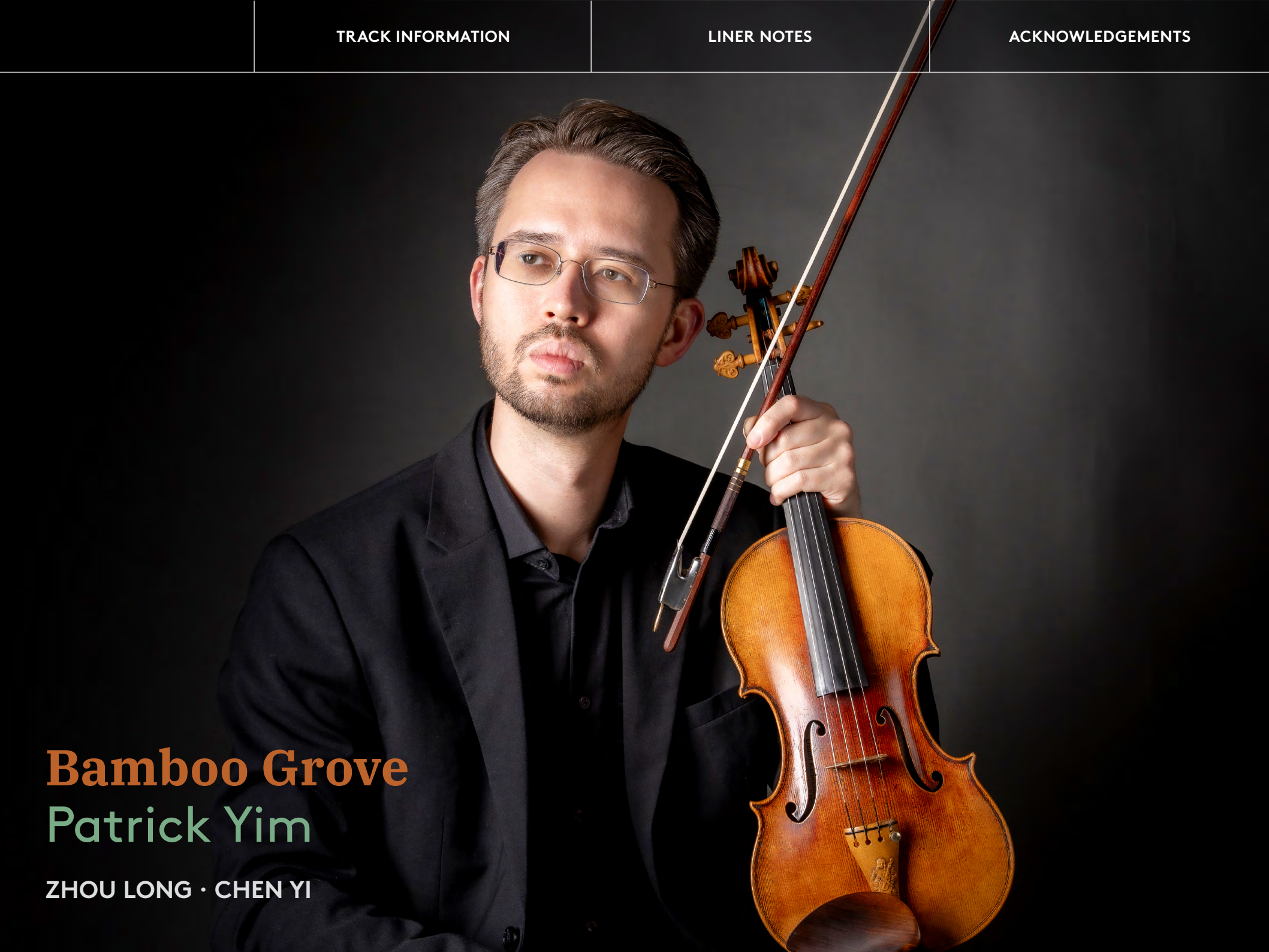




Bamboo Grove

Patrick Yim

ZHOU LONG · CHEN YI

BAMBOO GROVE

Zhou Long (b. 1953)

1 **Bamboo Grove for Unaccompanied Violin (2024)** 11. 09

Patrick Yim, violin

Chen Yi (b. 1953)

2 **Xian Shi for Viola, Percussion, and Piano (1982)** 15. 15

Patrick Yim, viola

Paul Vaillancourt, percussion

Shuai Wang, piano

Zhou Long

3 **Tales from the Nine Bells for Clarinet, Violin, Viola,
and Piano (2013)** 13. 50

