a costume suitable for the high rank of the character, featuring brilliant colors and rich embroidery, often in the design of a dragon. Persons of high rank or virtue wear red, lower ranking officials wear blue, young characters wear white, the old wear white, brown, or olive, and all other men wear black. On formal occasions, lower officials may wear the *kuan yi*, a simple gown with patches of embroidery on both the front and back. All other characters, and officials on informal occasions, wear the *chezi*, a basic gown with varying levels of embroidery and no jade girdle to denote rank. All three types of gowns have water sleeves, long flowing sleeves that can be flicked and waved like water, attached to facilitate emotive gestures. Tertiary characters of no rank wear simple clothing without embroidery. Hats are intended to blend in with the rest of the costume and will usually have a matching level of embroidery. Shoes may be high or low soled, the former being worn by characters of high rank, and the latter by characters of low rank or acrobatic characters.

For colored photos of costuming, see the CD accompanying this guide.
The accompaniment for a Beijing opera performance usually consists of a small ensemble of traditional melodic and percussion instruments. The lead melodic instrument is the jinghu, a small high pitched two string spike fiddle. The second is the circular bodied plucked lute, the ruan. Performances are begun with rigorous beating of the daluo and xiaoluo, large and small cymbals that call the audience to their places. The two main musical styles of Beijing opera, Xipi and Erhuang, originally differed in subtle ways. In the Xipi style, the strings of the jinghu are tuned to the keys of A and D. The melodies in this style are very disjointed, possibly reflecting the style’s derivation from the high and loud melodies of the Qinqiang opera of northwestern China. It is commonly used to tell joyous stories. In Erhuang, on the other hand, the strings are tuned to the keys of C and G. This reflects the low, soft, and despondent folk tunes of south-central Hubei province, the style’s place of origin. As a result, it is used for lyrical stories. Both musical styles have a standard meter of two beats per bar. The two musical styles share six different tempos, including manban (a slow tempo), yuanban (a standard, medium-fast tempo), kuai sanyan (“leading beat”), daoban (“leading beat”), sanban (“rubato beat”), and yaoban (“shaking beat”). The xipi style also utilizes several unique tempos, including erliu (“two-six”), and kuaiban (a fast tempo). Of these tempos, yuanban, manban, and kuaiban are most commonly seen. The tempo at any given time is controlled by a percussion player who acts as director. Erhuang has been seen as more improvisational, and Xipi as more tranquil. The lack of defined standards among performance troupes and the passage of time may have made the two styles more similar to each other today.

The melodies played by the accompaniment mainly fall into three broad categories. The first is the aria. The arias of Beijing opera can be further divided into those of the Erhuang and Xipi varieties. An example of an aria is wawa diao, an aria in the Xipi style that is sung by a young Sheng to indicate heightened emotion. The second type of melody heard in Beijing opera is the fixed-tune melody, or qupai. These are instrumental tunes that serve a wider range of purposes than arias. Examples include the Water Dragon Tune, which generally denotes the arrival of an important person, and Triple Thrust, which may signal a feast or banquet. The final type of musical accompaniment is the percussion pattern. Such patterns provide context to the music in ways similar to the fixed-tune melodies. For example, there are as many as 48 different percussion patterns that accompany stage entrances. Each one identifies the entering character by his or her individual rank and personality.
There are 18 instruments played by 16 musicians in *Second Visit to the Empress*. For colored photos of some of the instruments, see the CD accompanying this guide.

**Bowed Strings**

**Jinghu**  A jinghu is a Chinese bowed string musical instrument used primarily in Beijing opera. Its high pitch and vigorous tone is considered an ideal accompaniment to Beijing opera, in which the Jinghu performs the melodies. In its accompaniment, the Jinghu coordinates with the vocal part very closely. It has two strings that were formerly made of silk, but which in modern times are increasingly made of steel.

**Erhu**  The erhu, sometimes known in the West as the “Chinese violin” or Chinese two-string fiddle, is a two-stringed bowed musical instrument, used as a solo instrument as well as in small ensembles and large orchestras. Traditionally the two strings are made of silk, although metallic strings are used as well. The player of an erhu usually sits, and the erhu is placed on his left upper thigh in front of his left hip. The instrument is played by moving the bow horizontally through the two vertical strings.

Go to the following link to see a video clip or listen to an audio file of the erhu: http://learningobjects.wesleyan.edu/vim/cgi-bin/instrument.cgi?id=19

**Zhonghu**  The zhonghu is a low-pitched Chinese bowed string instrument. It is was developed in the 20th century to be used in orchestras of Chinese traditional instruments. The zhonghu is the same as the erhu but is slightly larger and is lower pitched.

**Plucked Strings**

**Yueqin**  The yueqin is a traditional Chinese string instrument. It is a lute with a round, hollow wooden body. Along with the Jinghu, and the Jingerhu, the Yueqin is considered one of the three great Beijing Opera string instruments.

**Daruan**  The ruan is a Chinese plucked string instrument. It is a lute with a fretted neck, a circular body, and four strings. Its strings were formerly made of silk but since the 20th century they have been made of steel. It comes in five sizes, and the bass version is known as the daruan. The instrument can be played using a *plectrum* similar to a guitar pick or using a set of two or five acrylic nails that are affixed to the fingers with adhesive tape.

Visit the following link to see a video clip or listen to an audio file of the daruan: http://learningobjects.wesleyan.edu/vim/cgi-bin/instrument.cgi?id=125
**Pipa**  The pipa is a plucked Chinese string instrument. Sometimes called the Chinese lute, the instrument has a pear-shaped wooden body. It has been played for nearly two thousand years of history in China, and belongs to the plucked category of instruments. The name pipa is made up of two Chinese syllables, *pi* and *pa*. These are the two most common ways of playing this instrument. *Pi* is to push the fingers of the right hand from right to left, thus more than one finger can be used at a time striking multiple notes, and *pa* is to pull the thumb of the right hand from left to right, in the opposite direction. The strings were originally played using a large plectrum (guitar pick) then gradually replaced by the fingernails of the right hand. Since the revolutions in Chinese instrument making during the 20th century, the softer twisted silk strings of earlier times have been exchanged for nylon-wound steel strings, which are far too strong for human fingernails, so false nails are now used, constructed of plastic or tortoise-shell, and affixed to the fingertips with the player’s choice of elastic tape.

Visit the following link to see a video clip of the pipa: http://www.philmultic.com/liufang/video/

**Zhongruan**  The zhongruan is the tenor size of the ruan.

Visit the following link to see a video clip or listen to an audio file of the zhongruan:  http://learningobjects.wesleyan.edu/vim/cgi-bin/instrument.cgi?id=126

**Winds**

**Dizi**  The dizi is a Chinese transverse flute. It is a major Chinese musical instrument, and is widely used in many genres of Chinese folk music, as well as Chinese opera, and the modern Chinese orchestra. Traditionally, the dizi has also been popular among the Chinese common people, and it is simple to make and easy to carry. Most dizi are made of bamboo, which explains why dizi are sometimes known by simple names such as “Chinese bamboo flute.”

