

China instalment 1- 24.7.10

I left Melbourne with Sarah Brooke last Sat for Shenzhen, China via Singapore. It's a large industrial city of approx. 8.5 million.

We are working for a company called English Orff and they provide Orff training for preschool and primary teachers around China. Phil and I travelled to China in 09 to work with preschool teachers in 3 different cities.

Sarah and I have had the privilege of presenting the first official Orff Schulwerk courses in China accredited through ANCOS (the Australian Orff Association).

We worked with 110 teachers for 5 days - singing, dancing, playing and improvising - what a joy!

i feel so blessed to do what I do - waking up every morning knowing that it will be another day of heart felt music making.

We work with translators as most people don't speak English - so whilst it can be a challenge, it is communication on another level - through actions, movements, expressions and sounds.

After eating rice for lunch and dinner, noodles for a change and then more rice, last night we went to a German restaurant for schnitzels, potatoes, vegies and lots of yummy bread rolls - I was in 7th heaven. There was a smoky bar attached to the restaurant with a young band and one of our group asked if I could play the piano and sing. So there I was at 52 singing and playing with a band to a young Chinese audience - music really does cross all boundaries.

After lunch today (more rice and noodles!!) we're driving to another city, Zhouhai which is 2 hours away. Another Orff course this time with only 60 teachers and then to Beijing on Friday for the ISME (International Society of Music Education) conference.

Love to all,
Susie

China instalment 2 – 4.8.10

Zhouhai is a very beautiful city on the southern tip of China – only 30 minutes or so from Macau by boat – so very near to Hong Kong.

Our Orff course was held in a bilingual Kindergarten (English/Chinese) for approx. 60 preschool and primary school teachers. More singing, dancing, playing and improvising and another very successful course.

Sarah and I left Zhouhai on Friday evening and arrived into smoggy Beijing later that night. After a long taxi ride to the hotel I met up with Phil and this week we have been involved in the ISME conference (International Society of Music Education).

Can you believe there are over 4000 people attending the conference – 3000 Chinese (many have received sponsorship from the Chinese government) and the rest from over 30 different countries.

There are hundred of papers, workshop demonstrations, concerts and children's classes.

On Monday, Phil and I presented a workshop for teachers and a children's class

There were hundreds of teachers crammed into a small space for the workshop. We had a much larger space for the children's demo – with approx. 1000 teachers looking on – hard to believe I know. At the end of both sessions, we felt like movie stars as many people took photos of us.

The Chinese children we worked with were a group of 20 x 10 year olds who appeared to have very little musical background but nevertheless joined in enthusiastically.

We've seen some great sessions and concerts and have also been hobnobbing with important dignitaries – as you do!

Back to Melbourne on Sat – see you all soon,

S & P