

Minnesota Orchestra
 Junping Qian, conductor
 Yiwen Lu, erhu | Joo Won Kang, baritone
 Roz Tsai, host | Fei Xie, artistic consultant

Saturday, January 28, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Tan Dun	<i>Internet Symphony "Eroica"</i>	ca. 7'
Dong-Soo Shin	<i>Mountain</i> Joo Won Kang, baritone	ca. 4'
Gioachino Rossini	"Largo al factotum," from <i>The Barber of Seville</i> Joo Won Kang, baritone	ca. 5'
Teng Yu-hsien/ arr. Che-Yi Lee	<i>Bāng Chhun-hong</i>	ca. 5'
Lee Jinjun	<i>Kampong Overture</i>	ca. 7'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Tieshan Liu/ orch. Mao Yuan	<i>Dance of the Yao Tribe</i>	ca. 8'
Jianmin Wang	Erhu Rhapsody No. 2 Yiwen Lu, erhu	ca. 10'
Fritz Kreisler/ orch. Clark McAlister	<i>Tambourin Chinois</i> Yiwen Lu, erhu	ca. 4'
Bao Yuankai	Selections from <i>Chinese Sights and Sounds</i> , Suite of 24 Folk Songs Dialogue on Flowers Flowing Stream Green Willow Going to Watch Yangge Dance	ca. 17'

concert partner

This program is presented in partnership with **The Great Northern**.

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Junping Qian, conductor

Junping Qian is the assistant conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, where he works closely with the Thomas Søndergård, who is the music director of that ensemble as well as music director designate of the Minnesota Orchestra. This week marks his first return to Orchestra Hall since debuting at the 2022 Lunar New Year concerts. Last season he made debuts with several orchestras in his native China including the National Centre of Performing Arts Orchestra Beijing, Shanghai Opera House, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and Macau Orchestra, among numerous others. In the 2022-23 season he makes debut appearances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Transylvania Philharmonic Cluj, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. A highly lauded violist, Qian moved to Europe in 2014 after he won a position in the Swedish Radio Symphony, a job which he left in 2016 to pursue conducting full-time. His conducting career in Europe has been equally as celebrated, as he has won the 2017 Bucharest International Conducting Competition, among numerous other prizes. In addition, he was a recipient of the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Conducting Fellowship 2018 and a Solti Foundation Career Award 2018-20. More: junpingqian.com.



Joo Won Kang, baritone

Joo Won Kang made his Metropolitan Opera debut last season as Marcello in *La Bohème*, and has also appeared in the company's new production of *Don Carlo*. He has been featured in leading roles such as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, the title role in *Eugene Onegin* and Ping in *Turandot* with opera companies throughout the U.S. Among them are San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Arizona Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Utah Opera. He sang the role of Chou En-lai in John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with the composer conducting, and he made his New York City Opera debut as Manfred in *L'Amore dei Tre Re*. At the Wexford Festival, he sang the leading baritone roles in two rare operas, Donizetti's *Maria de Rudenz* and Leoni's *L'Oracolo*, as well as appearing there in recital. This season, he returns to the Metropolitan Opera to cover Germont in *La Traviata*, a role he sings with Seattle Opera in the spring of 2024. He is a top prize winner in such important vocal competitions as the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Opera Index, McCammon Competition and Giulio Gari International Competition. More: kenbensonartists.com.



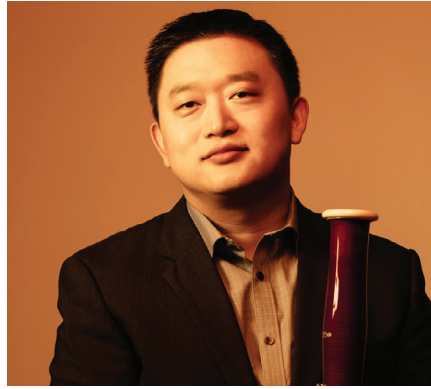
Yiwen Lu, erhu

Praised for her natural musicality and striking on-stage presence, Yiwen Lu is one of the most celebrated erhu players and teachers in China. She is currently a council member of the Bowed String Instruments Committee under the China Musicians Association as well as the Erhu Committee under the China Nationalities Orchestra Society. Her major awards include the Gold Medal of the 10th Golden Bell Award Erhu Competition in 2015—the highest award in any Chinese instrument competition—and the 4th Wenhua Prize, the Erhu Youth Group's highest performance award in 2012. Lu has collaborated extensively as a chamber musician and soloist across China and the world. In 2021, she and the Neo-classica String Quartet premiered newly commissioned arrangements for erhu and string quartet. She has also toured with the GSO Feiyue String Quartet across China. As a soloist she has collaborated with major orchestras such as the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, China Philharmonic and Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2022 she performed Qigang Chen's *Reflet d'un temps disparu* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and she toured with the SSO East Coast Quartet, GSO Feiyue String Quartet and NCPAO Bridge Quartet. She currently teaches erhu at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Roz Tsai, conductor

