



Advance Program Notes

Sounds of China

Saturday, February 2, 2019, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Sounds of China

Ma Jiuyue, composer and director

<i>Sushan Mountain</i>	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Walking with Singing</i>	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Love Elegy</i>	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Listening</i> Solo: Zhao Jienan	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Mask</i>	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Huxuan Dance</i> Solo: Zhang Ye	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Samsara</i> Lead: Di Yang	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Drifting Sands</i> Solo: Zhang Ye	Ma Jiuyue
<i>One Rainy Night</i>	Ma Jiuyue
<i>In a Faraway Fairyland</i>	Wang Loubin, arr. Ma Jiuyue
<i>Rose</i>	Folk song of Xin Jiang, arr. Ma Jiuyue
<i>Song of Horse Herding</i> Solo: Qiao He	Ma Jiuyue
<i>Spirits</i>	Ma Jiuyue
Encore: <i>Flying Bodhifattva with Pipa</i>	Ma Jiuyue



This performance is supported by Arts Midwest Touring Fund: China Tour, a program of Arts Midwest that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.



China Arts and Entertainment Group presents Sounds of China on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Program Notes

SHUSHAN MOUNTAIN

Ma Jiuyue

The color of the melody changes with continuous rhythm. What is important is not the melody, but the state—an attitude of pursuing a higher level of spirit. The composition is regarded as a breakthrough in terms of how Chinese traditional music is composed and pursues an effect of electronic music using loop-like drum beats and repetitive musical phrases.

WALKING WITH SINGING

Ma Jiuyue

Scherzando dance, humorous narration, joyful steps, melodious singing... Love makes us sing. Young hearts are dancing.

LOVE ELEGY

Ma Jiuyue

This song reminisces, like an old photo, about Shanghai in the 1940s and '50s. Shanghai's sensitivity, neon lights, fair ladies, cheongsams (traditional Chinese dresses) are described through the joint performance of erhu, pipa, zhongruan, and flute. Grey is the main tone, and the picture is enriched by jazz harmony.

LISTENING

Ma Jiuyue

With a small but dynamic rhythm ensemble, jazz, vocal singing, and instrumental melody come together in harmony. The whole piece has a feeling of fashion, fusion, and pop music. The guzheng is played with virtuosity, and there is a melody familiar in the western region of China.

MASK

Ma Jiuyue

The music is developed from a dialogue between flute and pipa, which takes place in a different time and space. The melody is full of complicated emotions, together with loneliness from the inner heart. Ma brings a whole new way for the audience to appreciate the music by adopting an unusual orchestration.

HUXUAN DANCE

Ma Jiuyue

Huxuan is a dance that comes to China from the western regions in the great Tang Dynasty. The distinguishing feature lies in the fast and continuous spins. Tang poems describe the beauty of the dance as falling snow, flying grass, and a whirlwind. The dancers spin so fast that the audience cannot even tell their faces from their backs. This music composition includes two clefs of erhu, which brings back this amazing dance form that is almost lost in antiquity in a musical way.

SAMSARA

Ma Jiuyue

Past and present, soul and body, and dream and reality are entangled in a sober yet chaotic stage. Like the never-ending wheel, the melody, rhythm, and interweaving of the voice make the whole piece go beyond reality, full of uncertainties.

Program Notes, continued

DRIFTING SANDS

Ma Jiuyue

In Dunhuang, on the ancient Silk Road, the expansive Mingsha Mountain surrounds the Crescent Moon Spring. When the wind blows, the sand flows like water. However, due to its terrain, the lake will never be buried by the sand, making this a mysterious wonder of the desert.

ONE RAINY NIGHT

Ma Jiuyue

Soft melodic sounds represent a couple telling each other stories of their life and love on one rainy night. They talk for hours, but when the rain stops and the sun comes out, they have to leave each other and say goodbye.

IN A FARAWAY FAIRYLAND

Wang Luobin, arr. Ma Jiuyue

In a Faraway Fairyland is a beautiful and renowned Chinese folk song written by Wang Luobin, who has been called the “king of songs” in western China, using materials and elements from Qinghai folk songs. It is said that Wang came to the village for a field trip in his 20s and came across a 15-year-old girl, Zhuo Ma, the daughter of the chief of the tribe. They had feelings for each other but didn’t develop a romantic relationship. When Wang returned to the village years later, he found that Zhuo Ma had been unhappily married and died from depression. Wang’s heart was deeply broken; he locked himself in his room for a week and put all his love, sadness, and sorrow down on paper, which later became this very well-known song. Ma Jiuyue retells this touching love story with a new concept and orchestration.

