

SNAPSHOTS



Myra Chu (in red) instructs children in a group dance. PHOTOS BY WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY

RURAL REVELRY TAKES CENTER STAGE

By ZHANG LEI

The sixth installment of a biannual drama festival was held in Mujiayuan village of Weifang, East China's Shandong province, last month. The festival, which included performances, workshops, a youth dialogue forum and a film screening, attracted scholars, artists and drama lovers from Beijing, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the provinces of Sichuan, Jilin and Shandong.

The genre of theatrical performances varied, with children's dramas, Peking Opera, Huangmei Opera and Lu Opera, presented by residents and artists from the drama workshops. The artists included well-known theater director and screenwriter Cao Kefei and dancer Myra Chu.

Dancer Myra Chu's *Farmland Ritual* was among the highlights of a recent Shandong village drama festival



Villagers participate in *Farmland Ritual*, a dance piece choreographed by Myra Chu (in black dress).

The stage shows were created and performed in temporary theaters set up in fields, squares and courtyards. The theme of this season's event was "Festival".

At the opening ceremony, a school from Weifang brought an original drama called *Nianyue* to commemorate Chang'e, the Chinese goddess of the moon, and her husband Hou Yi.

A farmer from the area performed a local opera accompanied by a troupe he established five years ago. Chu performed her dance *Farmland Ritual* in a field where the ground was covered with ears of corn.

The drama festival — held twice a year in spring and fall — is also known as the Village Reviving Drama Experiment. It was started in 2016 by resident Mu Changfei when he gave up big city life and returned to his hometown.



Villagers watch a performance of the Lu Opera *Snow in Summer*.



School students from Weifang perform the drama *Nianyue*, an original drama that commemorates Mid-Autumn Festival.



An actor who plays in the drama *Nianyue* is helped to dress before a performance.