

EXPAT EXPERT

COACH CATALYST

Russian engineer Sitlivi Dmitry has trained many in East China over two decades, **He Keyao** reports.

I've already got an ID card from my second home, because I can eat spicy food and use chopsticks just like you," says Sitlivi Dmitry, a Russian engineer who has been associated with China's chemical industry for more than two decades and has long held a Chinese "green card".

Dmitry, 85, is also one of the three Russian experts who met President Xi Jinping when he visited Russia in 2015.

In 1992, Dmitry, then-chief engineer of the Russian Scientific Center of Applied Chemistry, came to Quzhou city in East China's Zhejiang province to work as a directing engineer and deputy general manager for Zhejiang Jushen Fluoro Chemical Corp, which was jointly built by his organization and Juhua Group Corp, a Chinese company.

So began his love story with China. Under his leadership, experts from both sides worked hard to start the production of polytetrafluoroethylene at the unit within three months, leading to the largest-scale cooperation at the time between the two countries in such a field.

Discovered in 1983, PTFE is a synthetic compound of carbon and fluorine, and has found applications in nonstick cookware, among other daily-use items.

In the 1990s when China's fluorine industry was still in its infancy and relevant expertise was limited, Dmitry put all his efforts into training his Chinese colleagues.

Years later, he earned himself another title in the company — "general coach".

But being a coach wasn't easy, especially a serious one.

One problem was the language barrier. To make his courses clear, he asked his assistants to translate all his data reports, drawings and operational instructions into Chinese,

before telling them to translate the papers back in Russian so as to avoid any misunderstandings.

There is a much-told story among colleagues about his coaching.

Years ago, Dmitry suspended his teaching sessions once after a few young technicians failed to understand the structure and working of a particular equipment at one of his lectures.

Two days later, Dmitry's colleagues were surprised to find a small physical model of the equipment made from old calendars and used paper. He had spent two nights to make the model.

Lured by the promising investment environment, a series of preferential policies for foreign talents and the work spirit of his Chinese co-workers, Dmitry decided to settle down in Quzhou.

With decades of effort, Dmitry and his colleagues built the joint venture up from scratch and managed to make it an influential company with products sold at home and abroad.

Apart from his work in the field, Dmitry has contributed to building ties between Russia and China through academic exchanges and business cooperation.

In 2001, the Zhejiang Juhua China-Russia Scientific & Technological Cooperation Park was established, where more than 200 kinds of fluorine products are produced and more than 10 joint projects by the two countries have been launched so far.

Due to his contribution to China's development, Dmitry has received a number of awards in the country, including the central government's Friendship Award for foreigners, and the West Lake Friendship Award from Zhejiang's provincial government. He also cherishes the Chinese green card that he received in 2000.

"I'm so happy that I can stay in China for good, and Quzhou's Juhua is my home," says Dmitry.

Having lived in the prefecture-level city for more than two decades, Dmitry calls himself "half-Chinese".

"Dmitry is more than an old



Russian chemistry expert Sitlivi Dmitry works with his colleagues in Zhejiang Jushen Fluoro Chemical Corp in Quzhou, Zhejiang province.

PHOTOS BY SHI KELAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Above: Dmitry celebrates his 84th birthday with local friends and colleagues in Quzhou in 2015.

Right: Decorating his house with scrolls for Spring Festival has been an annual ritual for Dmitry.

friend. He's just like our family member and he likes to eat hot pot with us," says Liu Xiaomin, Dmitry's translator.

She says the Russian expert is an outgoing man who deeply values his relations with local friends.

Dmitry often invites his Chinese friends to visit his house. During the Spring Festival celebrations, he decorates his house with scrolls and dresses up in his red Tang suit, ringing in the Chinese New Year in a traditional way.

"People here treat me like family.

They take very good care of me and always make me feel welcome," says Dmitry.

When he was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago, he says some Russian hospitals told him that he was too old to be treated. But the Chinese company found him specialist treatment.

"China has kept its doors wide open for foreign talents, and it's worth being here," he says.

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50TH ANNIVERSARY

Beyoncé's surprise gig at country awards

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
in New York

Pop superstar Beyoncé helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Country Music Awards with a secret and boisterous performance of her song *Daddy Lessons* with the Dixie Chicks.

Beyoncé hit the stage unannounced when the show was about two-thirds over on Wednesday, wearing multiple strands of pearls and a sheer, champagne-colored body-hugging dress.

She looked happy and comfortable, dancing and clapping along with the performers who filled the stage. The performance got a standing ovation.