ROSE

Folk song of Xin Jiang (West of China), arr. Ma Jiuyue

In this traditional love song from western China, pleasant melodies of the pipa and flute remind the listener of a young boy and girl expressing their love for each other. Their pure and sincere love and happiness move all the passersby.

SONG OF HORSE HERDING

Ma Jiuyue

Combining Chinese folk music and jazz, this is a musical conversation between the East and the West.

SPIRITS

Ma Jiuyue

This one of the composer’s favorite tunes. After completing the composition with tears in his eyes, Ma felt strongly emotional, like being possessed by spirits; that’s where the name comes from.

Program Notes, continued

ENCORE: FLYING BODHIFATTVA WITH PIPA

Ma Jiuyue

The music is composed for one of the Dunhuang frescoes, the painting of flying fairies with pipas played backwards, which dates back to the Tang Dynasty and is found in Mogao Grottoes, Cave 112. After refining the music scores printed in Dunhuang frescoes, this piece shows a glorious picture of the great Tang Dynasty.

The style of playing pipa backwards is the most beautiful dance in all Dunhuang arts. It contains power and stretches, moving quickly while still being harmonious. The music and dance are elegantly combined and lead the audience's focus to the shoulders of the fairies. It is unknown whether such a talented singer really existed or if everything came out of the painters' fantastic imaginations and creativity. No matter how the image came into being, it remains a permanent symbol for the Tang culture.

Biographies

SOUNDS OF CHINA

Sounds of China is a neo-folk music group that was officially founded in 2014 by Artistic Director Ma Jiuyue, one of the pioneers and initiators of Chinese neo-folk music who is also a composer in residence for the China National Traditional Orchestra. Sounds of China is comprised of 30 talented young instrumentalists from China's top conservatories and state-owned performing arts companies.

As a young and vigorous band, Sounds of China possesses unique characteristics—it is fresh and stays on trend. It has a strong root in Chinese music, on which it grows a beautiful, harmonious type of music, creatively combining Western instruments and music styles. The ensemble embodies a national and international blend, which has been well received at home and abroad, especially for young music lovers.



MA JIUYUE, *composer and director*

Ma Jiuyue is a composer and one of the founders of new Chinese folk music. Ma studied several instruments, including piano, liuqin, and erhu, when he was very young. He graduated from the China Conservatory in music performance. In 1990 he began studying conducting at China Central Conservatory. Ma was the singer and keyboardist in a band he started. He has been a music producer since 1994. In his works, Ma has expressed special ideas and music interpretation from different perspectives. Jeff Rona, one of the voting members of the Recording Academy (Grammys) once called Ma "the genius composer of world music."



DI YANG, *ruan*

Di Yang graduated from the China Conservatory of Music with a degree in national instrumental music performance and studied ruan with Liu Qin. In 2004 Di was awarded the chief position in the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra as liuqin player and worked as the leader of the National Chamber Music Group. In 2011 he returned to Beijing to work as an ensemble conductor at the High School Affiliated to China Conservatory of Music, and in 2012 he taught liuqin there. In 2014, Di joined the FS Chamber Orchestra as a pipa and liuqin player.



HE QINGSONG, *flute*

He Qingsong is a flute player, a member of the Chinese Musicians Association, a China first-grade performer, and a principal player at the Oriental Performing Arts Group. He graduated from the China Conservatory of Music and hosted his first solo concert in 1994. He has always been actively involved in the Chinese music field and performed frequently in China and abroad, in locations such as Japan, Russia, Canada, Australia, and 20 other countries and areas.

Biographies, continued



LI SHANG, *percussion*

Li Shang began to study percussion music at the age of eight. At the age of 12, Li was admitted to the middle school affiliated to the China Conservatory of Music, where he was the chief of the percussion music department. Li was admitted to the China Conservatory of Music University in 2009. During that period, he performed in Singapore and Malaysia, among other countries. After graduating in 2013, Li was admitted to the Chinese Opera and Dance Theatre with a professional first grade as a member of the Percussion Music Department.



QI WENDUO, *ruan*

Qi Wenduo is a member of the Professional Committee of the Chinese National Orchestral Society, the chief of the Chinese Yan Xian Orchestra, and the chief of the Huaxia National Orchestra. Qi graduated from the China Conservatory of Music with a degree in ruan, and is now completing a master's degree in ruan at the conservatory as well. In 2014 he went to Russia with the Forbidden City Youth Chamber Orchestra for a solo concert. In 2015 he performed the solo for the Salty Orchestra Concerto's *Silk Camel Bell* in Los Angeles. Xu Yousheng, the director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, coordinated an overseas tour in Australia and New Zealand with the first *Silk Camel Bell* in 2017. In 2016 Qi joined the Gong

Yu Band and collaborated with Laojiao and Gong Linna.



