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presents

New Voices: Celebrating Contemporary Composers **MELODY OF CHINA**

YANGQIN ZHAO, *yangqin*; GANGQIN ZHAO, *guzheng*
WANPENG GUO, *sheng*; SHENSHEN ZHANG, *pipa*
THOMAS LEE, *erhu & gaohu*; XIAN LU, *dizi*

with guests **EARPLAY**

TERRIE BAUNE, *violin*; ELLEN RUTH ROSE, *viola*
THALIA MOORE, *'cello*; TOD BRODY, *flute*
PETER JOSHEFF, *clarinet*; MARY CHUN, *conductor*

Friday, December 7, 2012 at 8 PM

Old First Church
1751 Sacramento St at Van Ness Ave
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MISSION

Old First Concerts, established in 1969 as a year-round concert series, continues to present an astonishing array of programs performed by outstanding musicians from the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Old First Concerts has a distinctive niche within the local musical community with a solid history of creating and programming an incubator space for emerging and established musicians and ensembles of all genres. The musical content (our curatorial mission) is artist-driven on every level, with no restrictions placed on the musicians' artistic vision.

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"I have enjoyed going to this venue since the late 70s. They offer dozens of varied and sophisticated concerts and the soloists and ensembles are always first-rate." –Jerry K.

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Bridge Chamber Virtuosi, etc. Her *The Legend of Chang-e* won the first prize of "1994 Marimolin's International Composition Contest". Besides performances in the United States, her music has been performed in Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Her mostly recent multi-media work *Shanghai Trilogy* was world premiered in Shanghai, China during the "2010 Shanghai International Expo"; it also received a US premiere in San Francisco.

Joan Huang has taught at University of California, Irvine, and has given lectures at University of Southern California, University of California, Santa Barbara, California State University at Fullerton and Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China. She is a columnist with the bi-monthly Chinese professional magazine *The Music Lovers*. For more information, visit www.joanhuang.com.

Melody of China Administrative and Production Staff

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Touring Management: Eye for Talent 1139 San Carlos Ave–Ste 310
San Carlos, CA 94070 (650) 595-2274 eyefortalent.org

Earplay: 560 29th Street San Francisco, CA 94131 earplay.org

PROGRAM

Melody of China Ensemble

Traditional, arr. Melody of China
Flying China

Eric Myers
Standing at the Gate
World Premiere

Hu Deng-Tiao
Three Refrains on the Song of Yangguan Pass

Hu Deng-Tiao
Joyful Night

INTERMISSION

Melody of China ensemble and Earplay

Joan Huang
Along the River During the Qingming Festival (2011)

NOTES

Flying China: In this colorful medley, each musician performs an excerpt of a solo piece that showcases his or her virtuosity and then hands off the piece to another performer. Cleverly connecting different traditional themes through common key and melodic elements, this lively piece provides a taste of the music from different parts of China.

Standing at the Gate (2012) by Eric Myers

The waterway connecting the Pacific and the Bay, known as the Golden Gate, stands as a symbol of San Francisco's influence from and its connection to other cultures. *Standing at the Gate* pays homage to the Bay Area's unique cultural milieu. The first theme, led by the yangqin and erhu, portrays the majesty of the Golden Gate. The second theme, led by the sheng and dizi, describes the constant activity of a bustling metropolis. The final theme, led by the guzheng and shared by each instrument, is a dance of

different traditions coming together. – *Eric Myers*

Hu Deng Tiao (now deceased) created **Three Refrains on the Song of Yangguan Pass** using melodies based on simple themes to express the bittersweet melancholy of an impending journey far from home. **Joyful Night** is a good example of Hu Deng-Tiao's use of Western compositional techniques including trio harmonies and polyphonic writing.

Along the River During the Qingming Festival (2011) by **Joan Huang** is based on the famous panoramic painting with the same title by the Chinese Song Dynasty artist Zhang Zeduan (1085–1145). The painting exquisitely presented the people's daily life in the region of Bianjing (today's Kaifeng). The composition is written for the collaboration between Melody of China and Earplay.

