

CONTINUUM® - 43rd Season
Cheryl Seltzer & Joel Sachs, Directors
Continuum-ny@nyc.rr.com; www.continuum-ensemble-ny.org

CHINA IN AMERICA

Striking works – and two world premieres –
from the adventurous younger generations of Chinese-born composers in the U.S.

CONTINUUM, Cheryl Seltzer and Joel Sachs, directors, presents the final concert of its 43rd New York season on Saturday, April 18, 8 PM, at Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center, 129 West 67th Street. CHINA IN AMERICA focuses on brilliant Chinese-born composers who have settled in the United States in recent decades.

Contemporary music in our country has been enriched enormously by the presence of creative talents attending American graduate schools and settling here from China after the end of the Cultural Revolution. A few became internationally prominent - Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, among them. This first wave of composers has been followed by new immigrations to the present day. These composers have cherished a strong identity with their own musical heritage, and in their encounter with American and international modernism have created fascinating mixes of cultures - old and new. Continuum is representing some of the earlier wave along with vital newer voices. We will present two World Premieres of works commissioned for us from Bun-Ching Lam and Huang Ruo. Several of the composers will be present and will be interviewed during the concert.

The composers on Continuum's program have distinguished themselves in the U.S., winning advanced degrees, major awards, and grants, and have had prominent performances here and abroad, and recordings.

Commissioned composer BUN-CHING LAM was born in Macao, educated in Hong Kong, and earned her Ph.D. at the University of California, San Diego. She is currently composer-in-residence with the Macao Orchestra, and divides her life between Paris and upper New York State. Her work *LE VIN DES AMANTS* for soprano, clarinet, violin, and piano 4-hands (2008) sets a text by Baudelaire.

The second commissioned composer HUANG RUO, from Hainan Island, China, has degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and the Juilliard School, and is on the faculty of SUNY-Purchase. His music has been performed by orchestras here and abroad, including the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra. *WALL WRITINGS* for voice, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano (2009) will be sung by the composer in an extraordinary Chinese folk style.

KUI DONG, born in Beijing, received her doctorate from Stanford University and is on the faculty of Dartmouth College. Her compositions span diverse genres and styles, including experimental, jazz, film and multi-media. She also performs as an improvisational pianist. Her *PANGU'S SONG* (1998) is a virtuoso piece for flutes and percussion.

LEI LIANG, born in Tianjin to a family of music scholars, came to the U.S. as a high school student, later earning advanced degrees from New England Conservatory and Harvard. He teaches at the University of California, San Diego, and was just named a Guggenheim Fellow. His *GOBI POLYPHONY* for erhu and cello (2003) is a meditation on Mongolian music.

JING JING LUO, born in Beijing, as a young girl escaped from a labor camp during the Cultural Revolution and eventually was able to pursue composition studies in the U.S. She has taught at Oberlin College, and is also a visual artist of calligraphy and ink brush painting. Her *DRAMA FOR FOUR SPIRITS* for clarinet, violin, cello, piano and Beijing Opera percussion (2005) draws on ancient Chinese

images.

DU YUN, from Shanghai, is an alumna of Oberlin Conservatory and Harvard University, and is on the composition faculty of SUNY - Purchase. Her musical genres are unusually wide-ranging - from concert to experimental/improvisatory, theater, dance, and art shows, and she has been featured at international festivals. *VICISSITUDES I* (2002) is scored for clarinet, cello, double bass, percussion, steel-stringed guitar, and piano.

WANG JIE, also from Shanghai, moved to the U.S. in 2000 and studied composition at the Manhattan School of Music and the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Her opera *NANNAN* was selected for showcasing by the New York City Opera in their VOX Festival; she is the youngest composer ever included. *SHADOW*, is a set of miniatures for violin, cello, piano (2006).

Artists are Mary Mackenzie, soprano; Huang Ruo, Chinese folk singer; Ulla Suokko, flute; Moran Katz, clarinet; Arthur Kampela, guitar; Jared Soldiviero, percussion; Wang Guowei, erhu; Renée Jolles, violin; Kristina Reiko Cooper, cello; Richard Fredrickson, double bass; Cheryl Seltzer, piano; Joel Sachs, piano, conductor.

Continuum's signature Retrospective Series has been a key part of New York's musical life since the organization's founding in 1966. Its innovative programming has been praised for introducing New York to unknown extraordinary composers from around the world, many of whom later achieve worldwide standing. Continuum, in turn, has had remarkable opportunities to bring American and other new music to festivals in far corners of the world, in the ensemble's travels to such locations as Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Indonesia, and Korea. In May, Continuum will perform at the Beijing Modern Music Festival. Continuum has recorded on Nonesuch, Musical Heritage Society, Bridge, CRI, Capstone, Cambria/Troppe Note, TNC Recordings, Naxos, and New Albion, and has been broadcast extensively on national and European television and radio.

This concert is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency, which has also provided funding for the commissioned works, and support from the Amphion Fund, the Aaron Copland Fund, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Virgil Thomson Foundation, and other private and business donors.

Tickets, \$20, seniors, students \$10, are available at the box office, 129 West 67th Street (212-501-3330), www.merkinconcerthall.org. Continuum's website: www.continuum-ensemble-ny.org.