Dr. Benhong Rosaline Tsai, who hosted the Minnesota Orchestra's first Lunar New Year concerts in February 2022, is a global talent management executive who has held transformative leadership roles in multiple Fortune 500 organizations such as Ecolab, Honeywell and Xcel Energy. She currently serves as Vice President of Talent, Learning, and Org Effectiveness at Thrivent, a Fortune 500 financial services firm based in Minneapolis. She is a long-time community volunteer for youth development, arts and culture organizations, most recently completing her term as board chair for Minnesota non-profit BestPrep. A native of Tianjin, China, Tsai completed her undergraduate studies at Nankai University and obtained her master of science degree at St. Cloud State University. She holds a doctorate degree from University of Minnesota, where she currently serves as adjunct faculty for the Carlson School of Management. More: carlsonschool.umn.edu.



Fei Xie, artistic consultant

Fei Xie joined the Minnesota Orchestra as principal bassoon at the beginning of the 2017-18 season after serving as principal bassoon of the Baltimore Symphony, an ensemble he first joined as second bassoonist in 2008. When he won the principal role in 2012, Xie became the first Chinese-born bassoonist to hold such a position in a major American symphony orchestra. A highly praised soloist, Xie has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra—performing Mozart's Bassoon Concerto in January 2021—Baltimore Symphony, Festival Mozaic Orchestra and the Sichuan Conservatory Symphony Orchestra in China. An avid educator, he has taught masterclasses and coached orchestral bassoonists at universities, conservatories, festivals and youth orchestras throughout the U.S., China and Brazil. He took on the role of artistic consultant for the Minnesota Orchestra's first Lunar New Year celebration in February 2022 and continues in that capacity this year. Last year's concerts also saw Xie joined onstage by his mother and father—the professional Peking Opera musicians Mei Hu and Zhengang Xie, who are yue qin and jing hu masters, respectively. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

Tan Dun *Internet Symphony “Eroica”*

Lunar New Year festivities are thousands of years old in some countries, but tonight’s Lunar New Year concert begins with music that could only have come about in the 21st century. *Internet Symphony “Eroica”* was written by Grammy- and Oscar-winning composer Tan Dun (b. 1957), a native of China, on a 2008 commission from Google and YouTube as part of the first-ever YouTube Symphony Orchestra project. Over 3,000 musicians from more than 70 countries auditioned for the initiative via YouTube, playing their own interpretations of *Internet Symphony “Eroica,”* and the winners (among them Ben Odhner, who is now a member of the Minnesota Orchestra’s first violin section) then formed the real-world YouTube Symphony Orchestra, which premiered Tan’s work at Carnegie Hall on April 15, 2009.

Although only four and a half minutes in length, *Internet Symphony “Eroica”* is still in traditional four-part symphonic form. Featured throughout the piece are driving rhythms punctuated by brake drums, car wheel rims and timpani; extended techniques and glissandi for brass; a theme from Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony; and influences from around the globe. The composer commented on this groundbreaking project: “The Internet is an invisible Silk Road, joining different cultures from around the world—East or West, North or South. And this project has created a classical music phenomenon, bringing together musical heroes from all corners of the globe.”

Dong-Soo Shin *Mountain*

Mountain, composed by Dong-Soo Shin, is a musical setting of a poem by Hong-Chul Shin on the subject of longing for home—a poem that has been interpreted in the context of the Korean War that displaced millions of people in the 1950s. It exists in several instrumentations and is sometimes performed under the title “Oh Mountain.” Few details are available about the composer, but the music has nonetheless found its way to the hearts of many listeners around the world.

