



Michael Williams, Managing Director of Blackpool Entertainment Company Limited (BECL), operators of the Blackpool Winter Gardens and Blackpool Dance Festival, has been in China recently to promote two major initiatives.

Firstly, he visited Shanghai to launch the second annual Blackpool Dance Festival, China in association with ISA and Yi Sai. This year's Festival will be held between the 17th and 22nd August at the impressive Baoshan Sports Centre.

The Festival will see the very best International Dancers competing in a number of disciplines and will also incorporate the Blackpool Dance Festival, China, for Junior Dancers. Music will be provided by the Empress Orchestra under the Musical Direction of Mr Ashley Frohlick. Mr Marcus Hilton MBE and Mr Robert Bellinger, will once again be Chair of the International Adjudicator panels and the Blackpool organizing team will be in attendance throughout the Festival.

Mr HaiPing Ge of ISA confirmed his company's commitment to the Festival and the ongoing work that they are undertaking with BECL.

AliSports also attended the Press Conference and will provide live streaming for the 2017 event. In addition, Mr Wang Yichuan, Director of Culture Bureau of Baoshan District, Shanghai, and Ms. Ma and Mr Fang, vice director and Director of Private Non-enterprise Entities from Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau offered their support for the Festival as they look to bring more Cultural Events to the Region.

Mr Williams then visited Beijing, where he attended a Press Conference at the Grand Diaoyutai State Guest House and met with representatives from JINXIU and The China Culture Media Group Art Education Assessment Centre (CDC).

In attendance were:

Chairman of CDC and WDC Vice President, Mr Yuan Bin,

Chairman of China Culture Media Group, Liu Chenxuan,

Chariman of China Digital Culture Group, Liu Jie,

Vice president of China Culture Media Group, Liu Mei,

Director of China Culture Media Group Art Education Evaluation Centre, Zhang Guohong,

Principals from various associations and teachers from more than 300 training institutions.

The Chairman of CDC and Vice President of WDC, Mr Yuan Bin, announced " Today is a milestone in the history of Ballroom Dancing in China."

Vice President of Art Market Magazine Co. Ltd. and the Curator of Art Market Gallery announced that the *Visual China Continental Tour- The Art of Chinese Ink Painting* will be hosted at the Blackpool Dance Festival in May 2017. This is the very first programme that brings traditional Chinese ink painting into an International Dance Festival. The exhibition gathers more than 20 young artists actively engaged in Chinese arts industry and will present unique ink paintings - an arts fusion of ink painting and dance. This will be a meaningful breakthrough for the young Chinese artists.

Mr Williams confirmed " Jinxiu's support and sponsorship of The Blackpool Dance Festival, will help to preserve the traditions of the Blackpool Festival for future generations. Mr Yuan Bin is a great supporter of the Blackpool Dance Festival and with his help and support we have a unique opportunity for Cultural Exchange initiatives between China and Blackpool. The introduction of the Art and Calligraphy exhibition will add a new dimension to the Blackpool Dance Festival"

Over the past 20 years Ballroom dancing has been a fast growing business in China and formed part of the governments drive for citizens to lead a healthier lifestyle, with over 50 million people now registered as ballroom dancers with official Chinese bodies. The rise in popularity has also seen an increase in participants from China at the Blackpool Festival who now regularly visit to compete each year.