

**GRAND  
PIANO**

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

**VINCENT HO**

**THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS,  
BOOKS 1 & 2**

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**TONY YIKE YANG**



**VINCENT HO** (b. 1975)

**THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOKS 1 & 2**

**TONY YIKE YANG**, *piano*

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Piano: Bechstein, D-282

Piano Technician: Michael Lipnicki Fine Pianos Ltd

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A co-production with Gerhard Westphalen, Brad Hawkins

	<b>THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOK 1 (2021)</b>	<b>09:25</b>
<b>1</b>	I. Mischievous Mouse (调皮的老鼠)	00:42
<b>2</b>	II. Little Ox (小牛犊)	00:40
<b>3</b>	III. Dance of the Tiger Cubs (虎崽之舞)	00:36
<b>4</b>	IV. Prancing Bunny (腾跃的兔子)	00:58
<b>5</b>	V. Little Dragon (小龙)	00:59
<b>6</b>	VI. Playful Snakelets (蛇影蛇行)	00:25
<b>7</b>	VII. The Happy Foal (快乐的小马驹)	00:23
<b>8</b>	VIII. Sleepy Lamb (瞌睡羊)	01:42
<b>9</b>	IX. Monkey See, Monkey Do (猴子学样)	00:28
<b>10</b>	X. The Dancing Cockerel (跳舞的小公鸡)	00:28
<b>11</b>	XI. The Wandering Puppy (流浪的小狗)	00:51
<b>12</b>	XII. Gentle Piglet (温顺的小猪)	01:13

**THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOK 2:  
PRELUDES AND FUGUES (2023) 58:52**

**Volume 1**

	No. 1. Rascally Rat	
<b>13</b>	Prelude	01:46
<b>14</b>	Fugue	01:30
	No. 2. The Mighty Ox	
<b>15</b>	Prelude	02:06
<b>16</b>	Fugue	03:03
	No. 3. Dance of the Tigers	
<b>17</b>	Prelude	01:18
<b>18</b>	Fugue	01:30

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<b>19</b>	No. 4. Jubilant Rabbit	
	Prelude	02:37
<b>20</b>	Fugue	01:39
	No. 5. Soaring Dragon	
<b>21</b>	Prelude	04:10
<b>22</b>	Fugue	03:40
	No. 6. Spirited Snakes	
<b>23</b>	Prelude	02:18
<b>24</b>	Fugue	02:46
	<b>Volume 2</b>	
	No. 7. The Galloping Horse	
<b>25</b>	Prelude	01:14
<b>26</b>	Fugue	02:10
	No. 8. Drowsy Lamb	
<b>27</b>	Prelude	03:39
<b>28</b>	Fugue	03:18
	No. 9. Mimicking Manic Monkeys	
<b>29</b>	Prelude	01:24
<b>30</b>	Fugue	02:23
	No. 10. Rollicking Rooster	
<b>31</b>	Prelude	01:29
<b>32</b>	Fugue	02:21
	No. 11. The Sauntering Dog	
<b>33</b>	Prelude	02:03
<b>34</b>	Fugue	02:31
	No. 12. Tranquil Pig	
<b>35</b>	Prelude	03:20
<b>36</b>	Fugue	04:37

**WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS**

**TOTAL TIME: 68:34**

## VINCENT HO (b. 1975)

Vincent Ho is a multi-award winning composer whose music has been described as 'brilliant and compelling' by *The New York Times* and hailed for its profound expressiveness and textural beauty. His many awards and recognitions have included five Juno Award nominations, Harvard University's Fromm Music Commission, The Canada Council for the Arts' Robert Fleming Prize, ASCAP's Morton Gould Young Composer Award, four SOCAN Young Composers Awards, and CBC Radio's Audience Choice Award (2009 Young Composers' Competition). During the period of 2007–14, Dr Ho has served as the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's composer-in-residence and had presented a number of large-scale works that have generated much excitement and critical praise. His *Arctic Symphony* has been described as 'a beautiful work that evokes the Far North in a very special way' (John Corigliano), and a 'mature and atmospheric work that firmly establishes Ho among North American composers of note' (*Winnipeg Free Press*). His percussion concerto, titled *The Shaman*, composed for Dame Evelyn Glennie was hailed as a triumph, receiving unanimous acclaim and declared by critics as 'Spectacular' (*The New York Classical Review*), 'A powerhouse work' (*The Winnipeg Free Press*), and 'Rocking/mesmerizing...downright gorgeous' (*The Pittsburgh Gazette*). His second concerto for Glennie titled *From Darkness To Light*, Ho's musical response to the cancer illness, was lauded as 'a lasting masterpiece of sensitivity and perception' (*Winnipeg Free Press*).

[www.vinceho.com](http://www.vinceho.com)

## THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOK 1 (2021)

As my daughter was learning piano, I found there were few Asian-themed pieces in the repertoire series she was learning from, and even fewer that reflected Chinese cultural themes. So I decided to compose a book of twelve short pieces for piano inspired by the Chinese Zodiac animals, all tailored to the educational needs of student pianists. To ensure that I created sincere musical portraits of each animal, I researched their legends, personality traits, and cultural significance (for example Rabbit – gentle, compassionate, and lucky), as well as their distinguishing physical languages (Rabbit – swift hopping/jumping motions). This information was necessary in my efforts to capture their musical spirits and recreate their physical/gestural languages in pianistic form. In addition, I incorporated many sounds, harmonies, and performance techniques that I had learned from my years of researching (and composing for) Chinese traditional instruments. As a way to appeal to young players, I approached these works as musical caricatures of each animal in their early years:

- I. Mischievous Mouse
- II. Little Ox
- III. Dance of the Tiger Cubs
- IV. Prancing Bunny
- V. Little Dragon
- VI. Playful Snakelets
- VII. The Happy Foal
- VIII. Sleepy Lamb
- IX. Monkey See, Monkey Do
- X. The Dancing Cockerel
- XI. The Wandering Puppy
- XII. Gentle Piglet

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to Derek Chiu and Queenie Yang of the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) for their input and critical feedback during the creation of this work, and to Elaine Rusk, Vice President of the RCM Certificate program, for her enthusiastic support. I also thank my daughter Claudia (age 8 at the time) who not only inspired me but also served as my co-collaborator – her approval of these works was the critical test to their effectiveness and appeal for players at her level. Finally, I must thank Liz Parker for suggesting this idea to me in the first place back in 2017.

### **THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOK 2: PRELUDES AND FUGUES (2023)**

Book 2 of this series is a collection of twelve preludes and fugues that represent each of the Chinese Zodiac animals in their teenage years. The principle of creating this collection is to have the animals 'grow up' in musical form so students can grow older with them. Thus, the materials of each animal from Book 1 are retained in Book 2 but rewritten in ways to reflect their musical growths and technical advancements. The choice of writing them as Preludes and Fugues serves two purposes:

1. They are forms that most students and pianists of an advanced level will be familiar with (through the works of Bach) and thus easier for them to embrace.
2. This allows me to express Chinese cultural themes within Western musical traditions to represent my bi-cultural identity in musical form while introducing students and pianists to Chinese culture.

