



# CHANG PING

Oriental Wash Painting

Orchestral Suite of Four Concertos

Ji Wei, Guzheng • Yu Hongmei, Erhu

Zhang Qiang, Pipa • Yuan Feifan, Zhudi

China National Symphony Orchestra

Lin Tao



## Chang Ping (b. 1972)

### Oriental Wash Painting

Professor Chang Ping graduated with a Doctoral Degree from the composition department of the Central Conservatory of Music. In 2008, Chang Ping was sent by the Ministry of Education to the Berlin University of the Arts as a visiting scholar for further studies. He currently teaches at the composition department of Central Conservatory of Music.

Chang Ping's works feature a large variety of musical forms, including opera, symphony, nationalities orchestra, concerto, ballet, chamber music and solo works among others. A prolific composer, Chang Ping has had his works performed frequently both internationally and domestically, winning numerous prizes as well as garnering worldwide critical acclaim. *Concerto for Orchestra (Orchestral Works for Chinese Instruments)* won First Prize of the Wenhua Award for Music Composition in the 12th National Music Production Competition, making him the youngest recipient of this prize. His symphonic work *Genesis* won the Grand Prize of the same category in the 16th National Music Production Competition a few years later. It was premiered by one of the top symphony orchestras in Russia, the Saratov State Symphony Orchestra. The following composition, *Oriental Wash Painting – Orchestra Suite of Four Concertos*, a large-scale orchestral work, was composed for the four most representative traditional Chinese instruments – *The Noble Fragrance* for erhu and orchestra, *The Wind Washed Clouds* for Chinese zither and orchestra, *The Movement of Washing Painting* for pipa and orchestra and *Blue Lotus* for Chinese bamboo flute and orchestra.

In 2015, the China National Symphony Orchestra hosted and performed a concert featuring Chang Ping's symphonic works at the National Centre for the Performing Arts. His original three act opera *My Mother is Called Taihang*, commissioned by the China National Opera House, was performed at the Beijing Century Theater in the same year. In 2018, his symphonic work *Singularity* was premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York.

Chang Ping has been funded by the Central Conservatory of Music for his outstanding academic achievements and has published *The Analysis on Selected Orchestral Works in the 20th Century*. He is a candidate of the New Century Excellent Talents Supporting Program of the Ministry of Education.



Photo: Wang Gang

### 1 The Wind Washed Clouds – Concerto for Guzheng and Orchestra

*The Wind Washed Clouds – Concerto for Guzheng and Orchestra* was completed in April 2005 and was premiered at the Beijing Concert Hall a month later by Ji Wei, a famous Chinese Zither performer with the Beijing Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Tan Lihua. The work was again performed by the same soloist with the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Yang Yang at the Shenzhen Concert Hall in 2006. It won the Grand Prize in the 13th National Symphony Contest held by the Ministry of Culture a year later.

Chinese musicologist Li Jiti, when talking about this work, elaborated on how the idea came from a classical Chinese poem *My Cottage Unroofed by Autumn Gales*, written by Du Fu, a famous poet from the Tang Dynasty. The poem reads:

'Shortly the gale subsides and clouds turn dark as ink;  
The autumn skies are shrouded and in darkness sink.'

The composer was struck by these two lines, which gave him the inspiration to create this work. When the composer was reading the poem, a lot of images came to his mind: the hale had just passed away, the cloud was as dark as ink, and the rainstorm was about to come. The composer then turned these images into notes immediately, just like a painter's decisive sweep and stroke on a canvas, or a Chinese calligrapher splashing ink on paper without hesitation. The beginning of the work is as strong and violent as a tempest, imposing and impressive, and it's quite sharp-witted for the composer to start in this way.

The *Concerto* has inherited the characteristics of splashing ink and wild scribbling found in Chinese ink painting and calligraphy and at the same time adheres to the poetic tranquility at the Chinese literati's heart, whilst also incorporating modern aesthetics, as the composer notes:

'The work did not focus on all the connotations of the poem, but on the movement and tension shown between

the lines. I was moved by that and it aroused my respect to the magnanimity and charm of Chinese literati's thought and personality, and the meditation and insight into life, human nature, history, and time.'

