



THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

NEWSLETTER

FACULTY OF

ARTS

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University Artists



THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
CENTENARY
香港大學百周年



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On a pleasant weekend afternoon, it is not uncommon to see visitors from the community strolling through the halls and courtyards of the Main Building, steeping themselves in a setting that resonates with memories of Hong Kong's, and HKU's, past.

Director Ang Lee saw this potential when he chose to film part of his movie, *Lust, Caution*, here. "It's very hard to find a place like this, in Hong Kong or anywhere, where you can totally devote yourself to the age of innocence. The courtyards, the hallways – the place hasn't changed. It's really a place of innocence," he told a packed Loke Yew Hall audience in 2009.

That sense of long-ago reflects back to the early days of HKU and the Faculty of Arts, which are preparing to celebrate their centenary. With that in mind, the Faculty is collecting personal stories and impressions of the Main Building and the Faculty for an ongoing series in this newsletter. To put the submissions in context, it is helpful to know some history of the Main Building and the Faculty.

The Main Building was HKU's main campus when it opened in 1912. Even then it impressed visitors, such as a member of the Imperial German Consulate in Hong Kong, who visited in 1913. "I have to mention one thing which is very favourable for the University of Hong Kong. This is the almost hall-like lecture and adjoining rooms with their high windows, their dignified interiors, and their beautiful polished teak furniture, everything in the style of a modern European university," he said.

The Faculty of Arts has been housed in the Main Building since 1912, when it started with only part-time teachers before the first full-time staff arrived in 1913. Its establishment had been encouraged by the Chinese community, but Governor Frederick Lugard only reluctantly agreed to it; similar faculties in India were thought to have contributed to unrest there.

One of the early aims of the Faculty was to train people who wished to enter the civil service in China. This goal was thwarted by the upheavals in the country, but the Faculty nonetheless managed to educate prospective businessmen, teachers and others who went on to work in Hong Kong and China. In fact, the Faculty encompassed everything that was not medicine or engineering, including science, education and business, until 1939 when the Faculty of Science was established and 1967 when other departments joined to form the Faculty of Social Sciences.

HKU's first female student graduated from the Faculty in 1923 and, particularly after the Second World War, the Faculty became a source of many of Hong Kong's political and cultural leaders.

Today, the Faculty of Arts is renowned as a place for China-West studies and as the bedrock of humanities at HKU. Many stories still linger in the Main Building. If you have one to tell, please send an email to Mr Cyrus Chan at artsnews@hku.hk. Narrative articles, poems, photos and other artwork are all welcome (maximum 500 words).

CENTENARY EVENTS

The year of 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the University of Hong Kong. The Centenary Celebrations will be officially launched in January 2011 and will continue for two years, ending in late 2012. Notable events held as part of the Centenary Celebrations and hosted or co-hosted by the Faculty of Arts include:

January 10 – 12, 2011

Conference on Hong Kong in the Global Setting
Opening Address by Professor Wang Gungwu
Department of History, School of Humanities

January 21, 2011

Leading Change – A Forum on Cultural Leadership
Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme
(Presented in partnership with the British Council)

March 10, 2011

Centenary Distinguished Lecture – Professor Sir Andrew Motion: "Poetry in Life"

July 21 – 24, 2011

Association for Linguistic Typology 9th Biennial Meeting
Typology beyond the West: Diversity in East Asian and other non-Indo-European languages
Department of Linguistics, School of Humanities

December 15 – 17, 2011

Legacies of Taste: An International Conference on Food Narratives in China - School of Chinese

Approximately 200 members of the Faculty took part in the HKU100 Kick-Off Ceremony on Sunday, January 9, 2011, at the Stanley Ho Sports Centre.

The Faculty's own Centenary Celebrations will run from October 2012, when the first Arts students were admitted, to September 2013, when the first Dean of Arts, Professor A. E. Wrottesley Salt, was elected.

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Associate Deanship

Dr Umberto Ansaldo, Associate Professor in the School of Humanities (Linguistics), has taken up the Associate Deanship for curriculum development from Dr David Pomfret with effect from January 1, 2011. We take this opportunity to thank Dr Pomfret for his commitment and invaluable contributions to the development of the Common Core Curriculum and the four year curriculum reform process.



Dr Umberto Ansaldo,
Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts

New Staff Appointments

The Faculty was pleased to welcome the following academic and academic-related staff who took up new full-time and fixed-term appointments between July 1 and December 31, 2010.

School of Chinese

Dr Wu Cuncun, Associate Professor
Dr Yang Binbin, Assistant Professor

School of Humanities

Dr Barbara Dalle Pezze, Post-doctoral Fellow (Philosophy)
Dr Olivia S.C. Lam, Post-doctoral Fellow (Linguistics)

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Dr Kendall A. Johnson, Associate Professor (American Studies)
Dr John R. Haddad, Fulbright Visiting Associate Professor (American Studies)
Dr Wu Yongmei, Post-doctoral Fellow (Japanese Studies)
Ms Nathalie Iseli-Chan, Assistant Language Instructor (French)

Existing Staff

The following existing members of staff took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the same period of July 1 to December 31, 2010.

