



Left: Trainer Bai Yunling helps Yingying balance on a rocker. Right: Yingying steers a vehicle on stage.



Juggling, cycling onstage

Trainer helps turn panda Yingying into acrobat star

By YU NAN
China Daily staff

Yingying, the first panda acrobat in the world, is charming Beijing audiences at the ongoing First Chinese Acrobatics Festival. He can play basketball, walk on a big ball, weight lift, drive a vehicle, and can even use a fork and a spoon to eat Western food. Yingying's arrival has brought another wave of "panda-mania," with Beijingers eager to learn more about the special panda.

VIP treatment

Yingying is enjoying his VIP ("very important panda") life in Chaoyang Gymnasium, his temporary home in Beijing.

The gymnasium was emptied so that the 40-square-metre room could be used for the panda.

As always, Bai Yunling, Yingying's "mother" who has cared for him for 15 years, accompanies him.

Bai and her husband share the panda's room, along with three assistants.

"The whole room is neat and has no smell at all," said Bai. "You cannot tell that this room is for an animal unless you see the large cage in it."

Every morning, Bai uses a wet towel to clean Yingying's face. She regularly washes Yingying's body with special towels to keep his fur clean and tidy.

"I have been living in the same room with Yingying for 15 years. I believe he is the cleanest panda in the world," Bai said with pride.

Yingying is even toilet trained. When he was young, he was trained to use a basin by himself.

Yingying came to the Wuhan Acrobatics Troupe in 1986 when he was only 2.

To welcome the "national treasure," the troupe spent 100,000 yuan (US\$12,000), a large amount for a troupe at that time, to rebuild their 140-square metre dining hall into Yingying's training room. They also equipped the room with four air conditioners to maintain a pleasant temperature for the panda.

Yingying eats three meals a day. Two of his meals are nutritious congee, Yingying's favourite,

which is made with rice, millet, milk, sugar and salt. He also enjoys fresh bamboo, each twig of which is selected and fed to him by Bai herself.

Bai also feeds Yingying some tonics, such as calcium tablets, Golden Theragran (multi-vitamin pills) and fish oil, to maintain his health.

To prepare for performances, Yingying exercises regularly. Bai gets up with Yingying at 6 am every day for morning exercises. Afternoon or evening exercises are sometimes conducted depending on Yingying's condition.

Although Yingying is already 17 (60 human years), his body is still strong and his fur is still shiny.

Panda's 'mama'

Bai entered the acrobatics troupe when she was 9 and was an excellent rope dancer before Yingying joined the troupe in 1986.

Bai still remembers her first meeting with Yingying. "Many of my colleagues went to see him on the first day, but he only walked slowly to me," she recalled. "That was my first time seeing a panda so close and I began to love him immediately. And I could feel he liked me, too."

Bai was eventually chosen to train the panda.

