

MOSAIC

An ode to China's enchanting sweet osmanthus flower

When I think of a golden autumn, my mind often turns to one of the great joys of the season — sweet osmanthus, a tiny flower that has charmed generations of people every fall with its unforgettable fragrance.

This blossom, which measures only 1 centimeter across and grows in clusters scattered about evergreen branches of the osmanthus tree, truly exemplifies the idea that size and appear-

ance aren't everything. After all, even when painted in the most eye-catching bright orange or buttery yellow hues, it could never rival the more showy peony or rose on looks. But the osmanthus bloom doesn't have to, because its real strength lies in its honeyed scent, which, much like being in love, will leave you feeling a little giddy and lost in the moment, even when standing meters away from the flowers. If dreams had a fragrance, they might just smell like the osmanthus, imbuing a touch of paradise to even the most ordinary of places.

The osmanthus tree in the front yard of my in-laws' home in rural

Zhejiang province left me wonder-struck one early October morning when its flowers unfurled their magic. The alluring aroma, which had wafted indoors through an open window, enveloped me as I was descending the stairs. It brought me to a standstill for a few seconds as I breathed it in, along with this sensation of pure, unfettered happiness. Dreary clouds blanketed the entire sky above me and yet, even to this day, whenever I recall this memory, my mind bathes it in sunshine because of that intoxicating natural perfume that surrounded me. It's that uplifting.

I'm certain this kind of wondrous

effect factored into why my father-in-law refused to sell that osmanthus tree to horticultural dealers who would continually come by to inquire about its cost. "It's not for sale," he would simply tell them. Surely he already understood that nobody could put a price on the experience of having such a delicious fragrance right outside your doorstep every year.

And besides, even after the scent of the osmanthus bloom has faded as its petals wither and fall to the ground, it continues to enchant us. My mother-in-law collects those flowers from under the tree in the front yard, dries them in the sun,

and then adds their sweet aroma to a variety of foods, from roasted chestnuts to green tea. Each taste brings with it the gorgeous memory of a golden fall.

Despite its diminutive size, the osmanthus bloom has enraptured me and many others, including celebrated Chinese poets, and I believe it represents a special kind of flower power. I've walked through forests redolent with the luxurious smell of sweet osmanthus and emerged with a renewed sense of joy and possibility. In the midst of our imperfect lives and the shadows that haunt us, the osmanthus, which affords a feeling of ecstasy to

anyone passing by, shines as a symbol of the goodness in the world.

But like all great things, it won't last forever. So, if you have the chance this fall, take the opportunity to get out and experience the osmanthus bloom. It might just give you that extra boost you need to thrive in the throes of life's challenges and, perhaps, allow a little hope to flower.

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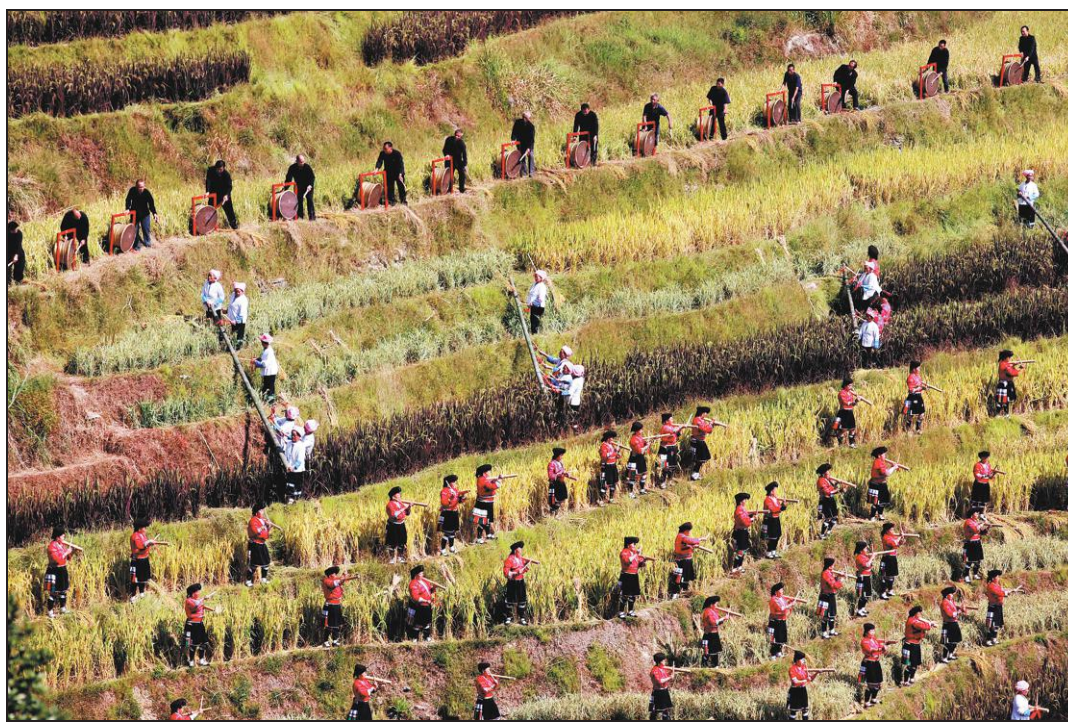
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Candid camera: Harvest of music

Farmers hold an open-air concert during a harvest festival in a village in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Monday.

