



dance music theater

Cal Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

SchoolTime 07/08



Study Guide

Guangzhou Ballet—*Mei Lanfang*

Friday, October 19, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

Zellerbach Hall



About Cal Performances and *SchoolTime*

The mission of Cal Performances is to inspire, nurture and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. Cal Performances, the performing arts presenter of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfills this mission by presenting, producing and commissioning outstanding artists, both renowned and emerging, to serve the University and the broader public through performances and education and community programs. In 2005/06 Cal Performances celebrated 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Our *SchoolTime* program cultivates an early appreciation for and understanding of the performing arts amongst our youngest audiences, with hour-long, daytime performances by the same world-class artists who perform as part of the main season. Teachers have come to rely on *SchoolTime* as an integral and important part of the academic year.



Cal Performances Education and Community Programs Sponsors

Cal Performances' Education and Community Programs are supported by American Express Company Foundation, California Arts Council, California Mortgage & Realty, Design Community & Environment, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Orton Development Inc., Sharon & Barclay Simpson, Pacific National Bank, The Wallace Foundation, Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Trust, and The Zellerbach Family Foundation.

Welcome

October 04, 2007

Dear Educators and Students,

Welcome to Cal Performance's *SchoolTime*! On **Friday, October 19, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.** your class will attend the *SchoolTime* performance of ***Mei Lanfang*** by the **Guangzhou Ballet** at Zellerbach Hall on the UC Berkeley campus.

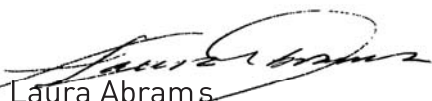
Just 13 years old, the award-winning Guangzhou Ballet of China has proven itself a powerful force in international dance. The company performs both Western classics and original ballets based on Chinese themes for cheering audiences all over the world. At the *SchoolTime* performance, Guangzhou Ballet will perform excerpts from their acclaimed production of *Mei Lanfang*, a ballet inspired by the life of the legendary Beijing Opera performer who shaped the art of Chinese theater. This exciting production has been internationally praised for its elaborate sets and costumes, as well as its captivating original score and innovative choreography.

This study guide will prepare your students for their field trip to Zellerbach Hall. Your students can actively participate at the performance by:

- OBSERVING how the dancers portray Mei Lanfang's life story and the Beijing Opera performances
- LISTENING to the unique and expressive original music composed for this piece
- THINKING ABOUT how culture, emotions and ideas are expressed
- REFLECTING on the sounds, sights, and performance skills experienced at the theater

We look forward to seeing you at *SchoolTime*!

Sincerely,



Laura Abrams
Director of Education
& Community Programs



Rica Anderson
Education Programs Administrator

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1 Theater Etiquette

Be prepared and arrive early. Ideally you should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and parking, and plan to be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

Be aware and remain quiet. The theater is a “live” space—you can hear the performers easily, but they can also hear you, and you can hear other audience members, too! Even the smallest sounds, like rustling papers and whispering, can be heard throughout the theater, so it’s best to stay quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. The international sign for “Quiet Please” is to silently raise your index finger to your lips.

Show appreciation by applauding. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the show. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the house lights come up.

Participate by responding to the action onstage. Sometimes during a performance, you may respond by laughing, crying or sighing. By all means, feel free to do so! Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form. For instance, an audience attending a string quartet performance will sit very quietly, while the audience at a gospel concert may be inspired to participate by clapping and shouting.

Concentrate to help the performers. These artists use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, they feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

Please note: *Backpacks and lunches are not permitted in the theater. Bags will be provided for lobby storage in the event that you bring these with you. There is absolutely no food or drink permitted in the seating areas. Recording devices of any kind, including cameras, cannot be used during performances. Please remember to turn off your cell phone.*



2 About the Performance

On Friday, October 19, *SchoolTime* presents Guangzhou Ballet's performance of *Mei Lanfang*. The ballet is inspired by the life of legendary Beijing Opera star Mei Lanfang (1894–1961) who introduced the United States to Beijing Opera in 1930 and is considered one of the greatest male actors of female roles. Guangzhou Ballet's founder and co-artistic director **Zhang Dandan** was a young girl when Mei Lanfang was still performing. As director of this piece, she brings the traditional and well-loved art form of Beijing opera to the genre of ballet. Chinese-Canadian choreographer **Fu Xingbang** translated the performance styles of Beijing opera when staging this ballet using a blend of classical ballet vocabulary, Beijing Opera steps, and martial arts. **Liu Tingyu** composed the original score using both Western and traditional Chinese instruments. The company's European tour of the production was hailed as "a triumph for the Guangzhou Ballet" (*Ballet Magazine*).

In translating Mei Lanfang's story into a ballet, choreographer Fu Xingbang made the decision to split the role of Mei in order to illustrate the dichotomy between the separate lives that Mei led onstage and off. A male dancer plays the part of Mei in his real life, while his stage persona is divided into four roles for four different ballerinas, each depicting one of Mei's important stage roles.

Apart from a reflection on Mei's theatrical life, the ballet also focuses on political events that caused Mei to give up the stage, such as the Japanese invasion of China.

Mei Lanfang is divided into three acts: in the first act, Mei reminisces over the great roles that he has played; in

the second act, Mei decides to retreat from the stage; and in the third act, Mei takes on his final roles as teacher and legend. This production features more than 60 ballet dancers and is set against a backdrop of extravagantly-colored scenery, evoking the richness of Mei's legacy.

This Cal Performances' engagement contributes to UC Berkeley's opening celebrations for the Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies and the C.V. Starr East Asian Library.



Above: Scene from *Mei Lanfang* depicting Mei and some of the female characters he played. **Below:** Legendary Mei Lanfang in costume.