School of English

Dr Julia C. Kuehn, Associate Professor

School of Humanities

Dr Max E. Deutsch, Associate Professor (Philosophy)
Dr Robert S. Peckham, Assistant Professor (History)
Dr Mirana M. Szeto, Assistant Professor (Comparative Literature)

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Dr Victor E.L. Teo, Assistant Professor (Japanese Studies)
Dr C. Roland Vogt, Assistant Professor (European Studies)

Centre for Applied English Studies

Dr Ken K.K. Lau, Assistant Professor
Ms Anne M. Storey, Senior Language Instructor
Ms Miranda G. Legg, Senior Language Instructor
Mr Samuel F. Cole III, Language Instructor
Ms Aida T. Hogue, Language Instructor
Ms Contia M.W. Lai, Language Instructor
Ms Claudia W.W. Wong, Language Instructor
Ms Francesca N.K. Sin, Assistant Language Instructor
Ms Jane H. Stokes, Assistant Language Instructor
Mr Sung Chit-cheung, Assistant Language Instructor
Dr Martin K.K. Tang, Assistant Language Instructor
Dr Bernadette W.L. Wo, Assistant Language Instructor

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH 2010

Five of the Faculty's distinguished scholars will be honoured for their research and teaching achievements in 2010 at the University's Award Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching and Research, to be held on February 17, 2011.

OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

Dr David Pomfret, Department of History, School of Humanities

OUTSTANDING RESEARCHER AWARD

Professor Christopher Hutton, School of English

OUTSTANDING YOUNG RESEARCHER AWARD

Dr Julia Kuehn, School of English

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH STUDENT SUPERVISOR AWARD

Dr Y.F. Yeung, School of Chinese

RESEARCH OUTPUT PRIZE

Dr Umberto Ansaldo, Department of Linguistics, School of Humanities, for his book, *Contact Languages: Ecology and Evolution in Asia*, published by Cambridge University Press.

A YEAR IN THE CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES AND MEDICINE

In December 2010, the Centre for the Humanities and Medicine (CHM) marked the first anniversary of its establishment. It was certainly a successful year. In April 2010, the MB Lee Endowed Professorship in the Humanities and Medicine was bestowed upon the Dean of Arts, Professor Kam Louie, in recognition of the importance of the Centre's cross-disciplinary and comparative cultural work.

CHM's prime focus in the Faculty of Arts has been on research and over the last twelve months the Centre, working through its interrelated Research Themes, has been active on this front. In January 2010, Professor Shigehisa Kuriyama from Harvard spoke at a research seminar on 'New Media and the Changing Horizons of Medical History'; in March, the Centre held a major international conference on 'Convergence and Collisions: Disease, Religion and Healing in Asia' in the LKS Faculty of Medicine; and in April it hosted a workshop on 'Death: Philosophy, Therapy, Medicine' supported by the Lee Hysan Foundation. Other research events included a jointly sponsored CHM-Psychiatry seminar given by Professor Derek Bolton from King's College, London, on 'The Boundaries and Definition of Mental Disorder: Evolutionary Theories and the DSM'; a conference on 'Body Films: New Approaches to Medicine and Film' supported by the Summer Institute; and co-sponsorship of an international workshop on 'Communicating with Patients in the Genetic Counselling Setting in Hong Kong'. In addition, the Centre was a co-sponsor with Journalism and Media Studies of 'One Year into the Pandemic: Perspectives on Risk and Crisis Communication', organizing a special session on 'Constructing Pandemics' with the participation of Professor Lisa Cartwright (San Diego) and Professor Charles Briggs (Berkeley). The Centre was also pleased to be one of the sponsors of the '9th Asia-Pacific Conference on Human Genetics', which was held in Hong Kong between 30 November and 3 December, and to partner with the HKU-Pasteur Research Centre to organize a symposium on 'The Nature of Altruism'.

2011 is set to be equally busy with a series of cross-cutting research workshops and conferences, beginning with 'Disease and Crime: Social Pathologies and the New Politics of Health' in April, which explores the historical equation of crime-as-sickness and infection-as-wrongdoing; a keynote speaker is Mark Seltzer, Evan Frankel Professor of Literature at UCLA.

One of CHM's core missions is to bridge the divide between the Faculty of Arts and the LKS Faculty of Medicine, and in so doing to reconnect academic study with the University's worldly remit. With this aim in mind, the Centre will launch the CHM Humanitarian Programme in May 2011 when Didier Fassin, CHM Visiting Research Professor, arrives at HKU on the first of his visits from the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. In recent years Humanitarian Studies have developed as a crucial area of inquiry, in large part as a response to the complex situations arising from wars, conflicts and natural disasters. The aim of the CHM Humanitarian Programme is to restore the 'humanitarian' to the humanities, as well as 'humanizing' medical interventions, thereby providing a unique opportunity to integrate medicine and the arts, and in so doing help to build a more secure and humane environment.

Finally, as part of the Centre's commitment to outreach work, CHM is currently developing an art project with the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences. The aim is to promote public debate on culture, community, wellbeing and health. The new initiative follows from the success of the multi-media exhibition 'HOPE & GLORY' in April and May 2010 at the ArtisTree, which was co-sponsored by CHM.



Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, recipient of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, in discussion with Dr Robert Peckham (Centre for the Humanities and Medicine, Faculty of Arts) following Professor Barré-Sinoussi's delivery of the second Centenary Distinguished Lecture at HKU on 22 November 2010.

The first institution of its kind in Asia, the Centre for the Humanities and Medicine is a joint initiative between the Faculty of Arts and the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine.



The Tang Dynasty was a golden period for Chinese poetry. The emotional expression that characterized that poetry appealed to budding revolutionaries in the 20th century, who revived its popularity. However, that focus offers an incomplete picture of Tang literature, says Dr H. L. Zhan, Associate Professor of Chinese, who hopes to fill in the gaps.

The poetry – *ci* (辭) – was traditionally paired with more prose-like work – *fu* (賦) – as a central requirement of civil service examinations in the Tang Dynasty. But *fu* has received scant attention from scholars in recent decades and it is this that Dr Zhan will focus on.

He was recently awarded funding under the Research Grants Council's General Research Fund 2010-2011 Exercise to conduct a deep study of *fu* and its importance in Tang Dynasty civil service examinations, and to consider the implications for such examinations today.

