

THE STAGE AND THE EXHIBIT: REVOLUTIONARY AND POST-REFORM MODELS IN THE CHILDREN'S FILM SERIES, **LITTLE BELL**

**WEDNESDAY,
FEB. 19**



**HG 1002
@ 3:30**

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This session will focus on work-in-progress from Dr. Linda C. Zhang on the 1963's children's film, *Little Bell* (小铃铛) and the sequel of the same name from 1986. The two films of the series create a stark contrast between the revolutionary optimism of the 1960s and the enthusiasm for economic liberalization of the post-reform era starting in the 1980s. In the 1963 film, *Little Bell* serves as a model actor of a puppet troupe, exemplified by his star performance at a cultural exhibit and museum. In direct contrast to the earlier film, by 1986 *Little Bell* is portrayed as a provincial stray and outdated cultural relic, no longer with his troupe and looking on from the outside at exhibits on renewable energy, scientific imaging, and computation. Zhang demonstrates that many of the 1986 sequel's concerns regarding technological development and progress were not new to the post-reform era, but in fact, were already part of the existing framework of speculative children's film and animated media from the 1960s and even earlier. In positioning its key character as a rising performance star who already had his moment in the 1960s, the *Little Bell* series inadvertently reveals an underlying commentary and changing anxieties regarding access towards science, information, and economic development.

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GET ACCESS TO THE (UN-SUBTITLED) FILMS.**