LIU JIAOQING / XINHUA



What's on

Russian Maestros — A Piano Trio Concert

When: Sept 28, 7:30 pm
Where: Shanghai Oriental Art Center

Leonid Zhelezny is a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory Central School of Music where he studied under Aleksander Vinnitskiy. In 2010, he won second prize at the Beethoven International Competition in Vienna.

Vladimir Balshin was born in 1973 in Moscow. After graduating from the Moscow Conservatory he continued his postgraduate studies there in the class of Natalia Shakhovskaya. As a member of the Russo Quartet he received tuition from Mikhail Kopelman and Valentin Berlinsky, both long-standing members of the Borodin Quartet.

Andrey Pisarev has won prizes in every piano competition he has entered, including the Beethoven Competition in Vienna in 1985, the International Piano Competition in Tokyo and the Paloma O'Shea International Piano Competition in Santander in 1987. He has performed in Russia and other countries since the age of 8.

Wuthering Heights

When: Oct 18-20, 7:30 pm
Where: Nine Theater, Beijing

Emily Bronte's only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, was published in 1847 under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell. This tale of passion and revenge has thrilled readers and audiences alike for generations. With its element of Gothic fiction and moorland setting, the novel has inspired adaptations ranging from films, television to dramas.

Chapterhouse Theater Company from the United Kingdom is proud to present the wild and tempestuous love story of *Wuthering Heights*, set on the beautiful and mysterious Yorkshire moors. Can Catherine and Heathcliff's love endure, or will fate tear them apart?

The Red Detachment of Women

When: Sept 30-Oct 1, 7:30 pm
Where: Shanghai Poly Grand Theater

Premiered by the National Ballet of China on Sept 26, 1964, this was the first and most successful full-length Chinese ballet, with both the theme and content reflecting a unique Chinese style. The dancers even lived for months in military camps to learn swordplay in order to portray the soldiers vividly on stage.

Since its birth, the ballet has been highly acclaimed for its moving and tragic plot, magnificent stage design and graceful choreography. Its music, undoubtedly, also contributes a lot to the ballet's success and popularity. It is said that *The Red Detachment of Women* was a prelude to the exertions of Chinese ballet artists trying to establish a Chinese identity using an essentially foreign art form. The piece has been hailed as a model of the successful combination of Western ballet technique with Chinese folk dancing.

Misterman

When: Oct 22 and 23, 7:30 pm
Where: Shanghai Grand Theater

Enda Walsh's play *Misterman*, written for a solo performer, is a study of one man's descent into religious mania in small-town Ireland.

The play's action is set in "an abandoned depot and dilapidated factory" in Inishfree, where loner Thomas Magill lives out his days, interacting with the people of the town via tape-recordings he has made of their voices, or by impersonating them himself. Magill is a fierce evangelist, disgusted by the ungodliness of the townspeople. He knows that jovial Dwain Flynn is a miserable drunk, that Timmy O'Leary enslaves his lovely mother, and that sweet Mrs Cleary is a blasphemous flirt. He is convinced that it's up to him to save the sinful place, but his deranged mental state leads to dire consequences for him and the town.

Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea

China Puppet Art Theater
When: Oct 4-6, 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm
Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

The Eight Immortals are popular Chinese deities who play an important role in Chinese religion and folk culture. Most are thought to be actual historical individuals elevated to immortal status through personal piety, trickery or luck. In the *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*, they cooperate, using their powers to cross a choppy ocean.

China Puppet Art Theater was founded in 1955 and restructured in 2006. Always ready to innovate in the art of traditional Chinese puppetry, the theater is devoted to telling the stories of China, carrying forward the spirit of the nation and its image by integrating unique national arts and fairy tales into performances.

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The Child Dreams

When: Nov 8 and 9, 7:30 pm
Where: Shanghai Culture Square

The Child Dreams is a 2010 opera by Gil Shohat, based on the play of the same name by Hanoch Levin.

On May 13, 1939, following the bloody events of *Kristallnacht* (Night of the Broken Glass), a ship called *St. Louis* departed from Hamburg carrying 936 Jewish refugees headed for Cuba.

But upon reaching Cuban territorial waters, immigration authorities refused to accept them. The ship then began sailing from harbor to harbor in a desperate attempt to find a country which would agree to let the passengers in. The story of that ship, which was also the basis for the movie *Voyage of the Damned*, partly inspired Levin to write his play *The Child Dreams*.

It is an escape journey to a distant land, to the unknown, a flight from a past of terror to a future of consolation. Levin's talent of interweaving satirical and comic situations with very expressive poetic ones, leads to a sensual and emotional experience, soberly dealing with the essence of human existence.

This Day, That Year



Editor's note: This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China.

On Sept 25, 1982, the Chinese women's volleyball team won the World Championship in Lima, Peru, as seen in this item from China Daily.

The team won five world titles in a row in the 1980s, inspiring the nation so much that the "spirit of the women's volleyball team" has since become a phrase in Chinese.

