



The Lexy's Lads Dixieland Band from Belgium is giving a 10-city tour of China.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

what's new

Ian Wright travels China



China Intercontinental Communication Center has worked with Discovery Channel to produce three episodes of *Invite Ian Wright*, the popular British TV host's latest show.

In the first episode, Wright traveled in Harbin, a chilling northeast city where he joined winter swimmers and ice sculptors.

In the second episode, he set foot on the vast Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, hung out with parkour players in Urumqi, capital city of the region, paid visits to the splendid Ice and Snow World, and explored the old communities in Kashgar.

The dramatic contrast between freezing Harbin and sweating Xinjiang makes China an impressive set for Wright, who has been doing travel TV shows for 20 years.

The crew is seeking its next stop in China. All the three episodes are scheduled to be released on Discovery Channel at the end of this year.

With the goal of presenting a diversified and real China to the world, China Intercontinental Communication Center partners with 40 TV production teams, including PBS, National Geographic and ITV.

Exodus from South to North

The premiere of *Great Migration*, a movie about the relocation of people for the South-North Water Diversion Project, China's massive project to divert water from the south to its arid north, was held in the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, on July 24.

The movie is jointly produced by the government of Danjiangkou city, Hubei province, and a Beijing-based film company.

The movie took almost a year to produce.

Microfilm focuses on Olympic viewing

A five-episode microfilm *The Road to Dreams* about the connection between ordinary Chinese and the Olympic Games premiered on July 23 on web portal sina.com and video site letv.com.

The movie records the changes in the lives of Shen Ao and his family in the past 28 years, and how the Games have affected them.

"It's our tradition to watch the Games on TV with family members. Sports, which tie the family together, should be part of everyone's lifestyle. But in the modern society, people have less time to exercise," says the film's producer Huang Jianxiang, who is also a famous Chinese sports critic.

China orchestra tours Germany

The Orchestra of the National Center for the Performing Arts is on its first tour to Germany. Under the baton of its music director Chen Zuohuang, the orchestra first played at Bad Kissingen to close the annual Bad Kissingen Summer Festival on July 21 and then played an all-Chinese works concert at Nuremberg on July 22.

Christoph Eschenbach took the baton to continue the tour to Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin and finally Ludersfeld on July 27.

Opened in December 2007, National Center for the Performing Arts has become the landmark cultural venue in Beijing. Its orchestra, which was formed in 2010, has cooperated with many maestros.

China-Russia Fair in Northeast

The third China-Russia Fair will be held from Aug 18-24 in Heihe, Heilongjiang province, and Blagoveshchensk of Russia's Amur Oblast, two cities bordering each other.

Sponsored by the ministries of culture of China and Russia, the fair has been held annually since 2010. This year's fair will include meetings of governors of Heilongjiang province and Amur Oblast, expos of crafts from both countries, art performances and exhibitions.

The China International Culture and Leisure Week will also take place around the same time in Heihe, during which a forum on cultural leisure will be held on a boat on the Heilong River.

Calling all music talents

The 2012 US Music Schools Piano and Violin Music Festival will be held at Beijing Concert Hall from Aug 13-17. The event is organized by Oberlin Conservatory and Beijing Concert Hall to discover music talents in China for further studies in the US.

Faculty from Oberlin Conservatory, Boston University School of Music, Ithaca College School of Music, New York University School of Music and San Francisco Conservatory of Music will provide master classes to the applicants.

They will also provide consultations to those who are planning to study in those music schools.

Children's Theater Festival

The Second China Children's Theater Festival was launched on July 13 in Beijing and will last throughout the summer vacation until Aug 26.

The program includes 27 plays ranging from classic fairy tales to acrobatic fairy tale dramas, family musicals and cartoon puppet shows. According to Shan Zenghong, vice-president of the China Children's Art Theater, two thirds of the plays are new and created by young artists and 13 artistic groups from six countries and regions including Japan, Canada and Argentina. China Children's Art Theater will also sign a contract with If Kids Theater Company from Taiwan, which has performed in the first Children's Theater Festival in 2011, to build a children's theater studio.

Fan Bingbing in new thriller



Female director Li Yu is working with actress Fan Bingbing for the third time in *Double Exposure*, a thriller to be released on Sept 29.

The two last cooperated in *Buddha Mountain*, which won Fan a best actress award at the 23rd Tokyo International Film Festival. It was Fan's first international award for acting.

In *Double Exposure*, Fan plays a mentally disturbed woman, opposite rising actor Feng Shaofeng who plays her love interest.

One of the most popular actresses in China, Fan claims that she has been offered many roles, but she chooses only those she can really relate to.

CHINA DAILY

THE SHOW HAD TO GO ON

This is the story of how a Belgian band battled a storm in Beijing and struggled via plane and train to get to its concert in Anhui on time, **Liu Wei** in Beijing and **Cang Wei** in Nanjing report.

About 200 concertgoers at a theater in Ma'anshan, Anhui province, suddenly found themselves watching a film.

The movie was *Mission: Impossible 3*, and the band they were waiting for — Lexy's Lads Dixieland Band — had its own mission almost impossible trying to get from Beijing to Anhui on time for the performance.

