

# SMART, YOUNG ROCKERS ARE ELECTRIFYING

More than 300 children from all over China gather at a weeklong camp, to play electronic instruments. **Chen Nan** listens in.

**Y**ang Liuqing plays the electronic keyboard like a professional, even though he is only 10.

"I wanted to wear my favorite Michael Jackson shirt but we have to wear these T-shirts today. I will wear it for our next show," says Yang, who is one of the members of Shanghai-based band, Troublemakers.

The round-faced boy who loves to smile, and his five other band members plays grunge, a sub-genre of alternative rock music. Li Qijun, 10, plays the electronic drums; Wang Yiqi, 8, bass; Lu Pengxiang, 8, electronic piano; and Wu Sijian, 9, and Zhang Yanjia, 7, electronic guitars.

The band recently performed at the opening of a summer camp in Pinggu district, on the outskirts of Beijing. They are among more than 300 children and young adults, aged between 3 and 18, from all over China, who gathered for a weeklong camp, titled Chinese Kids Rock with Electronic Musical Instruments.

The organizers — the local government of Pinggu district and Roland Corporation, a leading manufacturer and distributor of electronic musical instruments — want campers to feel comfortable being loud and expressing themselves on stage like adult rockers.

"Most parents in China get their children to learn at least one musical instrument, such as violin and piano. They only set their eyes on classical music," says Sun Qianxiao from Roland Corporation, the camp's founder and co-director. "We want parents and children to know that electronic musical instruments are electrifying."

At the camp, participants attend master classes conducted by international musicians, such as jazz-fusion guitarist Robert Marcello from Sweden and Masaking, percussionist from Japan.

Among the campers, 150 children play electronic drums, 80 children play keyboards and more than 20 play electronic accordion. The others play classical musical instruments. At the end of the camp on Aug 8, they performed a concert.

"Based on our research, one-third of the children who go for music lessons in China, learn electronic musical instruments," says Sun.

Shen Lukun, mother to a pair of 7-year-old twin daughters — Qin Wenjun and Qin Wenzhe — says her daughters fell in love with electronic drum after watching a TV show which featured the instrument.

"When the girls told me that they want to learn the electronic drum, I thought it was crazy because most of my friends send their children to learn classical music and not modern music," says Shen, from Jiaozuo, Henan province. Both her daughters joined the camp. "They were only 4 years old then. And, both my husband and I have no idea about electronic musical instruments."

"But when I saw how persistent they were about learning the instrument and how they enjoyed the classes, I knew they were serious," says Shen. She bought a drum kit for over 10,000 yuan (\$1,570) for her daughters and sent them to music classes twice weekly in their hometown. She has not mapped out any plans for her daughters' musical futures. "I only want them to be happy," she says.

"It is so much fun to play the drum," says Qin Wenjun, the elder twin, who performed solo at the concert. According to Liu Bingnan, a teacher from Roland Music School, most children love learning the electronic drum because it's easy to learn and fun to play. "It's like a base for music. You just have to follow the music and provide the beats," he says.

One of the camp participants who learns classical music, 11-year-old Wang Hanqing, has been playing the piano and accordion since she was 5. "My parents want me to have a good sense of music," says Wang. "They bought me a lot of classical music CDs as well as pop and rock CDs. For me, the music world is not only about classical music but there is a great variety. When I play music at home, I also try the two instruments with rock tunes."

At the concert, the girl played the piano accompanied by electronic musical instruments, and she also gave a solo accordion performance.

"I think piano sounds great with electronic musical instruments and accordion becomes alive with synthesizers," she says.

The location of the camp is at a 10-square-kilometer music valley in Pinggu, which is home to the annual China International Music Valley Festival. It is near Dongguancun village, which produces 300,000 violins annually and is the world's largest exporter of violins.

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FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Camp participants visit a violin factory in Pinggu.



### 3D exhibition on idyllic life

Witness how artist Liu Qinghe transforms his landmark installation *Suzhou Time Waves* from a 2D work into a 3D story in his *Floating Art Installation* solo exhibition at the Atrium of The Opposite House.

Presented by Red Gate Gallery, the sculptures depict a simple and

idyllic life in a pond landscape, contrasting the sprawling urbanization of China. Born in Tianjin, Liu graduated from Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts majoring in ink painting. Liu has exhibited extensively in China for more than 30 years and is considered to be one of the leading advocates of contemporary Chinese ink painting. *Until Sept 30. Atrium of The Opposite House, The Village, Building 1, 11 Sanlituan Lu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6417-6688.*

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# artbeat

finger on the pulse

## ART

### Solo art in mixed media

Lou Zhenggang, an artist, writer and TV host who lives in Japan, is holding her latest solo art exhibition at Today Art Museum in Beijing.

On show are Lou's works, which incorporate video, installation, ink painting, calligraphy and mixed media. The highlight is a huge installation that occupies a whole exhibition hall, featuring 108 experimental ink paintings, illuminated underneath and linked by a wooden bridge.

Since 1998, Lou has been experimenting with ink art, borrowing from other contemporary art genres.