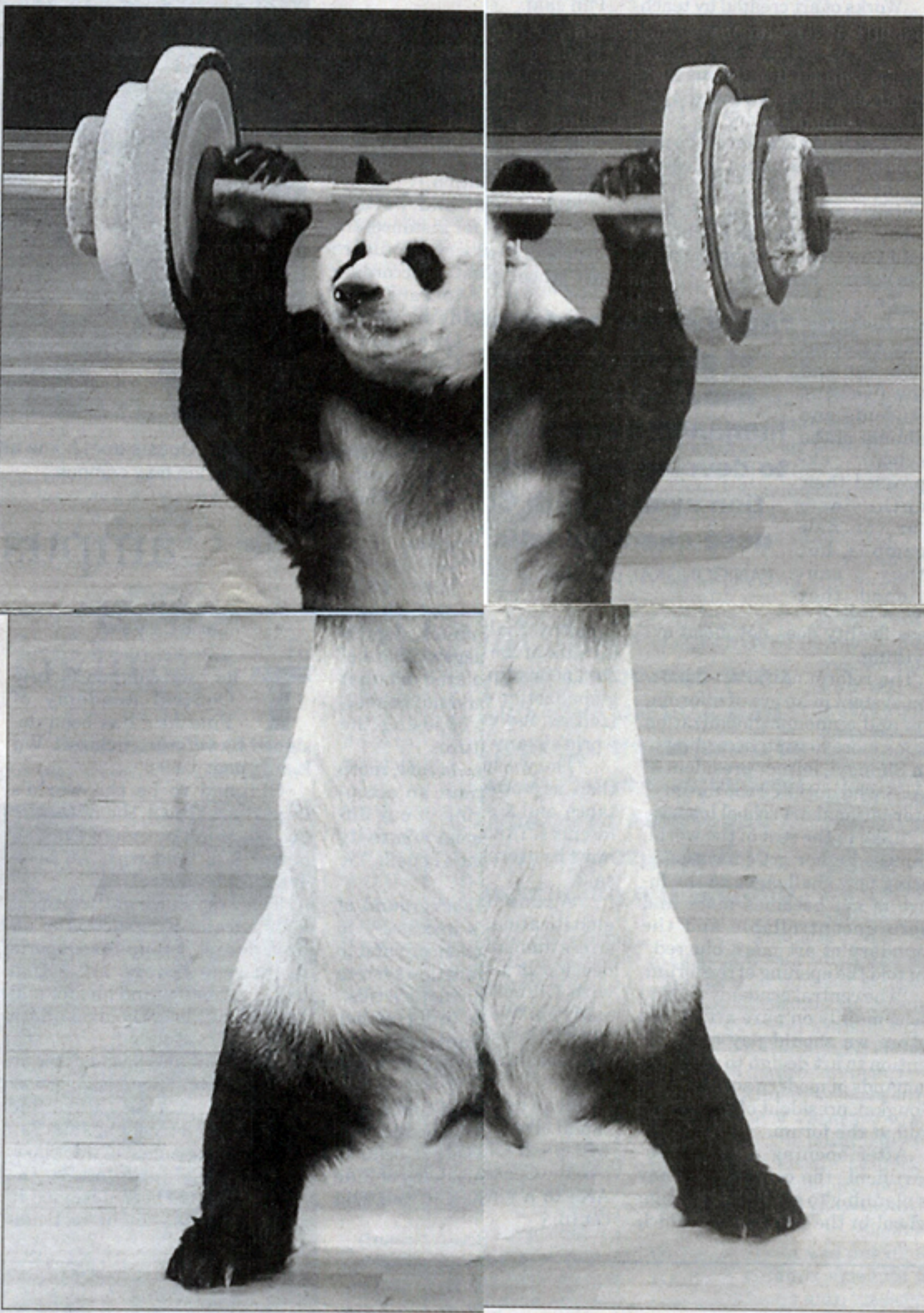
"We were very serious in choosing Yingying's trainer because he is so precious," recalled Xia Juhua, then director of the Culture Bureau of Wuhan. "Bai is a virtuous and responsible person. We all believed that she would treat Yingying very nicely."

However, Bai soon discovered that the job was no easy task.

Since she had never worked with pandas before, Bai first went to the library. She then asked an experienced feeder to teach her how to raise pandas. The most important step for her was getting familiar with Yingying as quickly as possible.

"When I first fed Yingying bamboo, he used his tongue to lick my hand, and my hand shook holding the bamboo," Bai recalled. "But after a few weeks, I even dared to hug him. I had conquered myself!"

Bai tries to spend as much time as she can with Yingying to promote the affection and trust between them. She fed, washed, played and even slept in the same room with him — explain-



Bearing all his tricks: Yingying the panda lifts weight during a performance at the Chinese Acrobatics Festival in Beijing.

ing her nickname, "panda's mum."

"I know how precious pandas are, so I treat him as best as I can, like my own son."

Training became easier after Bai won the trust of Yingying.

"But Yingying is still a naughty panda," Bai said. "He

is reluctant to follow orders sometimes during training."

Bai never beats Yingying or forces him to do her orders during training. If he doesn't want to do what she ordered, I will choose some other activity that he likes and let him do it first," Bai said. "Then I find that

he has cheered up, I will repeat my order. Then he will do it without any problem."

Under Bai's training, Yingying soon excelled in acrobatics. In 1987 and 1988, Yingying was invited to perform in Thailand and Canada, where he was highly welcomed.

Tan to bring audience new sound of water

By MU QIAN
China Daily staff

The 2001 Beijing Music Festival will present audiences with a concert of works conducted by Tan Dun tomorrow evening. Audiences at the Poly Plaza will be in for a surprise when the composer not only conducts the China Philharmonic Orchestra and a group of avant-garde musicians, but also shows the audience his music visually.

In "Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra — In Memory of Toru Takemitsu," New York-based percussionist David Cossin plays water as percussion instrument. Underwater cameras will catch the vision of

the water being hit and it will be projected onto a big screen by visual artist Mike Newman.

"I believe that the concert will bring Beijing's audience a new experience of multimedia arts," says Tan. "We have neglected many sounds in our life like the sound of water."

Tan has brought from New York a set of equipment designed for the performance of water as percussion instrument. The water will be taken from Beijing's Yuyuantan Lake.

In addition, Cossin is searching Beijing's trash bins for suitable garbage to be used for electronic feedback equipment, which, according to Tan, will produce a sound similar to African drums.



Tan Dun

Other than Tan, perhaps no more authentic "world" composer exists today. He grew up planting rice in Hunan Province and now lives in downtown Manhattan. He constantly travels the world, eagerly absorbing different cultures, as part of a career

that has placed him at the centre of the international music scene.