"I want to portray a complete image of Tang Dynasty literature. *Fu* was normally placed at the beginning of publications, ahead of poems and other writings, and scholars thought *fu* was important. But people have not been studying *fu* for the past 100 years. I want to raise its prominence because it should be regarded as highly as other forms of writing. *Ci* and *fu* are equally important," he says.

The two formats are quite different in their structure and intent, though. *Ci* poems in the Tang Dynasty consisted of 12 rhyming lines with five characters per line, while *fu* writings could be prose or poem and were much lengthier.

"*Ci* is for personal expression and spontaneous feeling," Dr Zhan said, while *fu* is more like an essay. "With *fu*, you have to study a period of time and put all the information together in a systematic, coherent and organized way. The format can be more irregular."

While Dr Zhan is interested in the literary value and characteristics of *ci* and *fu*, he also wants to look at them in historical and social contexts. For example, were they an effective way of assessing candidates for the civil service? Why were both formats included in the exams?

"Tang Dynasty officials were not the first to use this kind of separated examination. I'm interested in why they think this can help them to pick talented

candidates," he says. He will also explore whether the Tang requirements resonate in contemporary civil service examinations in Hong Kong and China.

Dr Zhan will be working with about 1,000 Tang-era *fu* papers that have been preserved over the centuries (in contrast, about 50,000 Tang *ci* poems have survived). He is also compiling a collection of his own *ci-fu* writings. By the end of the project, he hopes to have gone some way to restoring *fu* to its proper place in Chinese literature.



Dr H. L. Zhan
Associate Professor, School of Chinese

In addition to Dr Zhan's, five projects put forward by members of the Faculty of Arts received GRF grants. Total funding for the projects exceeded two and a half million Hong Kong dollars.

Professor Ken Hyland
Centre for Applied English Studies

Dr Giorgio Biancorosso
Department of Music, School of Humanities

Dr Esther Cheung
Department of Comparative Literature, School of Humanities

Dr Max Deutsch
Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities

Dr Victor Teo
Department of Japanese Studies, School of Modern Languages and Cultures

In a separate award, Mr K.W. Fung, Associate Professor in the School of Chinese, received funding in the amount of HKD634,500 from the HKSAR Government's Department of Environmental Protection for a research project which will result in a bilingual monograph on the history and development of water quality monitoring and protection in Hong Kong.

Dr Rajeev Balasubramanyam, a novelist and Research Scholar in the School of English, likens his craft to method acting: like an actor, he goes through painful psychoanalytic processes to authentically depict emotions. So when it came time to cast a central character for his latest novel *The Dreamer*, which draws on his own raw experiences of racism in the UK, the occupation was an obvious choice.



Dr Rajeev
Balasubramanyam

“My character is a method actor,” he says. “I’ve talked to a lot of actors and it’s really interesting, a lot of them have had a series of breakdowns and addictions, I think from all of this brutal self-exploration. You do exactly the same thing as a writer which was why this novel was so tough for me and why I went through some dark periods writing about such a messed up guy.”

The character, like the author, grows up in a small village in northwest England and deals with the consequences of racism in his past and present. He experiences racist bullying as a child (Dr Balasubramanyam himself had people throw bricks at his house, fill the family car with sand and paint swastikas on the house), and keeps getting typecast in stereotyped roles as an adult. The character has a nervous breakdown that takes him to astral planes and time travel, where his past and present merge.

“The breakdown is partly a result of not having recovered from childhood trauma and partly from having that trauma repeated by having to play terrorists and villains and monkeys and the like.

“It’s a reflection of UK society,” he says, where racism is persistent and unacknowledged. “The parts he plays tend to conform to what the dominant classes perceive.”

The use and abuse of power is also a theme in his current novel in progress, *The Story*, albeit on a global political scale. The novel concerns the atrocities that took place in the Western world during the 20th century. Being based at HKU turned out to be serendipitous to his research because one of his main gaps in knowledge was Latin America and one of his fellow Research Scholars was a Latin American historian, Dr Ryan Crewe, who brought him up to speed on the region’s cloak-and-dagger history.

“Latin America is really important to the 20th century – anything the Americans tried, they first tried there,” he says.

Both Dr Balasubramanyam and Dr Crewe are at HKU under the Faculty of Arts’ Society of Scholars in the Humanities programme, which offers talented scholars who are starting their careers a chance to pursue research free from any formal requirements.

The Dreamer was published by Harper Collins last autumn. Dr Balasubramanyam’s first novel, *In Beautiful Disguises*, published by Bloomsbury Books in 2000, won the Betty Trask Award and was long-listed for the Guardian Fiction Award.

Four new scholars joined the Society of Scholars in the Humanities programme in 2010.



From left to right: Dr Tao Gong, Dr Arnika Fuhrmann,
Dr Dan Marshall, Dr Nirmali Fenn

Dr Nirmali Fenn (Music)

Nirmali Fenn’s musical compositions have impressed many of the world’s leading ensembles specializing in contemporary music.

Dr Arnika Fuhrmann (Comparative Literature)

Arnika Fuhrmann is an interdisciplinary scholar on Thailand, working at the intersections of the country’s aesthetic and political modernities.

Dr Tao Gong (Linguistics)

Tao Gong conducts research on lexicon-syntax coevolution, categorization, the neural bases of linguistic behavior, and socio-cultural transmission.

Dr Dan Marshall (Philosophy)

Dan Marshall primarily works in metaphysics and in related areas in logic and the philosophy of language.



The School of English is pleased to announce that Kit Fan has been selected as the winner of the 2010 HKU Poetry Prize for his manuscript *Paper Scissors Stone*.

