

YingHua and Yinghua, Bilingual Education and Opera in Princeton

Martha Yinghua Liao Finds Her Namesake School in Princeton

PRINCETON, NJ

Martha Liao is the wife and partner of Hao Jiang Tian, the world-renowned Chinese-American basso cantante Hao Jiang Tian, well-known for his portrayal of Timur in *Turandot* and long-standing career with the New York Metropolitan Opera since 1991. Martha, whose Chinese name is Yinghua, supports Tian's side project iSING!, The iSING! International Young Artists Festival is the first-ever festival promoting the vocal arts in China. It introduces Mandarin as a lyric language and Chinese vocal music as an emerging genre in the mainstream music world by creating the opportunity for Western singers to be exposed to the developing opera scene in China and provides Chinese vocalists access to quality training in Western-style opera.

It was quite fortuitous that Martha "Yinghua" Liao met Bonnie Liao (no relation), founder of YingHua International School: English-Chinese Immersion School of Princeton at an event last spring. A few days later, Yinghua met YingHua when she toured the school in Kingston during its construction phase. The two names share Chinese characters and a mission - to bring cross-culture awareness through the medium of language. YingHua International School, a pre-school through 8th grade independent school in Kingston, enables aca-



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demically excellent and prepares students for compassionate, effective, and ethical global citizenship by facilitating English- and Chinese-language acquisition and instilling a passion for lifelong learning.

On Friday, September 23, YingHua International School: English-Chinese Immersion School of Princeton hosted their first fundraising gala. With Martha Yinghua Liao's influence, Hao Jiang Tian and four rising stars of the iSING! opera program delighted the crowd of YingHua International School supporters. Sopranos Pheobe Haines and Raquel Suarez performed arias in Chinese and Italian. Wei Wu and Hao Jiang Tian, both native Chinese basses, sang songs from South Pacific in English. They were accompanied by pianist Erika Chiu.

The fundraising gala, the first for YingHua International School, is part of the school's annual campaign for much-needed support for the expansion to Middle School grades and new after school program which offers numerous enrichment activities open to the community. The title sponsor of the gala was The Princeton Eye Group, with offices in Princeton, Somerset, and Monroe.

YingHua International School: English-Chinese Immersion School of Princeton, established in 2007, is central New Jersey's only Mandarin Immersion early years, elementary, and middle school (ages 2.5 years through 8th grade). Students at YingHua study all of their regular school subjects in the language of Mandarin, taught by native Chinese speakers. In this way, the students, who may or may not come from Chinese heritage families, learn Mandarin very quickly and become highly proficient in reading, writing, and speaking Mandarin. YHIS is accredited by the MSA-CESS and is a candidate school with the International Baccalaureate Organization. YHIS just opened its new campus at 25 Laurel Avenue in Kingston, New Jersey, in the historic Laurel Avenue School building. Contact Kristin Epstein, Director of Admissions, at info@yhig.org or (609) 375-8015 for information or tours.



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