

YOUTH



A feast of culture on show in Moscow

MOSCOW — Russians had an opportunity to experience Chinese culture during the China Festival held recently at Moscow's landmark Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy, or VDNH. The two-day China Festival was to celebrate the 70th anniversary of both the founding of the People's Republic of China and of China-Russia diplomatic relations.

Dozens of Chinese delegations from various regions performed Peking Opera, sang folk songs, showcased traditional musical instruments, did kung fu displays, performed the dragon dance, demonstrated calligraphy and cooked Chinese delicacies for the attendees.

Freshman Anya Leonova from the Russian Foreign Trade Academy stood in the crowd smiling, enjoying a love song performed by a young duo from China's Shaanxi province.

Holding a piece of paper with her first name written in Chinese calligraphy, Leonova said she was learning Chinese in college as she is fascinated by Chinese culture.

A group of Russians dressed in white Taoist robes performed Wudang martial arts and received many rounds of applause.

A Muscovite who called himself Anton has practiced Wudang martial arts for more than 10 years, and now he, as a teacher, is passing on what he has learned from his Chinese master.

Audiences cheered when Chinese artists performed the famous Russian song *Kalinka* with the traditional Chinese instrument, the *guzheng*.

"It made me feel warm on the inside to see Russians perform kung fu and the Chinese playing our music. People from both countries feel they are closer," said a Moscow resident who identified himself as Sergei, adding that Chinese culture is interesting and that he always wants to know more.

People waited in long lines outside several booths to get a taste of Chinese food, and many children did panda drawings.

When the night fell, four giant lanterns made in Southwest China's Sichuan province lit up the square in front of the Cosmonautics and Aviation Center of the VDNH, and visitors queued up to take photos with them.

The event was initiated by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Chinese embassy, the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and other government bodies and organizations from both countries.

Russia and China have rich cultures and the China Festival could serve as a platform for ordinary people to know each other better, said Sergei Luzyanin, the director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies.

Gong Jiajia, the cultural attache at the Chinese embassy in Russia, said the display of Chinese culture in various forms was conducive to deepening friendship between the two peoples.

XINHUA

An ode to China's progress

Online program displays nation's profound pace of change through the voices of its young, **Wang Kaihao** reports.

Celebrating birthdays is an opportunity to both reflect and look to the future. The same for countries. For a person marking a 70th birthday it is natural to reflect. For a country, reflection is also important, and so is the consideration of future prospects, using the foundations built by previous generations.

As the 70th anniversary marking the founding of the People's Republic of China approaches, people will reflect but will also bear in mind the rapid development that has seen breakthroughs in science and technology move apace and have borne witness to infrastructure sprouting like mushrooms after the rain.

However, many of the younger generation seem to take progress in their stride. After all, progress for them is part of their birthright. How will they celebrate the country's birthday through their own experiences? One answer may be participating in *Me and My Motherland*, a five-part online program available on streaming media platform iQiyi, and have their voices heard during the show.

The title of the show comes from a popular song of the same name from 1985.

In each show, after short videos are broadcast, a group of guests discuss them.

About 20 short videos made by young people from various sectors of society are broadcast on the show, which piloted on Aug 31. A new episode is uploaded each week. It highlights the changes that the country and its people have experienced throughout the years from multiple perspectives.

Topics vary, ranging from the dining table, to TV animation, farming



Actor Yu Entai (top) and singer Huo Zun are two of the star guests that appear on the show *Me and My Motherland*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

and traveling. Basically the changes Chinese people have witnessed over the decades are captured by the video uploaders, who were born in the 1980s, 1990s or the 2000s.

In one music video, a rapper presents a song dedicated to the people who have diligently worked at their positions, including doctors, firefighters, sanitation workers and border-guardians.

"They are heroes, and they share the same great dream," the lyrics say.

In one video, a young woman plays three roles from different generations to show how fashion trends have been revived in China, while in another video, a group of fans of ancient culture show how

the past still has a role to play, especially in terms of fashion.

In yet another video, a man mixes sound from old-film footage with videos he shot during his everyday life. The kaleidoscopic video gives a tantalizing glimpse of modern ways through the soundtrack of the past.

Sun Xiaoqing, producer of the program, tells China Daily that the show does not want to convey messages like conventional TV shows.

"We'd like to see what young people want to convey on the topic of 'me and my motherland,'" Sun says. "Once an open platform was given, diverse forms poured in — music video, vlog, animation, flash mob — you name it."

Form does not matter. True emotion does. "Only when video makers narrow down the topic into a point of focus can audiences be struck with resonance," she says. "A grand picture can then be unrolled from there."

This time, a group of popular youth idols — actors, singers, and standup comedians — who are used to being viewed in the spotlight by crowds of people, become the audience. After viewing the video clips, these star guests talk about their feelings and share stories in front of the camera, turning the studio into a friendly room of chat and banter.

"I see many young people admire traditional culture," says Huo Zun, a singer known for his traditional-style music, after he watched a video about overseas Chinese celebrating traditional culture abroad. "When they voluntarily set up clubs abroad promoting tradition among local communities, they enable Chinese aesthetics to be better understood by the public overseas."

Sometimes, the videos remind



Above: Chinese Australians play *Me and My Motherland* at a flash mob event in Melbourne. **PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY** **Top:** As the 70th anniversary of the PRC approaches, people are keen to celebrate the country's past while looking to its future. SHI YALEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

these stars of their own stories. Sometimes unfamiliar, interesting scenarios come up.

What is a memory for some viewers can seem like another country altogether for others. When veteran actor Yu Entai, 42, explains what a "food coupon" is, the 20-somethings opened their eyes in astonishment. They have no concept of a time when coupons were necessary for shopping due to supply shortages — as was the case during the 1950s to 1980s — and everyone had had a quota for daily necessities such as rice, flour and edible oil.

"Seventy years is not that long, but it's long enough for many young people to have never experienced something that used to be common for their parents or grandparents," Sun says. "However, young people can resonate with these experiences. After all, love for the motherland is shared."

Obviously, Wei Daxun, 30, an actor from Northeast China, never experienced the situation in the 1950s, when enthusiastic youths from across the nation answered the call to flock to the barren northeast to turn the wasteland

into fertile land. However, Wei's sharing of his childhood experiences in his hometown still paints a vivid picture for the viewers of the changes in Northeast China over the years.

Unlike TV platforms, web-tailored shows are often labeled as places to cater for young people's tastes, but they can be much more, says Wang Zhaonan, executive chief editor of iQiyi. "Web-tailored shows have diverse forms, which also enable mainstream values in society to be broadcast on wider channels," Wang says. "To attract young audiences, we try to put down-to-earth personal stories into a big picture. If the stories are touching, people will easily identify with the topic."

He says *Me and My Motherland* is one such attempt. It seems to have worked. Many users of Douban.com, China's main TV and film review website, left messages saying they watched the show initially because their idols were taking part, but they soon became absorbed by what was shown.

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