



樂·行

# SYMPHONY OF SELF

PIPA CONCERTI COMPOSED, ORCHESTRATED AND PERFORMED BY  
GAO HONG

WITH THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
AND "THE PRESIDENT'S OWN" UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

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### **Gao Hong – A Musical Journey: 50 Years of Storytelling Through Music**

A celebration of Gao Hong’s extraordinary 50-year journey as a professional musician—one marked by perseverance, transformation and a deep commitment to storytelling through music.

Gao Hong’s life has been marked by both hardship and joy. Her father, a government official and landowner, was sent away during the Cultural Revolution, leaving her mother to hold the family together as a music teacher. To help ease the financial strain, 12-year-old Gao left her home in the ancient capital of Luoyang and travelled 400 miles to Hebei Province to join the provincial song and dance troupe, beginning her musical career. It was a daunting step for someone so young, but she recognised it as a rare opportunity amid the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution.

In her new surroundings, in the quiet hours before dawn, she practiced her pipa in the warmth of the furnace room—coal soot tracing delicate lines around her smiling eyes. Her colleagues started calling her the “little black kitten,” a name that captured both her youthful spirit and her fierce determination.

Aged 22, Gao became a student at the prestigious Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she studied under the legendary pipa master Lin Shicheng, immersing herself in the Pudong pipa style, which deeply touched her heart. Music quickly became her voice, her refuge and her destiny.

After moving to Japan in 1993 and then to the United States in 1994, Gao spent the next three decades absorbing a rich tapestry of musical influences. As music scholar Frank Kouwenhoven observes:

*“She performs gospel, Afro-American jazz, bluegrass, Arabian music, Indian music, pop, symphonic music, Chinese traditional pipa, Chinese storytelling—all of that with the same vigour and passion and (seemingly) the same ease, as if all these territories had already struck roots with her at the time of her birth.”*

With *Symphony of Self*, her artistry soars to new heights as she composes, orchestrates and performs the pipa in four concertos—masterfully weaving ancient Pudong pipa traditions into the richness of a full Western orchestra. It charts her musical journey thus far through bold collaborations with the *Royal Philharmonic Orchestra*, while also highlighting her compositional skills for a full band in *Celebration*, performed by “*The President’s Own*” *United States Marine Band*. Each composition draws from the ancient Pudong pipa tradition of musical storytelling, using both *Wen* style, which evokes inner emotions and associations with nature, and *Wu* style, known for its dramatic and powerful narrative of events.

*“Each piece is part of a larger story: a tribute to my past, a reflection of the present, and a hopeful message for the future. My mentor, the great pipa master Lin Shicheng, dreamed of sharing Pudong’s unique voice with the world. This album continues his legacy—while telling my own story.”*

The pipa is a traditional Chinese lute usually performed in solo settings or small ensembles in China. However, by showcasing it alongside a Western orchestra, Gao hopes to not only preserve the instrument’s history but give it a new voice in the modern classical world. Her vision is to create a powerful cultural fusion connecting Eastern and Western musical traditions that also fosters a deeper appreciation and understanding between the different musical worlds. Western orchestras have long embraced new sounds and instruments from around the world, but by introducing the pipa in a concerto setting, Gao challenges both herself and the *Royal Philharmonic Orchestra* to explore fresh textures, techniques and harmonies, expanding the boundaries of both traditional and classical music.

*"The pipa is a very difficult instrument to compose for due to its complex techniques. As a pipa player composing my own concertos, I can bring insightful ideas to fully utilise the instrument's unique characteristics, making the pipa more versatile and opening it up to a wider audience."*

This project is deeply personal, as Gao admits she never wanted to be a musician. *"As a child, I dreamed of being a teacher or a writer. But my mother locked me in a room and made me practice for eight hours a day. Back then, my greatest wish was to never touch the pipa again!"*

And yet, more than five decades later, the pipa remains her companion and her voice. What changed?