### 2 The Noble Fragrance – Concerto for Erhu and Orchestra

*The Noble Fragrance – Concerto for Erhu and Orchestra* was commissioned by the Beijing Huqin Art Festival. It was completed in October 2012, and premiered a month later by Yu Hongmei, a famous erhu artist, with the China Youth Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Lin Tao in the Forbidden City Concert Hall. The work was then performed again by the China National Orchestra with Zhang Guoyong conducting at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, and by the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra with Wang Fujian conducting at the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, which garnered public acclaim. The length of the work is 32 minutes, which includes a large amount of complicated passages demanding skill and control from the performers. It is therefore considered to be the 'touchstone' for erhu performers. Moreover, the work also carries a deep meaning inside. On the first page of the full score, it reads as follows:

'Plum blossom' has been long loved by Chinese literati for thousands of years. It was regarded as the top of the four symbols of Chinese spirits: plum blossom, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum. She is never afraid of the chill of winter, and proudly blossoms in the cold. Her dogged personality resembles the unique Chinese traditional spirit. Meanwhile, her beauty and fragrance also represent the romance and deep love in human nature. The work is yearning for this kind of noble spirit, and it is also a pursuit and call for the greatest humanity – love.

### 3 The Movement of Wash Painting – Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra

*The Movement of Wash Painting – Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra* was finished in March 2015. The work has high



Photo: Wang Gang

dissolved in the water, forming black and grey colours with different denseness, presenting the light and shade on the paper delicately. The beautiful patterns created by water and ink provide changes on the atmosphere, and evoke reflections for people. First-class painters can make the water ink spread out on the paper gradually, layer upon layer, resembling the ripples on a lake when a rock drops in, mysterious and boundless.

The *Concerto* also implies that music is just like calligraphy. A masterpiece must be unconstrained, magnificent, flourishing, and delicate, changeable yet naturally revealing its personalities and noble characteristics.

#### ④ Blue Lotus – Concerto for Zhudi and Orchestra

*Blue Lotus – Concerto for Zhudi and Orchestra* was completed in September 2014. The composer spent a whole year in creating this work. It was rewritten twice, and was finally named as *Blue Lotus*.

The composer considers the blue lotus as a reminder of ancient times. For thousands of years, it has been regarded as the symbol of life. In ancient legends, people believed that it had the power of rejuvenation and regeneration; and because of its purity, it evoked romance and mystery. It was given the most beautiful meaning – eternal hope. It stands gracefully above the water, never polluted by the mire. It carries people's dream and pursuit for eternity and purity. Bamboo flute is one of the most ancient traditional Chinese instruments, which has a history of thousands of years. It is the perfect instrument to interpret the spirit of the blue lotus.

The work is premiered by the famous bamboo flute performer Yuan Feifan. The unique music language and artistic modeling in the work are different from those in traditional works for bamboo flute, casting a new challenge to the performer.

**Chang Ping**

*English translation: Naxos China*

requirements on the techniques, inner control and personality of the performer. It was been premiered by Zhang Qiang, the famous Chinese lute performer.

The work borrows the idea from a technique in Chinese ink painting which was created by Wang Meng, a famous painter from the Yuan Dynasty. The technique uses water, ink, brush and paper to uniquely present 'quality, quantity and space' with visual arts. The ink is

## Ji Wei



Photo: Hua Yuan

Chinese Zither player Ji Wei is an associate professor at the Central Conservatory of Music. She has performed over 100 recitals at home and abroad in concert halls such as The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Zurich Opera House, the Royal Albert Hall, London and Suntory Hall, Tokyo among many others. She has collaborated with many ensembles such as the Detroit and China National Symphony Orchestras, the German Radio and China Philharmonic Orchestras, the orchestra of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, CAPUT, Les Temps modernes, Nieuw Ensemble and Le Concert Spirituel. She has performed as a soloist at festivals such as the Venezia Music Festival, Dark Music Days Festival and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival. Ji Wei has produced many works combining Chinese Zither with other Western instruments, and was named one of the Ten Most Successful Women of 2010 in *Jessica* magazine. Ji Wei is also active in charity work, serving as an ambassador for the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation in 2009.

## Yu Hongmei



Photo: Liu Hui

Yu Hongmei is China's leading erhu virtuoso, and is a professor, doctoral supervisor and vice dean at the Central Conservatory of Music. She is also the vice president of the Erhu Society of the Chinese Musicians' Association and the Huqin Professional Committee of the Chinese National Orchestra Association, guest erhu soloist for the China National Traditional Orchestra and guest professor at the University of Calgary, Canada. Yu Hongmei graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music, and is a winner of the Pro Musicis International Award in New York. Her award-winning albums include *Yu Hongmei Erhu Concerto* (4th China Golden Record Prize), *String Glamour* (Best World Music Prize, Indie Awards – the only Chinese musician to ever have received this accolade) and *Hongmei Caprice* (First Prize, 1st National Excellent Audio and Video Products Prize). In February 2002, Yu Hongmei performed a solo recital at Carnegie Hall in New York – the first performer of Chinese musical instrument to host a solo concert at that venue. Yu Hongmei has presented more than 100 solo concerts internationally.