Boston Art Song Society Founding Director Seoyon MacDonald, who programmed *Mountain* on a Society recital in 2018, offered these comments last year: “I believe this song will touch us all personally, because every human being has that special longing for home wherever they may be. Today, I hope this song will be a gift to those who cannot visit their loved ones to celebrate life, and to those who couldn’t say their last goodbyes due to the pandemic.” Following is an English translation of the lyrics.

Mountain, O mountain of my beloved hometown,
Alas, I must leave you.
Carrying the burden of my heart,
You are the great wings of my soul.
With your arms embracing me,
Sorrowfully you make me weep, my love.
Mountain, O mountain of my beloved hometown, farewell!

Oh! Even when I am dead,
You are the home I would return to.
Wherever I am buried,
You are the final grave where I must be laid to rest.

Oh! Familiar mountain tops,
Affectionate valleys.
When I shall return,
I cannot promise you.
Yes! I must leave you.
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
O Mountain! Dear Mountain!
Ah! My beloved hometown Mountain!

Lyrics by Hong-Chul Shin; translation by Seoyon MacDonald.

Gioachino Rossini *“Largo al factotum,” from The Barber of Seville*

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) was born into a family of musicians in the town of Pesaro on Italy’s Adriatic coast. His musical career began when, at age 6, he played triangle in his father’s band. By age 14 he composed his first opera while attending Bologna’s Philharmonic School, and at 15 he was already making a decent living performing publicly on a number of instruments. He went on to compose a total of 39 operas (both comic and serious) as well as songs, chamber music, piano pieces and sacred music.

Rossini’s two-act comic opera *The Barber of Seville* is widely considered to be his greatest accomplishment and a masterpiece of the opera buffa genre (comic opera). The baritone aria “Largo al factotum” (Make way for the factotum) begins the opera as the main character Figaro appears for the first time, introduces himself, and sings about how he is in such great demand due to being an adept barber and having strong connections with influential people of Seville. The aria takes great skill and excellent enunciation to perform due to the repeating triplets at fast tempo and tongue-twisting libretto by Cesare Sterbini. Near the end, the often-parodied repeated “Figaro”’s are sung just before the closing patter. An English translation of the lyrics, omitting repetition, follows.

Make way for the city's servant.
Off to the shop soon. It is already dawn.
Ah, what a beautiful life, what lovely pleasure
For a barber of quality!

Ah, worthy Figaro! Worthy, superb!
Most fortunate for sure!

Ready to do anything, night and day,
Always around and about.
A better Cockaigne for a barber,
A nobler life, there is none.

Razors and combs, lancets and scissors
Are all here at my command.
There is also resourcefulness, in the trade,
With the young lady, with the young man.

Everyone asks for me. Everyone wants me:
Women, boys, the elderly, girls.
Here this wig; quickly this beard;
Here this bleeding, quickly this note;
"Figaro! Figaro! Figaro!"

Alas, what a fury! Alas, what a crowd!
One at a time, for charity's sake!
"Hey, Figaro!" Here I am!
Figaro here, Figaro there,
Figaro up, Figaro down.

Swift, swifter, like lightning I am.
I am the city's servant.
Ah, worthy Figaro! Worthy, superb;
Fortune will not fail you.
I am the city's servant!

Teng Yu-hsien/arr. Che-Yi Lee *Bāng Chhun-hong*

Bāng Chhun-hong (Longing for the Spring Breeze) is a song that in its original version contains lyrics in Taiwanese Hokkien, the language spoken natively by over 70 percent of the population of Taiwan. It was composed by Teng Yu-hsien (1906-1944), a Hakka Taiwanese musician, who set to music the lyrics by Lee Lin-chiu (1909-1979). The version performed at this concert was arranged by Taiwan native Che-Yi Lee (b. 1970) and is performed in an instrumental version without lyrics.

Arrangements of *Bāng Chhun-hong* and works deriving from it are popular in Taiwan and beyond. It was adapted into a Japanese patriotic song called *Daichi wa maneku*, which translates literally to "The Mother Earth is Calling on You," and another popular version was arranged by Koshiji Shirou and sung by Kirishima Noboru. Iterations have often been used as background music in Taiwanese films and teleplays. It is a theme in the soundtrack of *Singapore Dreaming*, a Singaporean film released in 2006. In a literary connection, Hakka writer Chung Chao-cheng used *Bāng Chhun-hong* as the title of a biographical novel about the life of the song's composer.