**Sheng**  The Chinese sheng is a mouth-blown free reed instrument consisting of vertical pipes in the Chinese orchestra. Traditionally, the Sheng has been used for accompaniment to small ensembles. In the modern symphonic Chinese orchestra, it is used for both melody and accompaniment. Its warm mellow sound expresses lyrical melodies well, while its ability to play chords makes it a highly prized accompaniment instrument. In the early 1800s the sheng inspired the invention of the harmonica, accordion, and reed organ.
Percussion

Bangu  The bangu is also commonly called Jing Bangu (bangu for Beijing opera). The drum’s frame is constructed of thick wedges of hard wood glued together in a circle, wrapped with a metal band. Its body is bell mouthed in shape, open at the bottom. Its top surface, covered with a piece of pig or cow-hide, has a small convex central circular opening, which is called the Guxin (drum heart), the actual sounding position. The player strikes on this central area with a pair of bamboo sticks. The type used for Beijing opera, with a smaller central striking area, has a relatively solid tone quality. The type used for the southern gong and drum ensemble, with a larger striking area, is loose and soft in tone. The Jing Bangu leads the percussion section in the instrumental ensemble of the Beijing opera.

Jiu Yingluo  The jiu yingluo is a standing instrument with multiple cymbals hanging from it.

Daluo  The daluo is a large cymbal that call the audience to their places.

Xiaoluo  The xiaoluo is a small cymal that call the audience to their places.

Raubuo  The raubuo is also a small cymbal, though it is characteristically played with a piece of cloth.
Quick Facts: China

Location
Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

Area
Total: 3,705,407 sq miles (slightly smaller than the US)
Land: 3,600,947 sq miles
Water: 104,460 sq miles

Land Boundaries
Total: 13,743 miles
Border countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, India, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia (northeast), Russia (north-west), Tajikistan, and Vietnam

Regional borders:
Hong Kong, Macau

Coastline
9010 miles

Climate
Extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

Terrain
Mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

Elevation Extremes
Lowest point: Turpan Pendi -505 ft (the second lowest point on Earth, the first being the Dead Sea)
Highest point: Mount Everest 29,035 ft

Natural Resources
Coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydro-power potential (world's largest)

Land Use
Arable land: 14.86%
Permanent crops: 1.27%
Other: 83.87% (2005)

Natural Hazards
Frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts; land subsidence

Current Environmental Issues
Air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on
coal produces acid rain; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; deforestation; estimated loss of one-fifth of agricultural land since 1949 to soil erosion and economic development; desertification; trade in endangered species

Geography Note
World’s fourth largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US); Mount Everest on the border with Nepal is the world’s tallest peak

Population
1,321,851,888 (July 2007 est.)

Age Structure
0-14 years: 20.4% (male 143,527,634/female 126,607,344)
15-64 years: 71.7% (male 487,079,770/female 460,596,384)
65 years and over: 7.9% (male 49,683,856/female 54,356,900) (2007 est.)

Birth Rate
13.45 births/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Death Rate
7 deaths/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Infant Mortality Rate
total: 22.12 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 20.01 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 24.47 deaths/1,000 live births (2007 est.)

Life Expectancy at Birth
Total population: 72.88 years
Male: 71.13 years
Female: 74.82 years (2007 est.)

HIV/AIDS-Adult Prevalence Rate
0.1% (2003 est.)

Nationality
Noun: Chinese (singular and plural)
Adjective: Chinese

Ethnic Groups
Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

Religions
Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Christian 3%-4%, Muslim 1%-2%
note: officially atheist (2002 est.)

Language
Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue
Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)

Literacy
Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Total population: 90.9%
Male: 95.1%
Female: 86.5% (2000 census)

Country Name
Conventional long form: People’s Republic of China
Conventional short form: China
Local long form: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
Local short form: Zhongguo
Abbreviation: PRC

Government Type
Communist state

Capital
Name: Beijing
Geographic coordinates: 39 56 N, 116 24 E
Time difference: UTC+8 (13 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)
Note: despite its size, all of China falls within one time zone

Independence
221 BC (unification under the Qin or Ch’in Dynasty); 1 January 1912 (Manchu Dynasty replaced by a Republic); 1 October 1949 (People’s Republic established)

National Holiday
Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China, 1 October (1949)

Suffrage
18 years of age; universal

Flag Description
Red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner

Economy Overview
China’s economy during the last quarter century has changed from a centrally planned system that was largely closed to international trade to a more market-oriented economy that has a rapidly growing private sector and is a major player in the global economy. Reforms started in the late 1970s with the phasing out of collectivized agriculture, and expanded to include the gradual liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, the
foundation of a diversified banking system, the development of stock markets, the rapid growth of the non-state sector, and the opening to foreign trade and investment. China has generally implemented reforms in a gradualist or piecemeal fashion, including the sale of equity in China's largest state banks to foreign investors and refinements in foreign exchange and bond markets in 2005. The restructuring of the economy and resulting efficiency gains have contributed to a more than tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. Measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, China in 2006 stood as the second-largest economy in the world after the US, although in per capita terms the country is still lower middle-income and 130 million Chinese fall below international poverty lines. Economic development has generally been more rapid in coastal provinces than in the interior, and there are large disparities in per capita income between regions. The government has struggled to: (a) sustain adequate job growth for tens of millions of workers laid off from state-owned enterprises, migrants, and new entrants to the work force; (b) reduce corruption and other economic crimes; and (c) contain environmental damage and social strife related to the economy's rapid transformation. From 100 million to 150 million surplus rural workers are adrift between the villages and the cities, many subsisting through part-time, low-paying jobs. One demographic consequence of the “one child” policy is that China is now one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world. Another long-term threat to growth is the deterioration in the environment - notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table, especially in the north. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and economic development. China has benefited from a huge expansion in computer Internet use, with more than 100 million users at the end of 2005. Foreign investment remains a strong element in China's remarkable expansion in world trade and has been an important factor in the growth of urban jobs. In July 2005, China revalued its currency by 2.1% against the US dollar and moved to an exchange rate system that references a basket of currencies. In 2006 China had the largest current account surplus in the world - nearly $180 billion. More power generating capacity came on line in 2006 as large scale investments were completed. Thirteen years in construction at a cost of $24 billion, the immense Three Gorges Dam across the Yangtze River was essentially completed in 2006 and will revolutionize electrification and flood control in the area. The 11th Five-Year Program (2006-10), approved by the National People's Congress in March 2006, calls for a 20% reduction in energy consumption per unit of GDP by 2010 and an estimated 45% increase in GDP by 2010. The plan states that conserving resources and protecting the environment are basic goals, but it lacks details on the policies and reforms necessary to achieve these goals.

