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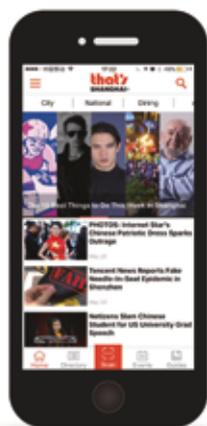
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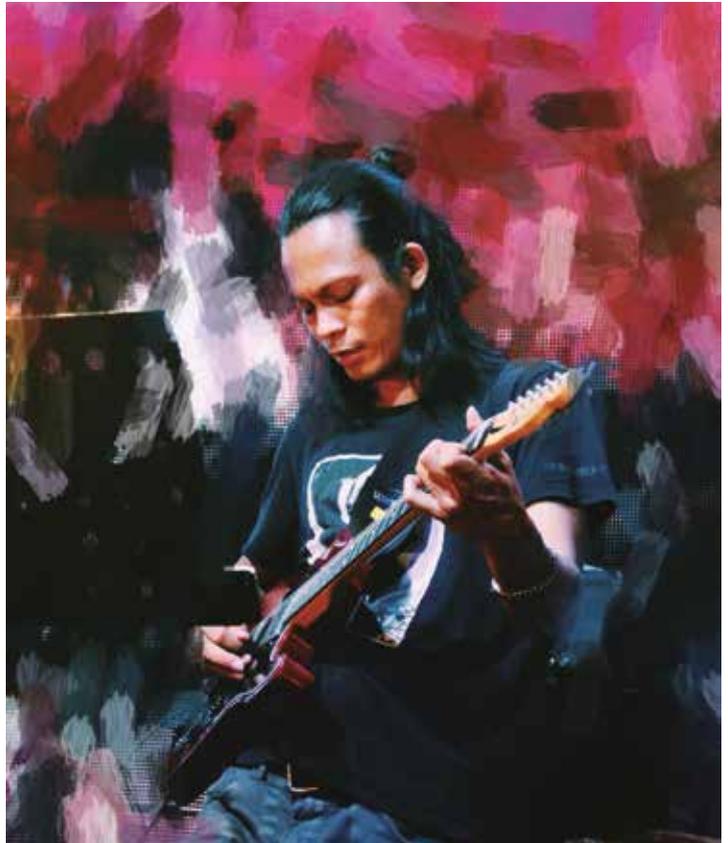


# ROBERT DY CAMPILLO

## Filipino Musician and Music School Owner

By Ned Kelly

Robert Dy Campillo was playing a solo gig in Singapore in 2005 when he received an offer to work with a group in Suzhou, so he got the band back together and headed to China. They proved to be so popular that he has opened a music school to pass the groove on to the next generation.



### How did a Filipino band find living in Suzhou when you first arrived?

We did not like living here at the beginning, so the plan was just to save some money to buy plane tickets home. Our first contract only lasted three months, but fortunately Harry's Bar offered us work afterwards.

I say fortunately because but it turned out to be a fun experience playing for the Suzhou crowd, so that few months at Harry's Bar became nine long years.

### Where can you guys be found these days?

We are currently working at Feeling Bar 188. Too Match, our band name, has been together for over 20 years, and performed in most Asian countries. We even played in Belgium as a guest band for a special event.

### For people who have not been to Feeling Bar 188, what can they expect?

We have a good mix of foreign and Chinese costumers, and because of that we mix up the style of music to keep everyone satisfied. Fridays and Saturdays are most crowded so we play party music until 2am.

Sundays we do acoustic sets to relax after two nights of rock and roll. Tuesdays we do a lot of country and blues. Latin on Wednesdays to fit the Ladies' Night theme. And then classic rock on Thursdays to warm people up for the weekend.

### How did your music school Strums come about?

I used to go house to house teaching guitar. Most of my clients were the kids of people I met in the bar. I was very fortunate to have a kid called Ray Warth Jr as one of my first students. He was only about 8 years old, but happened to be a natural talent. He became quite famous in Suzhou, and that brought me a lot of new students.

The only problem with that was it got to a stage where I could not handle it on my own anymore, so I decide to train some teachers and open Strums. Everyone is welcome, from kids to adults, and we offer piano, guitar, drums, ukulele, bass and vocal lessons from beginning to advanced level.