3 About the Artists

Guangzhou Ballet of China

Formally organized in 1994, the Guangzhou Ballet of China has since gained worldwide recognition and acclaim, winning prizes at the Paris International Ballet Dance Competition, the Varna International Dance Competition, the Moscow International Ballet Competition, and the Helsinki International Ballet Competition, among others. Designated by the Municipal Government of Guangzhou to be a trial unit for comprehensive reforms in art performance organizations, the company has grown in its thirteen years. Among its original works, many of which are ballet-operas, is *Mei Lanfang*, choreographed by guest co-artistic director Fu Xingbang. Other original works include *Natural Melody*, *Peach Bloom Fan*; and *The Celestial Phoenix*, which was awarded a prize for excellence at the Fifth National Opera Festival Performance Competitions in 1997.

Guangzhou Ballet's repertoire also includes eleven full-length classical ballets and more than thirty medium length works, demonstrating the ensemble's range and unique creative talents. The company has toured extensively to Cuba, Germany, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Spain.

The company also has organized a pre-professional training school, and a recreational dance school. It offers classes for secondary and junior college students.

Considered the "most innovative [troupe] in China" (*China Today*), the Guangzhou Ballet is also the nation's



Scenes from *Mei Lanfang* performed by the Guangzhou Ballet



youngest ballet ensemble. Intent on building upon the Chinese people's growing interest in ballet, artistic director Zhang Dandan reaches ever larger audiences by offering affordable tickets. Guangzhou Ballet hopes to make its own rich contribution to the culture of Guangzhou, and to add a new and significant chapter to the development of Chinese ballet.

Ensemble members

Zhang Dandan, Artistic Director

A celebrated ballerina with the Central Ballet Ensemble (CBE), Zhang Dandan retired from the stage in 1994 to



launch the Guangzhou Ballet Ensemble. As a principal dancer with CBE, Zhang performed leading roles in *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote* and *Romeo and Juliet*, among others. Of her debut performance as Odette in *Swan Lake* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1986, Zhang was heralded as “very much a dancer to watch... the comparison to... Gelsey Kirkland would not be out of place” (*The New York Times*). Under Zhang’s leadership, the reputation of the ensemble has grown within and outside of China.

Fu Xingbang, guest Co-artistic Director

The guest co-artistic director and choreographer/instructor for the Guangzhou Ballet, Fu Xingbang has been highly praised for his innovative and dynamic choreography which challenges the technical limits of his dancers. His training in Chinese dance, classical ballet, contemporary ballet and opera fuels the creative energy in his choreography. Born in Guangzhou, China, Fu Xingbang received his professional training from

the Beijing Ballet Institute. He furthered his dance training with the school at American Ballet Theatre and joined the Washington Ballet Company. In 1986, he created the Xing Dance Theatre in Toronto, where he resides. He has danced extensively throughout North America.

Liu Tingyu, composer

Born in Chongqing, China, Liu Tingyu graduated in 1965 from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. He has composed more than ten Chinese modern ballets and is currently deputy director of the Central Ballet Troupe. He has also composed music for sport events such as the Eleventh Asian Games and the Seventh China Nationwide Sporting Competition. In *Mei Lanfang*, he has composed for Western as well as traditional Chinese instruments.

4 About the Art Form

Guiding Questions:

- ♦ What are some artistic elements of ballet and Beijing Opera?
- ♦ How does the orchestra enhance a Beijing Opera performance?
- ♦ Discuss the impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution on traditional Chinese art forms.

Ballet

The roots of classical ballet go back to Renaissance Europe (c. 1300 -1600) where it was first presented by the Italian nobility. These lavish performances combined music, mime, costume, poetry, singing, pageantry, elaborate stage effects, and dancing. The word ballet originally comes from the Italian, *ballare* (to dance) and *balletto* (little dance).

At first, the performers who appeared in these *ballets de cour* (court ballets) were not professionals, but members of the court; even kings and queens took part. Professional dancers did not appear on stage until the reign of Louis XIV, who ruled France from 1643 to 1715. Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, often performed in court ballets as a young man, but when he got older and gained weight, dancing became difficult. When Louis was forced to stop dancing, court protocol demanded that none of his court could dance either.

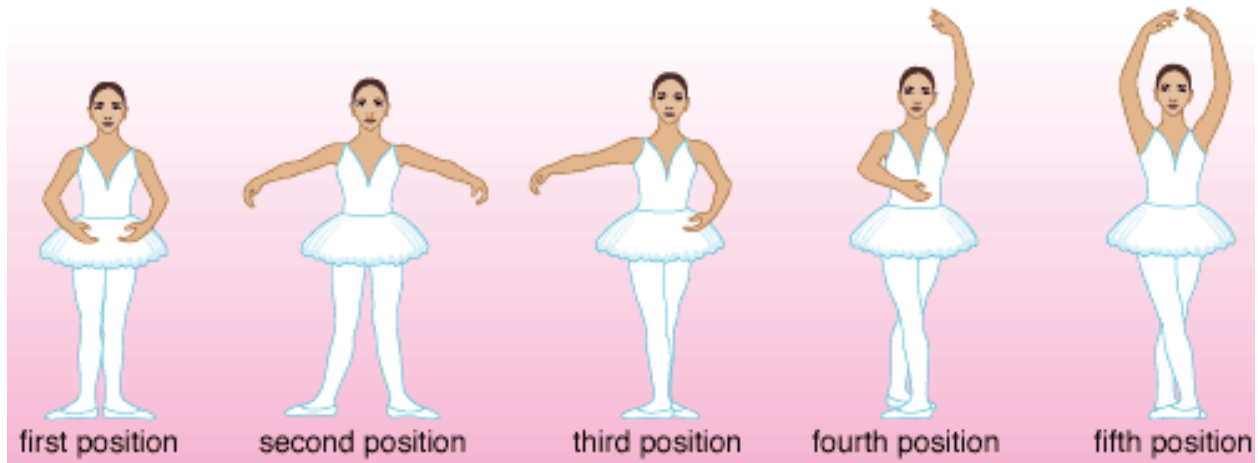
Since Louis still wanted to enjoy these regal entertainments, he created a Royal Academy of Music and Dance in