"At night waiting alone under a dim lamp, with the spring breeze blowing on my cheeks, I, an unmarried maiden of 17 going on 18, see a young man. I see he has a handsome face and a pale complexion; I wonder which family he is from? Wanting to ask him yet fearing embarrassment, my heart flutters as if it were a pipa being strummed. Wishing him to be the groom of mine, with love inside my heart. Waiting, wondering when my beau might come to gather my blooming flowers of youth. Suddenly I hear someone outside, and I open the door to see. The moon laughs at my foolishness, for I did not realize it was just the wind."

Lee Jinjun *Kampong Overture*

Contemporary Singaporean Lee Jinjun (b. 1990) is an award-winning composer, trumpet player and musical mentor. His music has been performed in Singapore, China, the U.S., Belgium, Germany and Spain. Recently, his symphonic band work *Autumnal Fireworks* was awarded first prize at the Singapore International Band Festival Composition Competition. In 2014, another band work titled *What Does the Future Hold?* won first prize at the World Projects Composition Contest and was premiered at the Walt Disney Concert Hall during the 2015 Los Angeles International Music Festival. Lee was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to write the concert band set pieces for the 2019 Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation. Other commissions include works for Timothy Reynish, Royal Northern College of Music, SMRT Corporation and the Orchestra of the Music Makers.

Lee wrote the following comments on his orchestral work *Kampong Overture*: "Czech composer [Antonín] Dvořák was famous for melding folk elements into the symphonic form, creating music that sounds nostalgic and genuine, qualities that made him one of the most popular folk-inspired composers of the 19th century. *Kampong Overture* takes a page from Dvořák by

using three Malay folk tunes, ‘Geylang Sipaku Geylang,’ ‘Lenggang Kangkung’ and ‘Suriram,’ and weaving them into a Romantic-styled symphonic overture.”

Jianmin Wang Erhu Rhapsody No. 2

Jianmin Wang was born in 1956 in the city of Wuxi, Jiangsu province in China. He is currently a professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He previously served as a visiting professor at Nanjing University, Dean of the School of Music of Nanjing University of the Arts, and the executive vice president of the High School Attached to Shanghai Conservatory of Music. His compositions have won over 30 awards. Erhu Rhapsody No. 2 won a silver medal from the third China Golden Bell Awards.

With his great skill and innovative spirit, Wang is best known for applying contemporary techniques and harmonies to traditional folk songs in ways that preserve the essence and flavor of the songs while creating new versions that are inventive and listenable. His music has been performed in China and abroad by the China Symphony Orchestra, China National Traditional Orchestra, China Central Broadcasting National Orchestra, Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Taiwan National Experimental Chinese Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and others. In addition, he has published many works in Music Creation and other publications, and recorded and published dozens of albums.

Erhu Rhapsody No. 2, which spotlights the erhu, a Chinese bowed musical instrument with two strings, was composed in August 2001. The music incorporates ethnic characteristics of Hunan flower-drum opera and melodic elements of Hunan folk songs giving the piece a distinct regional style and flavor. The music expresses a national spirit of perseverance, optimism and resourcefulness, as well as the heroic ethos of Chinese youth who are fearless in confronting difficulties in their lives.

Fritz Kreisler/orch. Clark McAlister *Tambourin Chinois*

On January 30, 1962, the day after Fritz Kreisler died, the critic Harold Schonberg wrote in *The New York Times*: “Among his colleagues he was unanimously considered the greatest violinist of the century...Kreisler was neither a fiery virtuoso nor a classicist, though he had plenty of technique and could play Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms with as much musicianship and knowledge

as any classicist. Where he differed from all other violinists was in his charm, and in the sheer aristocracy of his conceptions...His tone was of unparalleled sweetness. Above all violinists, he had an infallible sense of rhythm and rubato. His interpretations were natural, unforced, and glowing...As a composer he wrote what might be described as transfigured salon music. If the test of music is longevity, Kreisler’s music bids fair to be immortal.”

Composed in 1910 for violin and piano, *Tambourin Chinois* (Chinese Drum) has since been arranged for solo violin and orchestra by Clark McAlister, and for solo xylophone and brass quintet by Edward Bach. Tonight’s performances uses the McAlister arrangement, but with the violin part played on the erhu. The piece’s main theme is written in a pentatonic scale that uses five pitches rather than the seven in a typical major or minor scale. Said the composer: “I don’t mind telling you that I enjoyed very much writing my *Tambourin Chinois*. The idea for it came to me after a visit to the Chinese theater in San Francisco—not that the music there suggested any theme, but it gave me the impulse to write a free fantasy in the Chinese manner.”

