

Alfred University Guzheng Ensemble performs at National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Three students comprising Alfred University’s Guzheng Ensemble performed before more than 200 guests on Sept. 14 during the 2019 Confucius Institute U.S. Center National Honors Gala.

The Guzheng Ensemble, under the direction of Daisy Wu, visiting professor of music and director of the Confucius Institute at Alfred University, performed at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Guzheng is a traditional Chinese stringed instrument. Members of the Ensemble who performed at the Gala were students David Fuller, Ty Heyden and Nellie Dennis. Fuller, an accounting major from Groton, NY, and Dennis, a psychology major from Buffalo, are seniors; Heyden, a sophomore from Mount Shasta, CA, is an art and design major.

Each year, the Confucius Institute U.S. Center celebrates the global education and cross-cultural exchange between the United States and China. The National Honors Gala will recognize the achievements and contributions of 10 outstanding Confucius Institute students from around the United States.

Guests at the Sept. 14 performance included distinguished academic and business leaders, educators, public officials, diplomats, media representatives, and artists. The Guzheng Ensemble, the only musical program that evening, was warmly received by the audience, Wu related.

“Our team’s efforts have been well rewarded. I believe this trip was an excellent experience for all of our Guzheng Ensemble students, and their experiences can inspire other students,” she said. “Alfred University is culturally diverse and student-centered. We are very proud of our Confucius Institute program. It has been serving our university community for 11 years to advance this mission and cherish the value of promoting global awareness, diversity, and creativity.”

Alfred University is one of a very few colleges in the United States with a special curriculum in music education focused on Chinese musical instruments. In collaboration with the Confucius Institute at Alfred University, Alfred University’s Division of Performing Arts has since 2010 offered a credit-bearing course, “Music of Guzheng,” taught by Wu. In response to students’ enthusiasm for guzheng, the University founded the Guzheng Ensemble in 2011 with

Wu as its Artistic Director. Since then, more than two hundred Alfred University students have learned to play guzheng, and about 100 students have joined the Guzheng Ensemble.

Alfred University is the first U.S. college to offer the opportunity for students to learn guzheng and perform in a guzheng ensemble for credit. Sponsored by the Confucius Institute at Alfred University, the Guzheng Ensemble has given many successful concerts, not only on campus, but also at other cultural exchange events in the U.S. and even in China, where the group made its international debut in 2014. Alfred University's Guzheng Ensemble enjoys a great reputation. In 2014, the Ensemble participated in the Global Confucius Institute Chinese New Year Gala and won the third-place prize. In 2016 and 2019, the ensemble won Gold Medals at the New York Chinese Musical Instrument International Competition in New York City.

In photo above, members of the Alfred University Guzheng Ensemble (from left), Ty Heyden, David Fuller, Daisy Wu, and Nellie Dennis perform during the 2019 Confucius Institute U.S. Center National Honors Gala Sept. 14 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.