Paris to train professional musicians, singers, and dancers. He also gave permission, for the first time, for ballets to be performed in public theaters. Many of today's classical ballet steps, poses, and movements derive from those developed at the Royal Academy, where dancers were trained in the elegant style beloved by the king.

Characterized by graceful yet precise articulation of the body, ballet choreography emphasizes symmetry and repeating patterns. Striving to give the illusion of weightlessness, dancers hold their bodies in an upright position and extend their arms and legs away from the body. They also turn their legs out from the hips, and perform many turns and movements high on the balls of their feet or on *pointe*. Ballet uses five basic positions of the feet, and the terminology you would hear in a ballet class is in French.



In 1661 ballet pioneer Jean-Baptiste Lully established a department of dance in the Royal Academy of Music.



Above: The 5 basic ballet positions in French: première (prehm-YAHR), second (se-GOHND), troisième (trwah-ZYEM), quatrième (kah-tree-EHM), cinquième (san-KYEM). **Right:** Chinese opera performer puts the finishing touches on his face make-up. Scene from the Beijing Opera, *Peony Pavilion*.

Chinese Opera

Along with ancient Greek theater and Indian Sanskrit Opera, Chinese opera is one of the oldest dramatic art forms in the world. Chinese opera evolved from folk songs and dances, plays which included rhymed and lyric verse, and distinctive dialectical music. Gradually, it brought together music, drama, and dance with acrobatics and elaborate costumes. Since Chinese opera performers must be multi-talented and skilled in singing, acting, dance and acrobatics, they must train intensively for several years. A saying among Chinese opera performers goes: “One minute’s performance on the stage takes ten years’ practice behind the scenes.”

During the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907), the Emperor Taizong established an opera school called *Liyuan* (Pear Garden) where performers studied this growing art form. Supported by emperors and court officials, Chinese opera developed in the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368). However, it wasn’t until the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911) that Chinese opera became fashionable among ordinary people who watched performances in tearooms and restaurants.



Women and Chinese Opera



Although many strong female characters emerged from Chinese opera, until relatively recently it was illegal for women to perform these roles. As was the case worldwide for much of history, in China, it was considered indecent not only for a woman to act onstage, but for audience members to view them. Women were not even allowed to attend theater in China until the 20th century. The men and boys who stepped into Beijing opera's female roles spent years training to capture the gestures, voice and stance of an idealized vision of Chinese femininity.

Around 1912 and 1913, Chinese officials began allowing women to perform in certain theaters. However, male actors who felt threatened by this new source of competition soon persuaded the authorities that in the interest of public decency all female performers must be banned from the stage. Finally, in 1930, Chinese authorities lifted the ban for good and men and women have performed together ever since. Today, women play the female roles in Beijing opera. However, many of the characters' movements, mannerisms and vocal qualities are still a legacy from star male performers like Mei Lanfang.

Different Styles of Opera

Different styles of opera gained popularity in China's separate regions. In the north, the ***zaju*** or "multi-act" play was patronized by the upper classes. *Zaju* operas usually featured the following characters; a woman, a wise older man, a young man and sometimes a comic person who would offer amusing commentary on the actions. The main lead in these operas sang the lyric verse by themselves, while the other characters spoke their lines.

In the south and east, particularly in the Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, the ***chuanqi*** (marvelous tales) tradition flourished. *Chuanqi* plots came from popular accounts of historical figures or from contemporary life, and average *chuanqi* had 30 to 50 changes of scene. Besides the hero and heroine, the supporting actors also sang the ***arias*** which were slower than in *zaju* opera, and had frequent changes in the end rhymes.

From Kunshan, in the southeast of China came the ***kunqu*** ("songs of Kun") style of opera that combines song, dance, and spoken word. Appreciated by educated audiences, *kunqu* was considered a high-brow art form and thought to be the most literary, elegant and artistic genre of traditional Chinese drama. Commonly called ***shuimodiao*** ("water-polished music"), *kunqu* is



characterized by mild, melodious and sentimental music, and librettos which focus on romantic love. *Kunqu* singing emphasizes voice control and changes in rhythms. Each *kunqu* role calls for its own particular set of stylized movements and performance skills. *Kunqu*'s two types of dancing include movement built around gestures that represent a character's spirit and essence, and an expressive type of dance that corresponds with the singing parts.