This inaugural prize welcomed submissions from poets around the world writing in English and who had not previously published, or self-published, a full-length collection of poems. The winner receives HK\$2,500 and publication of a first collection of poems with The Hong Kong University Press.

The shortlist for the prize included five finalists, with the winner selected by the distinguished poet Louise Ho, author of *Incense Tree*.

Born and educated in Hong Kong, Kit Fan now lives in York where he completed a PhD in English at the University of York. His poems are widely published in UK literary magazines such as *Poetry Review*, *Poetry London*, *Poetry Wales*, and *The London Magazine* and he won a *Times* Stephen Spender Prize for Translation in 2006.

The 2010 HKU Poetry Prize Presentation will take place on March 15, 2011, at the University of Hong Kong, in a ceremony organized in conjunction with The Hong Kong International Literary Festival 2011.

The HKU Poetry Prize is supported by the HKU Culture and Humanities Fund.



Kit Fan

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE ARTS FACULTY

A Guide to the Study of Pali: The Language of Theravada Buddhism, Centre of Buddhist Studies.
By Ven. K. Anuruddha

The Theravada Abhidhamma, Centre of Buddhist Studies.
By Y. Karunadasa

《成語典故解讀》(The Origin of Idioms), Wenshizhe Press.
By C.M. Si

Impressionist Children: Childhood, Family, and Modern Identity in French Art, Yale University Press.
By Greg M. Thomas

HOW CANGJIE INVENTED CHINESE CHARACTERS BY KIT FAN

'The moment Cangjie invented the written words, the sky rained millets as nature's secret was disclosed, and the ghosts cried through the night as their shapes could no longer be changed.'

— The Book of Huai-nan Tzu (2 BC)

In the beginning was the knot,
and the knot was on the branch,
and the knot was mine, the same
tree on the same bank of the same
river, and I tied a second one,
and none of them had names.

Then all things began twice:
the river, the bank, the tree, the branch.
At first sight, I was still on my own.
My shadow followed me home.

By the tree laden with knots,
I washed my face and a phoenix
flew across the ripples round my knees.
I turned and found a creature
that had fallen from its beak.

I made a knot and sat by the river
till my shadow lengthened behind me.

As I looked at the hoof-print,
a passing hunter said, 'It's a *Pi Xiu*,
the ninth offspring of a dragon!'
He walked past, following his shadow.
I walked home, following mine.

But there were currents in the river,
trails on the banks; there was the crown
of the tree, the fork of the branch.

The same was in the beginning
with the mouths of the knots,
their braided muscles kept tight
through last night's storm.

This morning I loosed them
one by one into the river, each ripple
a quiver of unnoticed past
scratched on a tortoise shell,

from the first knot of spring
to that of yesterday's phoenix.

Dr Charles Schencking, Chair of the Department of History, has a passion for history and the humanities that he hopes to inspire in others. His starting point is far removed from the dry recounting of dates, names and places that are often, wrongly, used to characterize the study of history. Natural disasters stir his blood and he makes a strong case for the insights they offer into the human condition.



Dr Charles Schencking
Chair of the Department of History

“When I tell people I’m teaching a course on natural disasters, they automatically assume I’m an Earth Sciences or Environmental Studies person. Scientists can tell us why an earthquake happens, or how a tsunami develops, but they tell us very little if anything about what most people are interested in: the impact of a natural disaster on humans and our responses to catastrophic events,” he says.

His research and teaching currently focus on the Great Kanto Earthquake and conflagration of 1923 that killed approximately 100,000 persons and destroyed roughly 45% of all structures in Tokyo and 90% in Yokohama. The power released during the subduction of the Philippine Sea tectonic plate near Tokyo released energy equivalent to the detonation of 402 Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs. It was Japan’s worst natural disaster.

Tokyo at the time was the most modern city in Asia and science had advanced enough to indicate earthquakes were caused by natural shifts in the ground. But numerous commentators and government officials preferred to explain the disaster in ways that made direct reference to heavenly displeasure and intervention. Elites used this calamity to admonish citizens, who they suggested had become increasingly enamoured with luxuries and intoxicated with decadence and hedonistic urban lifestyles: behaviours many suggested had brought about catastrophic intervention.

“There were many references to heavenly warning (*tenkei* 天警), divine intervention and heavenly punishment (*tenbatsu* 天罰 or *tenken* 天譴). It was in fact an attempt by the elite and officials to alter and influence people’s behaviour and thinking,” he says.

That approach has persisted through the centuries, a point he underscores with students. He cites the examples of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, which occurred on All Saints’ Day, and Hurricane Katrina in the US in 2005, which were both attributed by religious leaders and select commentators and politicians to divine punishment.

“With students, we look at how diverse people and cultures have dealt with natural calamities in similar ways, in different parts of the world and at different times. What does a disaster tell us about our relationship with nature and the built environment, and with what we might perceive to be a higher power? I can’t think of a better way to introduce students to the importance of interdisciplinary studies or the humanities than through natural disasters,” he says.

Dr Schencking’s success at getting this message across earned him a Faculty Teaching Excellence Award 2010. This follows the national university teaching excellence award he earned in Australia at the University of Melbourne in 2006. Since arriving at HKU, he has been keen to share his research and teaching passion with a wider audience. He has found the Common Core a useful vehicle because students are from a broad range of disciplines. “The Common Core is a chance to demonstrate that humanities are an important component of university education and also a fundamental cornerstone of an informed civil society,” he says.

He also hopes to bring this message to the wider community through the department’s new History in the Making public lecture series. With this series, scholars are given the opportunity to talk about their research and to share with their peers, students, and members of the public the processes that go into “making history.” The inaugural speaker was Chair Professor of Humanities, Professor Frank Dikötter, who spoke on his most recent book *Mao’s Great Famine* before 220 people in November.

