

The Melodies of Life: The Journey & Contributions of Chunfeng Li

Three years ago, I was introduced to a vocal program that would change my perspective of music and my life forever. I remember as I cautiously walked into the practice room, nervous for my audition. There could be so many things that could go wrong. I could accidentally sing the wrong notes, and I didn't even know if I had the courage to stand up and do my audition. Yet after I saw the face of my auditioner and my soon-to-be mentor, Mr. Chunfeng Li, all of my fears and worries went away in a flash. I had expected a strict and solemn auditioner, yet the face in front of me was friendly and understanding. After my audition, Mr. Li told me, "I believe you can stand on the stages of the world's most famous performance halls." I was stunned at the amount of confidence he had when he said this. How could he be sure that I was going to be great? That was the very first time I met my vocal instructor, Mr. Chunfeng Li. Since then, I have learned how to become a musician, and more importantly, I have learned what music is. This couldn't have occurred without the mentorship of Mr. Li.

Li Chunfeng, a vocal educator and baritone singer in the United States, graduated from the Peabody School of Music at Johns Hopkins University in the United States and Martina Arroyo Foundation in New York. Young Artist Opera Training Center, under the tutelage of the famous baritone singer Mark Rucker of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and the famous Chinese bass singer Mr. Wen Kezheng. In recent years, he has become an opera actor, represented by opera works by Mozart, Rossini, and Donizetti, and won the Outstanding Vocal Teacher Award from the National Association of Teachers for three consecutive years! He was rated as the most talented young Chinese baritone opera actor by the New York Times, Washington Post and many other media. Now he is signing a contract with the New York Opera House, Florida Opera House, etc

Unlike many other musicians who had musical backgrounds, Mr. Li had a family where nobody pursued music before he did. According to himself, there were three teachers in his musical journey that had the greatest impacts on him. First, his high school music teacher noticed that he was talented in music, and encouraged him to apply for a music school. Surprisingly to him, he got into one of the best music schools in China, and so he met another teacher that would impact him greatly. His professor in the music school expanded his view about the different forms of music and inspired him to explore the field of music. After he graduated, he met the teacher who would impact him forever as a musician. Professor Wen KeZheng, a professor teaching at the Performance School of Shanghai. Professor Wen allowed Mr. Li to expand his view and dive deeper into the question of "What is music?". It's because of the determination of Professor Wen to teach students that inspired Mr. Li to teach more students to pass down this legacy. After his studies with famous professors, he came to America and began to make

progress here. He won several world-class opera awards and met well-known performers around the world.

I can't describe the impact that Mr. Li had on me and many others. He's my inspiration for singing, striving for the best, and determined and persistent for music. It was the same for him too, because he was passionate about music, that's what made him succeed in following this path. Unlike some of his other friends at Xinghai conservatory of Music, who changed their majors after finding music to be an unsuccessful career path. But overall, the most important lesson Mr. Li ever taught to me is to have passion for what you are doing. If he did not have the passion to sing and teach, he wouldn't have done it in the first place. Through this incredible musical journey, with his help, I have learned to become a better performer and a better person, just because of him.

Through the years of teaching many students, both the teacher and the student have made significant progress on their performance skills and aspects of life. Learning opera from Mr. Li has significantly increased my confidence. At first, I was a shy child who only sang for fun, but after three years of learning with Mr. Li, my confidence improved a lot. And now I finally realized the true meaning of singing. I believe that this is true for many other of his students who explored the best in themselves and became more confident and dedicated.

The word contribute can be defined in many ways. It could mean to help to cause an event, to provide something for the community or society, or it could just mean to help achieve a certain goal. To contribute is no different than to sacrifice a part of oneself for a greater purpose. This is true for every known person that lives upon us in this world, one of the great traits that all successful people have in common is the will to contribute, to help achieve something great. No better person exemplifies this than Mr. Chunfeng Li, a great opera performer, and an even greater mentor.

Speaking of contributions, in my opinion, the greatest contributor to the Howard County Chinese Community is Chunfeng Li, who sacrificed so much for his students to craft them into passionate musicians, and created programs such as the Howard County Chinese School Children's Choir to encourage children to express themselves in the form of singing. It's not because of fame or fortune that made Mr. Li go on the path of performance and teaching, it is his passion for music and for his students. Music is part of his life, it's his heart's burning fire that ignites once music is played. Through his dedication to music and teaching, he has made great progress and amazing contributions.