*"The audience persuaded me; I saw how much people enjoyed my music, and their incredible encouragement keeps me going on this musical journey. It made me realise something important: though I may have shaped my identity as a storyteller through the pipa, the truth is, I'm carrying on a much older story—one that began long before me."*

*The Pudong style of pipa is one of the most expressive and narrative-driven traditions in Chinese music. Pudong style is storytelling through sound. When I compose—like in the pieces on this album—I use this style to express emotion, history and imagination. That's why I use music to connect with people around the world—to exchange stories, carry on traditions, and pass this voice on to the next generation. So now, the pipa is in my blood. If someone tried to take it away from me, I would be very mad!"*

Gao has, in many respects, fulfilled her childhood dreams, just not in the way she expected. Today, she is both a teacher and a writer: teaching about the pipa, writing music that expresses her deepest emotions, and sharing her passion worldwide. *Symphony of Self* is the culmination of that dream: a celebration of music as both a journey and a destination, a reflection of a life shaped by discipline, discovery and joy. Above all, it is a gift of sound that reaches beyond the boundaries of time, place and language.

## FLYING DRAGON CONCERTO 《飛龍琵琶協奏曲》 [for pipa and orchestra]

Commissioned by the American Composers Forum (ACF) | Performed by Gao Hong and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra | Conducted by Michael Poll

Gao was born in the Year of the Dragon. On the day of her birth there was an unexpected heavy snowfall; her mother slipped and fell in the snow, causing Gao's premature birth.

*"As I grew older, I realised how strong I must have been, even before I was born. That moment—the chaos of the snow, the wind, the storm—this is how A Dragon's Lament opens. The timpani and strings create a mysterious, textured atmosphere, filled with the sounds of snow, wind and water. It is the moment the dragon—my spirit—was born."*

When Gao was little, a fortune-teller told her that she was a 'flying dragon,' something she has identified with ever since: constantly on the move, never feeling settled and uncertain of where home is. This concerto tells the story of her pain, strength and eventual transformation as the dragon takes flight into the unknown. After a snow-laden introduction, the uneven meters shifting from 4/4 to 6/4 and 4/4 to 5/4 echo the unsteadiness of Gao's life at this stage.

*"It was incredibly hard. I cried myself to sleep nearly every night, missing my parents, my school, and the general day-to-day childhood activities that I should have been experiencing at this age. Whenever I saw children with their parents or walking to school, it reminded me of everything I had left behind."*

Since then, she has moved farther and farther from her hometown—first to a neighbouring province, then to Beijing, then Japan, and finally the United States. *A Dragon's Lament* is filled with loneliness and sorrow, reflecting her sense of isolation during this time. The dragon flies, but the path is uncertain.

Gao then moves on to explore the mixed emotions and confusion brought on by her nomadic lifestyle in *The Dragon Flies*. She reflects on the struggles of survival and the resilience required to press forward, even when the path ahead is unclear. Gao's life is still full of uncertainty; however, now she understands that this is her destiny, and she accepts this. *"I fly everywhere, never quite knowing where I will land or what lies ahead, but now, I can see that this can also be exciting."*

At the end of this piece a new technique is heard on the pipa as Gao scratches the string with her nail, mimicking a soaring sound through the sky as the dragon takes off again—still searching, still journeying, never knowing exactly where home is.

## **GUANGXI IMPRESSION 《廣西印象》 [for pipa and orchestra]**

Commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra Performed by Gao Hong and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra | Conducted by Michael Poll

Guangxi is a province in southern China with a richly diverse population, including 48 counties and 12 ethnic groups. Gao embarked on a field trip here more than 20 years ago after receiving the Bush Fellowship; forever touched by the sound of traditional instruments and the spirit of the Guangxi people, it remains one of the most meaningful experiences of her life.

