

Confucius Institute Ljubljana

Celebrating Friendship

To honour the 20th anniversary of establishing the diplomatic relationship between Slovenia and The People's Republic of China and the second anniversary of the establishment of the Confucius Institute Ljubljana, a large number of cultural events will take place as part of the Chinese Cultural Month.

By Polona Cimerman

Celebration of the two important anniversaries will start in Maribor on 7 May 2012 with a grand concert, »Echo from the Far East – Chinese Rhyme«, Foreign exchange of Chinese culture volunteers performance in collaboration with the Confucius Institute Ljubljana, one of the main organisers together with the City of Ljubljana, the Chinese Embassy, the City of Maribor and Shanghai Institute of Foreign-Trade, the Chinese partner university of the Faculty of Economics. "This is our gift to Maribor as the European Capital of Culture 2012," said Shuihui Zhang, Deputy Director of the Institute. The performing artists from the Shanghai Faculty of Education, the Music School, the Theatre Institute, the University for Chinese Medicine and the Chengdu Art Group, will present the mighty 5,000 year old civilisation with a soloist, various traditional instruments such as an antique bone flute and double-bamboo pipe, acrobatic performances, a tea ceremony, dancing and the Sichuan Opera with its famous, face-changing performance, a definite magical highlight according to Zhang. "The concert will be very colourful and diverse – just like Chinese food," asserts Danijela Voljč, Director of the Institute.



quin Wang "Tea and Water". The rich programme of the Month of Chinese Culture will end on 13 June 2012, a date carefully selected because of the symbolic link with the life of Ferdinand Avguštin Hallerstein, a major 18th century scientist and the first Slovenian who emigrated to China where he built a successful career.

Strengthening the Ties

The past twenty years since the start of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries has brought many changes. "The bilat-

eral relationships in various fields have experienced very smooth and fruitful development," explains the Chinese Consul in Slovenia, Yang Jianzhong. "There have been many high-level exchanges which have deepened our mutual political trust. The two sides have made significant progress in the fields of culture, education and economically, for example from 2010 Slovenia has become China's biggest trade partner from the former Yugoslav countries."

As a result of the good relationship and to strengthen it, the Confucius Institute Ljubljana was

established two years ago to promote and develop awareness about the Chinese language and culture amongst Slovenians. "In this time we have won recognition in Slovenia. The interest for learning Chinese is outstanding, we have an excellent academic bilateral relationship with China and the business community perceives us as an important source of information and opportunities," adds Voljč. "The Institute is a bridge between Slovenia and China. It provides and encourages two-way communication," continues Zhang. "China sent their artists to honour the celebrations with the greatest pleasure and enthusiasm. Slovenia is very much appreciated and the Chinese express their extremely positive attitude toward it."

However, according to Jianthong, the two countries need to make a joint effort to further consolidate their relationship in these uncertain times of the global economic crisis: "A good foundation has already been laid but there is still huge potential waiting to be explored." In his opinion, the two sides should deepen their economic connection and cooperation, expand the trade volume and increase two-way investment: "The 20th anniversary should be the start of the next phase of our bilateral relationship." ■

Art Exhibition and Much More

Four days after the Maribor premiere, the concert will be repeated at the Puppet Theatre in Ljubljana, the sister city of the City of Chengdu. However, prior to this, an important three week exhibition will open in a gallery on Trg republike in Ljubljana. Two prominent Chinese artists, Rong Kang and Wei Zhang, will be present at the opening of "The Tao Follows the Nature" exhibition which focuses on traditional and modern Chinese paintings and shows the highest forms of Chinese art – calligraphy.

In addition, Chinese artists will prepare a photo exhibition from Chengdu, a street performance in the old part of Ljubljana and a multimedia exhibition by Hui-

