



INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

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"Singing on an Impulse: the genuine 'music' of southern drama"

a lecture by

Regina Llamas

Lecturer of East Asian Languages and Cultures
Stanford University

Monday, March 23, 2015

3:00 pm

**Pomerene Hall, Room 208
(1760 Neil Avenue)**

In his Notes on Southern Drama, the playwright Xu Wei (1521-93) noted that southern theater, or nanxi, was a composite of earlier Song dynasty song-lyrics (ci), the popular songs of peasants in the countryside and the girls in the marketplace. He argued that nanxi had its own musical organization: it was sung to the beat of a clapper, with no instrumental accompaniment, and could not be regulated by a modal musical system. Xu Wei's text – which has now become a manifesto of the "nature" of southern drama – expressed an unprecedented concern with articulating the genuine musical form of southern drama. This talk will contextualize his text within the debate of the gongdiao, or modal system, and explain how his concerns with the musical authenticity of the form could no longer satisfy the artistic standards of his time.



Bio

Regina Llamas is currently working on a monograph on the historiography of Chinese drama and how this discipline was formed. Her earlier work, both in English and Spanish focused on southern Nanxi drama, dramatic historiography, modern ethnography and dramatic performance, and the later Qing commentarial dramatic tradition. She is currently a lecturer at the Center for East Asian Languages and Cultures at Stanford University.



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This event is sponsored in part by a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Grant