*"I visited many different ethnic communities—Dong, Zhuang, Yi, Miao, and others—each with their own unique musical styles and cultural expressions; I adored immersing myself in their local traditions and was overwhelmed by the region's natural beauty and rich musical heritage. This composition reflects that experience through three movements, each inspired by moments and people I encountered."*

### *Movement I: Tiao Dan Dance*

Many people in the Guangxi countryside carry baskets balanced on bamboo sticks across their shoulders. The bamboo is very flexible, so as they walk, the rhythm of their movement resembles dancing. This is often referred to as 'Tiao Dan Wu' or the 'bamboo pole dance'.

*"It's almost magical—like a dance emerging from the fields. The music expresses the lightness and joy I felt watching the people return from their work, moving in harmony with the land and with each other."*

### *Movement II: Summer Cicadas*

This movement is inspired by one of the most famous traditional songs of the Dong minority, known as the Cicada Song "Da Ge." Its cultural significance is so important that it has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In the Guangxi summer, the air is filled with the buzzing sound of cicadas. During work breaks, young women would sing, and young men would respond, creating a musical courtship.

At the heart of this movement, a gentle exchange unfolds as the girl (pipa) calls out and the boy (cello) responds, their dialogue gradually blossoming into a tender connection. The orchestra joins in, representing the community—supporting and celebrating the blossoming love. It's playful, intimate and full of life.

### *Movement III: Celebrating the Harvest*

The final movement is a jubilant tribute to the harvest season in Guangxi, inspired by the village festivals Gao witnessed. It brims with drumming, dancing, and singing, combined with unusual time signatures.

*"I used a 5/4 meter here to reflect the distinct character of their traditional folk music. At the end, you hear voices calling out 'Hei Lou 嘿喽!'—a joyful exclamation, like 'Yahoo!' in English. It's the sound of celebration, of harvest, of life."*

When the Minnesota Orchestra commissioned the piece, Gao was thrilled to bring this music to a wider audience.

*"Guangxi is a region of incredible beauty—its mountains, waters, and people all left a deep impression on me. The people are hardworking, joyful and full of spirit. Although I've travelled the world, China remains the foundation of my soul and music."*



*Gao Hong with the Minnesota Orchestra  
© Courtney Perry*

## REMINISCENCES 《故園情》 [for pipa, bassoon and orchestra]

Commissioned by the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra and supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board | Performed by Gao Hong on pipa, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with Richard Ion on bassoon | Conducted by Michael Poll

The 2020 pandemic was a time of isolation, uncertainty and longing. Like so many, Gao found herself suddenly cut off from everything familiar—flights were cancelled, concerts postponed and borders closed.

*“I couldn’t visit my 90-year-old mother in China, and the separation was heartbreaking. The distance between my life in America and my roots in China felt greater than ever. The best way for me to heal the pain I felt was to compose.”*

This piece became Gao’s way of processing that emotional distance—a dreamlike reflection on childhood memories, old streets and familiar sounds. The pipa traces her journey through life, seeking connection through sound, while the bassoon carries the emotional weight of her childhood memories.

A sense of detachment is evoked with *Memories of Home* as the Western harmonics here create disconnection and emotional distance through the intentionally sparse and fragile melody. Memories feel barely within reach as the music carries Gao’s longing, grief and love across time and space.

The pace intensifies as we enter *Dreams Echo with the Past*, almost like a dance—but it’s not entirely joyful. It reflects moments of remembered happiness, but with a bittersweet twist. There is warmth, but also sadness—because the people and places longed for are still so far away. A double cadenza unfolds, as the pipa and bassoon seem to speak directly to one another, telling stories of the past, recalling both joy and pain, laughter and long farewells. The music swells with emotion, layered with the complexity of love, absence and longing.