Daddy Lessons, on her recent

album *Lemonade*, is as close to a country song that Beyoncé ever released. The Dixie Chicks started covering the song on tour earlier this year.

Rumors that Beyoncé would attend the show started only a few hours before it started and show organizers would not say when or what she was going to do. Then, right after a commercial and without any introduction, Beyoncé appeared at the top of the third hour. Immediately, Beyoncé started trending on Twitter.

Not everyone was prepared to welcome Beyoncé with open arms.

"Let me have my country music in peace" wrote one critic on Twitter. Another suggested that whoever had invited her should be fired. Still another threatened: "I was going to watch, but not now."

But many others sounded thrilled, including country singers Brad Paisley (who tweeted "welcome") and Cassadee Pope (who said, "I'm gonna explode").

The CMAs have invited non-country artists before, as they did last year with Justin Timberlake.



Beyoncé (right) performs onstage with Emily Robison and Natalie Maines of Dixie Chicks at the 50th annual CMA Awards at the Bridgestone Arena in the United States on Nov 2. AFP

SPOTLIGHT

Guizhou orchestra gets foreign conductor

By LIU XIANGRUI and YANG JUN in Guiyang

When Italian conductor Rico Saccani was appointed the music director of Guiyang Symphony Orchestra in September, he felt like he was home.

"Almost all the familiar faces when I first came are still here. I kept in touch with several of the orchestra members over the past two years," says Saccani, 64.

Saccani and his predecessor in the orchestra, Chinese conductor Chen Zuohuang, met in the United States as students in the early 1980s.

In 2014, Chen invited him to Guiyang for a few concerts. Saccani's performance was well received by the local audience, and Saccani was impressed by the symphony's professional management. The two sides continue to collaborate, says Sheng Wenqiang, deputy head of the orchestra.

Last year, when Chen's term as music director of the orchestra was ending, the orchestra owner asked Saccani to take over.

"And the rest is history," Saccani says during an interview at a theater in Guiyang, capital of Southwest China's Guizhou province, where the orchestra is based.

"On top of everything else, being the first foreign music director for a Chinese orchestra is quite an honor," he says.

In picking Saccani, Sheng looked for new energy to take the orchestra forward.

"We hope he can take our

orchestra to new heights," says Sheng.

Saccani served as music director of and artistic adviser to the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra between 1996 and 2005.

In 2005, he was given the Legion of Honor by Hungary for "distinguished contributions to Hungary's cultural life for over 20 years".

In his long career, Saccani has appeared regularly as a guest conductor for the Hungarian State Opera, Bavarian Radio Orchestra (Munich), Czech Philharmonic and the Irish National Symphony, among other orchestras.

For him, working with the Guiyang orchestra is quite different from his previous experiences.

Founded in 2009 by local businessman Huang Zhiming, a fan of Western classical music, the Guiyang orchestra is the first privately-run orchestra in China. A foundation established by Huang provides about 20 million yuan (\$3 million) annually to support its operation. The city government also sponsors performances and provides venues.

Saccani says the orchestra owner's interest in music is a positive thing for him.

While in Guiyang, Saccani spends most of his weeks at the theater or in his hotel. His Chinese colleagues sometimes take him out to experience life in the city.

The average age of the orchestra's more than 80 musicians is 35, and over a third of them are foreigners.

Saccani, who was the conductor for this year's opening concert by



Italian conductor Rico Saccani takes the baton of the Guiyang Symphony Orchestra. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

the Guiyang orchestra in September, says the enthusiasm from the audience came as a surprise. The tickets were sold out and even extra ones for standing room were sold to meet the demand.

"You don't usually see this enthusiasm in other concert halls, because the average age of the audience is about 60, while in Guiyang the average age is around 35," he explains.

"It's a young orchestra, it's a young audience, and you can feel this youthful energy in the public."

The orchestra has a 44-week performance season that includes both classical and pop concerts to suit audience tastes.

Saccani has encouraged the orchestra to increase the number of Chinese folk music concerts, which are popular in Guizhou as the region is home to many ethnic groups.

"It's like a menu. You have to try

to find the right balance to see how you can appease the biggest possible audience."

He's glad that an effort is under way to cultivate interest in classic music among the local residents.

New concert halls are being built in cities near Guiyang, where the orchestra will provide more performances in the future.

Although Guiyang is a relatively small city in China, Saccani says it is still a major metropolis because of its population of more than 4.5 million and "deserves" to have a major symphony orchestra.

"The Guiyang orchestra is a cultural symbol for the city and the province as a whole," Saccani says, adding that the next goal is to stimulate interest about the orchestra internationally.

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