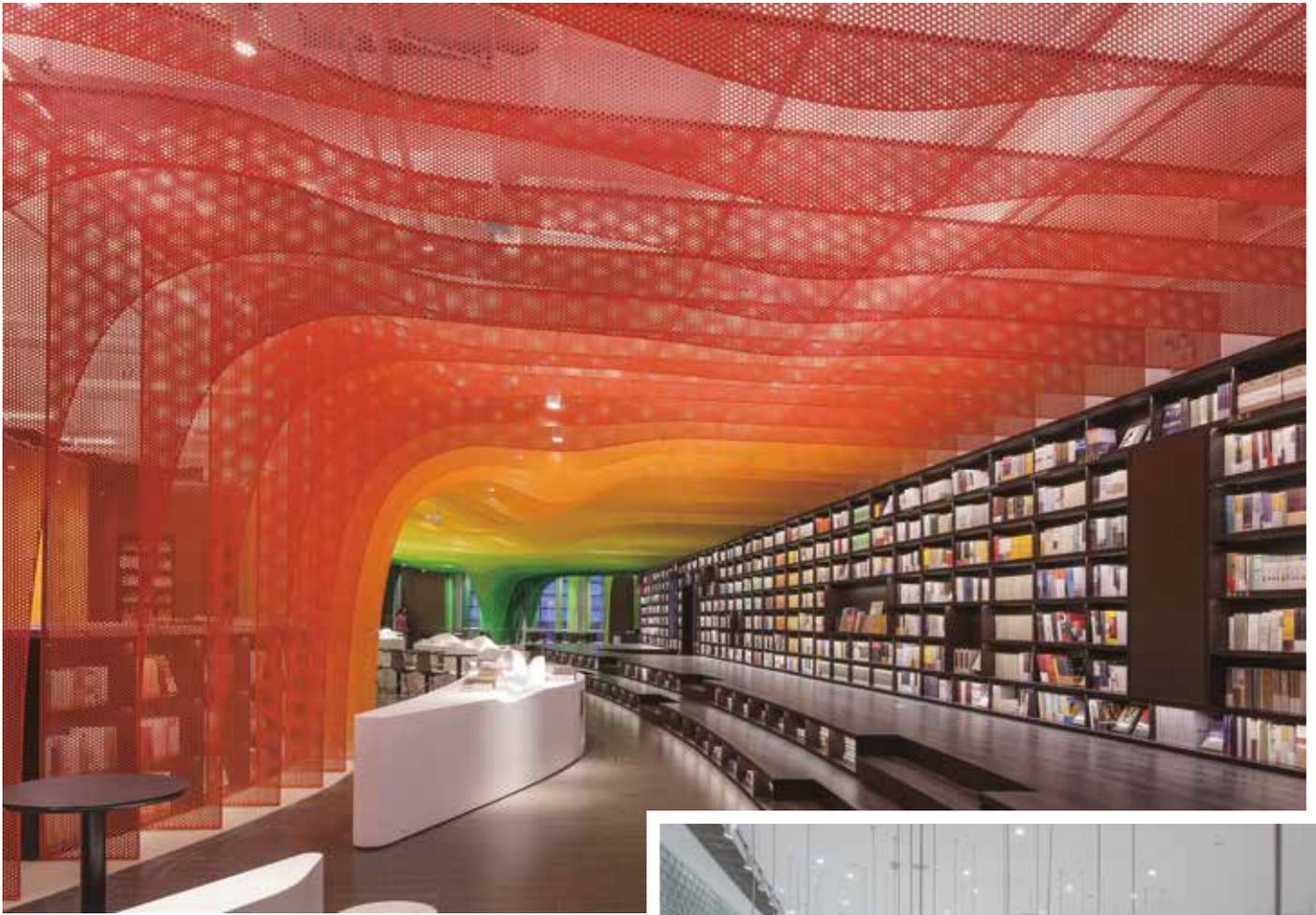
### How would you describe the music scene in Suzhou?

When Too Match arrived in Suzhou there was so little going on musically, but now there is music everywhere. It is more competitive, but there are more choices for people, which is a good thing.

### Finally, what is it that makes Filipinos such musical people?

Thanks to the Spaniards, they taught us how to play and sing.

Find Too Match playing at Feeling Bar 188, Global 188, 88 Suhui Lu, by Xinghai Jie 苏惠路88号环球188购物中心1楼, 近星海街 (139 1552 2701). To find out more about music school Strums add them on WeChat (ID: StrumsMusic).



# ZHONG SHU GE

## A Colorful and Enlightening Literary Journey

By Dominic Ngai

Recently named by the world-renowned Interior Design magazine as the 'Best Bookstore of 2017,' Zhong Shu Ge on the third floor of The Summit is referred to as a sanctuary for literature by Yu Ting, the space's chief designer.

The pristine, futuristic white entrance area of Zhong Shu Ge serves as the first stop of the journey into the 1,400-square-meter space. Reminiscent of a minimalistic museum, colorful volumes of best-sellers and new arrivals are displayed like works of art on acrylic cases and shelves.