*“In Whispers of Home, I return to the musical colours of my childhood: a sweet, lyrical style inspired by local Chinese music. The piece is full of tenderness and reminds me of the sweetness of memory and the strength it gave me. Even though I couldn’t go home physically, I could go there through sound. This piece, in the end, is a tribute to my hometown, which—even from far away—continues to bring me peace, strength and joy.”*

## YUE XING [Musical Journey] 《樂·行》 [for pipa and orchestra]

Commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra | Performed by Gao Hong and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra | Conducted by Michael Poll

'Yue Xing' (樂·行) in Chinese can be interpreted as 'Musical Journey' or 'Happy Journey', as the character for 'music' (樂, yue) also means 'happiness.' Over the years, Gao has collaborated with musicians from Japan, India, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas—from jazz to blues and classical to world music. This concerto brings all those global influences together into one musical landscape reflecting the joy, inspiration and freedom Gao has found through cross-cultural collaboration.

A reflective pipa solo sets the stage for *Following the Heart*, in which Gao recalls the daunting uncertainties of life ahead. The following harmonies that change and overlap echo her early thoughts—wondering about the future, uncertain of where music would take her. Then the orchestra enters, symbolising the surprise and beauty of what unfolded: unexpected joy, vibrant experiences and a feeling of new beginnings. Returning to her cultural roots with the Chinese pentatonic scale, she reflects on her deep connection to China—her homeland, her foundation. *"Although I left my family and country at a young age, that identity has always stayed with me."*

*Paths and Cultures Entwined* recalls Gao moving from China to Japan—her first time ever leaving her homeland—and then to America, where she collaborated with musicians from diverse cultures. We hear influences from Japanese, Indian, Arabic and Western musical traditions. Arabic scales are introduced in the middle section, spotlighting the cadenza, as Gao explores the shared Silk Road roots of the pipa and barbat.

*Music Beyond the Horizon* is Gao's joyful tribute to music itself and the life it has gifted her with: one filled with beauty, connection, purpose and meaning. By the end of the piece, the music bursts into a celebration of unity—honouring how music transcends language, background and geography.

*"Yue Xing is more than just a composition—it is my musical autobiography! This piece is like a sequel to Flying Dragon, which represents my youth—my struggles, my strength, and my will to survive. Musical Journey continues that story, reflecting where I am now: a life enriched by music, shaped by it, and in many ways, saved by it."*

## **CELEBRATION** 《歡慶》 [for wind band] (Live)

Commissioned by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band | Composed by Gao Hong | Performed by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band  
Conducted by Captain Darren Y. Lin

*Celebration* not only captures traditional Chinese festivals filled with parades, laughter and dancing, but for Gao, it also represents something deeper: the joy of a lifelong journey in music.

*Celebration* began as a chamber orchestra work commissioned and premiered by the *Minnesota Sinfonia*, under the baton of conductor Jay Fishman, during the pandemic in 2021. At the time, the COVID-19 lockdowns were being lifted throughout the world—flickers of hope amid a prolonged period of fear, loss and isolation.

*"I finally felt a spark of hope. I wanted to express that joy and relief through music. I envisioned Celebration as a tribute to survival, resilience and the anticipation of returning to life—together. I wanted to honour holidays, peace, beauty, family and love—universal moments that remind us of what it means to be alive."*

After its premiere with the *Minnesota Sinfonia*, the piece quickly drew attention leading to an associate conductor suggesting a full orchestral version. Embracing this idea, Gao expanded the piece and saw its debut the following year with the *Maryland Symphony Orchestra*, conducted by Elizabeth Schulze. The musicians' warm response touched Gao deeply. After the concert, the concertmaster suggested sending it to "The President's Own" United States Marine Band.

*"In China, I grew up with traditional orchestras rich in winds—but not brass. Writing for an American band felt intimidating. Still, I sent an email, unsure if anyone would even respond."*

To her amazement she received a quick reply from the band's director, Lt. Col. Ryan Nowlin. He expressed admiration for the piece and invited her to create a transcription for the band. *"I was overwhelmed with gratitude and awe—this is one of the oldest and most respected bands in the world, with over two centuries of history!"*

On March 7, 2024, at the 89<sup>th</sup> American Bandmasters Association Convention in Washington, D.C., “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band premiered this live band version, conducted by Captain Darren Y. Lin.