However, in the Qing dynasty, around the late 1700's, *jingxi* (Peking, or as it is known today, Beijing opera) came into popularity, gradually overshadowing *kunqu*. *Jingxi* incorporates elements of *kunqu*, and *bangzi qiang* (clapper operas) and is sung in Mandarin, the dialect of Beijing. *Jingxi*'s arrival in Beijing is traced to drama companies from Anhui in eastern China, who brought a mixture of several styles of opera to Beijing to celebrate the Emperor Qianlong's birthday in 1790. Highly conventionalized, in *jingxi* the attitudes of individual characters are

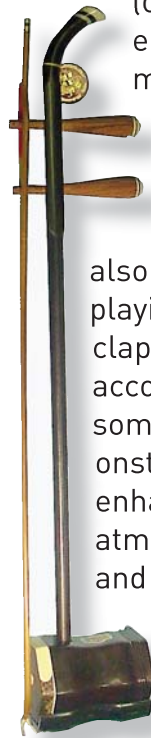


Portrait of Emperor Qianlong

encoded in traditional steps, postures, and arm movements. The performers wear elaborate face paint to illustrate the characters they play and use acrobatic movements to suggest violent action. Interludes of spoken narration allow singers to rest periodically during the characteristically lengthy performances. *Jingxi* traditionally employed an all-male cast with female impersonators, but in the late 20th century began to include female actors. The most renowned *jingxi* performer was **Mei Lanfang**, who introduced the art form to an international audience by touring to Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

The Music

Beijing opera performance is accompanied by the *wen wu chang* (orchestra), typically a small ensemble of about six or seven musicians playing traditional musical instruments like the *erhu* (fiddle), *luo* (gong), *di* (bamboo flute), *bo* (cymbals) and *pipa* (fretted lute.) The conductor also serves as the percussionist, playing a **drum** and *guban* (wooden clappers) which he uses to accompany the music's rhythm and some of the action and narrative onstage. Gongs are also used to enhance the plot and evoke the atmosphere or tone of the situation, and to comment on a character's personality. Serious, exciting and formal situations call for the use of the large gong, whereas the small gong sets the tone for humorous situations and also establishes quiet environments like a temple, convent or household. Usually the large gong also accompanies the actions of important characters in the opera, the small gong is connected with ordinary characters.



erhu



luo

The musical compositions of Beijing Opera rely mainly on existing melodies, many from folk songs, to which the playwright adds suitable lyrics. The aria's basic unit is made up of two poetic lines with either seven or ten Chinese characters each. The first line ends with a rising-tone character; the second, with a level tone. The plot informs the number of couplets and arias introduced per scene. Singers are trained to sing "from the abdomen" and they practice locating the sensation by placing three fingers below their beltline.

Characters

Early in their training, a Chinese opera performer begins specializing in one of the four principal types of roles: **sheng** (male roles), **dan** (female roles), **jing** (face painted roles) and **chou** (clown roles). *Sheng* roles can be mature or young, and the characters can range from scholars, old men, lovers, or military men skilled in kung fu. *Dan* roles include older ladies, young girls, comic characters and acrobatic warriors. *Jing* roles are often fighting and gymnastic roles and characters include army generals, bandits, warriors or officials. All *jing* characters have their faces painted elaborately; the colors of facial paint indicate the personality and temperament of the character. For example, white make-up signifies cunning and craftiness, black represents bravery and justice, red indicates virtue and trustworthiness, green signifies cruelty and pride, and blue signals a wild temperament. A mix of multiple colors indicates a more complicated personality.

Chou roles include male and female characters. The only characters that can break the "fourth wall," *chous* satirize the other characters, reference current or local events, and make humorous

impromptu remarks. Male *chous* wear a distinctive triangle of white make-up from their eyebrows to below their noses. Instead of a white patch, the female *chous* have a reddened face and dark black eyebrows.



Costumes and Props

The patterns and designs of Chinese opera costumes are based partly on fashions from the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644) and partly on the costume conventions that evolved in the art form. Costumes are colorful and elaborately embroidered to create a sense of drama and pageantry, as well as a beautiful onstage picture. As with facial paint, costume colors signify something about the character. Yellow represents royalty, red: high-ranking officials, green: virtuous roles, black: tough characters, and brown: the elderly. Costumes are often embroidered with animal designs symbolizing human qualities. For example, a phoenix signifies virtue and a dragon represents strength and power. Close attention is also given to hats and headgear, armor and pennants, and even wigs and false beards.

Apart from using swords and spears in fight scenes, performers have very few props in Chinese opera. Instead, large effects are suggested with simple props. For example, an oar may represent a boat, a whip signifies that a performer is riding a horse, banners may symbolize billowing waves. In different scenes, tables and chairs are moved around the stage to serve as a variety of set pieces.

Beijing Opera During and After the Cultural Revolution



China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), was launched by the Communist Party of China's Chairman Mao Zedong as a campaign to rid China of its "bourgeoisie," (the middle class that Mao felt oppressed the working class) elements. Mao believed that all art was propaganda either for or against the Communist principle of class revolution. Since Beijing opera performed traditional pieces that did not reflect class struggle or serve the needs of the masses, Mao banned these performances. The only plays he allowed under his government were works like the Eight Model Plays, which featured China's communist activities during the Sino-Japanese war, as well as the class struggles which arose after the founding of the People's Republic. Instead of tales of goddesses and warriors, these plays promoted communism and featured the working people, dressed in plain modern clothes, against a naturalistic set. Many leading actors from Beijing opera were

called on to perform in these works. Although communist ideals were the prevalent themes of these operas, the performances also introduced some new theatrical and musical forms to Chinese opera.

Beijing Opera suffered during the Cultural Revolution, as did other theatrical genres in China. Mao ordered the destruction of traditional opera costumes and backdrops. Many opera performers left the profession in search of other work, and the majority of opera schools were closed. In 1978, the Chinese government once again allowed traditional Beijing opera to be performed, however, the art form had lost much of its former audience. In the last few decades, China has launched campaigns to renew public interest in opera and other traditional performance art. For more than ten years, the Chinese Opera Journal has sponsored the annual Plum Blossom Award in Beijing, inviting dozens of performers from all over China to compete. China Central Television (CCTV), and national radio stations have hosted performance competitions which are aired live to the public. And recently, Beijing promoted the first Beijing Opera Month to celebrate this extraordinary art form.