Labor Force-By Occupation
Agriculture: 45%
Industry: 24%
Services: 31% (2005 est.)

Unemployment Rate
4.2% official registered unemployment in urban areas in 2005; substantial unemployment and underemployment in rural areas (2005)
Population Below Poverty Level
10% (2004 est.)

Agriculture Products
Rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, apples, cotton, oilseed; pork; fish

Industries
Mining and ore processing, iron, steel, aluminum, and other metals, coal; machine building; armaments; textiles and apparel; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizers; consumer products, including footwear, toys, and electronics; food processing; transportation equipment, including automobiles, rail cars and locomotives, ships, and aircraft; telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles, satellites

Currency
Yuan (CNY); note - also referred to as the Renminbi (RMB)

Exchange Rates

Military Branches
People’s Liberation Army (PLA): Ground Forces, Navy (includes marines and naval aviation), Air Force (includes airborne forces), and Second Artillery Corps (strategic missile force); People’s Armed Police (PAP); Reserve and Militia Forces (2006)

Military Service Age and Obligation
18-22 years of age for compulsory military service, with 24-month service obligation; no minimum age for voluntary service (all officers are volunteers); 18-19 years of age for women high school graduates who meet requirements for specific military jobs (2007)

International Issues
Based on principles drafted in 2005, China and India continue discussions to resolve all aspects of their extensive boundary and territorial disputes together with a security and foreign policy dialogue to consolidate discussions related to the boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, and other matters; recent talks and confidence-building measures have begun to defuse tensions over Kashmir, site of the world’s largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India does not recognize Pakistan’s ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; lacking any treaty describing the boundary, Bhutan and China continue negotiations to establish a boundary alignment to resolve substantial cartographic discrepancies, the largest of which lies in Bhutan’s northwest; China asserts sovereignty over the Spratly Islands together with Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei; the 2002 “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea” eased tensions in the Spratly’s but is not the legally bind
The national oil companies of China, the Philippines, and Vietnam signed a joint accord to expand construction of facilities in the Spratly Islands; China occupies some of the Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan; China and Taiwan continue to reject both Japan's claims to the uninhabited islands of Senkaku-shoto (Diaoyu Tai) and Japan's unilaterally declared equidistance line in the East China Sea, the site of intensive hydrocarbon prospecting; certain islands in the Yalu and Tumen rivers are in dispute with North Korea; China seeks to stem illegal migration of North Koreans; China and Russia have demarcated the once disputed islands at the Amur and Ussuri confluence and in the Argun River in accordance with their 2004 Agreement; in 2006, China and Tajikistan pledged to commence demarcation of the revised boundary agreed to in the delimitation of 2002; demarcation of the China-Vietnam land boundary proceeds slowly and although the maritime boundary delimitation and fisheries agreements were ratified in June 2004, implementation remains stalled; in 2004, international environmentalist and political pressure from Burma and Thailand prompted China to halt construction of 13 dams on the Salween River.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Refugees (country of origin): 300,897 (Vietnam), estimated 30,000-50,000 (North Korea)
IDPs: 90,000 (2006)

Trafficking in Persons

Current situation: China is a source, transit, and destination country for women, men, and children trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor; the majority of trafficking in China is internal, but there is also international trafficking of Chinese citizens; women are lured through false promises of legitimate employment into commercial sexual exploitation in Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan; Chinese men and women are smuggled to countries throughout the world at enormous personal expense and then forced into commercial sexual exploitation or exploitative labor to repay debts to traffickers; women and children are trafficked into China from Mongolia, Burma, North Korea, Russia, and Vietnam for forced labor, marriage, and sexual slavery; most North Koreans enter northeastern China voluntarily, but others reportedly are trafficked into China from North Korea; domestic trafficking remains the most significant problem in China, with an estimated minimum of 10,000-20,000 victims trafficked each year; the actual number of victims could be much greater; some experts believe that the serious and prolonged imbalance in the male-female birth ratio may now be contributing to Chinese and foreign girls and women being trafficked as potential brides.

Tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - China failed to show evidence of increasing efforts to address transnational trafficking; while the government provides reasonable protection to internal victims of trafficking, protection for Chinese and foreign victims of transnational trafficking remain inadequate.

Illicit Drugs

major transshipment point for heroin produced in the Golden Triangle region of Southeast Asia; growing domestic drug abuse problem; source country for chemical precursors, despite new regulations on its large chemical industry.
Lesson Plans
Introduction

The following lessons and activities offer suggestions intended to be used in preparation for the UMS Youth Performance. These lessons are meant to be both fun and educational, and should be used to create anticipation for the performance. Use them as a guide to further exploration of the art form. Teachers may pick and choose from the cross-disciplinary activities and can coordinate with other subject area teachers. You may wish to use several activities, a single plan, or pursue a single activity in greater depth, depending on your subject area, the skill level or maturity of your students and the intended learner outcomes.

Learner Outcomes

- Each student will develop a feeling of self-worth, pride in work, respect, appreciation and understanding of other people and cultures, and a desire for learning now and in the future in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.

- Each student will develop appropriately to that individual's potential, skill in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, problem solving, and examining and utilizing information using multicultural, gender-fair and ability-sensitive materials.

- Each student will become literate through the acquisition and use of knowledge appropriate to that individual’s potential, through a comprehensive, coordinated curriculum, including computer literacy in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.
ARTS EDUCATION
Standard 1: Performing  All students will apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.
Standard 2: Creating  All students will apply skills and knowledge to create in the arts.
Standard 3: Analyzing in Context  All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.
Standard 4: Arts in Context  All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.
Standard 5: Connecting to other Arts, other Disciplines, and Life  All students will recognize, analyze and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication  All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.
Standard 6: Voice  All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Standard I-1: Time and Chronology  All students will sequence chronologically eras of American history and key events within these eras in order to examine relationships and to explain cause and effect.
Standard I-3: Analyzing and Interpreting the Past  All students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.
Standard II-1: People, Places, and Cultures  All students will describe, compare and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures and settlements.
Standard VII-1: Responsible Personal Conduct  All students will consider the effects of an individual’s actions on other people, how one acts in accordance with the rule of law and how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as a member of society.

MATH
Standard I-1: Patterns  Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships and construct representations of mathematical relationships.
Standard I-2: Variability and Change  Students describe the relationships among variables, predict what will happen to one variable as another variable is changed, analyze natural variation and sources of variability and compare patterns of change.
Standard III-3: Inference and Prediction  Students draw defensible inferences about unknown outcomes, make predictions and identify the degree of confidence they have in their predictions.