Deeper into the space is a dark 'tunnel' that connects the entrance with the main reading area. Inside, a wall of thin strips of motion-sensing LED lightbulbs form a curtain that changes colors and brightness as guests move within the space.

Next, a bright reading area with an open layout is decorated with an eye-catching display of perforated aluminum sheets extending from the ceiling to the floor, gradually changing colors along



with the spectrum of colors of the rainbow. On the wooden bookshelves around the room are literature divided into different sections, as well as a café and communal tables for guests to enjoy a coffee with their favorite reading materials.

Instead of a box of treasures, what one will find at the end of the 'rainbow' is a children's reading area, where partitions are cut into the shapes of houses of various sizes.

Thanks to the glass exterior of the building, passersby on the streets are able to spot the rainbow-colored interiors tucked away on the third floor of the mall.

Level 3, The Summit South Tower, 119 Suzhou Dadao Xi, by Xinghai Jie 苏州大道西119号苏悦广场南楼3层, 近星海街 (512 8398 1987)



# PHO DONG TIAN

## Vietnamese that Could Do Better

By Tess Humphrys



### THE PLACE

One of the few Vietnamese restaurants in town, Pho Dong Tian Kitchen Bar is part of a nationwide chain founded by Li Dong Tian (Tony), a celebrity stylist and serial entrepreneur whose business empire includes restaurants, fashion and beauty labels, and hair salons, one of which is just next door to Pho Dong Tian. According to a blurb in the menu, Tony 'loves' the flavors of Vietnamese food and was inspired to add the concept to his ever-growing portfolio.

### THE FOOD

His supposed love for Vietnamese food makes the dominance of Thai dishes on the menu a bit perplexing. Vietnam is mainly

represented here by a variety of pho noodle soups, as well as some appetizers.

The rare beef noodle soup (RMB56) looked promising but its all-important broth was a bit underwhelming, not as rich and warming as beef pho can be, with an overwhelming pepper taste that could also be found in the Vietnamese rice wrappers spring rolls (RMB38). The vermicelli with lemongrass and chicken (RMB53) was a bit subdued and over-reliant on diluted sweet chili sauce to give it flavor, which was the same for the rather characterless Saigon fresh spring rolls (RMB40). The Vietnamese coffee (RMB33) had a bitter robust flavor, but was let down by inexperienced preparation.

Overall, despite their good presentation and generous portions, all the food lacked the

complexity of flavors and 'zing' that you can expect from the very best Vietnamese food.

### THE VIBE

Unlike a typical Vietnamese or Southeast Asian restaurant, Pho Dong Tian's decor is kitsch, with walls covered in vintage-style botanical and ornithological illustrations that remind one of a study or library. And that's the general problem with the place; the food also doesn't shout loudly enough about the vibrant flavors of the cuisine it honors, and certainly won't transport you from Suzhou to the bustling streets of Hanoi.

Level 3, South section, Suzhou Center, Suhui Lu, by Xinggang Jie 苏惠路苏州中心广场南区3栋3层13号, 近星港街 (512 6988 2358)



## MANXIN · TANGYIN HOTEL

A Sense of Tranquility in the Midst a Bustling Neighborhood

With water canals running alongside the busy street, Pingjiang Road exudes the vibe of a south of the Yangtze (Jiangnan) town. Juxtaposed against the modern commercial center in the neighborhood, everything from the historical architecture, and granite pavement to the trees on both sides of the waterway offer a sense of tranquility in the heart of the well-developed city.

Manxin · Tangyin, a boutique hotel located right on Pingjiang Road, is a property that pays tribute to Suzhou's intimate relationship between nature and history. Using this as the main design concept of the hotel, Xu Xiaohua, the chief designer of Manxin · Tangyin, incorporates natural materials found around the city into the project to reflect a sense of history with each and every brick.

### ADVERTORIAL

One of the highlights of the property is the lobby, where Xu and his team of designers have created a space that neither just a café nor just a bar, but a venue that can host a variety of activities where guests can partake in. Each of its guestrooms are named after poems and works of art of famous poet Tang Bohu, while the creations of local photographer Pang Yufeng decorate each room with sceneries of Jiangnan water towns in and around Suzhou.

With a professional management team that pays attention to large and small details of the overall guest experience, Manxin · Tangyin offers high-end amenities from world class brands, delivered with quality service from its staff. To fully immerse yourself in the history and beauty of Suzhou, a stay at Manxin · Tangyin is a must.

99 Temple Hill Lane 狮林寺巷99号金谷里 (512 6777 8839)





● **International School Choral Music Society XI**

Participated by 22 schools from Asia, Australia and the Middle East, this year's ISCMS, co-hosted with Dulwich College Suzhou and Dulwich International High School Suzhou, will be held at the Grand Theater of Suzhou's Culture and Arts Center. Musical guests include Juliet Petrus and Chenye Yuan, who will be performing the grand finale piece – 'Carmina Burana' – a classic cantata composed by Carl Orff.