QIAO HE, *pipa*

Qiao He graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music and successfully hosted two solo concerts in 2015 and 2016. Qiao also won the first prize as young professional pipa player. She joined an instrumental group at the age of 14, and started to tour in Japan and Southeast Asia. Qiao has released several recordings and albums, such as *Qianghai Lake* and *Poem of Qin*. She has toured with Sounds of China to the U.S., Europe, and other countries, and has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the China National Traditional Orchestra, and the China National Opera House, among others.



ZHANG YE, *erhu*

Zhang Ye was born on February 8, 1983, a professional erhu performer. Since 2004, Zhang has worked with the China Oriental Performing Arts Group as the orchestra's chief and erhu soloist. In 2016 she joined the Sounds of China. She has studied erhu professionally for 28 years and stage performance for 15 years.

Biographies, continued



ZHAO JIENAN, *guzheng*

Zhao Jienan currently teaches at Central Minzu University. Zhao graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music and won many awards in national and international competitions during her school years; she has also been invited to judge many times. Zhao has toured in many countries and has given master classes all over China. So far, she has performed two solo concerts.



ZHENG YU, *percussion*

Zheng Yu is a young percussion performer with PAS (China) and is the director of an international percussion art association. Zheng is a special expert with the Beijing University Chinese Orchestra and the Chinese People's Public Security University Chinese Orchestra. He performs with the Gu Feng percussion ensemble, is chief percussion player for Sounds of China, and is a soul band and new kyushu chamber orchestra member. Zheng graduated from the Chinese Conservatory of Music with a master's degree. He is a famous percussionist in China who has studied with Fang Guoqing, Jiao Shan Lin, and Wang Yidon. He is a crossover musician, performing classical, national, and popular music. As a young percussion

player of the next generation, Zheng has extensive and influential in-depth cooperation with different art groups and artists. He participated in the 2008 national percussion competition in Chengdu and won a gold medal in individual performance. In recent years, Zheng has performed many solo concerts around China and across the world, including in the U.S., Germany, France, Italy, and Spain.

Engagement Events

Saturday, February 2, 2019

MUSIC IN THE LOBBY: TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC

Directly before the performance by Sounds of China, enjoy a diverse set of traditional Chinese works as performed on violin, piano, and hulusi by local musicians.

Sunday, February 3, 2019

WORKSHOP: CHINESE MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTATION

While visiting Blacksburg, composer and director Ma Jiuyue led a workshop presentation for Virginia Tech music students.

Special thanks to Jenny Li, Alan Weinstein, and Sarah Xuejiao Zhang

Go Beyond

Ma Jiuyue's compositions and Sounds of China's performance blend traditional Chinese music with elements of contemporary genres like rock and pop. What was the effect for you of hearing pieces that spanned such a wide range of time and style? How did the more contemporary musical idioms you experienced relate to the traditional ones you heard, and vice versa?

In the Galleries

ARBOREAL

Thursday, January 24-Saturday, March 23, 2019

All galleries

Majestic, sustaining, enduring, but increasingly vulnerable—these words only begin to describe one of Earth's most critical life forms: trees. This stunning selection of works by artists from Australia, Spain, Israel, Japan, and the United States explores the imagery of trees and their symbolic resonance. *Arboreal* features photography, video, painting, works on paper, and ceramic, wood, and stainless steel sculpture.

JOIN US!

GALLERY TALKS

Micro to Macro—All About Trees

Join us for a series of gallery talks presented by Virginia Tech faculty that explores a broad variety of topics relating to the world of trees, from sustainability and conservation to dendrochronology and invasive species. Each talk is approximately 30 minutes each and is free and open to the public. Talks will be held in the Ruth C. Horton Gallery.

Saturday, February 16, 2019, 5:30 PM

Art Through the Eyes of an Arborist: Eric Wiseman, Ph.D.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 6:30 PM

Charismatic Trees: Lynn Resler

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 6:30 PM

Invasive Species—Trees as Victim and Victor: Jacob Barney, Ph.D.

GALLERY HOURS

Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

To arrange a group tour or class visit, please contact Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager, at megh79@vt.edu.