For me, the original painting stimulates in me a multitude of ideas. Along both banks of the Bian River, the scenery is an abundant landscape with diversified figures, activities are easily perceived and the dramas are spotlighted. My intention was to follow the vibrant images the original painting presented. In order to capture those lovely images and stories, I adopted the many regional characteristic ballads as well as the melodious Henan bangzi (a regional traditional opera). In many places, the violin, viola and 'cello imitate the zhuihu (similar to erhu) sound. Like the panoramic painting (the arched bridge is the center), the entire piece is in an arch shape: Slow-fast-slow-fast-slow, with the 3rd movement as the centerpiece. From the right to the left side, the music "unfolds" the story of this symphonic scroll painting:

I. Wooded Countryside: Shimmery, many sounds of nature, bucolic landscape, farmers, herders, etc. are portrayed.

II. Bustling Market: Singing and dancing, a lively scene, rhythmic yelling sounds, boats on the river, a variety of vendors humming a medley of folk tunes, people approaching the main gate of the city.

III. Rainbow Bridge: A rainbow-like bridge forms the center stage, with boatmen, fishermen, singing "working songs" etc.

IV. Main Gate: A sprawling and hectic urban scene at the main gate.

V. Country Folks: People chatting in a teahouse, busy vendors, various figures interacting with one another. Wheeled wagons, donkeys, mules, sedan chairs, and chariots are in the scene. At the end, people gradually leaving the scene. – *Joan Huang*

including John Adams' earthquake romance *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*. Ms. Chun has worked with opera companies in Europe and the U.S., including Opera de Lyon, La Monnaie, Kosice State Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Opera Idaho, the Texas Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Lyric Opera, Pacific Repertory Opera, the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, and San Francisco Opera.

Pianist, composer, educator and arts administrator **Eric Myers** began working with Melody of China in 2006. As MoC Managing Director, his duties include grant writing, development and project coordination. As a composer, Mr. Myers has composed and premiered numerous piano and chamber works including *Smoke and Mirrors* (2006) and began writing for Chinese instruments in 2007 when Melody of China premiered his *Meandering Streams* through a San Francisco Foundation Funds for Artists grant. MoC also premiered his *Butterfly's Beginnings* for Chinese sextet in 2008. *Standing at the Gate*, also for Chinese sextet, is his most ambitious work thus far. Recently, Mr. Myers has composed a series of twelve piano pieces. He plans to release a CD of his piano music in 2013. Mr. Myers holds a dual Bachelor Degree in Music and Chinese from Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY) and a Master of Arts in Music Composition from Mills College (Oakland, CA). He lived in Suzhou, China for eight months and is semi-fluent in Mandarin. For more information, visit his website at www.emtones.com.

Joan Huang grew up and received her early music education with her parents in Shanghai, China. During her teenage years under the political pressure of the Cultural Revolution, she was sent to a farm to accept 're-education', which meant doing heavy manual labor for three years. During her time on the farm, she had the opportunity to learn authentic Chinese traditional music from local farmers. In 1986, she came to the United States to continue her education at the University of California at Los Angeles and studied with Elaine Barkin, William Kraft and Roger Bourland. She became very interested in creating a style of fusion of Chinese traditional musical language with Western contemporary compositional techniques. She has received several awards, including two from Phi Beta Kappa for international students, one Tanglewood Music Festival fellowship and two Aspen Music Festival Scholarships. In 1991, she received her Ph.D. from UCLA.

As a composer, Ms. Huang has had commissions and performances from outstanding organizations and performers, such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Boston Music Viva, Boston Artists Ensemble, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Southwest Chamber Music, Marimolin, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Ying Quartet, and Piano Spheres, San Francisco

unique opportunity to hear eloquent, vivid performances of some of today's finest chamber music. Earplay concerts feature the Earplayers, seven artists who, as a group, have developed a lyrical and ferocious style. Earplay has performed over 435 works in its 27-year history including 115 world premieres and over 50 new works commissioned by the ensemble. The 2012 season reinforces Earplay's unwavering track record of presenting exceptional music in the 21st century.