Tan is passionate about his music and it is his mission to share his experiences, as well as that of the culture of high-technology, with his audience.

The music of Tan, according to Tan, is not just "avant-garde," or "traditional," nor about East or West, nor about simplicity or complexity: it is a path towards exploring the inner world of and finding the roots for human beings. It is music for and about people.

"In this concert will present to Beijing's audience the musical concepts concluded from my experiments over the last 10 years," said Tan, whose last concert

in Beijing took place eight or nine years ago. "My music keeps changing, for our lives keep changing."

The programme for the second half of the concert will be Tan's Oscar award-winning "Crouching Tiger Concerto," which he composed for Ang Lee's film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

The work will feature cellist Maya Beiser and Chinese bamboo flutist Tang Junqiao.

Embracing a wide range of musical languages from classical to world music, from contemporary music to alternative rock, Beiser is internationally acclaimed as a leading virtuoso performer on the cutting edge of the musical world.

WHAT'S ON

Acrobatic Show
Chaoyang Theatre is a theatre which specializes in acrobatics all the year round. Many top acrobatic artists from all over the country are invited to perform for the Chinese and foreign tourists.
Venue: Chaoyang Theatre, 36 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Time: 7:15 pm, nightly
Telephone: 6507-2421, 6507-1818

STAGE
Ballet for Life: Maurice Bejart, a legendary 20th century dance figure, gives us a distinguished and treasured gift with his Ballet for Life tour. It marks his public directorial debut in Asia. The performance combines the music of the world-famous rock band Queen with master composer Mozart.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 9-11
Place: Century Theatre, Sino-Japanese Youth Centre, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu
Tel: 6561-0651, 6561-0652, 6561-0653

Russian swans: The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre ballet team from Russia will stage its repertoire "Swan Lake" in Beijing. The 225-year-old theatre will stage a version created by choreographer Yuri Grigorovich.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 15-18
Place: Beizhan Theatre, 135, Xiwai Dajie, Xicheng District
Tel: 6835-1383

Opera excerpts: The Liyuan Theatre presents traditional Peking Opera excerpts specially packaged in short programmes with English explanations for foreign audiences in the original style. The theatre revives the ambience of Old Beijing by setting up Ming-style tables so guests can sample snacks during performances.
Time: 7:30 pm nightly
Place: Qianmen Hotel, 175, Yong'anlu, Xuanwu District
Tel: 6301-6688 ext 8867

CONCERTS
European Union Baroque Orchestra: To celebrate the 300th anniversary of the births of three of

the greatest baroque composers: J. S. Bach, Scarlatti and Handel, the EUBO was founded in 1985. Using original or exact copies of 18th century instruments, the talented young players from all over Europe will offer Beijing audiences for the first time a real taste of the "fruits of the baroque" in Beijing Concert Hall.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 13
Place: Beijing Concert Hall
Tel: 6463-6572, 6463-6628

Excellent co-op: Chinese maestro Lan Shui, leader of one of the finest orchestras in Asia, joins the great violin virtuoso Cho-Liang Lin in a performance of Barber: Violin Concerto and Mahler's Symphony No 9 in D major.
Time: 7:30 pm, October 27
Place: Poly Plaza, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie
Tel: 6513-1039

Asian musicians: The Chinese conductor Lan Shui will lead the Singapore Symphony Orchestra in collaboration with famous Chinese-American violinist, Cho-Liang Lin. They will play Barber's "Violin Concerto op 14," and Mahler's "Symphony No 9 in D major." Lin is known for the beauty of his sound and his technical mastery.
Time: 7:30 pm, October 27
Place: Poly Theatre, 14, Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 6500-1188 ext 5176

Icelandish concert: A solo concert entitled "European Song Pearls" will be given to celebrate the 30 anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Iceland and China.

The concert stars Iceland's leading soprano Sigrun Hjalmtydottir. She will sing songs from the Nordic countries and some arias from Italian, French and German operas.
Time: 7:30 pm, October 27
Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall, inside Zhongshan Park on the west side of Tian'anmen Square
Tel: 6559-8315

BRIDGE (By Phillip Alder)

George Eliot — what was her real name? — wrote, "What we call illusions are often, in truth, a wider vision of past and present realities — a willing movement of a man's soul with the larger sweep of the world's forces — a movement towards a more assured end than the chances of a single life."

At the bridge table strive to give yourself a chance, no matter how hopeless the cause might appear to be. Here, you are in four spades. West leads his singleton diamond: four, ace, eight. East returns a diamond, West ruffing. Now comes the club queen to your bare ace. How would you play the trumps?

South's first bid is a matter of debate. Maybe a quiet one spade is best. South, though, being a perennial rubber-bridge player, leapt straight to game.

