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NATIONAL INTEREST

Olympic girl seen but not heard

August 12, 2008 | From John Vause CNN

A little girl and her song captivated millions of viewers during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. But what they saw was not what they heard.

Games organizers confirm that Lin Miaoke, who performed "Ode to the Motherland" as China's flag was paraded Friday into Beijing's National Stadium, was not singing at all.

Lin was lip-syncing to the sound of another girl, 7-year-old Yang Peiyi, who was heard but not seen, apparently because she was deemed not cute enough.

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Yang Peiyi's voice was heard during Friday's opening ceremony, but her face was never seen.

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"The reason was for the national interest," said Chen Qigang, the ceremony's musical director, in a state radio interview. "The child on camera should be flawless in image, internal feeling and expression. ... Lin Miaoke is excellent in those aspects."

The decision was made at the highest levels, Chen said.

"We had to do it," he said. "We'd been through several inspections. They're all very strict. When we rehearsed at the spot, there were several spectators from various divisions, especially leaders from the Politburo, who gave the opinion it must change."

Few who watched the Olympic ceremony realized the deception. "Tiny singer wins heart of nation," read the headline in Tuesday's China Daily newspaper.

"Lin Miaoke might be only 9 years old but she is well on her way to becoming a star, thanks to her heartwarming performance," the article gushed -- without mentioning she never sang a note.

But as word has gotten out on the Internet, some Chinese bloggers are outraged.

"If you're not good-looking, no matter how well you sing, you'll not be onstage. Do you know you're twisting a whole generation?" read one comment.

Another said, "If foreigners found out, they'd think we can't even find a girl who is good at both." [iReport.com](#): Share your Olympic spirit



As for Yang Peiyi, she's been quoted as saying she was honored to have had a role in the opening ceremony, even though few realized just how big her part really was.

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