University of Chicago Arts announces the Chicago premiere of Chinese opera star Ling Ke (凌珂) and members of the Tianjin Peking Opera Company on April 12 and 13, 2014, as a highlight of its campus-wide Envisioning China: A Festival of Arts and Culture (“演视中国” 文化艺术节). Full festival schedule now available at envisionchina.uchicago.edu

OTHER FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:
• At the Threshold: Envisioning China festival opening celebration: Feb. 13
• Smart Museum of Art’s Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture (“中国戏曲中的视觉文化” 展览): February 13-June 15
• Rare Chinese Opera Film Series: March 7, April 6, May 3 and May 16
• Multi-screen video installation of Yang Fudong’s (杨福东) East of Que Village (雀村往东), February 28–March 30
• Chinese Fine Arts Society’s (中華才藝協會) Five Elements Project: Water, April 27
• Shanghai Quartet 30th anniversary performance presented by University of Chicago Presents, May 2
• M. Butterfly by award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang at Court Theatre, May 8–June 8
• Direct from China, recital by Pipa virtuoso Lan Weiwei (兰维薇), premiering new composition by UChicago alumnus Chen Yao (姚晨 PhD’12), June 1

CHICAGO (January 22, 2013)—The University of Chicago announces the Chicago premiere of Chinese opera star Ling Ke (凌珂) and members of the Tianjin Peking Opera Company on April 12 and 13, 2014, as a highlight of its campus-wide Envisioning China: A Festival of Arts and Culture (“演视中国” 文化艺术节). Incorporating over 40 events and exhibitions related to Chinese culture and
heritage, the majority of which are free to the public, *Envisioning China* is presented in venues throughout the University of Chicago from February 13 to June 15, 2014.

The new festival begins next month with **At the Threshold: Envisioning China**, an opening celebration on February 13 from 5-7:30 p.m. for the festival and Smart Museum of Art’s **Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture** ("中国戏曲中的视觉文化" 展览), an exhibition of rarely seen works from late imperial China. The festival continues through June with art, film, music, conversations and performances organized by UChicago’s Center for the Art of East Asia, Center for East Asian Studies, Court Theatre, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Department of Music, Department of Visual Arts, Doc Films, Film Studies Center, Oriental Institute, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts and University of Chicago Presents, as well as other collaborative partners.

“UChicago Arts is thrilled to welcome the outstanding young performer Ling Ke and the Tianjin Peking Opera Company to campus as part of *Envisioning China*,” said Judith Zeitlin, faculty festival director and William R. Kenan Jr. Professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Chicago. “The opera performance expands the festival’s already diverse offerings and provides the greater Chicago community the opportunity to experience one of China’s great cultural traditions.”

The festival also includes collaborations with Chicago-based arts organizations, including the Chinese Fine Arts Society’s first performance in its five-part concert series exploring the Chinese Five Elements.

**PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS**

Following are highlights of the programs and exhibitions from *Envisioning China: A Festival of Arts and Culture* ("演视中国" 文化艺术节) at the University of Chicago; a complete schedule of programs, including additional offerings, is online at envisioningchina.uchicago.edu.

**At the Threshold: Envisioning China**
February 13, 5-7:30 pm
Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, 5550 South Greenwood Avenue
Free admission, cash bar ($4 drinks). All are welcome, but must be 21+ to drink.

Celebrate the public opening of *Envisioning China* and the special exhibitions **Performing Images** and **Inspired by the Opera**. The evening features creative experiences organized by Matt Austin, an artist and the Smart’s interpreter in residence, as well as drinks, music, and conversation inspired by Chinese opera.

**Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture**
(“中国戏曲中的视觉文化” 展览)
February 13–June 15, 2014
Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, 5550 South Greenwood Avenue
Free

During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Chinese passion for opera and theater permeated the visual and material world of everyday life. Opera was at the heart of Chinese social life, from
the village to the court, and the spectacle of theater was found not only on the stage—in costumes, props, and face painting—but also across the full spectrum of Chinese visual culture, from scroll paintings to popular prints.

This one-of-a-kind exhibition focuses on the vibrant imagery of Chinese opera. The exhibition showcases how operatic characters and stories were represented in a wide array of media, including ceramics, illustrated books, painted fans, prints, photographs, scroll paintings, and textiles. Featuring approximately 80 remarkable and rarely seen objects on loan from major public institutions—the American Museum of Natural History, Asian Art Museum, Field Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Museum of Fine Arts Boston, among others—the exhibition reveals how Chinese visual and performing traditions were aesthetically, ritually, and commercially intertwined.

Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture is curated by Judith Zeitlin (蔡九迪), William R. Kenan Jr. Professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Chicago, and Yuhang Li (李雨航), Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Wisconsin, in consultation with Richard A. Born, Smart Museum senior curator.

Chinese Opera Film Series
March 7, 7 pm; April 6, 2 pm; May 3, 7 pm; May 16, 7 pm
Logan Center for the Arts, The University of Chicago, 915 East 60th Street
Film Screening Room
Free. Seating is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Explore cinematic adaptations of the epic and often scintillating stories from historic Chinese operas. This film series mixes narrative and documentary work and includes the rarely screened gem Romance of the Western Chamber (西厢记) (dir. Hou Yao [侯曜], China, 1927, 35mm print courtesy of EYE International, 59 min)—a silent film that will be presented with live music from a newly commissioned score by Donald Sosin. The film series is presented by the University of Chicago’s Film Studies Center, Department of Cinema and Media Studies, and Smart Museum of Art in conjunction with the Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China in Chicago. Note: Additional film titles in the series to be announced in the spring.

Yang Fudong: East of Que Village
杨福东: 雀村往东
February 28–March 30, 2014
Logan Center for the Arts, The University of Chicago, 915 East 60th Street
Opening Reception: Friday, February 28, 2014, 6-8 pm
Free

A focused selection of video works spanning the 20+ year career of one of China’s most iconic film-based artists, Yang Fudong (杨福东). The exhibition features the poignant, multi-channel meditation on the artist’s place of birth, East of Que Village (雀村往东) (2007). An objective if fractured depiction of an isolated village in rural Hebei, populated mostly by wild dogs, this work presents a contrast to the image of beautiful and urbane Chinese youth, which have come to define Fudong’s films. While these characters still appear in the exhibition, in rarely-seen single-channel works, the overall presentation aims to present the complexity of the artist’s vision of contemporary Chinese culture. The exhibition is co-curated by Wu Hung,
the Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor in Art History, and Monika Szewczyk, visual arts program curator, Logan Center. Organized by Logan Center Exhibitions.

A Night at the Peking Opera

Chicago Premiere of Opera Star Ling Ke and the Tianjin Peking Opera Company
April 12, 2014, 7:30 pm
Logan Center for the Arts, The University of Chicago, 915 East 60th Street
Performance Hall
$20 general admission/$10 students

Chinese opera star Ling Ke (凌珂) and the members of the Tianjin Peking Opera Company will perform a variety of world-famous Peking Opera highlights in their Chicago premiere. Among the inspired opera highlights are Wu Song Kills the Tiger (武松打虎), A Dragon Flirts with a Phoenix (游龙戏凤), and The Ghost of the Black Pot (乌盆记). These highlights will feature the characteristic artistry and charm that has made Ling Ke one of the finest young male performers in China today, as well as traditional Chinese instrumentalists, performers specializing in comic, martial, and dramatic roles, and dazzling costumes. This performance is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Consul General of Chicago of The People's Republic of China and the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

Ling Ke Salon Recital of Chinese Opera
April 13, 2014, 2 pm
Logan Center for the Arts, The University of Chicago, 915 East 60th Street
Free

In this intimate afternoon recital of Chinese Opera arias, Chinese opera star Ling Ke (凌珂) will perform Ballad (弹词) from The Palace of Lasting Life (长生殿) in a virtuoso performance of Peking and Kunqu Opera. This performance is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Consul General of Chicago of The People's Republic of China and the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

The Five Elements Project: Water
April 27, 2014, 3–4pm
Logan Center for the Arts, The University of Chicago, 915 East 60th Street, Performance Hall
$10 general admission, $5 students
chinesefinearts.org/five_elements

The first of the Chinese Fine Arts Society’s (中華才藝協會) series exploring the Chinese five elements, this concert features traditional and contemporary works by renowned composers Chen Yi (陈怡), Lei Liang, Bright Sheng (盛宗亮), and Liu Wenjin (刘文金), and the world premiere of Huang Ruo’s Phrases of the Stream for pipa and erhu. The program is curated by Qing Hou, Chicago Symphony Orchestra violinist and the Chinese Fine Arts Society’s artist in residence. Concert artists will include erhu master Betti Xiang. The five elements are used in Chinese philosophy, art, and science to describe natural phenomena. Inspired by CFAS’s late founder, Barbara Tiao, who was considered by many to be “a force of nature,” this series celebrates the society’s 30th anniversary.

