



Fish and Dragon Festival Exposes Barbadians to Chinese Culture

The recent Fish & Dragon festival exposed Barbadians from all walks of life to Chinese culture through a mixture of performance, food and art.

In celebration of the year of the monkey, organisers captured the serious play of this animal in activities spread over the two days.

The festival opened with a gala in the Frank Collymore Hall that was held under the patronage of the Chinese Ambassador to Barbados, Wang Ke. Throughout the night, the near – capacity audience was treated to high calibre vocal, instrumental and dance performances by the Chinese National Opera Dance & Drama Theatre.

The spirit of friendship between the two countries was on full display when legendary Barbadian entertainer Emile Straker joined Cao Xue on stage for a touching rendition of “Beautiful Barbados” and again later when the very talented Gaye Gajadhar duetted with Cui Xiuli.

On day two of the festival, Church Village Green was abuzz with activity including demonstrations of capoeira, karate and other styles of martial arts; performances from the Chinese National Opera Dance & Drama Theatre, 1688, Nikita and many others; and a number of cultural displays. Patrons were also able to sample Chinese and Bajan cuisine and purchase keepsakes from stalls dotting the perimeter of the Green.

“I was mesmerised by the opera singers. I witnessed a world class opera performance on the Church Village Green. What a relaxing evening! I am so happy that I attended,” Beverley Howell-Mayers, a Central Bank employee who attended the festival commented after one of the performances.

In the Grande Salle, the public was given the opportunity to discover more about China, including its relationship with Barbados and the wider Caribbean. They were also able to learn a bit of the Chinese language at a workshop put on by the Confucius Institute.

The soon to be opened Exchange Museum (the old Masonic Lodge in Church Village) was also the setting for an art exhibition featuring the work of Trinidadian Joshua Lue Chee Kong, Cuban Leandro Soto and Versia Harris of Barbados. Viewers commented that the displays were of an extremely high standard the quality and they lavished praise on the artists “exceptional” work. The exhibition is open to the public until February 27.

Chinese Television Network (CCTV) was in Barbados to capture the two-day festival.

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