

## HOOFBEATS: A Sisters rider explores the Mongolian steppe

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years ago, Keith watched Blue Roan, loaded with packs, slip and go down in high water. He almost rolled, but made it to a shallows and stood there shaking. Scared. Big Dirty Face, also packing that trip, had been watching, too. As Keith was deciding at what moment to ride back out into the current for the roan, Big Dirty Face waded out to Blue Roan and guided him to the bank.

Keith and Sabine have huge respect and love for their horses. Like most horses in Mongolia, when not with their humans the horses roam free, grazing on the grass and herbs of high-country pastures. Half wild. And their wildness enables them to face predators and withstand harsh Mongolian winters. Being in a herd, unconfined, living more like their ancestors did, also gives them a healthier mindset.

Sabine and Keith rode their favorites, Sabine in the maiden voyage of a saddle she made for herself. Their horses are “sarul grey,” what we call grulla, and have a roman nose; seems those characteristics turn out a horse of tremendous stamina even by Mongolian standards.

More than the stamina and willingness, though, Sabine and Keith treasure the connection that these horses have to the earth. To the wilderness and their place in it. And horses have some way of sharing this connection with their human companions.

Most especially, Keith and Sabine love the freedom of being in the wildlands of Mongolia. Vast landscapes. Challenging riding. Self-reliance. Navigable only by foot. No fences. In many ways, it resembles North America 200 years ago.

While we packed camp, Keith pointed out well-ensconced lichen-covered rocks forming a rim around a slumped pile and several other small rock piles. Purposely placed, about 2,500 years ago. A burial ground. The smaller piles often cover horse heads, as sometimes the deceased’s horses would be sent with him.

As the rumble of hooves perhaps rattled the bones in the graves, Keith wondered if “the horse culture to whom the graves belong would appreciate the sound of hoof beats overhead, stirring their hearts for their beloved creatures... It’s what I would like over my own grave.”

We moved on, riding further into this adventure.

## LUTE CONCERT: Event is free to the public in Sisters

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12 years old, she claimed the Outstanding Performance Award of the Art Cup international Chinese traditional instruments contest. At the age of 16, her music was recorded and published by New Era Sound & Video Company of Guangzhou and Nanjing Video Publishing House of China. These recordings are used for future generations of music students to study as ideal renditions of these pieces.

As a concert soloist, Zhou Yi has toured Europe, Asia,

and North America.

Zhou Yi is a co-founder of the Ba Ban Chinese Music Society of New York. She also plays the qin (zither), liuqin (high-pitched lute), ruan (alto lute), sanxian (three-stringed lute) as well as the piano. Zhou Yi currently resides in New York City.

The event will be a night of cultural exchange for Sisters.

“I’m having the three Chinese teachers prepare some Chinese dumplings and other eatables to offer free of charge to concert attendees in the commons prior to the concert,” Perkins said. “Basically, we would like to do a ‘Chinese night’ for the kids and their parents.”

## Circle of Friends...



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters’ mentorship program Circle of Friends celebrated back-to-school time with an event at Fir Street Park last week. Hats were provided by Heartwarmers and the program gifted the children school supplies from Cindy Greer, LSW, and Westside Church.



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