In addition to being a member of Earplay, **Terrie Baune**, *violin*, is Co-Concertmaster of the Oakland-East Bay Symphony, Concertmaster of the North State Symphony, and a former member of the Empyrean Ensemble. Her professional credits include concertmaster positions with the Women's Philharmonic, Fresno Philharmonic, Santa Cruz County Symphony, and Rohnert Park Symphony.

Ellen Ruth Rose, *viola*, has performed as soloist with the West German Radio Chorus and appeared at the Cologne Triennial, Berlin Biennial, Salzburg Zeitfluss, Brussels Ars Nova, Venice Biennial, and Budapest Autumn festivals. She holds degrees in viola performance from The Juilliard School and the Northwest German Music Academy; and a degree in English and American history and literature from Harvard University.

Thalia Moore, *'cello*, attended the Juilliard School of Music as a scholarship student of Lynn Harrell and received her bachelor's and master's degrees in 1979 and 1980. She has been Associate Principal 'Cellist of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra since 1982, and in 1989 she joined the 'cello section of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

Tod Brody, *flutes*, is in the forefront of contemporary music activity in northern California through his performances and recordings with Earplay, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and the Empyrean Ensemble. He maintains an active freelance career, teaches at the University of California, Davis, and directs the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Composers Forum.

Peter Josheff, *clarinets*, composer and clarinetist, is a founding member of Sonic Harvest and of Earplay. He is also a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Empyrean Ensemble, the Eco Ensemble, and the Paul Dresner Ensemble. He has performed with many other groups, including Melody of China and sfSound, and has appeared as a clarinetist on numerous recordings, concert series and festivals, both nationally and internationally.

Mary Chun, *conductor*, has premiered the works of many composers,

ARTISTS



Melody of China

Clockwise from left:
Xian Lu
Thomas Lee
Wanpeng Guo
Gangqin Zhao
Yangqin Zhao
Shenshen Zhang

Melody of China, a nonprofit ensemble based in San Francisco, is the premiere Chinese music ensemble in the United States. The organization was formed in 1993 by a group of enthusiastic professional musicians from some of the most prestigious music conservatories in China. The ensemble has a two-fold mission: to promote Chinese classical, folk and contemporary music, and to provide quality entertainment through the synergy between an ancient cultural tradition and youthful, multi-colored American culture.

Over its history, in addition to performing a large repertoire of traditional music, Melody of China has commissioned or premiered forty new works by twenty contemporary composers including Yuanlin Chen, Kui Dong, Francis Wong and Gang Situ. Melody of China has collaborated with distinguished organizations and performing artists including the Berlin Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, the Del Sol String Quartet, Earplay and Wu Man. Past projects have included a concert featuring Songs from Mongolia as well as the innovative Young Composers series, where young people are asked to compose music for Chinese instruments. Recent projects include a performance with the Lily Cai Dance Company, providing music for Alonzo King's Lines Ballet and the Shaolin Monks, music for Michael Lowe's *Bamboo* with the Oakland Ballet in 2008 and a performance with computer music specialist Carl Stone at the Asian Art Museum as part of the 2008 San Francisco International Arts Festival. Melody of China has also been featured at many international folk and world music events including National Folk Festival, Globalquerque World Music Festival, and Confucius Institute at the University of Alaska.