Scenes from *Red Detachment of Women*, a revolutionary play sanctioned by Mao.

5 About Mei Lanfang

Guiding Questions:

- ♦ What different talents did Mei Lanfang cultivate that led to his becoming a legendary performer?
- ♦ How did Mei Lanfang influence Beijing Opera?

Growing Up

Born on October 22, 1894 in Beijing, China, Mei Lanfang is considered the finest male performer of female roles to grace the Beijing opera stage. A son and grandson of noted Beijing opera singers, Mei began studying *jingxi* himself at the age of eight. A tireless student, when a teacher told Mei that his lackluster eyes would prevent him from becoming a great performer, the boy worked relentlessly on finding expressive ways of looking at people and objects. He later stated that he felt he wasn't born with great natural talent, but that he had spent his life trying to achieve artistic perfection through constant practice.

Within a few years, Mei became a highly accomplished singer, dancer and actor. At the age of eleven, he made his stage debut, playing a weaving girl. After that, he began his career of playing female roles. He joined the Xiliancheng Theatrical Company at age 13. After performing with the company in Shanghai and throughout China, he soon acquired a national reputation. By the age of 20, he was so highly respected that he was regarded as the leader of China's opera community, the Pear Garden.



Mei's stage career spanned five decades, during which time he played more than 100 female roles ranging from concubines, noblewomen, warriors and goddesses. Some of his most famous roles are **Bai Niangzi** in *Duanqiao* (*Broken Bridge*), **Lin Daiyu** in *Daiyu zanghua* (*Daiyu Buries Flowers*), **Yuji** in *Bawang beiji* (*Farewell My Concubine*), and **Yang Yuhuan** in *Guifei zujiu* (*Concubine Gets Drunk*). Mei made these traditional roles his own by developing a rich repertoire of character gestures, expressions and poses.

An innovator, Mei redefined female characters, breaking through the barriers between the rigidly distinct roles of *qingyi*, the elegant, dignified lady and *huadan*, the lively young maiden. Mei combined the



Top to bottom: Mei Lanfang in *Wedding in the Dream*; A young Mei dressed in costume; Mei later in life demonstrating how to convey femininity in small gestures.

lovely singing voice of the *qingyi* with the vivacious facial expressions and gestures of the *huadan* for a more compelling performance.

A playwright and choreographer as well as performer, Mei wrote many new plays for Beijing opera and created dances which perceptively revealed a character's depth and emotion. Mei's plays and dances, as well as his adaptations to costumes and make-up, form part of the great legacy he left to the Beijing opera.

Later Years

Mei Lanfang was the first performer to bring Beijing opera to the rest of the world. In the 1920's and 30's, he and his troupe of actors toured to Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union, performing sold-out shows and winning rave reviews wherever they went.

However, when the Sino-Japanese war erupted in 1937, Mei refused to perform for the occupying Japanese and he withdrew from the theatre until the end of the Second World War in 1945. In 1946, he resumed his performing career, participating in both stage and film work. After 1949, Mei served as director of the China Peking Opera Theater, director of the Chinese Opera Research Institute, and vice-chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1959.

Mei performed in the weeks before his death from heart failure on August 8, 1961. Even in his later years, age was no barrier for this extraordinary performer who performed with his trademark artistry and vitality well into his sixties. Today, Mei Lanfang is a household name in China, admired as a leading and influential figure in a significant and unparalleled art form.

6 Learning Activities

Visual Art (Grades 2-8)

Chinese Opera masks

Supplies:

- paper plates
- markers, crayons, colored pencils or paints
- popsicle or craft sticks
- glue or tape
- scissors

Directions:

Look at examples of facial make-up in Beijing opera. (You might find this website helpful: <http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Opera/China-opera-colors.html>.)

Think of a character from a book, play or story that your class has read. If that character was in a Beijing opera, what colors would be used for their facial make-up? (Refer to the guide below to see which qualities the colors symbolize.)

With a pencil, draw the outline of your character's face on a paper plate. Then, draw outlines for the character's eyes.

Cut out the eyes and around the outline of your character's face. (Teachers, you may want to pre-cut younger students' masks.)

Design the patterns on your mask and color them in with the appropriate "character" colors.

After you have finished drawing, glue or tape a popsicle stick to the bottom of your mask as a handle.

Color symbolism in Beijing Opera facial make-up:

