IU Bloomington Offers Unique Class on Mongolian Throat Singing

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ith the help of many people and the largesse of several granting agencies, Mongolia’s preeminent teacher of the Mongolian national art of throat singing, B. Odsuren, was invited to the United States to teach and perform his art. He was assisted by his student, B. Battuvshin, an honored artist of the Buryat Republic of Russia. Together they were in residence at Indiana University Bloomington where they led an eight-week course on throat singing, the first such course ever undertaken in this country.

“Throat singing is not connected with formal religion, but with the sense of nature being alive with spirits,” says Christopher Atwood, assistant professor of the Mongolian Studies Program in IU’s Department of Central Eurasian Studies.

Today, throat singing is an integral part of the musical culture throughout Mongolia, and practitioners are increasingly finding audiences outside the country. Throughout the 1990s, American and European audiences became acquainted with throat singing through the steady increase in the number of performance tours by Mongolian and Tuvin artists and ensembles, such as Huun-Huur Tu of the Tuva Republic of Russia, which performed in Bloomington during the Lotus Blossoms concert series in March.

The throat singing class proved to be a great success, as nearly 14 undergraduate and graduate students and people from the university community learned to sing khoomei. Particularly interesting for them was experiencing a very different way of teaching. Odsuren’s approach was more hands-on and concentrated on techniques as opposed to theories of vocal production. He hopes that these students can go on to create a foundation of teaching and performing throat singing in America. Peter
School of Engineering and Technology
Hosts Alumni Gathering in Malaysia

In January 2003, H. Öner Yurtseven, dean of the IUPUI School of Engineering and Technology, was host to the fifth gathering of Malaysian alumni in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. More than 100 alumni, friends, and special guests took the opportunity to hear news from IUPUI and renew friendships. Faculty members from the School of Engineering and Technology sent greetings in a video message that was played during the event. As so often happens when Malaysian friends get together, food was a central attraction at the alumni gathering, presented as a traditional Malaysian high tea.

Among the special guests were Abdul Farouk Ahmad, former president of the IU Alumni Association in Malaysia, and Tan Sri Ani Arope, former chief executive of Tenaga Nasional, Malaysia's national power company. Ani Arope was a key figure in establishing Universiti Tenaga Nasional, one of Malaysia's newest and most successful private universities. Also attending were Syed Abdul Kader, Aljunid, dean of the College of Engineering, Universiti Tenaga Nasional and Nawal Ali and Kala Kovan, who represented the Malaysian American Commission on Educational Exchange, an advising service sponsored in part by the U.S. Embassy.

While in Malaysia, Yurtseven spent several days at Universiti Tenaga Nasional in the role of external examiner for the university's degree programs in electrical engineering. Yurtseven served as provost of the IUPUI–Tenaga program from 1994 to 1996.

The IUPUI School of Engineering and Technology currently has 130 members on its Malaysia alumni list. The strong representation of IUPUI alumni in Malaysia results from long-term relationships with Universiti Tenaga Nasional and other educational institutions in peninsular Malaysia.

—Timothy Diemer
School of Engineering and Technology, IUPUI

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grant monies from a number of organizations, including the Asian Cultural Council and the Trust for Mutual Understanding. In addition to the Mongolia Society, other IU units that supported the program and artists' performance were the Department of Central Eurasian Studies and the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center.

—Peter Marsh
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