

# The Yandong Grand Singers of China

## Interpreting the Grand Song of the Dong Culture



The **Yandong Grand Singers** is a choir formed by farmers of the Dong ethnic group from Yandong, a township in Southwestern China's Guizhou province. The group has performed at the International Festival for Vocal Music - a cappella in Leipzig (2015), World Music Shanghai (2013), and Kokugakuin University of Japan (2011). The Grand Song of the Dong ethnic group is a unique polyphonic a cappella singing style that was proclaimed as a masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2009.



The Dong people, who don't have a written language of their own, transmit much of their history, culture and knowledge through songs. These songs accompany Dong people throughout their lives, and choirs of children, young and senior people are formed in every village.



The Grand Song of the Dong ethnic group is a unique polyphonic a cappella that was proclaimed by UNESCO as a masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. The Dong people, who don't have a written language of their own, transmit much of their history, culture and knowledge through songs. These songs accompany Dong people throughout their lives, and choirs of children, young and senior people are formed in every village.



In bright voices and natural harmonies shaped by the unique environment of the area, the Dong people sing about nature and life. An example of the former is the *Cicada Song*, in which the singers imitate the flickering of cicadas' wings with quick

sextuplets; while the latter is represented by the song *Life Is Short, and It Is a Pity If You Don't Sing*. For the Dong people, Grand Song is an indispensable part of life, just as their saying goes, "foods feed the body; songs feed the soul".

Members of The Dong Singers often sing grand songs at the drum tower, a meeting place found in every Dong village. In recent years, they have also toured nationally and internationally to promote their music culture. Besides grand songs, they also perform other genres like songs accompanied by the pipa lute. Their performances have been covered by media like MDR Figaro(Germany), CCTV, Xinhua News Agency and China Daily.



Watch a video of The Dong Singers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwOxih8oTlk>



Steve Heath, Artist Rep.  
<http://almaartistbooking.com>  
[steve@almaartistbooking.com](mailto:steve@almaartistbooking.com)  
248-905-3966