Red: virtue, trustworthiness, loyalty

Purple: wisdom, bravery, steadfastness

Black: bravery, justice

White: cunning, craftiness

Blue: wild temperament

Green: pride

Yellow: brutality

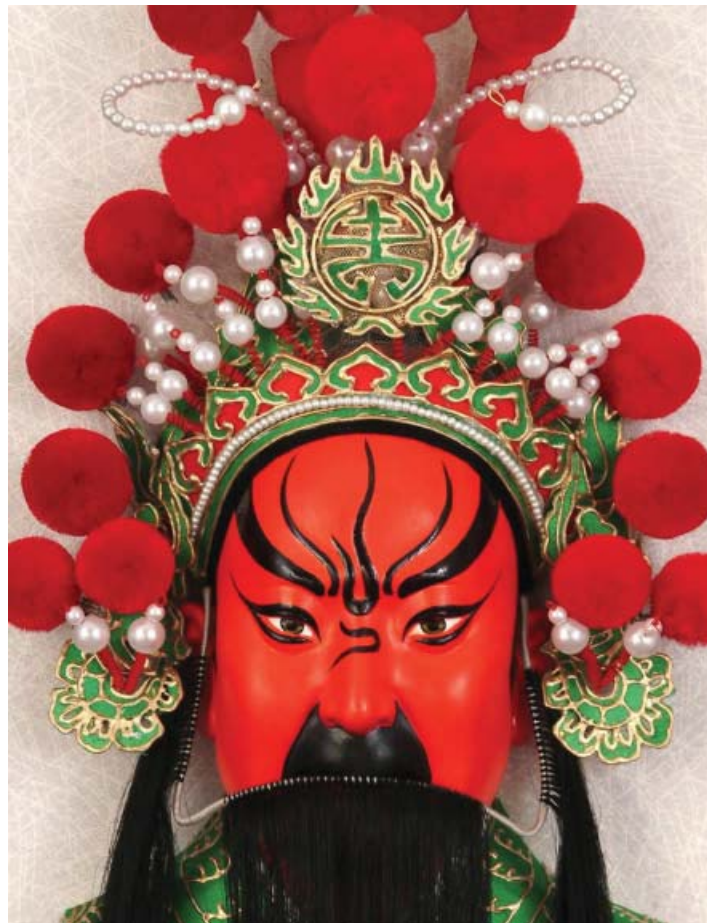
Grey: an old scoundrel

Dark red: loyal, time-tested warrior

Pink: humor

Gold and silver: supernatural (demons, Buddhas, spirits)

Examples of Beijing Opera face masks



Geography (Grades 3-8)

Map of China

Different forms of opera originated in several areas within China. Beijing opera evolved from many of these opera styles and is the most well-known Chinese opera today.

Supplies:

-Map of China (use the map below or one large enough for the whole class to use.)

Directions:

Locate Beijing on a map of China.

Using an atlas or researching on the web, locate the following areas where different styles of opera originated and draw a line from this area to Beijing.

Opera Style

Location

chuanqi

Zhejiang province & Jiangsu province

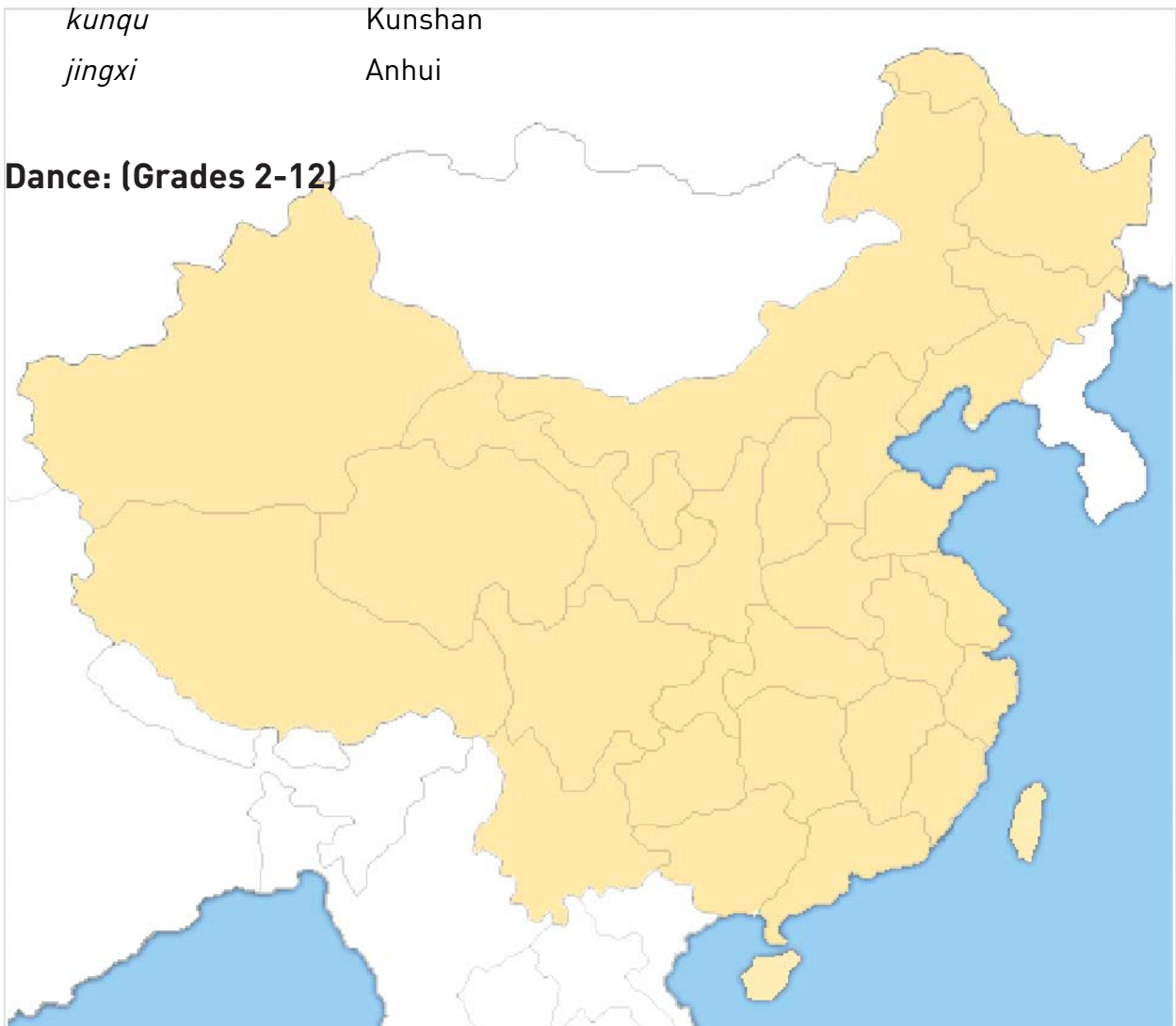
kunqu

Kunshan

jingxi

Anhui

Dance: (Grades 2-12)



Movement Study: Real Life vs. Performance

Research the life of one of America's significant or influential artists. (Some examples could include: dancers Alvin Ailey or Maria Tallchief, theater actor and director Luis Valdez, or musician YoYo Ma.) You might read articles or books about their life, look at pictures of them, and watch clips of their performances on the internet.