SCIENCE
Standard I-1: Constructing New Scientific Knowledge  All students will ask questions that help them learn about the world; design and conduct investigations using appropriate methodology and technology; learn from books and other sources of information; communicate their findings using appropriate technology; and reconstruct previously learned knowledge.
Standard IV-4: Waves and Vibrations  All students will describe sounds and sound waves; explain shadows, color, and other light phenomena; measure and describe vibrations and waves; and explain how waves and vibrations transfer energy.
CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY

Standard 1: Applied Academic Skills  All students will apply basic communication skills, apply scientific and social studies concepts, perform mathematical processes and apply technology in work-related situations.

Standard 2: Career Planning  All students will acquire, organize, interpret and evaluate information from career awareness and exploration activities, career assessment and work-based experiences to identify and to pursue their career goals.

Standard 3: Developing and Presenting Information  All students will demonstrate the ability to combine ideas or information in new ways, make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas and organize and present information in formats such as symbols, pictures, schematics, charts, and graphs.

Standard 4: Problem Solving  All students will make decisions and solve problems by specifying goals, identifying resources and constraints, generating alternatives, considering impacts, choosing appropriate alternatives, implementing plans of action and evaluating results.

Standard 5: Personal Management  All students will display personal qualities such as responsibility, self-management, self-confidence, ethical behavior and respect for self and others.

Standard 7: Teamwork  All students will work cooperatively with people of diverse backgrounds and abilities, identify with the group's goals and values, learn to exercise leadership, teach others new skills, serve clients or customers and contribute to a group process with ideas, suggestions and efforts.

TECHNOLOGY

Standard 2: Using Information Technologies  All students will use technologies to input, retrieve, organize, manipulate, evaluate and communicate information.

Standard 3: Applying Appropriate Technologies  All students will apply appropriate technologies to critical thinking, creative expression and decision-making skills.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Standard 2: Using Strategies  All students will use a variety of strategies to communicate in a non-English language.

Standard 8: Global Community  All students will define and characterize the global community.

Standard 9: Diversity  All students will identify diverse languages and cultures throughout the world.
Before the game begins, fill in each box with one of the vocabulary words or phrases below. Your teacher will call out the definition for one of the words below. If you’ve got the matching word on your board, cover the space with your chip. When you’ve got a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row of five chips, call out WORD-O!

<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
Lesson 1: Understanding the Characters of Beijing Opera

Objective
To enable the students to enjoy and understand the 4 characters of traditional Beijing Opera.

Standards
Arts Education:
Standard 3: Analyzing in Context All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.

Standard 4: Arts in Context All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Standard 6: Voice All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

MATH
Standard I-1: Patterns Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships and construct representations of mathematical relationships.

Standard III-3: Inference and Prediction Students draw defensible inferences about unknown outcomes, make predictions and identify the degree of confidence they have in their predictions.

CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY
Standard 3: Developing and Presenting Information All students will demonstrate the ability to combine ideas or information in new ways, make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas and organize and present information in formats such as symbols, pictures, schematics, charts, and graphs.

Materials
This guide and the CD accompanying this guide

Activity
I. Identifying Beijing Opera Characters
Describe the character types to students, using the color photos provided on the CD as an example. Once students are comfortable with the 4 roles, have them identify character roles from new pictures, explaining their reasoning.
II. Creating Your Own Beijing Opera Character
Have students think of their favorite character from a fairy tale, story, cartoon, etc. Ask them to think of the personality traits, skills, and social status (if applicable) that that character possess and write them down. Once students have their list, have them decide which of the 4 types of Beijing Opera roles (and the sub-type of that role, if possible) their character is most similar to.
Lesson 2: Face Painting

Objective
To enable the students to enjoy and understand the painted face character of traditional Chinese Opera.

Standards
Arts Education:
Standard 3: Analyzing in Context  All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.

Standard 4: Arts in Context  All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication  All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Standard 6: Voice  All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

MATH
Standard I-1: Patterns  Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships and construct representations of mathematical relationships.

Standard III-3: Inference and Prediction  Students draw defensible inferences about unknown outcomes, make predictions and identify the degree of confidence they have in their predictions.

CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY
Standard 3: Developing and Presenting Information  All students will demonstrate the ability to combine ideas or information in new ways, make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas and organize and present information in formats such as symbols, pictures, schematics, charts, and graphs.

Background Info:
In Chinese Opera, the painted face performer is called jing. In Second Visit to the Empress, the jing is portrayed by Duke Xu. The jing is usually a warrior, bandit, or hero, and always a man.

Face painting was first created, so the story goes, to change a young prince with soft features into a heroic warrior able to frighten his enemies. In theater, each color and symbol of the painted face carries a special meaning and gives the audience some idea of the personality of the character on stage. They can tell at once whether the actor is playing a good guy or a bad guy.

There are three main types of painted faces: gods and spirits, humans, and demons.
To do your own authentic opera make-up, this is what you need to know:

**Color**
- **red or black**: for heroes - loyal and brave
- **purple**: for heroes too - quiet and strong
- **white**: for villains - sly and cruel
- **yellow**: for bad guys - cunning and sneaky
- **blue**: for bandits - fierce and bold, bad temper
- **green**: for warriors and bandits - stubborn, excitable
- **gold**: for supernatural creatures, the most powerful gods
- **silver**: for supernatural creatures, second in line

**Pattern**
- **General rule**: The more complicated the pattern, the more likely the character is bad or evil; the more simple the pattern, the nobler he is.
- **perfect face**: pure color (red or black) for the whole face - loyal and brave
- **broken face**: a mix-up of all colors arranged in mixed-up patterns - bad guy
- **balanced (symmetrical)**: loyal to the emperor
- **unbalanced (asymmetrical)**: for thieves and rebels
- **straight lines**: honest and good
- **broken lines**: evil and dishonest

**Symbol**
Look in the middle of the forehead and above the eyebrows for special symbols. For example, you’ll often see bats because the word for bat, fu, is the same as good fortune. You might also find the character for long life, shou, but people with the long life character never live long! There can also be an extra eye for extra insight, or a coin to symbolize wealth. Hou Yi, the master archer who shot down nine suns has images of the nine suns on his face make-up.

For more information on symbols, visit the following website: [http://www.novelhall.org.tw/arthur/chineseopera/ehome.htm](http://www.novelhall.org.tw/arthur/chineseopera/ehome.htm)

For photos of face makeup, see the CD accompanying this guide.
**Activity I : Photo Identification**
Using the photos provided on the CD accompanying this guide, show students some examples of painted face, or jing roles. Once they are comfortable with the basic colors and patterns, have them do their best to identify the personality of a new character.

**Activity II: Making Paper Theater Masks**

**Materials:**
- Mask Patterns for photocopying
- Index weight paper 8.5 x 11, for each student
- Colored pens, pencils or construction paper, or paint and brushes
- Decorative materials such as glitter, paint, string, yarn, ribbons, straws, pipe cleaners, crepe paper streamers, pasta, buttons, cut paper, bottle caps, shells, leaves, feathers, etc.
- Glue
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- String

**To make the masks:**
Glue mask pattern to index stock or have children copy the shapes from the pattern to the stock.

Cut out mask shape.