In addition, this collection expands on the pianistic techniques I developed in Book 1, which were originally inspired by the performance practices of Chinese

traditional instruments. Thus, one will hear many familiar sounds normally associated to various traditional instruments but presented in pianistic form (e.g. pipa, ruan, guzheng, etc.). As mentioned, each movement represents musical caricatures of each animal in their teenage years:

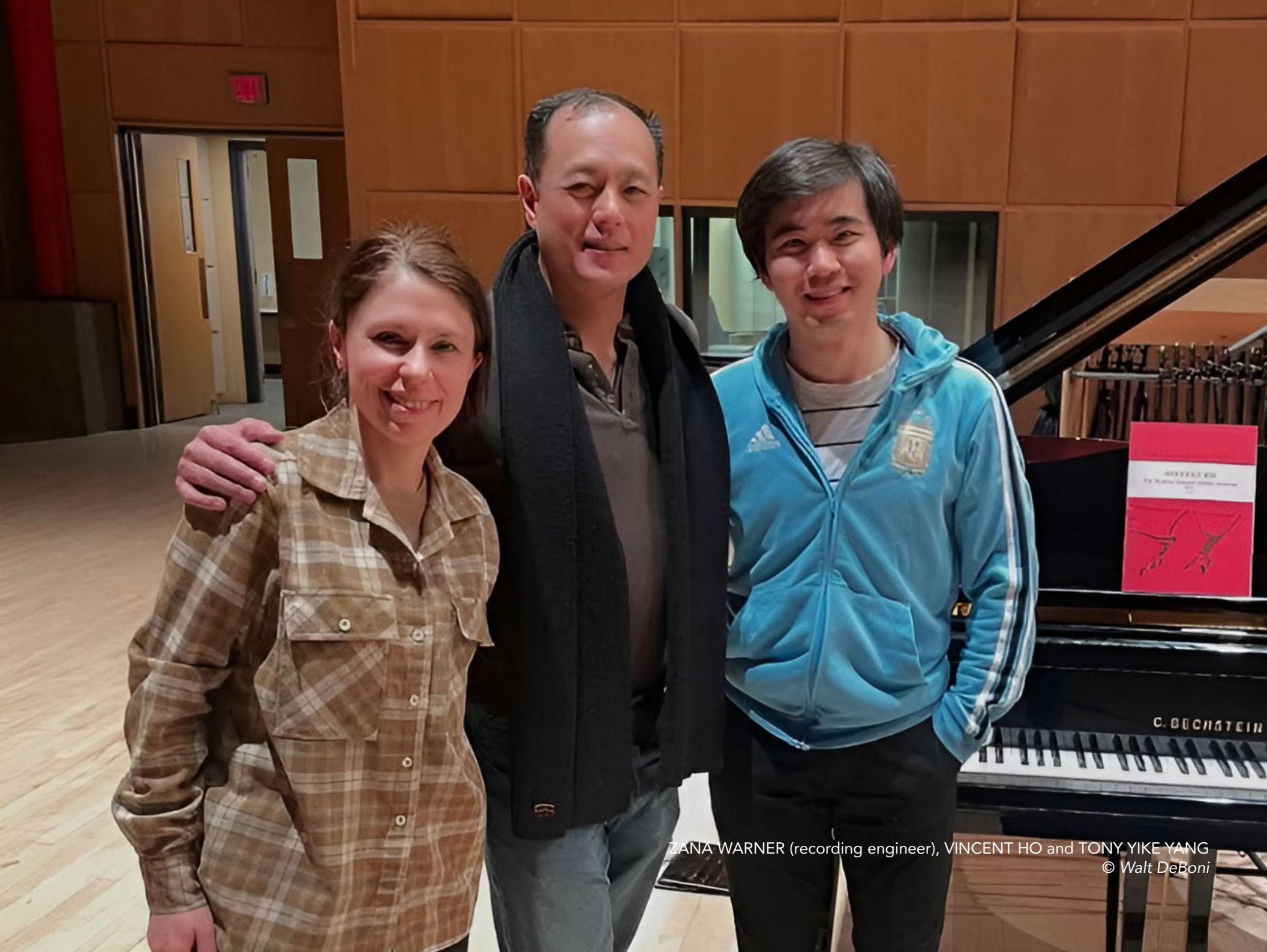
- I. Rascally Rat
- II. The Mighty Ox
- III. Dance of the Tigers
- IV. Jubilant Rabbit
- V. Soaring Dragon
- VI. Spirited Snake
- VII. The Galloping Horse
- VIII. Drowsy Lamb
- IX. Mimicking Manic Monkeys
- X. Rollicking Rooster
- XI. The Sauntering Dog
- XII. Tranquil Pig