## Zhang Qiang



Photo: Bai Jie

York, the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Taipei National Music Hall, among many others.

Zhang Qiang is a contemporary Chinese luteist and a professor at the Central Conservatory of Music. Having studied under Chen Zemin, Zhang Qiang graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in 1987. He is often invited to perform at music festivals at home and abroad, and has performed recitals worldwide. He has been invited to attend the Edinburgh International Festival, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Netherlands Art Festival, the Helsinki Asian Art Festival, and festivals in Berlin, Turin, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Zhang Qiang performs regularly as a soloist, as well as with orchestras, traditional string ensembles and chamber ensembles in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Wiener Musikverein, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New

## Yuan Feifan



Practice. His original thesis is titled *The Relationship between Techniques and Arts – the Interplay of Technical Talent and Art Cultivation*.

Yuan Feifan is associate professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, a member of the Chinese Musicians Association and the Chinese Ethnic Wind Instrument Institute and deputy secretary general of the Chinese Bamboo Flute Specialised Committee. Yuan Feifan graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in 1998, going on to work at the China National Opera & Dance Drama Theater. He has appeared as a soloist with ensembles and orchestras around the world, and has been invited to record for film and TV as well as educational resources. He has lectured both in China and overseas. His original compositions include *Exquisite*, *Childhood Sweetheart*, *Rhyme*, *Water & Flower*, *Colour* and *The Beauty of the Moon*. He has also adapted works by Liu Wenjin and Joe Hisaishi. His educational publications include *Learn Cucurbit*, *Ba-wu Flute & Xiao from Scratch*, *Learn Flute from Scratch* and *30 Original Flute Sketches for*

## China National Symphony Orchestra (CNSO)



Photo: Cao Xuefeng

The China National Symphony Orchestra (CNSO) was founded on the basis of the Central Philharmonic established in 1956. The orchestra is chartered and administered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China with three affiliations: the orchestra, the chorus and the Beijing Concert Hall. The orchestra combines virtuosity and musicality, performing a vast selection of repertoire, and champions works by contemporary Chinese composers. As a national entity, the orchestra undertakes major performances on significant national and diplomatic occasions such as the Beautiful China and Glorious Dream Concert in celebrating the 65th anniversary of establishing the People's Republic of China and the Boao Forum for Asia among many others. Throughout its history, the CNSO has established long-lasting relationships with many prestigious artists, performing almost 100 concerts per season. The orchestra has toured in major countries and regions in Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, presenting unforgettable performances to audiences worldwide.

## Lin Tao



Lin Tao is a professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, and artistic director and chief conductor of the Kuzbass Symphony Orchestra, Kemerovo in Russia. He studied at the Central Conservatory of Music and the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. From 1993 to 1996, Lin Tao was assistant conductor to Valery Gergiev, who praised him as an outstanding conductor, at the Mariinsky Theatre, and Alexander Dmitriev at the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. He has since been chief visiting conductor of the Tomsk Symphony Orchestra, chief conductor of Krasnoyarsk Symphony Orchestra and artistic director and chief conductor of the Saratov Philharmonic Orchestra. Lin Tao has conducted many other prestigious orchestras, and to date, his internationally acclaimed appearances include over 1,000 concerts and more than 20 operas. Lin Tao also gave the premiere of a work by Rodion Shchedrin at the National Centre for the Performing Arts which was praised by the composer.

Award-winning composer Chang Ping's *Oriental Wash Painting* is a set of four concertos that showcases traditional and ancient Chinese instruments, each performed by renowned and influential soloists. The 'wash painting' of the title implies a relationship between music and Chinese ink paintings – masterpieces which are magnificent and unconstrained, revealing a noble personality and character. This recording captures the world premiere concert of these remarkable works at the China National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

## CHANG PING

(b. 1972)

### Oriental Wash Painting Orchestral Suite of Four Concertos

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|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | <b>The Wind Washed Clouds –<br/>Concerto for Guzheng and Orchestra</b>     | <b>14:55</b> |
| 2 | <b>The Noble Fragrance – Concerto for Erhu and Orchestra</b>               | <b>31:26</b> |
| 3 | <b>The Movement of Wash Painting –<br/>Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra</b> | <b>18:01</b> |
| 4 | <b>Blue Lotus – Concerto for Zhudi and Orchestra</b>                       | <b>16:49</b> |

#### WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

**Ji Wei, Guzheng (Chinese Zither) 1**

**Yu Hongmei, Erhu (Chinese Violin) 2**

**Zhang Qiang, Pipa (Chinese Lute) 3**

**Yuan Feifan, Zhudi (Chinese Bamboo Flute) 4**

**China National Symphony Orchestra • Lin Tao**

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