*“That performance opened doors I had never imagined, with more than 20 conductors contacting me afterwards asking to perform the piece. Since then, it’s been performed across the U.S., in Canada, and even in Hong Kong. It was my first composition for a full band, and it marked the beginning of a new chapter for me.”*

Musically, *Celebration* is a journey of emotion and imagination. *Dancing Together* captures the energy of a colourful street parade hung with festive lanterns—people dancing, drums pounding, families gathering.

*“In the beginning of Joy and Celebration, the slow section expresses our deepest longings—for peace, beauty, family, and love. It evokes the feeling of being in a perfect moment, surrounded by everything that truly matters.*

*I also drew inspiration from Chinese festivals—each filled with unique rituals and meaning. Through rhythm and sound, I hoped to create a universal celebration, one that connects people and cultures.”*

At the end of the piece, the drums soon lead us into a full vibrant and energetic celebration before being joined by the full band in an explosive, joyful finale.

*“This piece is a celebration of my life, not just as a performer, as I do not perform in this particular piece, but as a composer. It marks 50 unforgettable years in music; it’s a moment to honour where I’ve been, how far I’ve come, and the people and cultures that have shaped me along the way.”*

**GAO HONG 高虹** ([www.chinesepipa.com](http://www.chinesepipa.com))

Since moving to the United States, Gao Hong has performed at the Lincoln Center Festival, Carnegie Hall, the San Francisco Jazz Festival, Smithsonian, and at festivals in Paris, Caen, Milan and Perth. She has presented concertos for the pipa with the *Minnesota Orchestra*, *Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra*, and the *China National Traditional Orchestra*, among others. In 2017, she became the first Chinese musician to play the National Anthem at an NBA basketball game while playing pipa for the Minnesota Timberwolves in Minneapolis.

Gao has since received numerous top awards and honours in China and the U.S. In 2005, Gao became the first traditional musician to be awarded the prestigious Bush Artist Fellowship, and as a 2018 Sally Award winner, she was honoured at the Ordway Center for her commitment to the arts. In 2012, her composition for pipa solo, *Flying Dragon*, won a Global Music Award – Award of Excellence Solo Instrumental (Gold Medal), and in 2019, she became the only musician in any genre to win five McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians. She is also the author of the first pipa method book written in English and published and distributed worldwide by Hal Leonard.

In 2021, ARC Music re-released the highly acclaimed album *Hunting Eagles Catching Swans* featuring Gao Hong and her mentor, the late, great pipa master Lin Shicheng. The album won two Gold Medals from the Global Music Awards, “Best Album” and “Best Instrumentalist”, and was among Songlines magazine’s “The Best New Albums from Around the World.”

In 2022, Mayor Melvin Carter of St. Paul proclaimed April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, to be ‘Gao Hong Day in the City of St. Paul’ in honour of Gao’s milestone concert at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts—*50 Years of Making Music with Friends*. Several pieces from this concert were featured on America’s most popular classical music radio program—American Public Media’s ‘*Performance Today*’<sup>®</sup>, hosted by Fred Child.

She then went on to receive eight more Gold Medals from the Global Music Awards. The first two were "Best Album" and "Best Duo" medals for *From Our World to Yours*, her 2022 collaborative album with Syrian oudist Issam Rafea. In 2023, she was awarded "Best Duo" and "Best Instrumentalist" for her highly acclaimed album *Terri Kunda: House of Friendship* that she recorded with Senegalese kora player Kadialy Kouyate. In 2024, her album *Alondra* with flamenco guitarist Ignacio Lusardi Monteverde won for "Best Duo" and "Creativity/Originality," and in 2025, *Prelude to the Divine Realm* with guqin master Zhao Xiaoxia won for "Best Duo" and "Best Instrumentalist."