“We’re trying to show that history is really a dynamic discipline and that it has relevance and importance to everyday life. The skills of history – critical and creative thinking and research and analysis – are just as important for life after graduation as they are when one is a student” Dr Schencking says.



LIVING A LANGUAGE

Studying a new language is truly experiential learning because students are expected to use the new language from the very first day in a variety of settings. That can be a particular challenge when the target language is rarely encountered outside the classroom.

Tonja Weilerscheid-Fung is a Language Instructor in German and her efforts to connect her students to the German community in Hong Kong have helped her to earn a Faculty Teaching Excellence Award 2010.



Ms Tonja Weilerscheid-Fung (centre)
Language Instructor in German

She takes students to German restaurants and films, helps to organise an annual German October on campus, invites students to her home and insists they speak German with her when they see her outside the classroom.

The benefits are much deeper than language because in the process the students also learn about another culture.

“What I’m trying to do is to make students realise they are learning a living language, not just a paper thing. Even if they only do it at HKU for the first two years of study, they are exposed to another culture behind the language. You can’t just refer to the grammar without meaning,” she says.

Ms Weilerscheid-Fung uses materials from Germany that reflect different attitudes there, such as advertisements that depict single mothers and gay people. “You won’t see this in Hong Kong. It shows students how Germany is more liberal and how these things are handled in a different way there. It also makes them more aware of their own culture,” she says.

Students have to work at it, though. German learners have to master complicated grammar if they are to progress and her classes are structured to reflect this demand. The best learning, though, takes place where German is spoken and students are encouraged to go on exchange to Austria, Germany or Switzerland.

“Learning a new language takes learning out of the classroom. All students who go abroad come back and say it was the greatest time of their life. There are also more employment opportunities for them and not just with German companies. Employers see these students are willing to try something new and take risks by living in another culture, even if it is just for one month,” she says.

That advantage is being considered in the context of the new four-year curriculum, which Ms Weilerscheid-Fung is helping to co-ordinate in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. A study period abroad would be an ideal capstone experience for language students but it is not affordable to all. The School is therefore considering a long essay in the target language to wrap up their learning.

In the meantime, Ms Weilerscheid-Fung is keen to see her students speak German whenever possible – even after more than 15 years in the same job. “Every day is different. A lot of my former students say, you’re still teaching past and present? Isn’t that boring? It’s funny, but it isn’t. The way the class reacts is different every year,” she says.

FACULTY TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD (FTEA)

The 2010 Faculty Teaching Excellence Awards went to Dr Charles Schencking, Chair of the Department of History, School of Humanities, and Ms Tonja Weilerscheid-Fung, Language Instructor in German, School of Modern Languages and Cultures.

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Award was established in 2009 and is designed to recognize full-time teaching staff for excellence in teaching and curriculum development.

Asian Games silver-medallist and first-year BA student, Hayley Chan Hei-man, is the picture of determination. She defied the odds to win her medal in windsurfing in Guangzhou in November, training 20 hours a week on top of full-time studies. So it is surprising to learn she had no real affinity for the sport when she first stepped onto a sailboard, age nine, during a two-day introductory camp.



Asian Games silver-medallist Hayley Chan (fourth from left)

“At first I really hated it,” she says. “I fell into the water, I couldn’t pull up the sail. I was stuck by the beach and couldn’t get out further.

“I was really surprised when I then received a letter inviting me to join the development squad program. I don’t know how they saw I had potential. Maybe they looked at my determination, because I kept trying even though I couldn’t do it. Maybe they were looking at this attitude.”

And maybe there was something more. Her native skill and perseverance led to an invitation to join the national team aged 14 and at 18 Hayley became World Champion for girls in the Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships in Brazil.



The training required for that achievement was substantial. She trained full-time, about 25 hours a week, in addition to her studies. As she reached her 19th birthday in early 2010, she moved into the adult leagues, which meant an even tougher regime that involves overseas competition and training.

The time demand made her pause as she prepared to enter HKU in September, but she came up with a half-way deal: she would stay in Hong Kong, train as much as possible and be sure to attend every class, just in case she had to miss some later on. That moment came in her first term when she was selected as part of the Hong Kong team at the Asian Games.

“I didn’t have great expectations of the Asian Games. I wanted to study more than train at that time,” Hayley says.

“Before the competition we did some practice races, mostly in light winds, and I was quite surprised that I was faster than the Chinese girl. By the time of the race itself, the winds were a lot stronger and she was quite good. I did get in a few good races but I still could have done better and prepared myself better.”



The win has spurred Hayley to set her sights on the 2012 Olympics. One of her main competitors for a slot on the team is HKU graduate, Vicky Chan Wai-kei, who represented Hong Kong in the 2008 Olympics.

If Hayley wants to reach the Games in London, she will need to participate in international competitions and training this year, which has again put her in a quandary over her studies. She still wants to do a BA in English and is discussing with the Faculty what arrangements can be made.

In any event, there will always be the 2016 Olympics in Brazil to aim for.



EXPANDING INTELLECTUAL HORIZONS

MPhil candidate Melody Li was one of only three Chinese students to join the prestigious summer fellowship programme at Cornell University's School of Criticism and Theory. She emerged after six weeks with new knowledge – and an appreciation of rambunctious classroom debate.

"At Cornell it was like everybody was fighting in class – fighting with their different opinions. At first I thought this wasn't good, but I saw that during an argument, you come to know where you stand and it's a way of developing and polishing your ideas," she says.

"One thing I really learned was how to pose a question even if it's about something outside my field. Before, I didn't want to make mistakes or lose face so I didn't really speak up much in class. Now it's different. My style of thinking has changed."

