

VOICE OF FRIENDSHIP 友声



中国人民对外友好协会

Chinese People's Association for
Friendship with Foreign Countries



中国国际友好城市联合会

China International Friendship Cities
Association



Editor's note marking the launch of this
magazine 35 years ago

May peace and friendship last forever

Interview with Kurt Karst

Sincerity brings friends, innovation promotes cooperation

No. 194

December 2018

ISSN 1000-9582



The Chinese paintings displayed in the exhibition have great historical significance. In 1945, as the country was celebrating victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, artist Zhu Qizhan and his elder brother Jishen launched an activity with the themes of “Restore our lost territories”, “Celebrate the victory” and “Peace is a blessing”. They collected paintings from art circles to express their delight in this unique way. With brushes and paint, the artists depicted beautiful scenes of harmony and expressed their longing for a peaceful life. The works were exhibited in Tokyo, Beijing, Taipei and Shanghai in 2015 and received widespread attention. On this occasion, the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty, the exhibition of these works was of far-reaching significance. The Japanese paintings exhibited were created by the noted Japanese ink and wash artist, Mr. Ebihara Rogen, whose works are highly valued around the world. In addition to holding individual exhibitions, he has also produced art for many films, stage productions, TV shows and books and has been featured in multiple calligraphy art performances at home and abroad. In 2012, the Japan Agency of Cultural Affairs appointed Ebihara Rogen as its cultural exchange ambassador.

On the day of the inauguration, the exhibition was decorated with all sorts of flower arrangements, with stirring and refreshing fragrances. Witnessed by the guests, Ebihara Rogen wielded his writing brush and wrote “Peace Is a Blessing”, bringing the atmosphere to the climax. ■

Interview with Kurt Karst

Staff Reporter



Kurt Karst at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Kurt Karst, 72, is friendly to China and fond of Chinese culture. He is president of the Wiesbaden-Mainz Germany-China Friendship Association and the Federation of German-Chinese

Friendship Associations.

In 1986, when in his 30s, he participated in the founding of Villa Musica Rheinland-Pfalz, one of the most influential music education

institutions in Germany.

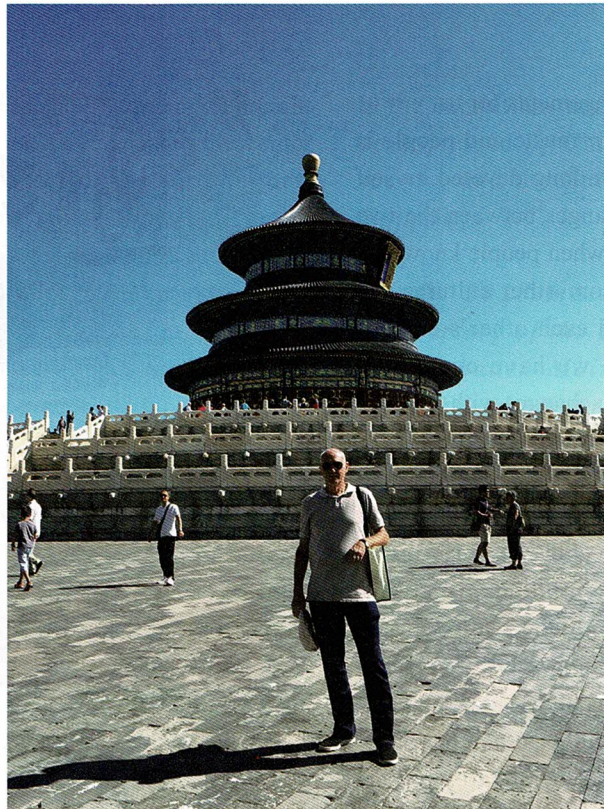
In 1993, an exchange program between Chinese and young German musicians was launched thanks to the efforts of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Villa Musica. Every year, a Chinese music group goes to Germany while a German arts group comes to China. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the program.

Q: *Mr Karst, nice to meet you. We know that you have decades of friendship with China. Would you like to share with us when you began to associate with this country?*

A: In 1993, I was asked whether a Chinese folk music group could have a concert at Villa Musica. At that time, Villa Musica had frequent music exchanges with many countries, but not with China. So inviting a music group from China did arouse my interest.

After some efforts, the Chinese artists were finally invited to stay at Villa Musica in Mainz for a time. Then in April 1993 they presented three concerts in Rheinland-Pfalz. The concerts were a great success, appealing to the local residents who were unfamiliar with Chinese folk music.

In my opinion, cultural exchanges are two-way communication instead of one-way transmission. My view coincides with Chen Haosu, who was CPAFFC president. So back in January 1995, with our joint efforts, the mutual visits between Villa Musica and Chinese folk music groups were launched. Villa Musica went to China



Kurt Karst at the Temple of Heaven

in 1995 and later the Chinese music group came to Rheinland-Pfalz.

Q: *May I ask why you have been committed to China-Germany friendship, especially cultural exchanges between the two peoples? What attracts you most in terms of the Chinese culture?*

A: In June 1995, the Chinese folk music group brought nine concerts to Rheinland-Pfalz. Thus, I met and made friends with those Chinese artists, including pipa soloist Miu Xiaoqin

and percussion musician Li Chunyong. Many of them paid several visits to Germany later on. Every time I go to China, I always try to find the time to meet them. Now through WeChat, I can follow their performances wherever they go.