It also won the 1981 World Cup and claimed gold at the Olympics in Los Angeles in 1984.

The Chinese players struck Olympic gold again at the 2004 Athens

Games by overcoming Russia.

At the 2016 Rio Olympics, China won the title for the third time, defeating Serbia 3-1 in the final, after defeating champions Brazil in the quarterfinal.

It also won silver at the Atlanta 1996 Games and bronze at the Seoul 1988 and Beijing 2008 Games.

The team has netted four World Cup victories and two World Championships.

In the latest world rankings for women's volleyball, China was in second place behind Serbia.

On Monday, China thrashed the United States in straight sets 25-16, 25-17, 25-22 in the ongoing Women's Volleyball World Cup to snatch their seventh victory in a row.

On Tuesday, Team China breezed to their eighth straight victory, dismantling Kenya 3-0 (25-12, 25-12, 25-14).

The women's national teams of Bra-

zil, China, Italy Russia, Serbia and the United States won their respective pools in the Tokyo Volleyball Qualification Tournament for the Tokyo Olympic Games next year.

"Winning the Olympic ticket is our first step," said Team China coach Lang Ping.

Lang also led the US women's national team to the silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Known as the "Iron Hammer" during her playing days on the Chinese team in the 1980s, Lang was inducted into the Volleyball Hall of Fame in 2002.



Volleyball team triumphs

China triumphed in the World Women's Volleyball Championship. The Chinese women's national team won the World Championship in Lima, Peru, yesterday. She was a member of the Chinese team that won the World Championship in 1982, as well as World Cup titles in 1981 and 1985. She led the national team to gold against the US in 1984.

The newspaper and beyond

On our Sina Weibo

Spicy Chongqing hotpot lollipops go viral

Lollipops with a spicy Chongqing hotpot flavor recently went viral after Alibaba founder Jack Ma tasted one at a fair in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. This snack, created by a Chongqing hotpot chain Peijie Hotpot, has three flavors from mild, medium to strong. At 30 yuan (\$4.2) per piece, the lollipops quickly sold out at the fair hosted by the Taobao Maker Festival.



Artificial light at night linked to weight gain

Sleeping with a cellphone, bright alarm clock on or a television next to your bed puts women at risk of weight gain, a study found. Women who slept with a light or even with the TV on were 17 percent more likely to have gained 5 kilograms over the course of five years, according to the study. Light coming in from outside the room was associated with more modest weight gain, researchers found. The study is the first to find an association between exposure to artificial light at night while sleeping and weight gain in women, according to the National Institutes of Health in the United States.

Say goodbye to Singapore's iconic statue

One Faber Group, the operator of amusement attractions in Singapore, announced that the Sentosa Merlion's last day of operations will be on Oct 20. It will make way for the Sentosa Sensoryscape project, which includes a themed thoroughfare linking Sentosa's north and south shores. To encourage Singaporeans to revel in nostalgia at the 37-meter-tall landmark, One Faber has offered tickets at half-price to residents and permanent residents.



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Video: Frenchman sees changes in Yantai

As the People's Republic of China prepares to celebrate its 70th anniversary on Oct 1, our website is featuring a series of videos, *New China at 70*, on expats living in the country and their impression of its development. In the latest episode, we interviewed Frenchman Michel Humbert, 84. Having retired in 2000, he gladly accepted an invitation from Shandong province to become a senior adviser at Yantai city's investment development board, which he regards not only as a good opportunity but also his "destiny". He expressed great confidence about the future of the country.

Society: License for tests of auto vehicles

Wuhan, Hubei province, has issued the country's first commercial licenses to companies for trials of driverless vehicles in open road conditions. The companies — including Baidu, Haylion Technologies and Deep Blue Technology — received licenses from the Wuhan traffic authority and will be able to conduct trials in designated areas of a 28-kilometer road.

The area is a demonstration zone set up by the city for the testing of internet-connected cars. The area has attracted more than 40 automakers from home and abroad to set up operations to test their buses, taxis, logistics trucks and sanitation vehicles. Officials said that commercial licensing will allow companies, based on previous tests, to deepen their trials of remote driving and the application of the intelligent collaborative systems under the 5G environment.



Travel: Austria makes trips easier for visitors

The Austrian region of Tirol is making travel to its attractions easier for Chinese tourists by allowing them to pay via Alipay and WeChat from next summer, according to the Austrian National Tourist Office. The plan will cover attractions in Inns-

bruck, Kitzbuehel, Kufstein, Soelden and St. Anton. Chinese travelers made nearly 1 million visits to Austria last year, and the number who stay overnight keeps growing. June to August is the most popular time among Chinese tourists, accounting for 67 percent. Tirol, in the heart of the Alps, is a land of mountains, home to more than 500 summits over 3,000 meters.

World: Bird-singing competition held

Over 1,800 birds from Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore took part in the annual bird-singing competition in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat on Sunday. In Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and also in Vietnam and Laos, it is common to hold regular bird-singing competitions. The competition takes place on open areas where a metal framework is set up for the small wooden bird cages to hang off.

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