During the exhibition, she will also launch her book, *Voices of the Heart*. The book contains her TV interviews with Japanese cultural celebrities from 2003-2004 in Japan.

10 am-5 pm, until Aug 27. Today Art Museum, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-5876-0600.

### Homage to Ballard

James Cohan Gallery is running a summer exhibition, featuring two young Shanghai-based artists, James H. Bollen and Li Wenguang. James H. Bollen's exhibition titled *Jim's Terrible City* carries 12 colored photographs from his recently completed book-length project. The photographs were inspired by British writer J. G. Ballard. Li, who is a self-taught artist, presents his fine works on rice paper mounted to traditional Chinese silk scrolls using a combination of pen, brush, Chinese ink and acrylic paint.

July 29-Aug 31 Tuesday - Saturday, 10 - 6 pm; Sunday, 12 - 6 pm; Monday by appointment. James Cohan Gallery Shanghai, 1F, Building 1, 170 Yueyang Road, Shanghai. 021-5466-0825.

## DRAMA

### Laws of nature



Join a girl's adventure into a forest in icy winter and watch how she gets help from the gods representing the 12 months of the year.

China Children's Art Theater presents *The Twelve Months* written by Samuil Marshak, a writer of the former Soviet Union, at Guangzhou Opera House, on Aug 11 and 12.

The play tells a story that a girl is forced by a willful queen to find snow lotus in winter when the flower only blossoms in April. In the play, the 12 gods will teach the little queen, and the young audience as well, to respect the laws of nature.

As the play is an adaptation from a Russian fairy tale, the audience will enjoy exotic Russian song and dance.

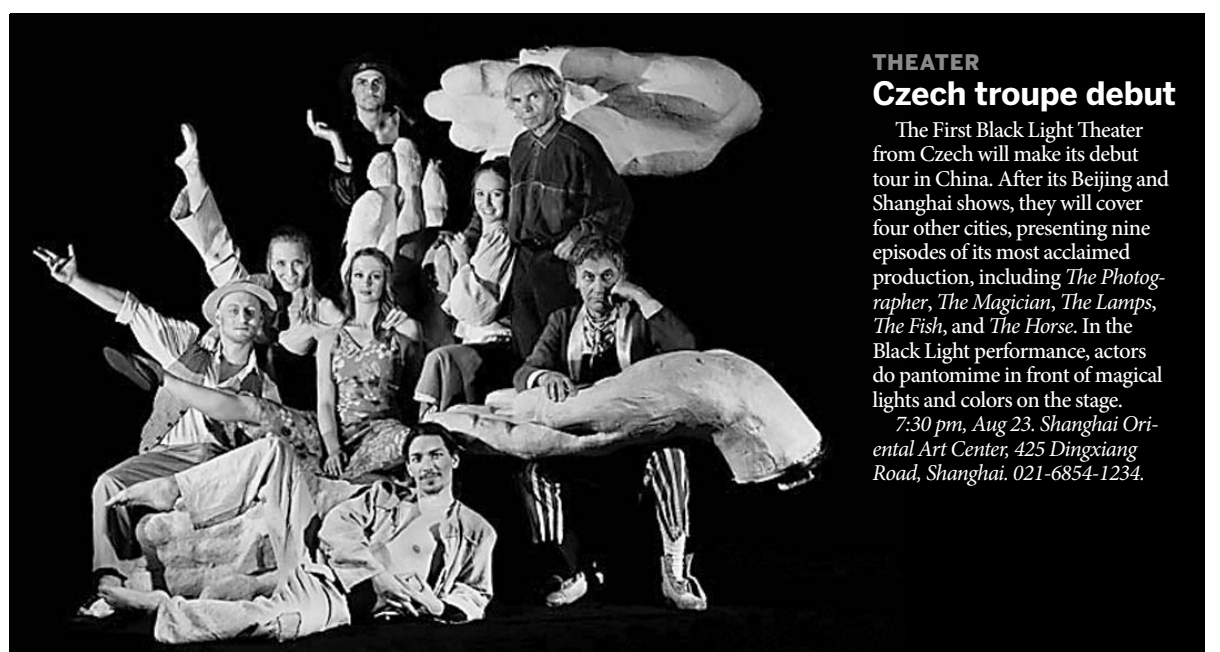
The sophisticated stage props give the impression that the actors and actresses are running through real birches and playing beside shimmering lakes.

8 pm, Aug 11 and 12. Guangzhou Opera House, Exit B1 of Zhujiang New Town subway station, the interchange of subway line 3 and line 5, Guangzhou. 020-3839-2888.

## FESTIVAL

### Pop stars unite

About 100 singers will stage a two-day music show in Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong, to celebrate the 35 anni-



## THEATER

### Czech troupe debut

The First Black Light Theater from Czech will make its debut tour in China. After its Beijing and Shanghai shows, they will cover four other cities, presenting nine episodes of its most acclaimed production, including *The Photographer, The Magician, The Lamps, The Fish, and The Horse*. In the Black Light performance, actors do pantomime in front of magical lights and colors on the stage.

7:30 pm, Aug 23. Shanghai Oriental Art Center, 425 Dingxiang Road, Shanghai. 021-6854-1234.

versary of Guangdong's pop music.