If West had led a heart, the defenders could have taken four tricks. But how was he to know that? Understandably, West selected the singleton in his partner's suit and obtained a ruff. However, now declarer had a parking place for his heart loser, and needed only to play the trumps for one loser.

From his opening bid, East was marked with the spade king. So, South continued with the spade ace and

11-05-01

North			
♠	—	♠	11-05-01
♥	K 7 6 4 3	♥	—
♦	K Q 7 5 4	♦	—
♣	6 4 3	♣	—
West			
♠	J 7 6	♠	K 5 4
♥	10 9 2	♥	Q J
♦	2	♦	A 10 9 6 3
♣	Q J 9 8 5 2	♣	K 10 7
East			
♠	A Q 10 9 8 3 2	♠	—
♥	A 8 5	♥	—
♦	J 8	♦	—
♣	A	♣	—
Dealer: East			
Vulnerable: Both			
South	West	North	East
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
Opening lead: ♦ 2			

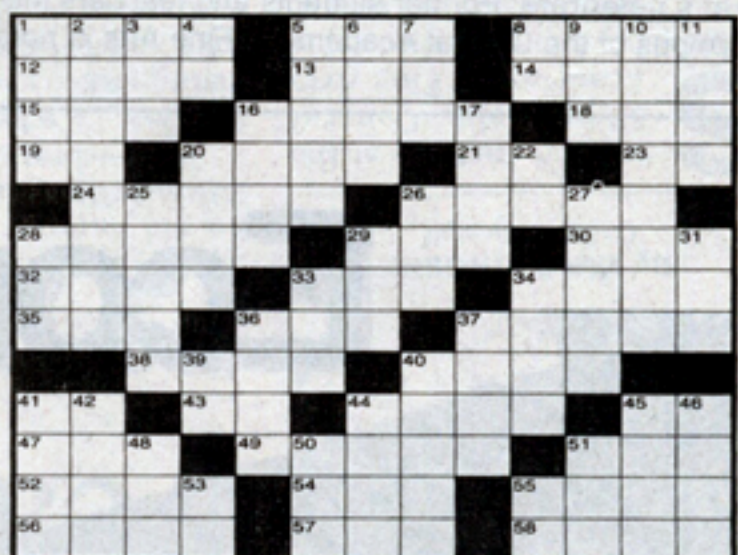
spade queen, trying to pin the jack. Here, that worked perfectly.

Note that if East had, for example, started with king-doubleton of spades, the contract was unmakeable. Even if South played the ace and a low spade, a third diamond lead from East would have promoted West's remaining spade jack.

George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Ann or Marian Evans.

CROSSWORD (No 6423)

- ACROSS**
- Fomer Russian ruler
 - Feline
 - Delay (legal proceedings)
 - Prefix with dynamics
 - Ms Thurman
 - Clark Kent's friend
 - Director, for short
 - Here and there
 - Before (prefix)
 - Therefore
 - Latin I word
 - Violent whirlwind
 - Grad-to-be — closet
 - Gloomy feeling
 - Marx brother
 - "— is Your Life"
 - Leave at the altar
 - Spanish article
 - Robt. —
 - Q-U linkup
 - Couple
 - Darya (river in



- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 47 — up (finish) | 20 Pay the kitty |
| 49 Arranged properly (abbr.) | 22 For example (abbr.) |
| 51 — my brother's keeper?" | 25 Without power to move |
| 52 Deity | 26 Picnic pest |
| 54 Male title | 27 Sting |
| 55 Part of USA | 28 Males |
| 56 They're kissable | 29 Question |
| 57 — the season ... | 31 Theatre sign (abbr.) |
| 58 Wild goose call | 33 Literary inits. |
| | 34 — Sunday |
| | 36 Irritate |
| | 37 Hastened |
| | 39 Entertainer |
| | Don — |
| | 40 Cancels previous change in |
| | 41 Leave out |
| | 42 Unless |
| | 44 Two words of understanding |
| | 45 Augur |
| | 46 Father of Michael Douglas |
| | 48 Burst |
| | 50 Suffix |
| | 51 Latin I word |
| | 53 SWID |
| | 55 Exclamation of discovery |

Solution to No 6422

A	P	T	R	S	V	P	T	W	A	S
S	E	A	E	R	I	E	W	I	N	O
A	S	H	N	A	S	A	L	I	Z	E
P	O	I	N	T	I	R	I	S		
T	O	A	T	L	T	U	S	K		
D	C	I	W	A	S	R	E	P	L	
E	I	S	I	R	C	O	D	U	R	
W	A	S	P	S	S	H	E	B	R	A
Y	O	Y	O	S	P	A	D	O		
R	H	E	A	O	D	D	E	R		
G	L	I	T	T	E	R	E	D		
O	I	S	E	T	E	L	E	S		
O	P	E	D	O	D	S	S	E		