Shanghai Quartet
May 2, 2014, 7:30 pm performance; 6:30 pm pre-concert talk with Philip Gossett
Mandel Hall, The University of Chicago, 1131 East 57th Street
$35 reserved seating, $5 students

Celebrating its 30th anniversary season, the Shanghai Quartet has become one of the world’s foremost chamber ensembles and is renowned for its passionate musicality, impressive technique, and multicultural innovations. The elegant program includes Verdi’s only string quartet, written during a production delay of his opera Aida, and Zhou Long’s (周龙) Song of the Ch’in (琴曲). Presented by the University of Chicago Presents.

**M. Butterfly**
May 8–June 8, 2014
Court Theatre, The University of Chicago, 5535 South Ellis Avenue
Ticket prices vary.

*M. Butterfly* is an exquisitely delicate and aggressively original play about sex, espionage, and imperialism. Skillfully intertwining the story of Puccini’s opera *Madama Butterfly* with an extraordinary plot inspired by true events, playwright David Henry Hwang untangles the story of René Gallimard, a meek French civil servant who meets the woman of his dreams in Song Liling, a beautiful Chinese opera diva. What Gallimard doesn’t realize—or refuses to see—is that his “modest Chinese girl” may be much more than she appears. *M. Butterfly* has become a postmodern classic whose exploration of the sexual politics of East and West continues to resonate today. Directed by Court Theatre Artistic Director Charles Newell.

**Pipa Recital: Lan Weiwei (兰维薇)**
June 1, 2pm
Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, 5550 South Greenwood Avenue
Free. Seating is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Enjoy a performance from virtuoso Lan Weiwei (兰维薇)—one of the best pipa players in China and lecturer in pipa performance at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. The pipa, a plucked Chinese string instrument, was often featured in Chinese opera accompaniment. The recital will bridge ancient and modern, featuring Ming dynasty and other traditional works from the pipa repertoire as well as the debut of a newly commissioned piece by composer Chen Yao (姚晨 UChicago PhD’12, assistant professor in composition at Illinois State University). Before the recital, exhibition curator Judith Zeitlin (蔡九迪, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Chicago) will give a brief gallery talk about a rare, lavishly decorated Ming dynasty pipa that is on view in the Smart Museum’s special exhibition *Performing Images*.

This performance is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Consul General of Chicago of The People’s Republic of China, and the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago.

**About Envisioning China: A Festival of Arts and Culture (“演视中国” 文化艺术节)**

UChicago Arts presents a diverse selection of art, film, music, conversations and performances connected to the arts and cultural history of China during a five-month festival. From the magnificent
art and spectacle of Chinese opera to rarely screened silent films and world premiere performances, the festival opens a window on the rich cultural heritage of China, past and present.

*Envisioning China* is directed by Leigh Fagin, Assistant Director of Collaborative Programming at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts. Professor Judith Zeitlin (蔡九迪) is the faculty director of the festival.

Visit the festival website for the latest announcements, envisioningchina.uchicago.edu and like the festival on Facebook, facebook.com/envisioningchina.

**About UChicago Arts**

The University of Chicago is a destination for artists, scholars and audiences to converge and create. With a strong tradition of cross-disciplinary, intellectual curiosity and creative energy, UChicago fosters a bustling arts community on Chicago’s South Side.

UChicago Arts is comprised of renowned museums, theaters and music organizations; initiatives connecting the arts with scholars and the city; academic and research programs; and more than 60 student arts organizations, forging an integrative model for practice, presentation and scholarship.

Professional and presenting organizations include the Court Theatre, Oriental Institute Museum, Smart Museum of Art, the Renaissance Society and University of Chicago Presents. UChicago Arts initiatives include Arts + Public Life and its Arts Incubator in Washington Park, the Arts|Science Initiative, the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry and the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts.

Learn more about UChicago Arts at arts.uchicago.edu and follow UChicago Arts on Facebook facebook.com/uchicagoarts and Twitter twitter.com/uchicagoarts.

###

**Media Images/Video**

Download gorgeous images [here](#)

Video trailer available [here](#)

**Media Contact**

Elizabeth Neukirch/Beth Silverman
The Silverman Group, Inc.
312.932.9950
Elizabeth@Silvermangroupchicago.com