Tieshan Liu/orch. Mao Yuan *Dance of the Yao Tribe*

In 1951, Central Conservatory of Music professor and composer Tieshan Liu traveled with several students to southern China to research and collect folk songs from minority populations. While visiting the Youling Village in the Liannan Yao Autonomous County in northern Guangdong province, Liu became inspired by Yao folk melodies he heard and used several to compose *Long Drum Dance of the Yao People*. Liu’s colleague, the established composer Mao Yuan (1926-2022), orchestrated the piece for Western orchestra in 1952 and named it *Dance of the Yao Tribe*. In 1954, the famous conductor Peng Xiuwen arranged it for Chinese orchestra and it became popular throughout China. It has since been arranged for solo guzheng and chamber ensembles and has been performed throughout the world.

Dance of the Yao Tribe begins by depicting a gathering of Yao villagers in a large open area under the moonlight. Soft and gentle melodies describe the graceful dancing of young Yao girls, then the tempo accelerates and the atmosphere intensifies as young Yao men join the girls in the dance. They continue to dance together in the piece’s middle section, expressing their love for each other and their hopes for a bright future as they savor the moment and the sweetness of their mutual love and affection. A lively passage played by two trumpets and the melody played by the orchestra express the jubilation and boldness of the young

dancers. The section ends with the gentle playing of the melody by solo violin.

The final section features a condensed reappearance of the content in the first section as the dance transforms into a line dance with other villagers joining in. The atmosphere is warm and exciting as the villagers jump, spin and dance in an unrestrained display of the true spirit of Yao men and women. The music reaches a strong rhythmical climax and ends in a fast and joyful mood.

Bao Yuankai

Selections from *Chinese Sights and Sounds*, Suite of 24 Folk Songs

Beijing native Bao Yuankai (b. 1944) graduated in 1967 from the Central Conservatory of Music with a bachelor's degree in composition and theory. Since 1973 he has taught at northern China's Tianjin Conservatory of Music, one of the many institutions he has served. In appreciation of his contributions to Chinese musical culture, he was awarded a special grant from the Chinese State Council. Other awards he has received include a Golden Bell Award for musical composition, the best Chinese Musicologist award by the Department for Cultural Affairs, and the Outstanding Music Educator Award from the Chinese Ministry of Culture. Tonight's concert concludes with four selections from his Suite of 24 Folk Songs, also known as *Chinese Sights and Sounds*.

Dialogue on Flowers. A popular song in China during World War II, *Dialogue on Flowers* combines traditional music from Hebei, lively syncopated rhythms and sound effects to depict 30 different flowers. It is based on the traditional Hebei folk tune *Flowers*.

Flowing Stream. Originating from the city of Midu in Yunnan province, this folk song is about a young girl who stands by a stream and compares the moonlit water to her lover, who is with her always in her heart. The song begins with dissonant harmonies used to create the atmosphere of a dark, starry night. Soon arpeggios are used to depict the moon's reflection on the flowing stream, and later to imitate the gentle sound of the breeze. The theme later becomes brighter to show the happiness of the girl.

Green Willow. A happy depiction of rural farm life, *Green Willow* is the only song in Bao's Suite of 24 Folk Songs that imitates the lively pizzicato-like sounds of Chinese plucked instruments and Chinese folk percussion. The lyrics vary and are not connected to the music, and often include additional clever words and phrases.

Going to Watch Yangge Dance. Popular today in both rural and urban areas of northern China, Yangge is a folk dance form that derived from a Song dynasty (960–1279) dance known as Village Music. In the evening people wear colorful costumes and form lines or circles as they dance to express their happiness. This song tells the story of two sisters in Shanxi province walking to a festival held in a nearby village. Despite the threat of rain and thunderstorms they eagerly cross a river and climb a mountain in order to watch the Yangge dance. Once they arrive at the festival the clouds have disappeared and the sun is shining. Strong rhythms and percussive sounds are used throughout the song along with contrasting flowing melodies. The piece culminates in a thrilling use of syncopated passages often found in northern Chinese music.

Program notes by Gao Hong and Paul Dice.