Discover two poses and two movements or gestures to represent this artist in performance.

Now find two poses and two movements or gestures to represent this person when they are not performing.

Form a group with other students who are focusing on the same performer. (Ideally, this should be from 4-6 people.)

Share your poses and movements and decide which to use and in what order you'll perform them.

Challenge yourselves to expand the movements and make the poses more dramatic. Then, create movement transitions between the different poses and gestures.

Share your pieces with the rest of the class.

Theater and Dance: (Grades K-8)

Opposite Gender Tableaus with Movement

Teachers; when introducing this activity, please stress to students that they are not making fun of the character or showing a caricature of a boy or girl, but are trying to honestly represent this person.

If you are a girl, take a moment to think of a specific boy or man you know. What is a typical pose for this person? How do they walk, run, eat breakfast, tie their shoes? If you are a boy, think of a specific girl or woman you know and imagine them doing the same actions.

In groups of 4, create a tableau, or frozen picture, where you pretend to be this person. How does this person hold their bodies? Do they make big or small movements? Are they energetic or low key? Try to show your character's qualities in your frozen pose, and your facial expression, as if you were a statue of them. In your tableaus, do not touch the other people in your group.

Think of your character doing an activity like brushing their teeth or playing basketball. Show the beginning, middle and end of this activity in three frozen poses.

Now find how your character would move between holding their three frozen poses. After you move, always return to a frozen pose.

Share your "Tableaus with Movement" with the rest of the class.

Resources

Ballet and Beijing Opera:

<http://www.abt.org/education/dictionary/>
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/118168.htm>
<http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2002/e20027/ballet.htm>
<http://www.chinapage.com/beijing-opera.html>
<http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/HomeBj/t101198.htm>

Video & Audio clips on the web:

Beijing Opera: Mei Lanfang
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELk5AdNkV4M>
Beijing Opera performance clip
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYWiQ_RnLWE
Mei Lanfang performance (no sound)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9CUCvkz9Co>

Chinese Culture and History:

http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/time_line.html
<http://www.chsa.org/>
<http://condensedchina.com/>
<http://www.chinatoday.com/>

Chinese Literature:

Dream of the Red Chamber. Written by Cáo Xueqín, 18th Century.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Written by Luo Guanzhong, 14th century.

Four Books of Confucianism. Written by Zhu Xi, 10th century.

Journey to the West. Written by Wú Chéng'en, 16th Century.

Images:

<http://www.chinapictures.org/type/travel/beijing/>
<http://www.kingdouglas.com/>
www.flickr.com (search Beijing; Chinese; Ballet)
www.images.google.com (search Beijing; Chinese; Ballet)

Local venues featuring Chinese Culture:

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
<http://www.asianart.org>

Chinatown in San Francisco
<http://www.sanfranciscochinatown.com/>

The Association of Chinese Teachers (TACT)
Email: tact@muse.sfusd.k12.ca.us
<http://www.sfusd.k12.ca.us/org/tact/>

Oakland Chinatown Streetfest
(510) 893-8979
<http://www.oaklandchinatownstreetfest.com/>

Chinese Culture Center
<http://www.c-c-c.org/>
750 Kearny Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco

Chinese Historical and Cultural Project
P.O. Box 7074
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-0746
(408) 366-0688
www.chcp.org

7 Glossary

Performance Words

aria – a piece of melodious and often elaborate music in an opera, for one or occasionally two voices.

choreography – the art of creating and arranging dances or ballets.

composer – a person who writes music.

dialectical – characteristic of a provincial, rural, or socially distinct variety of a language.

fourth wall – the imaginary wall separating the audience from the action of a theatrical performance.

genre – a category of artistic composition having a particular form, content, technique, or style.

interlude – a brief show (music or dance, etc.) inserted between the sections of a longer performance.

lyric verse – a poem of songlike quality

melody – a pleasing succession or arrangement of sounds.

mime – the art of portraying characters and acting out situations or a narrative by gestures and body movement without the use of words; pantomime.

opera – an extended dramatic composition, in which parts are sung to instrumental accompaniment.

pageantry – an elaborate, colorful and sometimes ceremonious display.

playwright – a writer of plays; dramatist.

pointe – in ballet, dancing that is performed on the tips of the toes

repertoire – the entire stock of skills, techniques, or devices used in a particular field or occupation.

score – the music created for a movie or theatrical piece.

Chinese Words

chou – the comedy role in Beijing opera, usually a rascally, but likeable character.

chuanqi – called the “marvelous tales” opera, this genre originated in the south and east of China and included up to 50 scene changes per performance.

huadan – the vivacious, young female character in Beijing opera.

jing – the “face-painted” roles in Beijing opera, includes characters like army generals, bandits, warriors or officials. Jing actors specialize in acrobatics and martial arts.

jingxi – Beijing opera (formerly known as Peking Opera). Derived from a variety of Chinese opera forms and sung in Mandarin, the dialect of Beijing.

qingyi – serene, often mature and married female characters who sing in a high pitched voice and traditionally move very little.

sheng – the male roles in Beijing opera, characters can range from scholars, old men, lovers, or military men.

kunqu – a style of Chinese opera from the 16th century that appealed to the literate and educated classes. Kunqu combines song, dance, and spoken word.

dan – the female roles in Beijing opera, characters include older ladies, young girls, comic characters and acrobatic warriors.

wen wu chang – the mini-orchestra that accompanies Beijing opera, typically an ensemble of six or seven musicians.

zaju – one of the major forms of Chinese drama, consisting of several acts in which songs alternate with dialogue.

