

# Yale Daily News

## Elm City students learn Chinese music

By Stephannie Furtak  
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The Class of 1957 Music Education Project is working with new faculty hire Wing Ho MUS '87 to develop a traditional Chinese music program in New Haven Public Schools.

In Beijing, at the Yale-sponsored Musicathlon festival this past July, School of Music Dean Robert Blocker announced the appointment of Ho, a prestigious Chinese musician, to serve as the Class of 1957 Music Education Project professor for a one-year term. Ho's selection comes as New Haven public schools vie for a curriculum inclusive of Chinese language and culture and as Yale continues to strengthen its international ties.

"We just thought having a Chinese musician would be a great link to working with Chinese music and culture," Associate School of Music Dean Michael Yaffe said.

Ho taught music for over ten years in the United States before accepting a position at Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music. He said these experiences provided him with a thorough understanding of both school systems; he emphasized his ability to use music to bridge the gap between the two cultures.

Earlier this month, Ho completed a project with the students enrolled in Chinese language and culture classes at John C. Daniels School of International Communication, which culminated in a performance of traditional Chinese music.

Now, in addition to teaching a Yale course called "The Art of Teaching Music," he is focusing on Lincoln Bassett Middle School where he and three interns from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing teach strings three times a week.

Ho's professorship, funded by a \$5 million dollar music endowment from the class of 1957, has already enhanced Yale's presence in New Haven public schools, John Miller, the Music Education Project Coordinator, said.

"By teaching the students, [Ho] has given them a whole new experience to learn from a musician from China," he said. "It's been going phenomenally well."

In the classroom, Ho said students have been enthusiastic about learning music.

"They love that they can bring these traditional Chinese instruments home to

practice,” Ho said. “They come into every lesson so excited to learn.”

chair of the viola department at the Central Conservatory of Music.

At the beginning of this academic year, five New Haven public schools received a federal grant to establish Chinese education programs. Miller seized the opportunity for collaboration: Ho’s music instruction complements the new foreign language programs, he said.

Gina Wells, principal of John C. Daniels School of International Communications, said that the school originally had no intention of teaching Chinese music in addition to language, but when Miller informed her of Ho’s appointment, she said it was “simply perfect timing.”

“The music program holds hands with the language program,” Wells said. “We were given the ability to expose our kids to the culture [through language], and the music program just complements that so well.”

But Ho said he does not want to just complement the existing program; he also wants to expand it.

“Many [teachers] are very interested in bringing the program to their schools next year,” Ho said. “We’re in the process of contacting other schools, and hopefully we’ll be able to expand it to high schools as well.”

Beyond the program’s goals, Ho said he hopes to instill “a love of music [in the children] that will carry on throughout their entire lives.”

Ho, who earned his master of music degree in viola at Yale, is currently the