China’s music industry gets boost in US

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Some of the biggest names in China's music industry — Morden Sky Entertainment, NetEase Cloud Music, Universal Music China and Baidu Music — met students at Berklee College of Music recently, connecting musical talent interested in China with one of the world's fastest-growing music markets.  
"China's music industry is rising and growing, especially TV talent shows," said Zhang Man, producer of the Duets China (Zui Mei He Sheng) at one panel discussion. The meetings took place Dec 2-5.  
"We all know more and more Chinese students are coming to the US — the leading market of pop music — but it's very important to consider going back to China and developing a career there for both the students' own development and the future of China's music industry."  
Zhang explained that China's music industry is huge, but there is still a lot of room for younger generation musicians.  
"We are looking for young musicians who know the international music market, who know fusion music and have a better understanding of different genres of music to join us, and we are also very welcoming of Americans who want to explore the Chinese music market."  
Zhang suggested that the school build a channel between Chinese music producers and students to sustain the two-way flow of talent and culture between China and the US.  
"China's music industry is very open to foreign artists," said Wang Lei, general manager of Baidu Music and the founder of NetEase Cloud Music. "So we need talents who have overseas experience and strong language skills because the next music center might be the China mainland."  
"This is a good opportunity to set up this connection between the college and students and China's music industry," said Shen Danyang, senior executive director of music for Universal Music China. "It's amazing to see more and more Chinese students study music in the US, because it's the leading music market in the world with much experience, expertise and a long history."  
"With the rapid growth of China's market, there is a big demand for talented people from performers to industry people," Shen added. "The most important are the marketing people and management people who can integrate the music products into the market with strong data analysis skills."  
China's music industry saw year-on-year growth of 7.8 percent in its output in 2016, exceeding $49 billion, according to an industry report by the music industry committee of China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association published last month.  
In May, the central government listed the development of the music industry as a major cultural project in a work plan for cultural development and reforms between 2016 and 2020.  
"Berklee College of Music has been actively recruiting students in China, so the population has grown significantly over the past five years," said Stefanie Henning, associate vice-president of career and digital strategy at Berklee.  
Henning said the school had been collaborating with many music institutes in China to support the development of modern music in China in recent years. Berklee signed an agreement with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in China to establish an academic partnership earlier this year, and its dance division also began an international exchange program with the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing in September.  
"We have had a long relationship with Dulwich College and have had several student bands tour campuses in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou, and also held auditions, interviews and clinics," said Henning.  
"We hope through this summit that we can connect with some Chinese companies to provide more opportunities to students who are interested in the market, not only Chinese students but also students from the US, Europe and everywhere," Henning added.  
"I want to study jazz, but when I was in China there are only a few teachers and musicians who can teach jazz guitar," said Sun Yuchen, a senior who is studying guitar at Berklee. "After I graduate this year, I want to stay in the US for a few years to develop my style and learn more skills, but eventually I want to go back to China to teach jazz."  
"I'm thinking about going back to Hong Kong as a songwriter or session musician, and also work on my music," said Ma Walter, a student from Hong Kong who studies contemporary composition and production. "The main barrier for me to working as a musician in the US is still language, because if I want to make my music, I want to sing in Cantonese."  
"In China there are lots of opportunities opening up for musicians, especially on TV shows," said Qu Yang, a senior studying arranging.

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