Patrick Yim, violin

Kirsten Docter, viola

John Diodati, clarinet

Shuai Wang, piano

Chen Yi

Suite for Viola and Chamber Winds (2012)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | I. Lusheng Ensemble | 4. 38 |
| 5 | II. Echoes of the Set Bells | 3. 53 |
| 6 | III. Romance of Hsiao and Ch'in | 3. 40 |
| 7 | IV. Flower Drums in Dance | 6. 32 |

Patrick Yim, solo viola

Catherine Ramirez, flute

Jennet Ingle, oboe

John Diodati, clarinet

Anna Marsh, bassoon

Matthew Oliphant, horn

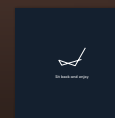
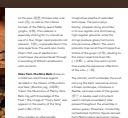
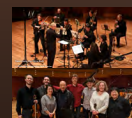
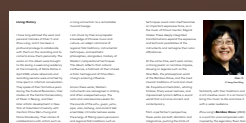
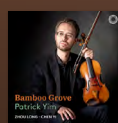
Charles Roberts, trumpet

Riley Leitch, trombone

Paul Vaillancourt, percussion

Paul Hostetter, conductor

Total playing time: 59. 03

All works are world premiere recordings

Living History

I have long admired the work and personal histories of Chen Yi and Zhou Long, and it has been a profound privilege to collaborate with them on this recording and to come to know them personally. The works on this album were brought to life during a week-long residency at the University of Notre Dame in April 2024, where rehearsals and recording sessions were enriched by time spent in informal conversation. They spoke of their formative years during the Cultural Revolution, their studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and their later artistic development in New York at Columbia University with mentors Chou Wen-chung and Mario Davidovsky. Their stories of collaborations with artists such as Yehudi Menuhin and Yo-Yo Ma offered

a living connection to a remarkable musical lineage.

I am struck by their encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese music and culture—an adept command of regional folk traditions, instrumental techniques, and aesthetic philosophies, alongside a mastery of Western compositional techniques. This album reflects that cultural confluence, a hallmark of their shared artistic heritage and of Chou Wen-chung's enduring influence.

Across these works, Western instruments are reimagined in striking and often unexpected ways. The violin and viola become vessels for the sounds of the *erhu*, *guqin*, *yehu*, *pipa*, *xiao*, *lusheng*, and ancient bell ensembles; intricate textures evoke the energy of Peking opera percussion and regional folk traditions such as Chaozhou *xianshi*. Through extended

techniques sound color itself becomes an important expressive force, as in the music of Chou's mentor, Edgard Varèse. These deeply integrated transformations expand the expressive and technical possibilities of the instruments and reimagine their sonic affordances.

At the same time, each work carries a strong poetic or narrative impulse, drawing on legends such as the Nine Bells, the philosophical world of the Bamboo Grove, and the lived musical traditions of rural and ritual life. Exquisite orchestration, whirling timbres, finely woven textures, and impassioned lyricism define a sound world that is at once ancient and contemporary.

From a performer's perspective, these works are both idiomatic and imaginative, pushing the limits of Western instruments through a deep

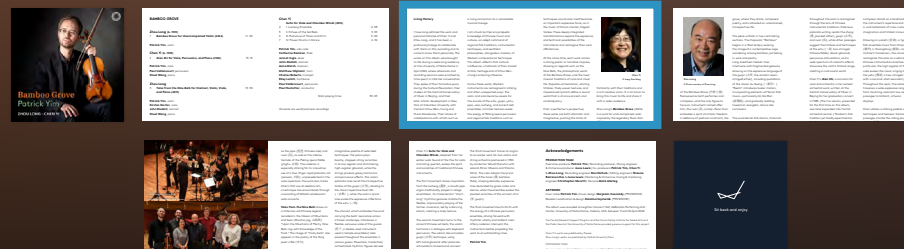


Chen Yi

© Jiang Xiao Ming

familiarity with their traditions and a rich creative vision. It is an honor to bring this music to life and share it with a wider audience.