Watch 1990s famous singers, include Mao Ning and Yang Yuying, reunite on stage on the first day. Rising stars who have emerged since 1997, including popular band Phoenix Legend, who will show their vigor on the second day.

A children's choir, with several hundred members, will also present local nursery rhyme classics on the second day.

8 pm, Aug 11 and 12. Guangzhou International Sports Arena, 2666, Kaichuang Avenue, Dalang Village, Luogang District, Guangzhou. 020-3209-1000.

### A bite of Thai food

Bite Thailand, a Thai fruit and cuisine festival, is being held at Lotus Supermarket in Beijing. Visitors can enjoy native Thai dishes including tom yum goong soup, durian with sticky rice, Thai curry and papaya salad. Guests can also learn one or two Thai cooking skills at the event.

10 am-10 pm, until Aug 14. Lotus Supermarket, 1 Yuanda Lu, Haidian district, Beijing. 010-8887-5758.

## CONCERT

### Marina Lomazov performs

Ukrainian-American pianist Marina Lomazov studied at the Kiev Conservatory where she became the youngest first prize winner of the All-Kiev Piano Competition. She was acclaimed as a pianist who embodies both unique Russian characteristics and musical sensibilities, by the Chicago International Music Foundation. She will perform *Variations in F Minor* by Haydn, excerpts from *The Seasons* by Tchaikovsky, and *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12 in C sharp minor* by Liszt, in Shanghai.

7:30 pm, Aug 25. Shanghai City Theater, 4889 Dushi Road, Shanghai. 021-5415-7496.

### Li Xincao takes control

Li Xincao (principal conductor of China National Symphony Orchestra) and the Busan Philharmonic Orchestra will perform in China in August to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea.

After the Beijing show on Aug 3, Li and the orchestra will perform at Guangzhou Opera House on Aug 8.

South Korea's rising violinist Kim Bomsori, who won first prize at 2011's China International Violin Competition, is going to play one of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius' violin concerto.

Li will also present Shostakovich's *Symphony No 10 in E Minor*. 8 pm, Aug 8. Opera Hall, Guangzhou Opera House, Exit B1 of Zhujiang New Town subway station, the interchange of subway line 3 and line 5, Guangzhou, Guangdong province. 020-3839-2888.

### Pop queen on love

Listen to the husky voice of Tiger Wong, a Taiwanese singer who has been named the "Queen of Pub", as she sings about her turbulent love life.

Wong is set to move the audience to tears with her love songs at the concert at Guangzhou Opera House on Aug 18.

After suffering a broken marriage, the 49-year-old is now enjoying a sweet relationship with her foreign boyfriend. She has also experienced all kinds of heartaches during her long singing career in pubs. Wong's songs tell of her heart-wrenching experiences and thus, always strike a chord with fans.

8 pm, Aug 18. Guangzhou Opera House, Exit B1 of Zhujiang New Town subway station, the interchange of subway line 3 and line 5, Guangzhou. 020-3839-2888.

### Star-studded gala



The China National Symphony Orchestra will stage its 2012-13 season's opening concert in Beijing.

The star-studded gala will have musicians from home and abroad, including famous French conductor Michel Plisson and pipe organ player Shen Fanxiu. Shen will play French composer and organist Camille Saint-Saens' classical work, *Symphony No 3 (Organ Symphony)*. Saint-Saens composed the symphony in 1886, which was commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society in Britain and was first performed in London.

7:30 pm, Aug 17. Concert Hall, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 West Chang'an Avenue, Xicheng district, Beijing. 010-6655-0000.

### CNSO presents animation classics

The China National Symphony Orchestra will present a concert comprising the music of Joe Hisaishi and Hayao Miyazaki's animation works.

Most Chinese animation fans are familiar with Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi, who is famous for his collaborations with animation master Hayao Miyazaki. He has composed most of the scores for his films, such as *Castle in the Sky, My Neighbor Totoro*, and *Spirited Away*.

The CNSO will not only play the music in Miyazaki's classical animations but also Hisaishi's works for famous movies such as *Departures* and *Kikujiro*.

7:30 pm, Aug 18. Beijing Concert Hall, 1, North Xinhua Street, Xicheng district, Beijing. 010-6605-7006.

## SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP

### Stories from Taiwan

Wu Nien-jen, a famous scriptwriter, director, and author from Taiwan, will be in Guangzhou to share moving stories about ordinary people he encountered.

Among the anecdotes are a man who set up a butterfly farm on his own to preserve local rare species, and an old woman who has been offering buffet lunches for a token to poor workers in the past five decades.

Wu thinks that these stories represent the real Taiwan and display Taiwan's beauty.

Wu produced and hosted a TV program, which debuted in 1995 and is still repeated on TV because of its popularity. He wrote a book with a collection of stories from his TV program, which he will bring with him to Guangzhou.

3-5 pm, Aug 11. Fangsuo Commune, TaiKoo Hui shopping mall, 383 Tianhehu, Tianhe district, Guangzhou, (Exit D of Shipaiqiao Station of subway line 3). 020-3868-2327.

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