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to The University of Calgary's Piano Department for their support and to the twelve student pianists I collaborated with on the creation of this collection: April Reyes, Ronan Paulhus, Ray Wang, Renee Pi, Kiwa Fukuchi, Christine (Yunseo) Sul, Jerry Liao, Anika Acasio, Amanda Caceres, Dakota Perez, Jarome Harlea, and Agata Skulimowska. I also thank Dr Jani Parsons and Lana Henschell for mentoring these twelve students on this project, and to my publisher Promethean Editions Ltd for their support. My heartfelt thanks to Walt and Irene DeBoni for their support in this project. Finally, I must thank pianist Tony Yike Yang for collaborating with me on this album and for his brilliant interpretations of my music.

**Vincent Ho**



VINCENT HO  
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ZANA WARNER (recording engineer), VINCENT HO and TONY YIKE YANG  
© Walt DeBoni

## TONY YIKE YANG

Hailed by CBC Music as one of Canada's finest young musicians, pianist Tony Yike Yang first rose to international acclaim in 2015 after becoming the youngest-ever laureate in the history of the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, winning Fifth Prize at the age of 16. He has also won prizes at the Van Cliburn, Gina Bachauer, Hilton Head, Cooper and Bösendorfer, and Yamaha USASU International Piano Competitions. As a soloist, Yang has performed in nearly 40 countries in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, Seoul Arts Center, Stadtcasino Basel, Koerner Hall, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Severance Hall, Esplanade Singapore and Theatro Municipal in São Paulo. Concerto highlights include appearances with The Cleveland Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony, Orchestre Métropolitain and the Basel Proms Orchestra. Yang has also performed for dozens of royalty and dignitaries such as Her Majesty Queen Camilla of the United Kingdom, Her Majesty Queen Mathilde of Belgium, former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, former Kuwaiti prime minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah and Polish president Andrzej Duda, to name a few. Born in Chongqing and raised in Toronto, Yang is a recent graduate of Harvard University with a Bachelor of Arts in economics. He is artist-in-residence at the Ingesund Piano Center in Sweden and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and was previously a fellow at the International Piano Academy Lake Como. Currently pursuing his Master of Music at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover under Professor Arie Vardi, Yang is named One to Watch by Scala Radio UK. Since 2022, Yang has been a feature artist of Toronto-based charity *Looking at the Stars*, delivering between five to ten concerts a year to prisons across Lithuania and the United States.

[www.tonyyikeyang.com](http://www.tonyyikeyang.com)



TONY YIKE YANG  
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# VINCENT HO (b. 1975)

## THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS, BOOKS 1 & 2

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The music of multi-award-winning composer Vincent Ho has been described by *The New York Times* as 'brilliant and compelling', not least for his music's beauty and expressive breadth. Ho wrote *The Twelve Chinese Zodiac Animals* as a gift for his eight-year-old daughter, to enrich her musical education as she learned the piano and to introduce her to Chinese cultural themes and performance practices in pianistic form. The cycle presents the musical spirits of the animals with captivating musical caricatures in two books, the second of which is a selection of preludes and fugues for more advanced players. They are performed by Tony Yike Yang, one of Canada's finest young pianists and the youngest laureate in the history of the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw.



**TONY YIKE YANG**

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|--------------|--|--------------|
| <b>1–12</b>  | <b>THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS,<br/>BOOK 1 (2021)</b>                      | <b>09:25</b> |
| <b>13–36</b> | <b>THE TWELVE CHINESE ZODIAC ANIMALS,<br/>BOOK 2: PRELUDES AND FUGUES (2023)</b> | <b>58:52</b> |

**WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS**

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 68:34**



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