Her intellectual horizons have widened, too. She was studying alongside a high calibre group that included graduate students and professors from the US, Greece, Turkey and Germany, whose disciplines ranged from technology and literature to the fine arts. "It was very stimulating to have all these perspectives on the table," she says.



Melody Li (centre)

A seminar on digital humanities at Cornell has prompted her to apply to pursue a PhD there. She hopes to investigate how digital humanities have changed the identity of the Chinese diaspora by providing spaces for them to come together, such as Facebook communities.

Melody's supervisors at HKU, Mr Joseph Poon and Dr Isaac Yue, recognised her academic ambitions early on when they advised her to apply for the fellowship

in the first place so she could get more experience abroad. She earned an undergraduate degree at Sun Yat Sen University before coming to HKU to do her MPhil on whether Chinese-American literature loses some of its distinctiveness when it is translated into Chinese.

She took her supervisors' advice to heart and after the Cornell fellowship, joined an American Studies tour of the eastern US.



Melody Li (second right)

"I'm very thankful for the opportunities I've had. I'm not the best student but I am lucky," she says, modestly. "My supervisors provide a very free atmosphere that cultivates my independent study and research. Independence is really important because if you want to stay in academia, you have to do the work yourself. I've really enjoyed the process of finding where I am and what my interests are."

The Faculty strongly encourages Arts students to participate in student exchange programmes during their course of study, with a view to widening their horizons and enriching their learning experience. A Faculty-level undergraduate exchange programme was launched in November 2009 to supplement existing University-level programmes and provide Arts students with additional opportunities to study abroad. Places at twenty-seven institutions in Africa, Europe, and North America are available for the 2011-2012 academic year.

The Department of Japanese Studies in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures also offers students the opportunity to spend one academic year or, in the case of some institutions, one semester at a university in Japan. The University of Hong Kong currently has agreements with sixteen Japanese universities to accept a total of over thirty exchange students each year.

The Faculty is pleased to announce that four world-renowned artists have been appointed as University Artists for the period from January 2011 to December 2012. They are Ms Mabel Cheung (Film), Mr Alex Law (Film), Ms Yip Wing-sie (Music), and Mr Gu Wenda (Visual Arts).

Mabel Cheung (張婉婷) is an alumna of HKU and an award-winning film director. She is one of Hong Kong's finest film producers and directors, with her 1987 film, *An Autumn's Tale*, enjoying great commercial success. There has also been great international recognition for her work, from the Hong Kong Films Awards, the Asia-Pacific Film Festival, and the Golden Horse Film Festival and Awards. Most recently, she was awarded the prestigious Crystal Bear for Best Film at the 2010 Berlin International Film Festival, for *Echoes of the Rainbow*. Her professional recognition also includes being appointed a member of the Hong Kong Film Development Council.



Mabel Cheung



Alex Law

Alex Law (羅啟銳) has built a reputation as a talented film director, producer and writer whose impressive career has seen him reach the highest echelons of the Hong Kong film industry and international film festivals. Most recently, he won the Crystal Bear for Best Film at the 2010 Berlin International Film Festival for *Echoes of the Rainbow*, which also garnered him the Best Screenplay Award at the Hong Kong Film Awards. Since graduating with a BA in Chinese and English Studies & Comparative Literature from HKU, he has worked on many films with fellow alumna, Ms Mabel Cheung, a creative partnership that has led to numerous awards and honours.

A highly respected and influential figure in Asia's orchestral music scene, **Yip Wing-sie** (葉詠詩) has been the Music Director of the Hong Kong Sinfonietta since 2002 and is also the Principal Guest Conductor of the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra. Winner of the First Prize as well as "LYRE d'OR" in the 35th Concours International de Jeunes Chefs



Yip Wing-sie

(photo credit: HK Sinfonietta Ltd)

d'Orchestre de Besançon in 1985, Yip Wing-sie has collaborated with such renowned artists as Augustin Dumay, Fou Ts'ong, Shlomo Mintz, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. She was awarded the "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication in 2007. In 2010, she was elected Fellow of the Royal College of Music (FRCM).

Gu Wenda (谷文達) is considered one of the pioneers of Chinese contemporary art. In the early to mid 1980s, he challenged the establishment and influenced an entire generation of artists in China with a series of provocative ink paintings that employed fake or pseudo Chinese characters. After he moved to the United States in 1987, he began creating large-scale installations using everything from human hair to human placenta powder to create artistic objects and explore the issues surrounding multiculturalism and globalization. Through his work, Gu Wenda has established himself as a powerful commentator on the cultural and linguistic barriers that continue to exist in a globalized era.



Gu Wenda

(photo credit: Jungsun Kim)

During their tenure, the University Artists will be invited to participate in workshops, screenings, exhibitions and performance events, including those held as part of the University's Centenary Celebrations, and will have opportunities to work directly with academics, practitioners and students at the University, as well as the wider community.

Launched in 2008 with the support of the Wah Ching Fund, the Scheme's main objectives are to recruit visual and performing artists of international calibre; engage students and the University community-at-large in interaction and dialogue on culture and the arts; and foster students' appreciation of and lifelong involvement in the arts. Five artists were appointed during the Scheme's first two years, 2008-2010: theatre director and drama educator Dr Vicki Ooi, filmmakers Mr Peter Ho-sun Chan and Ms Ann Hui, percussionist Dr Lung Heung-wing, and violinist Ms Yao Jue. They participated in a total of 26 events, attracting more than 4,000 people.

The University Artists Scheme 2011-2012 is generously supported by the Daniel Chan Fund.



