

Chinese music sets them free in Central New Jersey

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By [Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)



Wang Junling plays a zheng, also known as a Chinese zither, an instrument which dates back to the time the Great Wall of China was built more than 2,500 years ago. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Herbert Kuehne, of Monroe Township, talks with musician Wang Junling, right. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Herbert Kuehne, of Monroe Township is a self-described "Bach, Mozart and Beethoven person," but after attending a standing room only performance at the [Monroe Township Library](#) of traditional Chinese music he concluded, "I was quite pleasantly surprised. I definitely liked it!"

Kuehne was among those in attendance at a Chamber Concert of Traditional Chinese Music presented by the [Princeton Symphony Orchestra](#) in partnership with the [Monroe Township Cultural Arts Commission](#). The three performing musicians were part of [Music From China](#), a New York based chamber group playing traditional Chinese instruments, which was founded in 1984.

Kuehne added, "I was very impressed with the music, which I didn't know if I was going to like it or not because it's so different."

Traditional Music from China in New Jersey





Susan Chang, founder/director of Music from China, speaks to the audience during the show. (Michael Mancuso / NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Susan Chang founded Music from China in 1984. She says the group also has a Chinese name, which translated means "long wind" and with good reason.

"The music is like a wind that blows from ancient times across the continent to the U.S. and everywhere," she said. "So there's a continuity from ancient times to the present."

She emphasized the strong connection between flow of the music and the flow of nature, calling to mind images of wind and water. The first song was titled "Melody of the Purple Bamboo."





*Musician Wang Junling, right, shows her instrument, zheng, to concert-goers after the performance.
(Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)*



Sun Li on pipa (sometimes called the Chinese lute). (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Sun Li graduated from the Shenyang Music Conservatory where she studied pipa and was a member of the Central Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing. She has performed with Music From China since 2002. Her recent appearances include the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, New Brunswick Symphony Orchestra, and 2013 Lincoln Center Festival.



Detail of the headstock of a pipa (sometimes called the Chinese lute). (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Sun Li on pipa. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Musicians (from left) Wang Guowei on erhu; Sun Li on pipa and Wang Junling, on zheng. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Wang Junling, right, inherits the Henan style of zheng music from her family. She graduated from Henan University and was a soloist with the Henan Song and Dance Drama Academy.



Detail of zheng, also known as a Chinese zither, an instrument which dates back more than 2,500 years. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Musicians (from left) Wang Guowei on erhu; Sun Li on pipa and Wang Junling, on zheng. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



One of the featured musicians was Wang Guowei on erhu. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

Wang Guowei studied at the Shanghai Conservatory and was concertmaster and soloist with the Shanghai Traditional Orchestra. Joining Music From China as Artistic Director in 1996 and also maintaining a solo career, Wang Guowei has appeared with such artists as the Shanghai Quartet, Amelia Piano Trio, Continuum, Four Nations Ensemble, Virginia Symphony, Post Classical Symphony, Ornette Coleman, Butch Morris, Yo-Yo Ma.



Detail of side-by-side erhus, sometimes known in the Western world as the Chinese violin. The resonator section is made of snakeskin. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Audience members applaud a Chamber Concert of Traditional Chinese Music at the Monroe Township Public Library. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Musician Wang Junling, left, speaks with concert-goers after the performance. Vivian Yee, of Richboro, Pa is at right. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)



Musician Sun Li , right, speaks with concert-goers after the performance. (Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

The next performance in The [Monday Afternoon Chamber Series](#) at the Monroe Township Library is scheduled for April 6, 2020

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