CHINESE, CLASSICAL MUSIC IN CARNEGIE HALL TREAT

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Chinese music filled the air recently at Carnegie Hall in celebration of the Lunar New Year.  
The New Year Spectacular IV on Feb 24 featured a wideranging lineup of performers who played to a soldout Zankel Hall.  
Produced by Lily Li and Charles Sullivan, the evening included Beijing-based Steinway Artist Jiaxin Tian; Shanghai- based tenor William Cai, who was trained by the late, great Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti; Steinway Artist and pianist Simon Mulligan from the UK; and New York violinist Deni Bonet and her enthusiastic band.  
David Dinkins, former New York City mayor, narrated a portion of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which was accompanied by Mulligan playing Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 in E Minor From The New World. Dinkins, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, received a standing ovation.  
Jiaxin Tian delighted the audiecnce with Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 8, in A minor, k.310 and Beethoven's joyful Moonlight Sonata.  
Mulligan also played George Gershwin's famed Rhapsody in Blue. Dr Cai sang a number of classical favorites including Capua's O Sole Mio.  
Deni Bonet, who had previously been the violinist on pop singer Cyndi Lauper's tours, performed pieces from her recently released CD including Bright Shiny Objects, Primal Dream, Last Girl on Earth, Palisades and One In a Million.  
After the intermission, Tian played two pieces of traditional Chinese music. Liuyang River - a Chinese song in praise of Chairman Mao Zedong's contributions to China - and Music at Sunset, better known as Spring Blossoms on the Moonlit River, a classical piece rooted in Chinese poetic culture.  
"I tried to use the piano to imitate a variety of traditional Chinese musical instruments, such as pipa, guqin, drum, and traditional Chinese bamboo flute," Tian said after the show. "I hope the sound will give the audience really amazing imagination."  
Dinkins said the evening was "a wonderful opportunity" to celebrate the variety of cultures.  
The annual spectacular has been co-produced by Premier Event Management Inc and Harvard Wealth Strategy & Management, two US organizations working toward bridging the cultural gap between China and the United States.  
"This is the strongest assemblage of talent we have ever had in the history of the Spectacular series. We're honored to be able to create this tradition, showcasing diverse talent to our multicultural audience," said co-producer Li, who is also the chairman of Harvard Wealth Management.

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