Zhou Long's **Bamboo Grove** (2024) is a work for unaccompanied violin inspired by the legendary Ruan Xian (阮咸), one of the famed Seven Sages





Zhou Long

© Photo courtesy of Zhou Long

of the Bamboo Grove (竹林七賢). Renowned as both performer and composer—and the only figure to have an instrument named after him, the ruan (阮, a lute)—Ruan Xian embodies a spirit of artistic freedom. In defiance of political constraint, the Seven Sages retreated to the bamboo

grove, where they drank, composed poetry, and cultivated an unrestrained, introspective life.

The piece unfolds in two contrasting sections. The rhapsodic “Bamboo” begins in a fluid tempo, evoking the image of a contemplative sage wandering among bamboo, partaking in wine and poetry. Long-breathed melodic lines intertwine with fragmented gestures, drawing on the expressive language of the guqin (古琴, the ancient seven-stringed zither), including quotations of the classic Jiu Kuang (《酒狂》). “Beats” introduces livelier motion, incorporating elements of Henan folk music—particularly *Xin Kai Ban* (新開板)—and gradually building toward an energetic, dance-like conclusion.

The work blends folk idioms, historical reference, and virtuosic inventions, and

throughout the violin is reimagined through the lens of Chinese instrumental traditions. Extensive pizzicato writing recalls the *zheng* (箏, plucked zither), *guqin* (古琴), and *ruan* (阮), while other passages suggest the timbres and techniques of the *erhu* (二胡, two-stringed Chinese fiddle). Quick glissandi, percussive articulations, and a wide spectrum of coloristic effects showcase the violin’s timbral range, creating a vivid sound world.

Chen Yi’s *Xian Shi*, a concerto for viola and orchestra, is her earliest orchestral work, written at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing for her graduation concert in 1983. (The trio version, presented for the first time on this album, was later expanded into the full orchestral version.) Rooted in folk tradition yet boldly experimental, this first viola concerto by a Chinese

composer stands as a landmark in the instrument’s repertoire and a vivid statement of cross-cultural imagination and timbral innovation.

Drawing on *xianshi* (弦詩), a type of folk ensemble music from Chaozhou (潮州) in Guangdong (廣東)—her mother’s hometown—the concerto reimagines the viola as a vehicle for Chinese instrumental sonorities. In particular, the high register of the viola evokes the nasal, singing tone of the *yehu* (椰胡, a two-stringed fiddle with a coconut-shell resonator). Throughout the work, the soloist traverses a wide expressive range, from haunting, resonant low-register passages to brilliant, virtuosic displays.

Chen utilizes a striking palette of techniques and textures: tremolo passages imitate the rolling plucking (*lunzhi*, 輪指) of instruments such





Tales from the Nine Bells

© DeBartolo Performing Arts Center



Patrick Yim, Shuai Wang, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Kirsten Docter, John Diodati, Jesse Lewis & Dan Nichols

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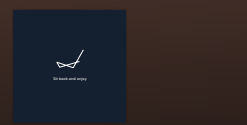
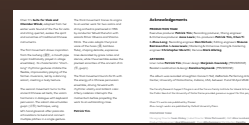
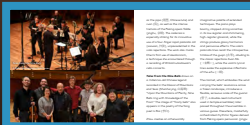
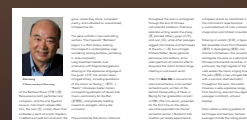
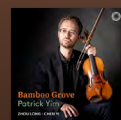
as the pipa (琵琶, Chinese lute) and *ruan* (阮), as well as the intense tremolo of the Peking opera fiddle (*jinghu*, 京胡). The cadenza is especially striking for its innovative use of a four-finger rapid pizzicato roll (*saoxian*, 扫弦), unprecedented in the viola repertoire. The work also marks Chen's first use of aleatoricism, a technique she encountered through a recording of Witold Lutosławski's cello concerto.

Tales from the Nine Bells draws on a millennia-old Chinese legend recorded in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing*, 山海經): "Upon the Mountains of Plenty, Nine Bells ring with Knowledge of the Frost." The image of "frosty bells" also appears in the poetry of the Tang poet Li Bai (李白).

Zhou creates an otherworldly soundscape through a richly

imaginative palette of extended techniques. The piano plays boomy, stopped-string sonorities in its low register and shimmering, high-register glissandi, while the strings produce glassy harmonics and percussive effects. The viola's pizzicato lines recall the introspective timbre of the *guzhen* (古琴), alluding to the classic repertoire *Xuan Mo* (《玄默》), while the violin's lyrical lines evoke the expressive inflections of the *erhu* (二胡).