A member of Chinese Musicians' Association and the Chinese Nationalities Orchestra Society, **Yangqin Zhao**, *Artistic & Executive Director (Yangqin)*, graduated with Honors from the Music Department of the Nanjing Normal University and became the head of the faculty of Instrumental Music of the university. She won the highest award by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the People's Republic of China in 1982. Ms. Zhao also won first prize at the Jiangsu Provincial Arts Festival in 1987 and 1991. Her profile appeared in the *Who's Who in Young Chinese* and *The Chinese Musicians Yearbook* in 1990. Ms. Zhao has been invited to perform internationally in Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mexico and Germany. In June of 1996, she was invited as one of seven greatest musicians hailed as masters on the yangqin for the Tanz & Folk Fest Rudolstadt (Folk Instruments Festival) in Germany. Ms. Zhao also represented China and the United States playing the Chinese hammered dulcimer at the International Santur Festival in Iran in 2003. She has performed at Lincoln Center, with the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, The Woman Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony.

A member of Chinese Musicians' Association, **Gangqin Zhao**, *guzheng*, finished her study in the Music Department of Nanjing Normal University in 1987. She was named one of the Ten Best Musicians by the university in 1990. She was an instructor of guzheng in the Nanjing Children Music and Dance School for years before she immigrated to U.S. in late 1990s. She has performed internationally in Singapore, Demark and Germany. Currently, she is the director of Chinese Arts & Music Center in San Francisco. Her students competed in the 2010 International World Cup Chinese Instruments Competition where they won Gold Medals.

Shenshen Zhang, *pipa*, entered the college at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music in 1988. She won the "Outstanding Performance Award" in Young Professional Pipa Performer category in the 1st International ART Cup Chinese Traditional Instruments Competition. After Graduating from the Conservatory with a Bachelor's degree in performance in 1992, Ms. Zhang entered Xiamen Opera House as a Pipa soloist. In 2005, she earned the master's degree in musicology. Having collaborating with Symphony Silicon Valley, the "Bridge" Chamber Virtuosi, Xiamen Philharmonic Symphony and Xiamen Opera House orchestra, and with conductor Paul Lolivnick, Han Zhongjie, Yan Liangkun, and Zheng Xiaoying, also with composer Yuanlin Chen, Joan Huang, Jim Francisco, and choreographer Alonzo King. She represented San Francisco at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

Wanpeng Guo, *sheng*, is a member of the Asian Orchestra, Singapore

Chinese Orchestra, China National Chinese Orchestra, China Musician Association, China Nationalities Orchestra Society, and China National Wind Instrument Society. He has performed in the United States, France, German, Australia, Denmark, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, and Austria. His music has been released on China Records, Hugo Records, and Wana Records. Since immigrating to the US in 2001, Mr. Guo has been the Sheng instructor/ conductor in Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra in San Jose, and the conductor of Great Wall Youth Orchestra in Oakland.

After graduating from Nanjing Normal University, **Xian Lu**, *dizi*, continued his studies in musicology in the Department of Music of Turku University in Finland in 1991. He won first prize in wind instruments at the First Chinese Folk Music Instrument Competition. He has shown on the stages in Australia, The Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Russia and the United States. In addition to flute, Xian Lu also plays many of the traditional Chinese wind instruments, including Xiao, Bawu, Xun. Currently, Mr. Lu is the guest professor of wind instruments in Laney College, Oakland, California.

Thomas Lee, *erhu*, is a member of China National Orchetra. Born into a musical family, he studied Gaohu with Professional Gaohu Masters Gan Shang Shi since he was nine years old. Entering the Group of Cantonese Opera at 12, he served as Chief Gaohu Resident of the Hong Kong Youth Contonese Opera in 1979, and has been invited as a Gaohu master by television stations for performances and educational programs in many San Francisco Bay Area schools. One of his students won the first National instrumental award and was met with widespread approval. Mr. Lee was invited to participate in many local art festivals and gave numerous performances in the United States. He also started a Chinese Arts & Music Center that promoted Chinese music culture in our community.



Earplay
 From left
 Tod Brody
 Ellen Ruth Rose
 Karen Rosenak
 Mary Chun
 Thalia Moore
 Peter Josheff
 Terrie Baune

Founded in 1985 by a consortium of composers and musicians, **Earplay** is dedicated to the performance of new chamber music offering audiences a