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## East Meets West

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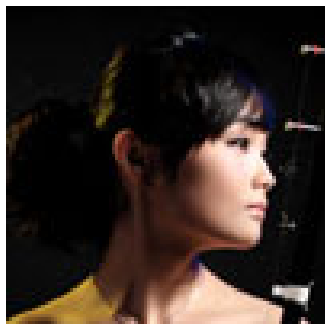
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## East Meets West

**07.10.2012 | Engineering, Fine Arts, Students**

The world-renowned Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Ohio's former Governor Bob Taft, the University of Dayton's Horn Quartet and a solo percussionist will travel to China in August to help kick off the grand opening of the University of Dayton China Institute in Suzhou Industrial Park.

Taft will participate in the Aug. 8 grand opening ceremonies with University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran, Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) officials, representatives from international companies, educators from Chinese universities and two Catholic bishops from the region. The ceremony will be conducted in Chinese and English.

The festivities conclude in the Duschu Lake Theater with an evening concert featuring the University of Dayton Horn Quartet and solo marimba performer Rebecca Welch directed by Richard Chenoweth; University of Dayton pianist Eric Street; a Chinese music performance from Nanjing University of the Arts; and a grand finale by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company.

The University of Dayton China Institute is a five-story, 68,000-square-foot building that Suzhou Industrial Park officials renovated with science and engineering laboratories, classrooms and project space. SIP invited the University of Dayton to conduct applied research and product development for international industries in the park, which is home to a third of the world's Fortune 500 companies.

The evening concert will feature American musical selections, such as ragtime piano music and George Gershwin's well-known "Rhapsody in Blue," as well as music from other parts of the world, including China. Under the direction of Artistic Director Debbie Blunden-Diggs, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company will reprise "Os padrões," a piece inspired by the artistry in the painting and sculpture of Willis "Bing" Davis that premiered in Dayton in February. It's choreographed by Robert J. Priore.

"Dance becomes a universal language," said Ro Nita Hawes-Saunders, executive director of the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. "This stunning piece examines how patterns in shapes are created with the human body through movement. DCDC is delighted to perform in China at this celebration."

Sharon Davis Gratto, chair of the department of music at the University of Dayton will emcee the concert. One of her research specialties is world choral music. On campus, she directs the World Music Choir.

"The Chinese music features the beautiful traditional string instrument known as the erhu. The program also includes several Latin American and Spanish-influenced compositions, some by American composers," she said. "I tried to select music, instrumentalists and contemporary American dance that the audience might be less likely to see in China and that would provide a representative sample of music education and performance at the University of Dayton."

Gratto sought the best chamber music and solo performers to travel to China for the grand opening. Three of the four were Honors Recital winners. Two won the University of Dayton's Concerto Competition. One was a recipient of the Presser Foundation Scholarship Award. Another, who didn't major in music, performed with the University's Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Horn Choir, Horn Quartet, Marching Band and Flyer Pep Band.

"I am the oddball math major who just loves playing," said Sara Jordan, of Indianapolis. "I've never been to China and am absolutely thrilled to get the chance to travel there and perform. I hope we can leave the audience with a great impression of the University of Dayton and the arts here at UD."

Senior music major Mitchell McCrady has never traveled to China, let alone overseas. "This trip is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me," he said. "I feel so blessed and thankful for our quartet to be chosen to represent the University of Dayton in China. My colleagues and myself have been working extremely hard to keep our playing chops in shape over the summer recess, and I have no doubt our music will knock their socks off."

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