



CTW Newsletter #22 — Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023

慎终如始，則無敗事

**If you are careful where you start, nothing can go wrong— Lao Tse**



These past several years have been challenging times for small non-profit cultural organizations. On the surface, things seem to be returning to “normal,” but in fact nothing is the same. Many of our colleagues in the field have had to close down or severely cut back their operations. What can a small band of artists do that will help nurture some Light in these dark times?

We’ve been fortunate to have generous support from our friends and colleagues. We are grateful to our local and State governments, who in hard times have kept up funding for Arts and Culture. We are especially grateful for our multi-talented staff and touring company; for the volunteers and interns, who blessed us with their buoyant energy; for our wonderful sponsors and presenters, who let us reach out to diverse audiences across New York City and beyond; and to all the individuals and foundations, whose donations keep us going. This past year, we received a special grant from the Coalition for Asian-American Children and Families that allowed us to train and revitalize our Board of Directors.

How can we repay all this generosity? By creating work that feeds the minds and hearts of our local, regional and global communities, and by sharing resources and creative energies with other cultural groups around the World. By strengthening the bonds between us all and through our combined efforts, adding some light to the Cultural Ecosphere.

Kuang-Yu Fong 馮光宇

Stephen Kaplin 史蒂芬·凱派林

Co-Artistic Directors--紐約美華劇坊(原名 中國戲劇工作坊)

**During our 2023 Season, CTW participated in 48 performances, 51 workshops, 1 international forum, 9 lecture demonstrations, 2 original puppet productions, 1 collaboration with another theatre company.**

**Hao Bang Ah Rabbit-** 2023 was the year of the rabbit, so we kicked it off with the debut of a budaixi style hand puppet show celebrating the wit and wisdom of our favorite long eared zodiac animal! Hao Bang Ah Rabbit! toured regularly throughout the year, making stops in some of our favorite NYC neighborhoods including Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Flushing. We also hosted a memorable series of Summer performances at Battery Playscapes in Battery Park. In addition to classic skits, including The Bunny Dance and Zodiac Parade, Hao Bang Ah, Rabbit! featured a budaixi retelling of the classic Taiwanese song Ti-Oh-Oh.



**Cross Cultural Experience: Asian American Dance in NYC Forum** - This June, Chinese Theatre Works collaborated with Asian American Arts Centre to host this unique academic forum. With a speakers panel representing a wide range Asian dance styles, what ensued was a lively discussion on NYC emerging Asian-American Dance scene in the 1980s and the ways in which traditional forms took on new expressions in this unique environment.



**The Tiger of Zhao-** Chinese Theatre Works biggest project of the year was the debut of this new original shadow production. With the support of the Jim Henson Foundation, we premiered the show at Flushing Town Hall after an extensive production process which included the revival of a set of 90-year-old set of shadow figures from Chengdu, the translation of this classic folk tale into OP images, and the composition of an original score by CTW's own Lu Liu. The FTH performance was well received and plans are in place for further development in 2024.



**Tiger Tales** - One of the biggest stars of the Year of the Rabbit was one of CTW's classic puppets- the Rabbit Grandmother from Tiger Tales. This caring and crafty folk hero shared her story of her perilous time as the Tiger's Prime Minister to audiences throughout NYC. This included performances at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Nightingale-Bamford School, Flushing Public Library, Coney Island Museum, China Institute, and City University of New York Graduate Center.



**Educational Programs** - In 2023, CTW workshops, lectures, and public demonstrations made up the majority of our public programming. Our year started with Lunar New Year celebrations, including Shadow Theater Workshops at Asia Society, Flushing Town Hall, and a memorable Chinese Opera Demonstrations at The Nightingale-Bamford School in Manhattan. This Spring, CTW teaching artist Chia Ying Kao led a three month dance residency at CAMBA Beacon at PS 164 in Brooklyn. In June, we partnered again with Yibei Li to host a 6 week Shadow Theater course for Chinese Language Teachers. And in the fall we returned to the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival as guest teachers in Shadow Theatre. Other programs include workshops at China Institute, Flushing Library, and the Court Square Block Party.



**Puppeteer Training Program**- This Fall, CTW embarked on a new project launching our Pilot Puppeteer Training Program. For six weeks, a talented cohort of young puppeteers met at our studio on a weekly basis to study and practice the puppetry techniques we use in our performances. As stewards of these ancient art forms we have a serious responsibility to pass on our knowledge to the next generation. We're very proud of the passion and growth of these students, and, as we look to the future, we hope to offer more long-term opportunities for artists to study Chinese shadow and hand puppetry styles.