Gao has served as a board member for the American Composers Forum and as the Recording Academy/Grammy's Chicago/Midwest Chapter Governor. She is a Recording Academy Voting Member for the Grammys, and a board member for the Minnesota Citizens for the Arts. She also teaches at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in the U.S., where she is Director of the Chinese Music Ensemble, and is a guest professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, the China Conservatory of Music, and many other institutions in China.

*"For over 50 years. Gao Hong's music has inspired and moved countless numbers of people around the globe. As one of the premiere pipa players in the world, Gao Hong's illustrative career is filled with accomplishments as a musician, composer and educator."* – Amy Klobuchar, United States Senator



## ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

[rpo.co.uk](http://rpo.co.uk)

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO), with Music Director Vasily Petrenko, is on a mission to bring the thrill of live orchestral music to the widest possible audience. The RPO's musicians believe that music can – and should – be a part of everyone's life, and they aim to deliver on that belief through every note. Based in London and performing around 200 concerts per year worldwide, the RPO brings the same energy, commitment and excellence to everything it plays, be that the great symphonic repertoire, collaborations with pop stars, or TV, video game and movie soundtracks. Proud of its rich heritage yet always evolving, the RPO is regarded as the world's most versatile symphony orchestra, reaching a live and online audience of more than 70 million people each year.

But live performance has always been at the heart of what the RPO does, and through its thriving artistic partnership with Vasily Petrenko, the RPO has re-affirmed its status as one of the world's most respected and in-demand orchestras.

In London, that means flagship concert series at Cadogan Hall, the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, and the iconic Royal Albert Hall, where the RPO is proud to be Associate Orchestra. The Orchestra is also thrilled to be resident in four areas of the country: Crawley, Hull, Northampton and Reading. And around the world, the RPO flies the flag for the best of British music-making, with recent and forthcoming tours to Japan and South Korea, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The RPO remains true to its pioneering, accessible roots. Now in its fourth decade, the RPO Resound community and education programme continues to thrive as one of the UK's – and the world's – most innovative and respected initiatives of its kind.

Passionate, versatile and uncompromising in its pursuit of musical excellence, the Orchestra looks to the future with a determination to explore, to share and to reaffirm its reputation as an orchestra with a difference: open-minded, forward-thinking and accessible to all.



## "THE PRESIDENT'S OWN" UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

[www.marineband.marines.mil](http://www.marineband.marines.mil)



Established by an Act of Congress in 1798, the United States Marine Band is America's oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Its mission is unique—to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

President John Adams invited the Marine Band to make their White House debut on New Year's Day, 1801. In March of that year, the band performed for Thomas Jefferson's inauguration, and it is believed they have performed for every presidential inauguration since. In Jefferson, the band found its most visionary advocate. An accomplished musician himself, Jefferson recognized the unique relationship between the band and the Chief Executive, and he is credited with giving the Marine Band its title, "*The President's Own*."

Whether performing for state dinners or South Lawn arrivals, events of national significance, or receptions, Marine Band musicians appear at the White House an average of 200 times each year. These performances range from small ensembles such as a solo pianist, jazz combo or brass quintet, to a country band, dance band or full concert band.

In addition to its White House mission, "*The President's Own*" performs an annual season showcase series of indoor concerts and a popular outdoor summer concert series on the National Mall. Marine Band musicians also perform in many different types of ceremonies and events throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, including the Presidential Inauguration, Full Honors funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, Honor Flight ceremonies for veterans at the National World War II Memorial, and many other occasions.

Each fall, the Marine Band travels throughout a portion of the continental United States during its concert tour, a tradition initiated in 1891 by "The March King", John Philip Sousa, who was the band's legendary 17th director. As director from 1880–1892, Sousa brought "*The President's Own*" to an unprecedented level of excellence and shaped the band into a world-famous musical organization.