> Saturday, February 3, 7pm. RMB80-380. Suzhou Culture & Arts Center, 1 Guanfeng Jie, SIP 苏州工业园区观枫街1号 (yoopay.cn/event/92858988 or iscms.net)



● **Yu Fei'an Art Exhibition: Splendid Creation of Nature**

Known for his famous paintings of flowers and birds, the works of Shandong-born artist Yu Fei'an (1899-1959) are featured in the 'Splendid Creation of Nature' exhibition at the Suzhou Museum.

> Through Sunday, March 4. Suzhou Museum, 204 Dongbei Jie 东北街204号 (512 6757 5666)



● **Yuehu Tai Musical Fountains**

Available every Saturday evening in February and March, and also on February 16 and 18 during Chinese New Year, the impressive light show has moved from Jinji Lake in the SIP to this new location.

> Every Saturday (February to March), and Friday, February 16 & Sunday, February 18, 7-7.30pm. Free. Suzhou Bay, East Tai Lake. 东太湖苏州湾悦湖台

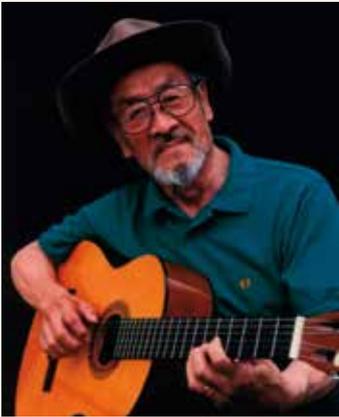


● **Jingzhou Cultural Relics Exhibition**

Available through the end of February, Suzhou Silk Museum's Jingzhou Cultural Relics Exhibition will showcase antiques and artifacts such as bronze dating back to the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

> Through Wednesday, February 28. Suzhou Silk Museum, 2001 Remin Lu 人民路2001号 (512 6753 6506)

# EVENTS



## ● Wang Luobin Memorial Concert

Singer-songwriter Wang Luobin (1913-1996), famous for tracks like 'In that Faraway Place' and 'The Half Moon Is Rising,' is honored at this memorial concert at the Suzhou Polygrand Theatre for his dedication to promoting the music from the northwestern region of the country.  
 > Saturday, February 10, 7.30pm. RMB50-100. Suzhou Polygrand Theatre. 1 Dongyuan Lu, by Suyuan Lu 东苑路1号, 近苏苑路



## ● To Pushkin: An Evening of Poems and Piano

Commemorating the 180th anniversary of the death of Alexander Pushkin, a group of world-renowned musicians, writers and narrators are honoring the works of the founder of modern Russian literature, reciting 14 of his most famous works on stage along with live strings and piano to provide more vivid imagery to the words.  
 > Sunday, February 4, 7.30pm. RMB100-880. Suzhou Culture & Arts Center, 1 Guanfeng Jie, SIP 苏州工业园区观枫街1号 (www.sscac.com.cn)



## Valentine's Day at Pan Pacific Suzhou

To celebrate the most romantic day of the year, Pan Pacific Suzhou is offering three special staycation packages for you and your loved one. For a 'Delicious' stay, couples can enjoy a meal at Garden Brasserie and stay the night in a Deluxe Room (RMB1,188), or enjoy a 'Romantic' stay in the same room type with a meal at Keyaki Japanese Restaurant (RMB1,528). But for those who want to splurge and spoil your special someone, opt for the 'Premium' stay in the Pacific Club Diplomat Suite, which comes with an exclusive in-room dining privilege (RMB5,888).  
 > Wednesday, February 14. 259 Xinshi Lu, by Dong Dajie 新市路259号, 近东大街 (512 6510 3388, panpacific.com/suzhou)

## ● Auspicious Omens: Yan Xiaojing Solo Exhibition

Toronto-based Chinese-Canadian contemporary artist Yan Xiaojing showcases her talent in a series of sculptures and installations inspired by elements found in nature, including water droplets, fungi, and insects at the Suzhou Museum.  
 > Through Sunday, March 4. Suzhou Museum, 204 Dongbei Jie 东北街204号 (512 6757 5666)



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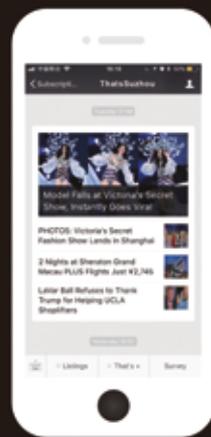
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