PUBLIC FORUM: "ALL ABOUT LOVE"

University Artist and filmmaker Ann Hui, actress Sandra Ng, and scriptwriter Elsa Yang Yee-shan attended a public forum to discuss their latest film *All About Love* on September 22, 2010. The forum, which was held in the University's Rayson Huang Theatre, was moderated by Dr Esther M.K. Cheung of the Department of Comparative Literature.

All About Love is a romantic comedy revolving around ex-lovers Macy (Sandra Ng) and Anita (Vivian Chow) who are coincidentally brought back together by unexpected pregnancies. Despite its lighthearted tone, the film depicts serious issues relating to gender, sexuality, and patriarchy in contemporary Hong Kong society.

SHARING SESSION WITH ZHU WEN

The director of the opening film of the 2010 Hong Kong Independent Film Festival (HKIndieFF), Zhu Wen (朱文), visited the University on November 12, 2010 to take part in a sharing session with Dr Gina Marchetti, Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature.

Zhu spent three years making *Thomas Mao* 《小東西》, which follows a painter, Thomas, who travels from Europe to China during the 2008 Summer Olympics. On the Mongolian grasslands he meets Mao. They spend three days and three nights together, and their inability to communicate leads to awkwardness and misunderstanding.

HKU CONCERT SERIES

The Department of Music organized seven concerts and musical events during the first semester of the 2010-2011 academic year, all of which were open to the public. Highlights included an audiovisual recital by critically acclaimed Taiwanese pianist Shiao-uen Ding; a recital by soprano Alessandra Boër and guitarist Gilbert Impérial; a performance by the Xinjiang Uyghur band JAM; an evening of Indian music with Sachin Patwardhan; and a Chamber Concert showcasing nine young talents from the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Orchestral Fellowship Scheme, and directed by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's Concertmaster John Harding and Principal Viola Andrew Ling.

The Series also featured a recital by students in the Department of Music's Advanced Music Performance class, and a sparkling evening during which the University's Chamber Choir celebrated the 400th anniversary of Monteverdi's music and welcomed the Christmas season with a selection of carols.

SHIN HSIO-YEN DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

On December 7, 2010, the Department of Fine Arts hosted the third Shih Hsio-yen Distinguished Lecture in Art History. The Lecture, entitled "Thinking on the Way to the Yoshiwara: Painting and Prints of the Trip to Edo's Pleasure District", was delivered by one of the world's leading scholars of Japanese art, Professor Timon Screech of the School of Oriental & African Studies in London.

The Distinguished Lecture in Art History is made possible by the generous support of donors to the Shih Hsio-yen Memorial Fund, which honors the memory of the Department's former Chair Professor.

POETRY READING IN DELHI

Dr Agnes S. L. Lam from the Centre for Applied English Studies visited India in November 2010 as Visiting Professor to the University of Delhi, a member of the Universitas 21 consortium. During her visit, she conducted field interviews of published poets in Delhi and Mumbai for her project, "Contemporary Asian poetry in English", which is supported by the Research Grants Council's General Research Fund. She also had the opportunity to interact with students at a seminar at Zakir Husain College, and was invited by the Poetry Society of India to read her poetry at the India International Centre in Delhi.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Lanterns and candles illuminating the night sky feature in festivals around the world. On November 17, 2010, the School of Modern Languages and Cultures' Korean, Swedish and Thai Programmes, along with the University's Chinese Culture Communication Association, Chinese Students & Scholars Association - Undergraduate Department, and Indian Student Ambassadors got together in the Global Lounge to show how the Festival of Lights is celebrated in five different lands: Mid-Autumn Festival in China, Diwali in India, the Lotus Lantern Festival in Korea, Lucia in Sweden, and Loy Krathong in Thailand.



The experience of music in the 21st century has sharply diverged from its traditional roots. Instead of a communal activity carried out in the course of daily living, it has become highly personalized as people plug into headphones or watch live performances at a remove from the performer. That chasm has inspired Dr Manolete Mora, Associate Professor of Music and a musical ethnographer, to preserve and promote music in authentic settings.

Dr Mora has recorded and studied communal music in Mindanao, Bali, Hong Kong, Ghana and Cuba. Recently he was asked to advise a UNESCO project that is recording the musical culture of Tibet.

“To hear someone singing a folk song on the edge of a Tibetan village with a great precipice before them, and the sound echoing across the valley – it’s breathtaking. The reason they sing the way they do is because it comes out of that space,” he says.

“Space and place are such crucial components in music making and in this day and age, when we can extract sounds from regional settings, we tend to forget that.

“In the West there are separate buildings for performing music, the performer and the audience are separated, and music is a separate living activity. But in most living societies, it is part of everyday life.”

That function of music is what the Tibetan project, entitled “Gompas and Markets: Safeguarding the Legacy of Tibetan Culture”, is trying to preserve. It was started about five years ago and Dr Mora was brought in last year to evaluate the findings and train the Tibetan participants to see their culture with fresh eyes so they can better identify what is unique and worth preserving.



Dr Manolete Mora
Associate Professor of Music

He also introduced them to affordable equipment that picks up background sounds without being swamped by them, and accompanied the Tibetans in late autumn to the chilly Qinghai plateau to record their music in its natural setting.

“Tibetan herders play flutes and sing to while away the time on the pastures. The sound of bells [on the animals] are also part of the scape of singing and flutes. We’re trying to get them to record those songs in their context and make it as natural as possible,” he says.

Dr Mora has recommended the UNESCO project be continued and that a website be set up to make the music accessible to a wider audience.



He did a similar thing with the Cheung Chau bun festival in 2009 (<http://www.soh.hku.hk/hksounds/SoundScape/Introduction.html>). Visitors can click on a place on a map of Cheung Chau and hear the sounds recorded there, from people climbing the bun tower to a lion dance and Taoist blessing ceremony.