The clarinet, which embodies the wind carrying the bells' resonance across a frozen landscape, introduces a flexible, sensuous scale of the *guanzi* (管子, a double-reed instrument used in temple ensembles) later passed throughout the ensemble in various guises. Elsewhere, masterfully orchestrated rhythmic figures derived from Peking opera percussion (*jingju luogu*, 京劇鑼鼓) animate the texture.



Chen Yi's *Suite for Viola and Chamber Winds*, adapted from her earlier work *Sound of the Five* for cello and string quartet, evokes the spirit and sonorities of traditional Chinese instruments.

The first movement draws inspiration from the *lusheng* (蘆笙, a mouth pipe organ traditionally played in village ensembles). Its characteristic "short-long" rhythmic gestures imitate the flexible, improvisatory playing of the farmer-musicians, led by a dancing soloist, creating a lively texture.

The second movement turns to the ancient Chinese set bells, the viola's harmonics in dialogue with keyboard percussion. The soloist also emulates *guqin* (古琴) technique, using left-hand glissandi after pizzicato articulations to bend and connect multiple pitches in a single gesture.

The third movement traces its origins to an earlier work for two violins and string orchestra premiered in 1996 by conductor Yehudi Menuhin with soloists Elmar Oliveira and Shlomo Mintz. The viola adopts the lyrical voice of the *hsiao* (簫, bamboo flute), shaping delicate, expressive lines decorated by grace notes and silence, while the ensemble evokes the plucked sonorities of the ancient *ch'in* (琴, guqin).

The final movement bursts forth with the energy of a Chinese percussion ensemble, driving forward with rhythmic vitality and brilliant color. A fiery cadenza interrupts the momentum before propelling the work to an exhilarating close.

Patrick Yim

Acknowledgements

PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producer **Patrick Yim** | Recording producer, Mixing engineer & Immersive producer **Jesse Lewis** | Co-producers **Patrick Yim, Chen Yi & Zhou Long** | Recording engineer **Dan Nichols** | Editing engineers **Shauna Barravecchio & Jesse Lewis** | Mastering & Immersive mixing & mastering engineer **Christopher Moretti** | Denoise **Mark Alletag**

ARTWORK

Liner notes **Patrick Yim** | Cover design **Marjolein Coenrady** (PENTATONE)
Booklet coordination & design **Karolina Szymanik** (PENTATONE)

The album was recorded at Leighton Concert Hall, DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, between 9 and 14 April 2024.

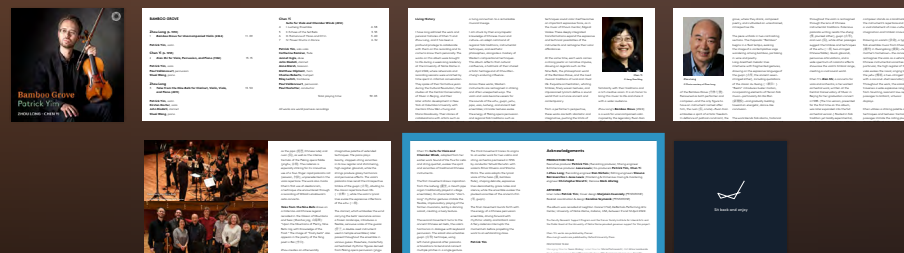
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Chen Yi's works are published by Presser.

Zhou Long's works are published by Oxford University Press.

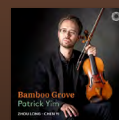
PENTATONE TEAM

Managing Director **Sean Hickey** | Label Director **Silvia Pietrosanti** | A&R **Alice Lombardo**
Product Management **Ana Milovanović** | Press **Allie Summers** | Distribution **Camilla Vickerage** | Audio **Wirre de Vries** | Finance **Adrie Engels** | Admin **Lineke Steffers**





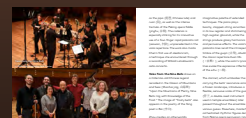
Sit back and enjoy



BAMBOO GROVE	
Produced by Yip	1:00
Music by Yip	1:00
Lyrics by Yip	1:00
Arranged by Yip	1:00
Recorded by Yip	1:00
Mastered by Yip	1:00
Designed by Yip	1:00
Published by Yip	1:00
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Liner Notes	
Patrick Yip is a multi-talented artist, composer, and producer. He has worked with many of the world's leading orchestras and soloists, and has received numerous awards for his work. His music is characterized by its emotional depth and technical precision.	1:00
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