Color. Cut eye and nose holes.

Punch holes on either side of the mask; tie a string to each side; tie on student’s head.

Students may either copy a traditional mask or create a new character using traditional colors. They can use any of the traditional symbols described above, or create new symbols representing personality traits or other characteristics. Students may create a new identity for themself or design a mask representing a friend. Have students share their masks with the rest of the class explaining why they chose the design they did. As an alternative, fellow classmates may have opportunity to “guess” the personality of the character.
Basic mask outlines for children to use to create their own characters.
B = black
G = green
Y = yellow
W = white
R = red
G = gold

Hou I, a good archer and husband of the goddess of the moon.
G = gold
R = red
B = black
W = white

Dragon King of the Eastern Sea (from Monkey stories)
Lesson 3: Movement and Gesture

Objective
To enable the students to enjoy and understand the role of movement and gesture in traditional Chinese Opera.

Standards
Art Education:
Standard 1: Performing All students will apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.
Standard 6: Voice All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY
Standard 3: Developing and Presenting Information All students will demonstrate the ability to combine ideas or information in new ways, make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas and organize and present information in formats such as symbols, pictures, schematics, charts, and graphs.

WORLD LANGUAGES
Standard 2: Using Strategies All students will use a variety of strategies to communicate in a non-English language.

Materials
This guide

Background Info:
Symbols and Signs
On the stage in Chinese Opera, you can:
- embroider silk (without a needle and thread)
- boil tea (without water or tea)
- swim across a river (without water)
- fight a huge battle (without ever touching anyone)

This is the area of pantomime - using only your hands and body to act without saying any words or, in most cases, holding any objects.

In Chinese Opera actors learn many symbols and signs for their performances. For instance, an actor doesn’t really cry onstage. He just raises his sleeves to his face in a gesture to wipe away his tears.

There are many rules like this on how to act in Chinese Opera. Many of the rules were created to make up for the few stage props. There’s very little scenery on the Chinese stage - no doors or windows are ever built. So, bringing two hands together at arm’s length means closing a make-believe door. To open a door, the actor moves his closed hands apart. To cross an imaginary threshold, he makes a quick hop. When he walks with both hands stretched
out and feeling about, he’s groping in darkness. And when he paddles a few strokes in the air, he’s sailing down a stream. But no boat is really used, and, of course, there’s no real stream either.

**Activity I. Ways to Act with Your Arms**
First, put on a grown-up’s long sleeve shirt. In traditional opera, the way an actor moves the sleeves of the costume means different things.

- **to cry** hold sleeves about 2 inches in front of your eyes and bend your head slightly
- **to show anger** pretend to fall back as though shocked, and fling your sleeves forward just below waist level
- **to show happiness** raise your hands chest high with the palms down, and then turn them, flicking the sleeves outward

Now, get a pencil and tape some long ribbon or streamers to it (about 2 feet long). The tassled pencil is now a riding whip for a horse.

- **riding a horse** hold the tasseled pencil straight up
- **getting off a horse** lay the tasseled pencil on the floor
Activity II. Ways to Act with Your Hands
Many female opera characters use their hands to say different things. To show shyness, an actress lets her thumb and middle finger touch in a curve while the index finger points upward - and she'll also hide her face behind her long sleeves. Some other examples are shown below. Try them for yourself.
Activity III. Ways to Act with Your Legs and Feet

- **noble lady**
  glide feet slowly and gracefully, one behind the other with little space between them

- **warrior**
  take long strides; stalk about boldly; hold yourself upright

- **scholar**
  life each foot slowly upward and turn them outward when stepping down

- **clown**
  run around any way you want to; be bold and funny

Now, get a pencil and tape some long ribbon or streamers to it (about 2 feet long). The tasseled pencil is now a riding whip for a horse.

- **riding a horse**
  hold the tasseled pencil straight up

- **getting off a horse**
  lay the tasseled pencil on the floor

Activity IV. Ten Kinds of Laughs and Smiles

Opera stars can show many different kinds of emotions. Here’s a list of ten ways to laugh onstage:

- **hearty** (usually three laughs to show cheerfulness)

- **shy**

- **sneaky** (often by the bad guy)

- **scared** (the danger has passed, but the character is still upset thinking of it)

- **surprised**

- **uneasy** (to hide embarassment)

- **smug**

- **silly**

- **nervous**

- **boastful**

Can you do these different kinds of laughs? Can you think of ten other ways to laugh and smile? How about cry and frown? Break into groups or pairs and practice with each other. Looking into a mirror helps too.
Lesson 4: Beijing Opera as a Changing Art Form

Objective
To enable students to think critically about the role of an art form in society and the ways and reasons in and for which it changes over time.

Standards
Arts Education:
Standard 3: Analyzing in Context  All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.
Standard 4: Arts in Context  All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.
Standard 5: Connecting to other Arts, other Disciplines, and Life  All students will recognize, analyze and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication  All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.
Standard 6: Voice  All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Standard 1-3: Analyzing and Interpreting the Past  All students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.

Materials
This Study Guide
Internet Access
Encyclopedias and/or Reference Books

Activity
I.  Compare and Contrast
Identify the ways in which Shen Wei’s treatment of Second Visit to the Empress differs from traditional Beijing Opera. How is it the same?

II. Essay
Knowing that Beijing Opera is a national art form deeply embedded in the history of China dating back hundreds of years, how would students respond to someone who expresses discontent over the changes Shen Wei is making to this traditional art form? Have students use what they know about the traditional art form and the ways in which Shen Wei has updated or altered the form. Have students use any extra resources (including this study guide) they need to make their argument, making sure to support their argument with examples, where necessary.
Questions to think about:

Have their been any major changes in Chinese society since the inception of Beijing Opera as an art form, and have these changes affected its performance?

Has the role of art in society changed?

Are contemporary native audiences as receptive to the art form as they once were?

Is the art form accessible to non-Chinese audiences?
Lesson 5: Women in Beijing Opera

Objective
Students will reach a better understanding of women’s rights in China over the period extending from the feudal Chinese empire to the modern day.

Standards
Arts Education:
Standard 3: Analyzing in Context  All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.
Standard 4: Arts in Context  All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.
Standard 5: Connecting to other Arts, other Disciplines, and Life  All students will recognize, analyze and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 3: Meaning and Communication  All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.
Standard 6: Voice  All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Standard 1-3: Analyzing and Interpreting the Past  All students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.

