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who revealed the deception during a Sunday radio interview. "The child on camera should be flawless in Go to the Rings Blog » image, internal feeling and expression."

Olympics 2008

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China wants the Olympics as a stage to present a pictureperfect image to the outside world, and perfection was clearly the goal for the dazzling opening ceremony.

Filmmaker Zhang Yimou, who oversaw the production, has drawn international raves for a performance considered one of the most spectacular in Olympic history. But to achieve the spectacular, Mr. Zhang not only faked the song but organizers also have admitted that one early sequence of the stunning fireworks shown to television viewers were actually digitally enhanced computer graphics used for "theatrical effect."

Dubbing music during large outdoor performances is not unprecedented.. At the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, the famed tenor <u>Luciano Pavarotti</u>, then 71, lip-synched an aria because of his age and the cold weather. But the recording was still his voice, as is usually the case when performers lip-synch.

After last Friday's performance, Mr. Zhang appeared at a news conference with Chinese reporters and praised Miaoke. "She's very cute and sings quite well, too," he said. Asked to name which section of the show he found most satisfying, he first mentioned Miaoke.

"I was moved every time we did a rehearsal on this, from the bottom of my heart," he said, according to a transcript of the news conference.

Miaoke's song was considered critical because it coincided with the arrival of the national flag inside the massive National Stadium, known as the Bird's Nest. In his radio interview, Mr. Chen said that a member of the ruling Communist Party's powerful Politburo, whom he did not identify, attended one of the last rehearsals, along with numerous other officials, and demanded that Miaoke's voice "must change."

By Tuesday, the Chinese media had already pounced on the story, instigating a national conversation that government censors were trying to mute by stripping away many, but not all, of the public comments posted online. The outrage was especially heated over the cold calculation used to appraise the girls.

"Please save the last bit of trueness in our children," wrote one person with an online name of Weirderhua. "They think Yang Peiyi's smile is not cute enough? What we need is truth, not some fake loveliness! I hope the kids will not be hurt. This is not their fault."

Another person added: "Children are innocent. Don't contaminate their minds!"

Mr. Lin, the father, said his daughter had been under strict orders not to discuss plans for the performance. He got only the 15-minute notice about her role and was thrilled. He only later learned of the voice switch when he saw a video clip of the interview by the musical director, Mr. Chen.

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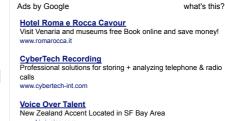
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