To Gao Hong



*Presented on behalf of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band with gratitude for your incredibly special music and our shared world première at the 2024 American Bandmasters Association Convention. Semper Fidelis,*

*RJ Nowlin*  
Lt Col Ryan J Nowlin

© Master Sgt. Brian Rust

Since Sousa's time, the band's musical reach has extended beyond America's borders on several occasions with performances in England, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Singapore, and the former Soviet Union. During Sousa's tenure, the Marine Band was one of the first musical ensembles to make sound recordings. By 1892, more than 200 different titles were available for sale, placing Sousa's marches among the first and most popular pieces ever recorded.

Since 1798, the Marine Band's mission has been to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. As the only musical organization with that mission, the Marine Band looks to the future, viewing its history and tradition as the foundation upon which to build its third century of bringing music to the White House and to the American people.

## **Many thanks**

*“This was truly a dream-come-true moment in my life. Recording at the iconic Abbey Road Studios with the RPO was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in my career. The highlight for me was that these musicians were not only of the highest calibre but also gave such encouragement and warmth to me and my music. Their kindness and generous words will forever live in my heart. And of course, I also can’t thank our conductor Michael Poll enough for his beautiful work, his energy was much appreciated by all.*

*I feel so honoured to receive these opportunities. I owe a huge thank-you to “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band and their director Lt. Col. Ryan Nowlin for trusting me and giving me the opportunity to compose the full band version of Celebration, conducted by Captain Darren Y. Lin.*

*I must also thank Ignacio Lusardi Monteverde for his tireless hard work and friendship. He is not just a musical partner and producer—most of all, he is a great inspiration and lifelong friend. Thanks also go to Chi Chung So for his amazing support and dedication to this project. Also, my deepest thanks to the incredibly talented photographer Zachary Spindler-Krage, the lead staff photographer at Carleton College, for sharing his gifts and generous support!*

*I’m especially thankful for the unwavering support from Naxos World. Their vision for this concerto album and their belief in me made this project possible. Chris Tomsett, Sarah Wanstall and Amelia Zimmatore have supported me unconditionally over the past several years. Their tireless work and encouragement have meant everything to me.*

*I am so grateful to Carleton College for 25 years of unconditional support. A huge thanks to the Carleton College Offices of the President and Provost, and Department of Music.*

*This album is dedicated to my husband, Paul Dice; my daughter, Alida Dice; my mother, Gao Huiting; and big brother, Gao Feng, for their incredible love and encouragement. Furthermore, this album is in memory of my late teacher, Lin Shicheng.”*

## **Gao Hong**

All tracks composed and orchestrated by **Gao Hong**

Tracks 1-11 performed by **Gao Hong** and the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**,  
conducted by **Michael Poll** ([www.michael-poll.com](http://www.michael-poll.com))  
and recorded at **Abbey Road Studios**, London, England

Tracks 12-13 performed by **"The President's Own" United States Marine Band**,  
conducted by **Captain Darren Y. Lin**  
and recorded at **DAR Constitution Hall**, Washington, D.C., USA

Musical director: **Gao Hong**

Produced by **Ignacio Lusardi Monteverde** ([www.ignaciolusardimonteverde.co.uk](http://www.ignaciolusardimonteverde.co.uk))

Engineered by **Ignacio Lusardi Monteverde** and **Chi Chung So**

Mixed and mastered by **Ignacio Lusardi Monteverde**

Liner notes, cover design and product design by **Sarah Wanstall**

Cover photography by **Zachary Spindler-Krage** (@zachspindlerkrage)

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*This project was made possible by the Carleton College Faculty Development Grant,  
supported by an endowment created by Robert A. Roth '69 and the Minnesota State Arts Board.*



*Gao Hong is a fiscal year 2023 recipient of a Creative Support for Individuals grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature, and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.*