Materials
Internet Access
Encyclopedias and/or Reference Books

Activity
Until relatively recently, women were not allowed to perform in Beijing Opera. Instead, characters known as Nan Dan, or men-for-women characters were employed in which males performed females roles. Have students research the state of women’s rights at the time of Beijing Opera’s origins in the 17th century through the modern day. At one point in history were women allowed to perform in Beijing Opera? What was the political climate at the time, and what changes were happening that allowed for their participation? Be sure to have students research the cultural revolution and women’s liberation movements in the mid-20th century.
For the Teacher:
Beijing Opera’s origins came during the feudal Chinese empire when women were inferior, and were banned from doing a great number of activities, from politics to performing on the stage. As such, Beijing opera was initially an exclusively male pursuit. The Qianlong Emperor had banned all female performers in Beijing in 1772.

The appearance of women on the stage began unofficially during the 1870s. Female performers began to impersonate male roles and declared equality with men. They were given a venue for their talents when Li Maoer, himself a former Beijing opera performer, founded the first female Beijing opera troupe in Shanghai. By 1894, the first commercial venue showcasing female performance troupes appeared in Shanghai. This encouraged other female troupes to form, which gradually increased in popularity. As a result, opera artist Yu Zhenting petitioned for the lifting of the ban after the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. This was accepted, and the ban was lifted in 1912, although male Dan continued to be popular after this period.

Further advances came with the women’s liberation movement which began in the 20th century. Since its inception, the movement has been shattering the old tradition. After 1949 when the Communists seized power, women were given equal rights with men.
Lesson 6: Performance Follow-up and Reflection

Objective
For students to reflect upon their experience observing the Shen Wei Dance Arts performance.

Standards
Arts Education 3: Analyzing in Context
English Language Arts 2: Meaning/Communication; 4: Language; 6: Voice
Social Studies II-1: People, Places, and Cultures

Opening Discussion
Talking with your teacher, friends, and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt, you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more.

Activity
Here are some questions to think about:

1. How would you describe Beijing Opera to a friend?

2. How would you describe Beijing Opera music to a friend? Describe any non-traditional (unique) sounds that you heard.

3. What feelings did you have while you watched the dancer and listened to the music and singers?

4. What did you like best and why? Was the program different from what you expected? How?

5. Did you have a favorite part of the show? A least favorite? Explain.

6. Discuss how traditional Beijing Opera became an art form.

7. Did you recognize cultural influences other than Chinese in any portion of the performance?
All of the words in the left column relate to the Shen Wei Dance Arts Youth Performance.

**Shen Wei**
The name of the group performing at the the Youth Performance

**Duke Xu**
A character in *Second Visit to the Empress*

**General Yang Bo**
A character in *Second Visit to the Empress*

**Empress Li**
A character in *Second Visit to the Empress*

**Miss Xu**
A character in *Second Visit to the Empress*

**Beijing Opera**
The style of opera featured in *Second Visit to the Empress*

**Jing**
A painted-face roles, usually includes warriors, heroes, satesmen, or demons.

**Sheng**
Male roles subdivided into lao sheng (middle-aged or elderly men), xiao sheng (young men), and wu sheng (men with martial skill).

**Dan**
Female roles subdivided into qing yi (of a strict moral code), wu dan (women with martial hua dan (vivacious younger women), and lao dan (elderly women).

**Chou**
A clown-like figure which does not appear in *Empress*.

**Power Center**
The theater where you will see the Youth Performance of Shen Wei Dance Arts

**erhu**
Chinese violin

**dizi**
Chinese flute

**pipa**
Chinese lute

**scrim**
A screen that can be flown in and out and can be either opaque or translucent depending on where the stage is lit. Used in *Empress* to denote a flash back sequence.
O + S + + + D + + U + R A D P
+ B + H + + + I O + E + R U I
+ + G + E + + H Z T + + E K P
+ + + N + N C + N I + + P E A
+ + + + A + W E + + + + O X +
+ + D + + Y C E + + M + G U +
+ A + + + R L + I I + + N + +
N + + M E + + A S + + + + I + +
+ + + W I + + S R + + + J + +
+ + O + + R X G N E H S I + +
+ P G + + U C + + + N + E + +
+ + N E R H U S + + + E B + +
+ + I + + + + + + + + G + +
+ + J + + + + + + + + + + + +
E M P R E S S L I + + + + + +
Resources

Photo by Shen Wei.
Dear Parents and Guardians,

We will be taking a field trip to see a University Musical Society (UMS) Youth Performance of Shen Wei Dance Arts Second Visi to the Empress on Friday, September 28 from 11:00am-12:30pm at the Power Center in Ann Arbor.

We will travel (please circle one) • by car • by school bus • by private bus • by foot

Leaving school at approximately __________am and returning at approximately ________pm.

The UMS Youth Performance Series brings the world’s finest performers in music, dance, theater, opera, and world cultures to Ann Arbor. This performance features Shen Wei Dance Arts.

We (circle one) • need • do not need additional chaperones for this event. (See below to sign up as a chaperone.)

Please (circle one) • send • do not send lunch along with your child on this day.

If your child requires medication to be taken while we are on the trip, please contact us to make arrangements.

If you would like more information about this Youth Performance, please visit the Education section of www.ums.org/education. Copies of the Teacher Resource Guide for this performance are available for you to download.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call me at ____________________________ or send email to ____________________________.

Please return this form to the teacher no later than ____________________________

Sincerely,

My son/daughter, ____________________________, has permission to attend the UMS Youth Performance on Friday, September 28, 2007. I understand that transportation will be by ____________.

I am interested in chaperoning if needed (circle one). • yes • no

Parent/Guardian Signature________________________________________  Date_____________________

Relationship to student ____________________________________________

Daytime phone number__________________________________________

Emergency contact person_______________________________________

Emergency contact phone number________________________________
Internet Resources

Arts Resources

www.ums.org/education
The official website of UMS. Visit the Education section (www.ums.org/education) for study guides, information about community and family events and more information about the UMS Youth Education Program.

www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org
The nation’s most comprehensive web site for arts education, including lesson plans, arts education news, grant information, etc.

Shen Wei Dance Arts

http://www.shenweidancearts.org/

China and Beijing Opera


www.lsa.umich.edu/chinanow - The website for the University of Michigan’s ChinaNow Theme Year.

http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/ccs// - The homepage for the University of Michigan’s Center for Chinese Studies


http://www.music.umich.edu/research/stearns_collection/index.htm- Website for the University of Michigan’s Stearns Collection, a collection of instruments from around the world.

http://www.swingcitydance.com/- Official website of local Ann Arbor Dance Studio, Swing City Dance Studio.

Although UMS previewed each web site, we recommend that teachers check all web sites before introducing them to students, as content may have changed since this guide was published.
Recommended Reading

PRIMARY & ELEMENTARY GRADES


Shepard, Aaron, Song Nan Zhang, Isabella Chen. Lady White Snake: A Tale From Chinese Opera (Pan Asian Publications (USA); Bilingual edition, 2001).


Zhang, Ange. Red Land Yellow River: A Story from the Cultural Revolution (Groundwood Bookss, 2004).

