

The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music
Ethnomusicology Archive presents



Music Alive in the Archive: Celebrating the Music and Legacy of Hua Wenyi

Monday, February 9, 2026

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Ostin Recording Studio 150

Program Schedule

Opening (6:00 PM)

- Helen Rees

Family Remarks

- Jane Xue

**Introducing the Hua
Wenyi Collection**

- Maureen Russell
- Mei-Chen Chen

**Roundtable
Discussion (6:15 PM)**

- Li-Yung Hou
- Ledell Wu
- Susan Pertel Jain
- Chi Li

**Performances
(6:45 PM)**

- UCLA Music of China
Ensemble
- Kunqu Opera Society USA

Co-sponsored by
UCLA Asia Pacific Center

With Support from
Kunqu Opera Society USA
UCLA Music of China Ensemble



Performance: UCLA Music of China Ensemble, Directed by Chi Li

Part 1. Labelled Melodies from Kun Opera

Kun opera instrumental performance is distinguished by its elegant and delicately flowing *shuimo* style. The principal accompanying instrument is the *qudi* (transverse bamboo flute), often revered as the “soul” of Kun opera. A defining feature of Kun opera music is its clear and supple tone, which closely follows the vocal line. This refined accompaniment emphasizes subtlety and lyricism, often shaping the melody in response to the text (*yi zi xing qiang*), making it one of the most elegant and meticulously crafted accompaniment styles in traditional Chinese opera.

1. Gentle Spring Atmosphere (Chunri Jinghe) 春日景和

Banquet Music (Yan Yue)

“Gentle Spring Atmosphere” is a *qupai* (labelled melody) from Kun opera, celebrated for its graceful lyricism and refined elegance, richly imbued with the aesthetic of court music. In Kun opera performance, this piece is commonly used to accompany scenes of banquets, scenic appreciation, dream sequences, and encounters with deities, evoking an atmosphere of serenity and poetic beauty.

2. Hillside Sheep (Shan Po Yang) 山坡羊 *Music of Jubilation (Xi Yue)*

“Shanpo Yang” is a Kun opera *qupai* with a long and distinguished history in both southern and northern traditions. In Kun opera performance, it is frequently used as accompaniment for lyrical dance, delicately expressing a character’s inner emotional world. Serving both narrative and expressive functions, the music supports character development and embodies Kun opera’s artistic hallmark of integrating song and dance with a strong lyrical sensibility.

Featuring: Helen Rees (dizi), Chi Li (erhu), Jodie Ryu (bangu), Chutian Shi (sheng), Jinghan Liu (pipa), Yifan Zhuo (yangqin), Eleanor Vo (zheng), Lan Nguyen (ruan)



Part 2. Kun Opera Aria

3. The Palace of Eternal Life— Shocking Mutiny: The Royal Banquet (Changsheng Dian – Jing Bian – Xiao Yan) 《長生殿·驚變》小宴 Hong Sheng (1688)

The Kun opera aria “*Flowers in Full Splendor*” (*Hua Fan Nong Yan*) from The Palace of Eternal Life, “*The Small Banquet*,” depicts Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty and Consort Yang Guifei feasting and admiring blossoms in the exquisitely landscaped imperial garden of the Palace of Eternal Life. Yang Guifei’s sumptuous costume and poised demeanor at the lavish banquet emphasize her extraordinary beauty and regal elegance, vividly conveying the height of imperial favor and the splendor and luxury she enjoys as the emperor’s most cherished consort.

Kun opera is often described as China’s “classical” opera, with the dizi (transverse bamboo flute) serving as the principal melodic accompanying instrument.

Performers: Deng Yinzhi, Milo Dillon, Annie Sun, Fiana Tang

Musicians: Chenlin Ma (dizi), Yifan Zhuo (yangqin), Hanchen Shu (erhu), Madeline Liu (erhu), Jinghan Liu (pipa)





Performance: Kunqu Opera Society USA

1. The Jade Hairpin— The Stirring Zither: *Chao Yuan Ge*

《玉簪記·琴挑》朝元歌

The *Jade Hairpin* was written by the Ming dynasty playwright Gao Lian. In *Stirring Zither*, a quiet evening is filled with the sound of the qin, drawing Pan Bizheng and Chen Miaochang into a poetic encounter. In her aria *Chaoyuan Ge*, Chen Miaochang conveys her hidden feelings with tones that seem both playful and shy, hesitant yet deeply tender.

Performer: *Chen Miaochang* by Li-Yung Hou

Musicians: Bin Ma (dizi), Jeffery Yan (drum)

2. The Peony Pavilion— The Garden Stroll: *Zao Luo Pao*

《牡丹亭·遊園》皂羅袍

The *Peony Pavilion* is a masterpiece by the Ming dynasty playwright Tang Xianzu. In *The Garden Stroll*, Du Liniang wanders through a spring garden with her maid Chunxiang, where blossoms and gentle breezes awaken her stirrings of love from the nature.

Performers: *Du Liniang* by Christina Jin, *Chunxiang* by Fang Wei

3. The Peony Pavilion— The Interrupted Dream: *Shan Po Yang*

《牡丹亭·驚夢》山坡羊

Following *The Garden Stroll*, *The Interrupted Dream* portrays Du Liniang drifting into sleep with her thoughts still lingering on spring. In her dream, encounters a young scholar; just as their affection deepens, she is suddenly awakened and drawn back into reality.

Performer: *Du Liniang* by Wei Wang



4. The Palace of Eternal Life— The Little Banquet: Qi Yan Hui

《長生殿·小宴》泣顏回

The Palace of Eternal Life was written by the Qing dynasty playwright Hong Sheng. In *The Little Banquet*, Emperor Xuanzong and Lady Yang stroll together through the imperial garden in autumn, enjoying the scenery and refined music at a quiet daytime feast, where seasonal beauty and courtly splendor reflect their profound bond and the grandeur of the Tang dynasty.

Performers: *Emperor Tang Xuanzong* by Yule Liu, *Lady Yang* by Yimeng Liu

About Kunqu Opera Society USA 美西崑曲社

Kunqu Opera Society USA is a California-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, performance, and education of Kunqu opera in North America. Through performances, lectures, and workshops, the Society introduces this UNESCO-recognized intangible cultural heritage to diverse audiences.

Thank you for joining us in honoring Hua Wenyi's enduring legacy.

The Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

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