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## **THE WUXI GRAND THEATRE, DESIGNED BY PES-ARCHITECTS, INAUGURATED IN CHINA**

Led by the Finnish PES –Architects design team, a remarkable cultural building is complete in the city of Wuxi: the Opera House, Wuxi Grand Theatre is, 78.000 m<sup>2</sup> in size. The detailed design and building were accomplished in just three years and before that, the competition and the concept design took one more year.

At the Inauguration Ceremony on 30.4.2012, a Finnish delegation of 60 guests was led by Ambassador Mr. Lars Backström and Professor Pekka Salminen from PES-Architects. Among other distinguished guests were Consul General Mr. Matti Heimonen from the Consulate General of Finland in Shanghai, Ms. Riitta Kaivosoja, Director General of Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture as well as representatives of Tekes, Finpro and the city of Lahti, the friendship city of Wuxi.

The Finnish delegation also included the designers of the opera house, PES-Architects and its 35 persons team of international experts.

Mr. Zhu Kejiang, Mayor of Wuxi, mentioned in his speech that the new opera house is the most important new cultural building of the city and a true landmark. Mr. Zhu also pointed out that this building, designed for producing and performing both Chinese and Western operas, is the biggest investment in the history of Wuxi, a city of 7 million inhabitants.

In the opening speeches special credits were given to the high quality of Finnish design and its importance in executing the project in record time. The main designer of the Wuxi Grand Theatre, Professor Pekka Salminen, was awarded a bamboo sculpture, representing traditional Chinese culture. Xinhua News has published an interview with Prof. Salminen (see, [www.pesark.com](http://www.pesark.com)).

The PES-Architects design team has been in charge, not only of the architecture and interior design of the building, but also of its functions, acoustics, theatre technology and landscape design. Also the design of the most important steel constructions, as well as HVAC technique and concept design of the lighting in public spaces has been made by Finnish experts.

Additionally, PES-Architects has coordinated all of the Chinese design companies during the phases of building permit, working drawings and construction. Generally, Chinese architecture companies do not have this role.

The massive bamboo interior of the main auditorium and the designer's decision to replace all wooden materials in interiors with bamboo, is in this scale unique in the world. Bamboo has in China since ancient times been called "The wise man's timber", but not until now it is becoming accepted as an interior material, thanks to new technology and its ecological qualities.

The form of the large acoustic ceiling reflector in the main auditorium has its inspiration from the facial mask of the Chinese opera.

In the foyer space, the curved wall of the main auditorium is covered by specially made glass tiles. These have been designed and produced in collaboration with PES-Architects, Aalto University Helsinki and the Suzhou University.

The Wuxi Grand Theatre is located on the man-made cape on the shore of LiHu Lake, surrounded by 100 m high apartment houses and thus the building has five important façades. One of them can be seen from above: a figure formed by its eight massive steel wings. This has been seen symbolizing a butterfly, and also refers to the old Chinese opera, Butterfly Lovers.

***Enclosed small versions of photos (10). Photos for publishing and additional information:***

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