**Board Development Initiative**- This January, with support from the , CTW undertook an ambitious Board Development project. Working with consultants from the Support Center for Nonprofit Management, our Board of Directors conducted an intensive reinvigoration of CTW's governance model— including new advances in member recruitment, expanding our committee systems, and identifying key development targets for the upcoming year. Additionally, this project welcomed in three new Board members— Dong Sun, Vera Huayan Lai-Buonora, and Jane Wei. We're immensely proud of the work our Board has done to secure CTW's future sustainability!



### Coming Up in 2024- Year of the Dragon

Here at CTW, we're carrying all of this momentum into 2024! The year of the Dragon is looking to be full of exciting opportunities for both our company and our community. We're looking forward to...

- A NYC tour of a new budaxi hand puppet show, "Hao Bang Ah, Dragon!"
- The debut of our first ever "Hao Bang Ah" shadow theater show
- Lunar New Year performances at venues including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Asia Society, and the Norton Museum of Art
- The premier of a new puppet show "Giant Dragon Pageant"
- The stage revival of our cross-cultural Purim show, "Budaixi Puppet Purimshpeil"
- Continued expansion of our Puppeteer Training Program
- Plus a host of additional workshops, performances, and other programs throughout the year!

**CTW People-** In 2022, we said goodbye to our Office Manager, Dianjun (Zoe) Jia. Zoe was an essential part of our administrative team throughout some of the most challenging years in our company's history. We're incredibly grateful for all she has done for CTW, and we are very proud to see her heading off to a new position at long-time CTW partner, China Institute. In turn, we have added two new staff members to our full-time admin team— Stephanie Ho and Charlie Santos.

We honor our Board of Directors: Natalie Christou (President), Dong Sun (Secretary), Fan Pen Chen, Junling Wang, Virginia Wang, Xiaoming Zhang, Jane Wei, Vera Huayan Lai-Buonora, Kuang-Yu Fong, and Stephen Kaplin

Much gratitude also goes to our company of performers, musicians, teachers, and collaborators who made our work possible, including: Jing Shan, Huaxin Bai, Harrison Greene, Charlie Santos, Stephanie Ho, Junling Wang, Yibei Li, Chia Ying Gao, Richard Chang, Lu Lui, Cathy Shaw, Erhan Bao, Binyan Ye, Yibei Fan, Ran Guo, Jingqiang Guo, Jianxin Tian, Yuling Fang, Jasmine Cao, Shuyan Yiao, Shudong Lu, Wenqi Chang and Zhaoyu Zhang.

**CTW Support-** We are thankful to the NY State Council on the Arts and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs who have been key supporters of our work. Special thanks also goes to the Jim Henson Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, and the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, who have all been gracious sponsors of key projects throughout our 2023 season.

We also want to recognize Flushing Town Hall, The Flushing Branch Library (and the entire NYPL system), Thompson/Reuters, the Mann Family Foundation, MY Charitable Foundation, the National Puppet Slam Network, and United Plus, as invaluable as partners and supporters of CTW's programming.

And of course the many individual donors and supporters who have given generously also deserve a round of applause, including: Jill and Brad Gordon, Richard Chang, Mindy Ying, Fan Pen Chen, Bao Ru, Jane Wei, Ted Geier, Jasmine Cao, Natalie Christou, Eleanor Yung, Mark Sussman, Jenny Romaine, Ann Kahn, Weigung Sun, Trudi Cohen, Bonnie Eisenberg-Greene, Allison De Salvo Adams, Chanpen Knag, Richard Chang, Hing-Tack Chen, Robert Lee, Karen Shee, Jonathan Oatis, Jing Lin, Chih Chi Lee, and many, many others.



## Membership/Sponsorship

Many dear folks have supported our work with their generous donations. This coming year, we hope to build this support base by instituting new Membership and Sponsorship programs. The annual Membership will support CTW's general operating expenses. We have several giving levels:

**Single Membership- \$45**      **Dual Membership- \$80**  
**Family Membership- \$150**   **VIP Membership- \$200-999**

We also have a Sponsorship program that allows donors to support and underwrite specific CTW's programs and productions at different levels:

**Silver- \$1,000-\$4,999**      **Gold- \$5,000-\$9,999**  
**Platinum- \$10,000-\$29,999**   **Diamond- \$30,000-\$49,999**  
**Crown- \$50,000+**

Please help us ensure CTW's future! You can donate via:  
 Paypal (chinesetheatreworks@gmail.com)  
 Venmo (@Chinese-Theatre-Works)  
 Or visit our website for more details.



## Chinese Theatre Works Inc

37-18 Northern Blvd, rm. #105  
 Long Island City, NY. 11101  
 (347) 528-8412

[chinese.theatre.works@gmail.com](mailto:chinese.theatre.works@gmail.com)  
[www.chinesetheatreworks.org](http://www.chinesetheatreworks.org)