“The background sounds are part of the performance. We’re re-contextualising it by putting these sounds back in their place,” he says.

Dr Mora left the University of Hong Kong in January 2011 and has taken up a new appointment at the University of New South Wales.



Two BA graduates, Andrew Fung (overleaf) and Ida Wan, working in the financial industry share their thoughts on how their experiences at the University of Hong Kong prepared them for the workplace and enriched their lives.

How does an Arts student end up in the banking world? Ida Wan Lok-lok, a 2008 graduate with a double major in Japanese Studies and Language and Communication, admits she knew little of the industry when she started, but she had something that others did not: an understanding of Japanese language and culture.

"I had no banking knowledge before I entered the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (BTMU) but, especially for Japanese companies, they look at your personality and communication skills instead of your professional background and knowledge. Japanese culture is unique; if you don't understand it or aren't suitable for it, you can't really survive in this working environment," she says.

Ida is Senior Officer in the Japanese Corporate Department at the Bank's Hong Kong branch and she finds her studies at HKU have given her highly useful insights.

"I know about Japanese history and customs and why they behave the way they do. I not only know their good points, but I can figure out their disadvantages and look at them from a neutral point of view. Also, through studying history, I have a more comprehensive view about the relationship between Hong Kong, China and Japan," she says.

Ida joined HKU in Year 2 after doing an associate degree at City University. Her career path started as early as the end of the second year when she did a six-week internship with BTMU. This was her first introduction to the bank, which she was to encounter again in Year 3 when she did a one-year exchange at Waseda University.

One of her assignments there was to interview a business person using formal Japanese business language. Through her contacts, she got an interview with the manager of BTMU's international department who, at the end of their talk, invited her to sit an upcoming examination for the bank's international training programme.

"He said this was for students like me who know different languages and cultures and I thought, why not? But frankly, I didn't have much confidence. I didn't know much about the bank or any banking terms or calculations. I just went for the experience," Ida says.

Nevertheless, she passed the exam and, after two days of interviews in Japan and subsequent interviews in Hong Kong, was offered a position by phone on the same day of her final exam at Waseda.

Ida still had one more year of study to complete but the position was kept for her. She has stayed with the bank ever since and continues to look fondly on her time at HKU and her BA.

"I'm thinking of doing a Master of Finance now but I also think the value of a BA from HKU is high. In Hong Kong and Japan, whenever employers and firms hear the name HKU, they say, wow. That puts pressure on me. Everybody has high expectations of me because I'm a HKU graduate and I can't disappoint them," she says.



Ida Wan goes from Gown to Town



What edge does an Arts degree give graduates when they leave HKU? Andrew Fung is well-positioned to answer that question from both angles: as an Arts graduate (with a BA in translation and English literature) and as a high-powered executive with many years' experience recruiting staff.



Mr Andrew Fung

Mr Fung graduated from HKU in 1981 and rose through the ranks of the finance industry. He is currently General Manager and Head of Treasury and Investment of Hang Seng Bank and is a member of a number of public bodies. He recently returned to HKU to speak at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony in December. An excerpt of his speech is below:

I have worked in the financial services industry since graduation. Every day, I am faced with the need to make decisions – some are easy, others much more difficult. For example, there are occasions when I need to decide whether to move out of a particular equity or foreign exchange position in order to cut losses. During such times I share Hamlet's "to be or not to be" pain.

I owe a lot to the professors in the Faculty who did not just teach me about the works of Shakespeare and the *Story of the Stone*, but also imbued me with valuable life and interpersonal communication skills that have proved critical at key points in my career and personal life.

As students in the Arts Faculty you are fortunate in that skills such as critical reasoning, creativity and observation that are a central part of arts-based programmes provide an excellent springboard from which to launch your career. My university peers are well represented across a diverse range of sectors – from politicians and civil servants to entrepreneurs and business professionals – there are few boundaries to success if you take the knowledge you gain and apply it wisely.

I have a former classmate who majored in comparative literature and is now a very successful human resources director who has worked for a number of multinational corporations. He has applied the skills he learned during his studies to differentiate himself from other well-qualified candidates.

On a more personal note, I have hired graduates in history, translation, Japanese and fine arts for various financial and banking positions, with most going on to forge successful careers for themselves.

Arts students are imaginative, creative and open-minded, and I encourage you to be adventurous as you begin to plan your future careers.

Upcoming events to be held as part of the HKU Centenary Celebrations are listed on Page 2.

JANUARY 14, 2011

96th Inauguration Ceremony of the Arts Association, H.K.U.S.U., Session 2010-2011

MARCH 2011

Hispanic Month
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

MARCH 9, 2011

Bang on a Can All-Stars: Lecture Demonstration and Workshop on Contemporary Music & Film
HKU Concert Series – Department of Music

MARCH 15, 2011

2010 HKU Poetry Prize Presentation
School of English

MARCH 24, 2011

History in the Making Public Lecture Series
Dr Yoshiko Nakano, Department of Japanese Studies

MARCH 24 & 25, 2011

Talks by Professor Andrew F. Jones, University of California, Berkeley
Department of Music

APRIL 2011

Japan Month
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

APRIL 15, 2011

Public Lecture by Writer-in-Residence
Professor Shui-Shun Hsiao
School of Chinese

APRIL 18 – 19, 2011

International conference on Disease and Crime: Social Pathologies and the New Politics of Health
Centre for the Humanities and Medicine

APRIL 27 – 29, 2011

Oriental Poems 7th International Conference
School of Chinese

MAY 17, 2011

Faculty Open Day

JUNE 20 – AUGUST 13, 2011

Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities

JULY 16 – 19, 2011

16th International Lexical Functional Grammar Conference LFG2011
Department of Linguistics, School of Humanities

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