8 California State Standards

Theater Grades K-12

1.0 Artistic Perception

Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to dance

Students perceive and respond, using the elements of theater. They demonstrate movement skills, process sensory information, and describe movement, using the vocabulary of dance.

2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, performing and participating in theater

Students apply theatrical principles, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through the improvisation, composition, and performance.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of theater

Students analyze the function and development of theater in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to theater and performers.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about works of theater

Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of theater, performance of actors, and original works according to the elements of theater and aesthetic qualities.

Music Grades K-12

1.0 Artistic Perception

Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to music

Students listen to, analyze, and describe music and other aural information, using the terminology of music.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Students analyze the role of music in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting cultural diversity as it relates to music, musicians, and composers.

Role of Music

3.1 Describe the social functions of a variety of musical forms from various cultures and time periods (e.g., folk songs, dances).

Diversity of Music

3.4 Describe the influence of various cultures and historical events on musical forms and styles.

Dance Grades K-12

1.0 Artistic Perception

Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to dance

Students perceive and respond, using the elements of dance. They demonstrate movement skills, process sensory information, and describe movement, using the vocabulary of dance.

2.0 Creative Expression

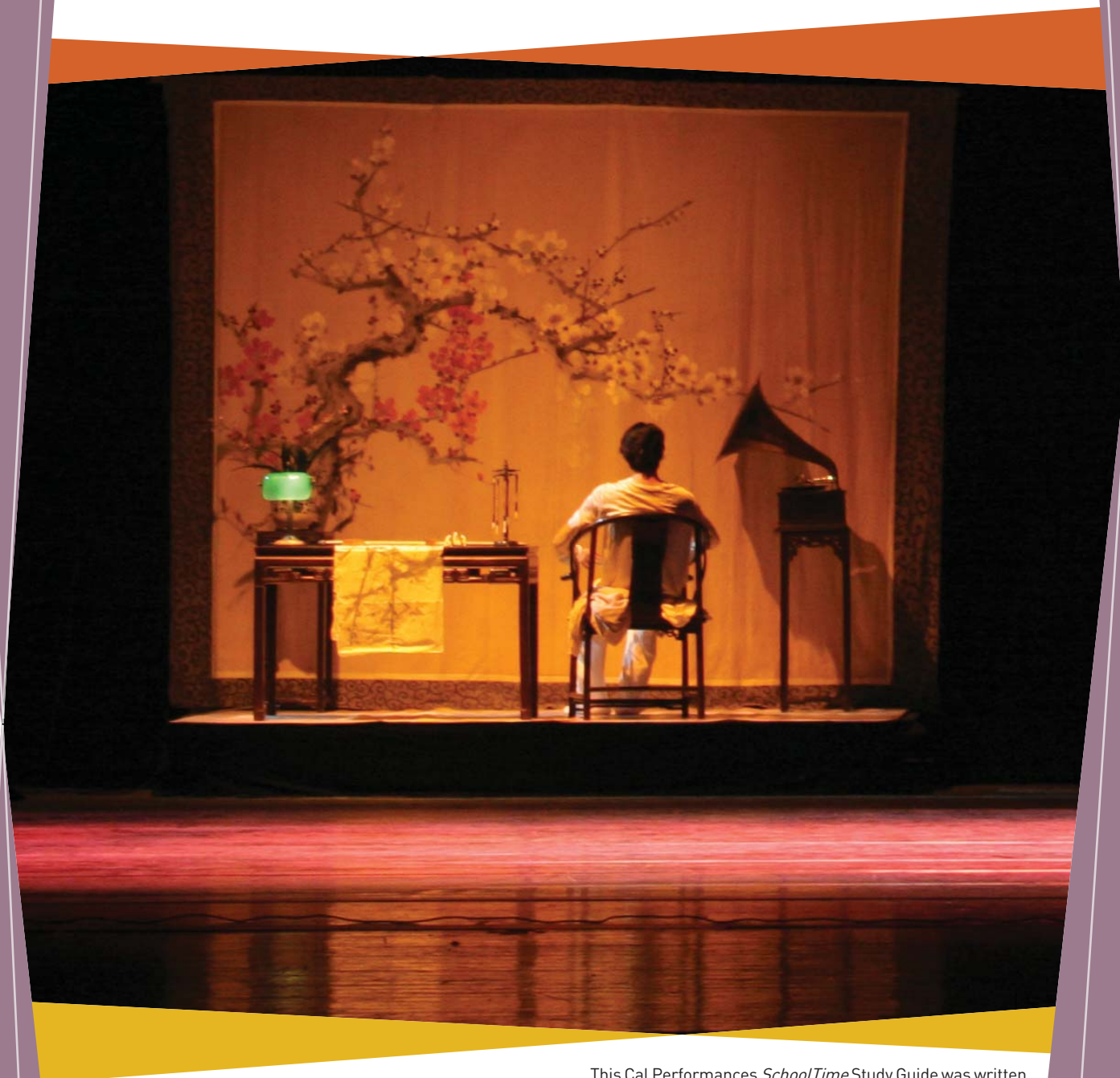
Creating, performing and participating in dance

Students apply choreographic principles, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through the improvisation, composition, and performance of dance.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of dance

Students analyze the function and development of dance in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to dance and dancers.



This Cal Performances *SchoolTime* Study Guide was written, edited and designed by Laura Abrams, Rica Anderson and Nicole Anthony. Copyright © 2007 Cal Performances