UPPER MIDDLE & SECONDARY GRADES


Mackerras, Collin. Peking Opera (Images of Asia) (Oxford University Press, USA, 1997).


Zhao, Menglin. Peking Opera Painted Faces (Beijing, China, 1997).
Community Resources

University Musical Society
University of Michigan
Burton Memorial Tower
881 N. University Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1101
734.615.0122
umsyouth@umich.edu
www.ums.org/education

University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies
1080 South University, Suite 3668
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734-764-6308
chinese.studies@umich.edu
http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/ccs/

University of Michigan Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments
Margaret Dow Towsley wing at the south end of the Earl V. Moore Building of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance
Baits Drive in the University of Michigan North Campus area
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734 936-2891
stearns@umich.edu.
http://www.music.umich.edu/research/stearns_collection/index.htm

Swing City Dance Studio
1960 S. Industrial E & F
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 668-7782
sfilipiak@earthlink.net
http://www.swingcitydance.com/
Evening and Family Performance Info

Shen Wei Dance Arts *Second Visit to the Empress*

Friday, September 28, 8pm  
Saturday, September 29, 8pm  
Sunday, September 30, 4pm

Power Center for the Performing Arts, Ann Arbor  
121 Fletcher Street

UMS’s 07/08 season opens with a work that breaks boundaries, both artificial and real. Chinese choreographer Shen Wei’s Second Visit to the Empress launches UMS’s overall season, its dance series, its theater series, and its Global/Asia season, as well as the University of Michigan’s China Theme Year.

Audiences who want to be taken by surprise are lured by the potent work of Shen Wei, whose unmatched style threads together the traditions of Chinese opera with contemporary approaches to both dance and visual art. He was trained in Chinese opera as a youngster, switched to modern dance in his 20s, and now in his late 30s is considered a provocative and ambitious choreographer, painter, and designer whose inimitable stage aesthetic creates performances that are as visual as they are kinetic.

His stunning, iconoclastic 90-minute dance-theater work, Second Visit to the Empress, is inspired by a landmark 17th-century Beijing Opera. In Chinese Opera, it is not the plot that is the most important element, but the presentation of the art form’s collaborative elements: music, singing, dialogue, pantomime, acrobatics, and martial arts. The startling choreography — a hybrid of ancient and modern influences drawn from Shen Wei’s decade in Beijing Opera — incorporates a live traditional Chinese orchestra, monumental backdrops, and lush costumes. The ravishing performers are the most accomplished artists in traditional Chinese opera today, with four world-class Chinese opera singers and 10 musicians performing alongside seven dancers.

Second Visit to the Empress is an epochal, exotic pageant of the dance and theatrical arts. It will be seen only at the Lincoln Center Festival and UMS. In Chinese with English supertitles.

**TEEN Ticket**

The UMS Teen Ticket is a special opportunity for high school students to purchase one discounted ticket to UMS performances. There are two ways to purchase the Teen Ticket:

$10 Teen Ticket  
Students may purchase a Teen Ticket for $10 the day of the performance for weekday performances or the Friday before for weekend performances at the Michigan League Ticket Office. The Michigan League Ticket Office is located at 911 North University Avenue and is open from 9 am - 5 pm weekdays.

$15 Teen Ticket at the Door  
Students may purchase a $15 Rush Ticket, if available, 90 minutes prior to a performance at the performance venue.

A valid high school ID is required. Limit one ticket per student per event, subject to availability and box office discretion.

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To purchase UMS tickets:  

Online www.ums.org  

By Phone (734) 764-2538
Upcoming Teacher Workshops

Open to all educators, student teachers, and community members, our workshops provide concrete methods for enhancing student learning in, through, and about the arts. Refreshments are served at all workshops.

Princesses, Princes, Ogres and Monkeys: Cambodian Dance and Folktales
Led by Toni Shapiro-Phim

Wednesday, October 3, 4:30 – 7:30 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

Toni Shapiro-Phim is a cultural anthropologist specializing in Southeast Asian performing arts. She is considered the nation’s leading expert on Cambodian dance and cultural history, and is the author of the book Dance in Cambodia. This workshop provides context, background, and tools for understanding Cambodia’s unique history, art forms, and folktales.

Classroom Management and Tolerance through Drama
Led by Stacey Coates

Tuesday, November 6, 4:30 – 7:30 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

Tolerance—the willingness to respect or accept the customs, beliefs, or opinions of others—has become a focus in schools determined to protect students from bullying, taunting, and belittling. What is needed to help students learn to be accepting and respectful team players and leaders? Stacey Coates addresses this question through drama strategies that build collaboration and respect in the classroom and result in teambuilding and the development of problem solving skills. This workshop also addresses a successful approach to basic classroom management using art as the captivating tool. At any grade level and with any population, teachers must first make sure their students will listen to them and to each other—only then can students be “taught.” Without such a behavior standard in place, it’s difficult for students to feel safe enough to share their ideas and skills.

Stacey Coates is an educational drama consultant who works with both the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Interacte Theatre in Washington, DC. She has a Master’s Degree in Drama for the Young from Eastern Michigan University and a Bachelor’s Degree in Theatre from Oberlin College. She has taught students in grades K-12 for over thirty years in both public and private schools. Her students have included the elderly, gifted and talented, ESL, incarcerated adolescents, and deinstitutionalized mental patients. Stacey has worked extensively with international and national audiences of all ages on tolerance training.

To register:
By Phone
(734) 615-0122

By E-Mail
umsyouth@umich.edu
...And Words Will Never Hurt Me: Strategies for Equity and Dialogue
Facilitated by Stacey Coates

Wednesday, November 7, 4:30 – 8 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

This special workshop examines best practices for overcoming inequity in the classroom. As a complement to Classroom Management and Tolerance Through Drama, Kennedy Center educator Stacey Coates facilitates this workshop, discussing the latest research, ideal frameworks, and core principles for creating a learning environment safe for all students. With help from area programs such as Zeitouna, Neutral Zone’s Building Bridges, Huron High School’s former “US” Program (understanding and sharing diversity), and AAPS Equity Teams, Stacey shares successful strategies for dialogue in the classroom, school building, and community. This workshop will also include a showing of Zeitouna: Refusing to Be Enemies, a documentary about how six Jewish women and six Arab women use dialogue as a tool for understanding.

Habits of Mind of Creative Engagement
Led by Eric Booth

Thursday, November 29, 4:30 – 7:30 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

Using hands-on techniques, Eric Booth explores with participants how the mind works when engaged creatively and delves into methods designed to enhance students’ flow of learning. Consider what this could mean to teaching and learning practices if educators focus on developing essential capacities like analogical thinking and brainstorming. Imagine teaching creative habits of mind instead of simply leading arts activities! In Habits of Mind of Creative Engagement, Eric unfolds this important educational innovation and reveals the key “habits” that invest students in their own learning. This approach invites fresh ways of thinking about the arts, learning, and creative vitality in the classroom and school.