In November 1995, Villa Musica for the first time sent its performance group to such Chinese cities as Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai. Since then, we began to have closer contacts with the CPAFFC. Here I want to extend my thanks to the CPAFFC for its careful organization of all activities and

considerate arrangements for us.

My love for music and people is the reason I have long devoted myself to cultural exchanges between the two countries. Only when people know and respect those from other cultures can they understand each other's culture. Based on this, we have conducted regular culture exchanges with China.

Chinese culture has thousands of years of history. Since I come from Mainz, home of Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of movable type printing in Europe, Chinese printing will always come to my mind when you mention the charm of Chinese culture, along with paper-cutting and shadow play, the two world intangible cultural heritages. Chinese culture also calls to mind the Dunhuang frescoes in Gansu province and the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

Although there are various musical instruments in China, they receive scant attention in Germany or elsewhere in Europe. To be honest, if I tried to make a comparison between the erhu and violin, I might be laughed at in my country.

Chinese culture, with its rich content, is so attractive that I want to further spread it in Germany.

Q: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the start of China's reform and opening-up policy. Would you like to talk about the changes in China you have seen during your visits to the country?

A: Great changes have taken place



Kurt Karst with the performer

in Chinese people's lives. In terms of China's development, I recall that in 1995, when I first went to Beijing, I saw millions of bicycles in downtown and just a few vehicles.

Today, millions of vehicles are running in the city with fewer bikes than before.

Changes can also be seen in the Beijing metro. It was difficult for foreigners to take the subway in the past. Since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, when electronic stop-reporting systems and signs in both Chinese and English were promoted along the metro lines, it has been much easier for foreigners to travel by underground.

Also amazing are the great

achievements in China's economic development. Take German-Sino trade relations as an example: On Oct 6, 2008, the container unit train from China to Hamburg, Germany raised the curtain on freight transportation cooperation between China and European countries. As of 2018, about 90,000 containers carried by 3,600 trains have arrived in Hamburg. I believe that under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative it will take less time and become more convenient to carry goods between China and Europe.

China has also achieved success in digital technology, such as electric vehicles and e-commerce. Now I use WeChat every day to keep in touch

with my friends all over the world.

Apart from so many changes, there is one thing that will never change — the friendship bonding my Chinese friends with me. As long as you make friends with the Chinese people, they will always be your friends. I really appreciate that. I am longing for having more chance to meet with my Chinese friends in Germany or in China.

Q: To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, the CPAFFC and its German partners held a series of cultural exhibitions over four months in Trier, Germany. The exhibitions caught public attention in both China and Germany, which included cultural exchange programs from Jiangxi, Shandong and Qinghai provinces, as well as cities such as Beijing; Baoshan, Yunnan province; Chengdu, Sichuan province; and Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. Mr Karst, you played an important role in the exhibitions. What is your comment on this event?

A: Karl Marx, a great philosopher, enjoys admiration in China. This great man was born in Trier, Rheinland-Pfalz.

Since Rheinland-Pfalz is also my hometown, it is of great significance for me to hold such an event with Chinese characteristics in Trier on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx.

Within the cooperative agreement signed by the General Directorate for Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Pfalz and

the CPAFFC, Thermen am Viehmarkt in downtown Trier became the center of Chinese culture, where cultural exhibitions from China's different provinces lasted for four months. From June 1 to Sept30, each exhibition, with its own unique charm, showcased the variety of China's landscape. The exhibitions planned in China and held in Trier could be seen as another big event by the CPAFFC.

The German audience was too excited to stop applauding the artistic performances during the exhibitions, including ceramic musical instrument performances from Jiangxi province, the performance of the Chinese song *Jasmine* by Beijing International Studies University and dancing and singing in the opera *Wonderful World* from Pengzhou, Sichuan province and *Monkey King* from Shaoxing, Zhejiang province.

I think the exhibitions were successful from arrangement to implementation.

Here I would like to extend my sincere thanks and best wishes to CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin, working staff from the CPAFFC and delegates from Jiangxi, Shandong and Qinghai provinces and cities including Beijing, Baoshan, Chengdu and Shaoxing.

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth, the exhibitions have injected vigor into the commemorative activities. All the participants will feel proud when they recall the exhibitions.

I believe that the audience might go to China to look for what they saw

in the exhibitions and that they will be impressed by China's beautiful scenery and the Chinese people's hospitality.

Q: 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Wiesbaden-Mainz Germany-China Friendship Association. As its president, what is your expectation or advice on further enhancing people-to-people friendship between Germany and China?

A: Laozi, a great philosopher in China, once said that a thousand-li journey begins with the first step. What one longs for determines where he goes.

I sincerely hope that by enhancing mutual trust the bilateral relationship between Germany and China can be promoted and that mutual understanding and mutual respect for each other's culture can be built.

The two countries should also learn from each other in such areas as economy, culture and education.

Young people are the key to the development of friendship between the two peoples. These future policymakers should have a chance to build their own vivid and unbiased attitude toward foreign countries.

I place great hope in the cultural exchange programs between our two peoples.

I am convinced that with our joint efforts the two countries will enjoy a relationship of stability and peace. ■