

Asian Arts & Culture Program



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**What: IMAGES OF CHINA
CHINESE ROD PUPPETRY BY DRAGON ART STUDIO**

When: Thursday, May 11 at 10 AM and Noon

Where: Bowker Auditorium

Call 413-577-2486 for tickets

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Contact: Sheila Siragusa at 413-577-2486 or 413-545-1980

Traditional Chinese Puppetry exemplifies rich and enchanting culture of folklore and art.

Images of China blends puppetry and music with elegance, humor and special effects to create a beautiful theatrical event. An art form revered throughout China, this puppet show will enthrall and delight the audience while providing an insight into Chinese folklore and culture. Two performances are scheduled on **May 11 at 10 AM and Noon in Bowker Auditorium.**

Chinese puppetry dates back more than a thousand years to the Han Dynasty, during which puppetry became a full-fledged and nationally recognized tradition of performance. The Chinese rod puppets, or the rod-top puppets, used by performers Yuqin Wang and Zhengli Xu are generally about three feet tall and are manipulated from below, consistent with traditional Chinese shadow puppetry.

Yuqin Wang, born in Beijing, China, followed in her father's footsteps, training at the Beijing Opera School by the age of ten. However, in 1964 the director of the Puppet Art Troupe of China saw Wang perform and asked her to join his troupe as a performer. Thus, she began her career in rod puppetry, a tradition of dramatic and acrobatic staging of folktales, legends and opera. While in the troupe, Wang met and married Zhengli Xu, a master puppet maker who, after training in puppetry school, traveled to villages to learn from the old masters the art of puppet making.

For over 31 years Yuqin Wang performed with the Puppet Art Troupe, the first national puppetry group in China, and traveled internationally with them, performing lead roles in over thirty puppet shows, as well as in movies and television programs. Zhengli Xu performed in and directed numerous shows and was stage director for six puppet shows. In 1996 Xu and Wang moved to Portland, Oregon, where they have taken their art form to new audiences. Collaborating with their daughter, Brenda, they have performed at the Atlanta Olympic Games and at the National Folk Festival in Michigan. In addition, they generously share their tradition in school residencies around the country and continue to teach in the Oregon Folklife Apprenticeship Program.

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Tickets: \$5 for students, \$7 for adults

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