Eric Booth brings four careers to his speeches and workshops about the arts and arts in education. As an actor for 20 years, he performed in many plays on Broadway and around the country. As a businessman, he started a company, Alert Publishing, that analyzes trends among American people (the largest of its kind). As a teacher, he has taught at more than 50 universities, 100 museums and cultural organizations, and led countless workshops for teachers and students (kindergarten through graduate school). Eric was also on the faculties of The Juilliard School, Lincoln Center Institute, and Tanglewood, and a consultant to the Kennedy Center Education Department, The College Board, and other organizations across the country. As an author, he has had four books published and is the founding editor of the Teaching Artist Journal.
Classically Sphinx
Led by Kelly Dylla and Aaron Dworkin

Monday, December 10, 4:30 – 7 PM
Kerrytown Concert House
415 North Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

Aaron Dworkin’s vision for giving a voice and opportunities to the country’s young Black and Latino string players earned him a MacArthur Fellowship (“genius grant”) in 2005. As founder and president of Sphinx he shares that inspiring vision and his personal story with educators in Classically Sphinx. Kelly Dylla, former Arts Education Specialist from the Lincoln Center Institute, joins Aaron and uses live musicians to discuss innovative strategies for engaging students in the classroom through classical music. Set in Ann Arbor’s intimate Kerrytown Concert House, this workshop is about realizing our dreams and hopes to today’s young people.

American Jazz 101

This unique professional development program features a series of in-depth lectures and live performances that enhance educators’ knowledge of jazz. Regarded as uniquely American, jazz music and performance can be integrated into the curriculum in many ways: study of American history, discussion of race, exploration of American culture, etc. Lectures are designed to precede and complement specific jazz performances on the UMS 2007/2008 roster. This series provides food for the mind and soul, a combination sure to refresh and exhilarate any educator. The series fee includes tickets to all four performances and the lectures are free.

Fee: $65

Event 1: Classic Jazz
Lecture: Monday, January 14, 7 PM, Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown
Associated Performance: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra – Wednesday, January 16, 8 PM, Hill Auditorium

Event 2: Modern Jazz
Lecture: Monday, February 11, 7 PM, Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown
Associated Performance: Ahmad Jamal Trio – Saturday February 16, 8 PM, Hill Auditorium

Event 3: Big Band Jazz
Lecture: Monday, March 10, 7 PM, Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown
Associated Performance: SFJAZZ Collective – Thursday, March 13, 8 PM, Hill Auditorium

Event 4: Contemporary Jazz
Lecture: Monday, March 31, 7 PM, Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown
Associated Performance: Brad Mehldau Trio – Friday, April 4, 8 PM, Michigan
Children’s Songs of the Arab World
Led by Hicham Chami

Wednesday, January 23, 4:30 – 7:30 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $30

Founder of both the Magic Carpet program in the Chicago Public Schools and Urban Gateways, Hicham Chami is a world-class educator on Arab music and culture. Hicham leads this special workshop on children’s songs from the Arab world to complement the UMS Youth Performance. Participants learn the Arabic lyrics (with English translations), music, and context of the songs performed in the UMS Youth Performance and receive information about Arab musical genres, instruments, and stories. Take-away gifts include sheet music and CDs to immediately engage students in the classroom immediately.

IMMERSIONS
Immersion programs are day-long intensive workshops that enhance educators’ knowledge about culture, community, and art. Each workshop includes materials and resources that can be taken back to the classroom.

CHINA Immersion

Saturday, February 2, 9 AM – 8 PM
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12
Fee: $50

A sunrise Tai Chi lesson opens the UMS CHINA Immersion: a full day of authentic, hands-on, and in-depth experiences with the culture, calligraphy, and celebrations of China (including Chinese New Year). Rich community resources bring China to life through live musical performance and visual art-making. The day will end at a local Chinese restaurant with a specially prepared meal and presentation on the ingredients, symbols, and rituals associated with Chinese food and dining. Participants leave the workshop with ready to explore further the global and local Chinese community with their students, colleagues, and families.

DETROIT Immersion
The Ultimate Educator’s Guide to Detroit

Saturday, March 8, 9 AM – 8 PM, Detroit
Fee: $50

In the 1940s and 50s, world leaders would travel to Detroit to glimpse the model city of the future. Today, however, the former glories of Detroit are faded and worn out...or are they? Participants in this day-long Immersion will rediscover the vibrancy and vitality of Detroit, the spectacular and often
misunderstood American city. Led by three Detroit historians, the UMS DETROIT Immersion guides participants through important Detroit landmarks, neighborhoods, and cultural districts including Black Bottom, Poletown Plant, the ’67 Riot Epicenter, Mexicantown, the Heidelberg Project, Pewabic Pottery, the Guardian Building, and much more. This bus tour from Woodward to 8 Mile and Livernois to Linwood also includes food stops at Avalon Bakery, Hamtramck’s Eagle Under the Flag, and Baker’s Keyboard Lounge. Participants return home full of exciting experiences (and food!), yet hungry for more.

**Urban Bush Educators:**
**Connecting the African and African-American Experience**
**Led by Robin Wilson and Idy Ciss**

Monday, March 17, 4:30 – 7:30 PM  
Teaching and Learning Center, WISD  
1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor  
Recommended: Educators of Grades K–12  
Fee: $30

In Urban Bush Educators, Robin Wilson identifies and examines issues, ideas, and themes featured in Les écaillies de la mémoire. As a former member of Urban Bush Women, Robin discusses and demonstrates the process of using the Black experience, storytelling, and personal narrative as a prism to create art. Her work is complemented by Senegalese educator Idy Ciss, former member of Les Ballet Africains and current member of Muntu Dance Company of Chicago. An expert on Senegalese performing arts, Idy guides participants through activities that highlight the role of dance, music, and ritual in everyday Senegalese life, and that connect participants to African cultural experiences.

**Registration**
To register for all workshops, please call (734) 615.0122 or email umsyouth@umich.edu.

All teachers must register and pay for workshops in advance. If paying with check, a credit card number must be submitted upon registration to reserve spot until payment is received.

Teachers bringing students to a corresponding youth performance and students enrolled in a university teacher education program receive a $10 discount for selected workshops.

Teachers will be charged for the workshops for which they are registered regardless of whether they actually attend. Teachers can cancel registration up to five business days in advance.

***For Ann Arbor Public School Teachers – AAPS will reimburse teachers who sign up for each workshop, subject to availability. Teachers who miss the workshop may not apply for reimbursement.***

***For Washtenaw Intermediate School District Teachers – WISD will reimburse the first five teachers who sign up for each workshop. Teachers who miss the workshop may not apply for reimbursement.***
Send Us Your Feedback!

UMS wants to know what teachers and students think about this Youth Performance. We hope you’ll send us your thoughts, drawings, letters or reviews.

UMS Youth Education Program
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