The 12 Belgian musicians and their Chinese coordinator, Zuo Kemeng, were stuck in Beijing, battling the biggest deluge the capital had experienced in more than 60 years.

They had landed in the capital on the morning of July 21, and should have had enough time to arrive in Ma'anshan for their evening concert — their first stop in a 10-city tour of China.

From the airport they were to have taken a domestic transfer to Nanjing and connect to a coach that would take them to the theater. The musicians were all very excited and already discussing plans to return for another visit to enjoy the attractions at leisure.

Zuo, who runs a performing arts agency in Shanghai, realized there was trouble when the flight attendant woke her up while she was dozing on the plane to Nanjing. They were still on the runway. And it was pouring outside.

Passengers were asked to get off the plane as the airline had no idea when or if the flight would take off. About 50 flights had already been delayed and the terminal was crowded with passengers bumped off flights.

It was 12:55 pm, six hours before the performance. Zuo immediately called the organizer of the concert in Ma'anshan, Sa Shibin, and after a quick discussion with band conductor Alex Steurs, they decided to take the train instead.

The next problem was to get their luggage back, and they had to wait for their turn as more than 100 irate passengers demanded their bags from the airline. For the band, they would not have been able to perform without their musical instruments or costumes.

As they waited, the band rehearsed, singing without music, and bringing a spot of unexpected sunshine to the chaotic airport where people were starting to shout for food, compensation, or reservation changes.

"It did look like a scene from the *Titanic*," recalls Steurs, smiling. "We never experienced such heavy rain in our lives, and the gloomy sky made the situation even worse."

Zuo was too busy to enjoy the music, and was scrambling to ask friends to help buy train tickets and find a car to ferry the band to the train station.

At 3 pm, the band finally claimed their luggage and rushed to find the vehicle they had reserved. As they came out of the terminal concourse, they were greeted by torrential rain but the car was nowhere to be found.

By the time they got on to the shuttle bus from the airport to Beijing South Station, everyone was soaking wet. It was past 3:30 pm and the bus could only travel at 60-70 km per hour along the very wet roads. Zuo called Sa again, and they started putting contingency measures in place.

At the Guangqumen overpass, the shuttle bus was stopped by rising flood waters and the band members had to get off, carry their luggage and look for the nearest subway station.

They did not know it then, but this was the same spot that claimed a life a few hours later when a driver caught in the floods was drowned in his car.

"I really could not remember which station we got to. I was too focused on how to transport the musicians and their instruments safely from the bus," Zuo says.

Battling rain and perspiration, the group ran into the subway station with everyone carrying about 20 kg of heavy brass instruments, books and wine bought at the airport. But no one complained.



The band members finally get on the train to Ma'anshan after battling rain from the Beijing Capital International Airport to the Beijing South Station.



Members from the Lexy's Lads Dixieland Band wait for their luggage at the airport on July 21.

They got on the train with two minutes to spare. It was 5 pm, and they would only arrive in Ma'anshan at 9:30 pm at the earliest.

When the musicians knew they would have no time to rest or prepare, they decided to clean up on the train, shaving or putting on contact lenses in the narrow cubicle restrooms on the train.

"We hurried as if we were about to meet a girlfriend we haven't seen in years," Steurs says.

In Ma'anshan, the organizers put up a billboard announcing the band's situation, and theater staff frantically called ticket holders to tell them of the delay. Another member of the staff took up position in the lobby, explaining to those who had arrived on time.

The audience was persuaded to pass the time watching *Mission: Impossible 3*, screened from a projector usually used for staff meetings.

Ten minutes to 10 pm, the rather bedraggled band finally arrived, and delighted theater staff rushed to relieve them of their luggage.

"They were all wet, but some still managed to joke that this was something historic," Yu Yangxue, director of the theater's marketing department recalls. "They could have cancelled the performance and no one would have blamed them, but they showed us what professionalism is."

The concert started at 10 pm, and the band shone on stage as they played to an audience of about 500. More than 80 percent of ticket holders had stayed for the show

and no one left during the 90-minute performance.

"It was pretty late for the residents in this small city," Zuo says. "The fact that they came, stayed and gave us huge applause — that was so touching."

The musicians were equally touched. They had prepared six Chinese songs for the tour and were planning to play one or two in each city. At Ma'anshan, they played all six songs and the band members went down into the audience, greeting them.

"We love China. Most of the people we meet here are nice and helpful," Steurs says.

"We look forward to coming back."

By the time the concert ended, the musicians had had a 36-hour day, having left Amsterdam for Beijing on the afternoon of July 20. They had battled rain and delays, crowded airports, flooded highways and the biggest rains ever to hit Beijing in six decades.

David Shen, director of Holland's S&L Cultural Exchange Center and one of the concert's organizers, summed it up: "They showed great understanding and patience, we really appreciated their professionalism. Steurs kept saying 'The show must go on.'"

And indeed it did.

Contact the writers at liuw@chinadaily.com.cn and cangwei@chinadaily.com.cn.

Song Wenwei contributed to the story.