



THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Presents

“THE SILKEN PHOENIX”

A Chamber Music Theater Work
Produced by the Core Ensemble
Written by Wang Ping

Fiona Choi, actress
The Core Ensemble:
Tahirah Whittington, cello
Hugh Hinton, piano
Michael Parola, percussion

Wednesday, January 22, 2003
7:30 p.m.

Amarnick-Goldstein Concert Hall
de Hoernle International Center

Program

Overture

Spring Confession P. Q. Phan

Scene One: Ho Xuan Huong

At the funeral of her second husband, Commissioner Coc

Banana Trumpet Games (piano) P. Q. Phan

Ancient Vase (marimba)..... Keiko Abe

Miniature No. 4 Kui Dong

Entr'acte

Triple Concerto "A Sonorous Path"..... Chinary Ung

Scene Two: Izumi Shikibu

Toki No Mon (A Gate Into Infinity)..... Somei Satoh

Dream of the Cherry Blossoms (marimba solo) Keiko Abe

Entr'acte

Triple Concerto "A Sonorous Path"..... Chinary Ung

Scene Three: Li Qingzhao

Miniature No. 1	Kui Dong
Feng (cello solo)	Lei Liang
Dew-Fall-Drops (piano solo)	Tan Dun
When soft voices die (piano solo)	Melissa Hui
Four Miniatures No. 3 (cello solo)	Kui Dong
The Willows Are New (piano solo)	Chou Wen-Chung

Interlude

Triple Concerto “A Sonorous Path”	Chinary Ung
As I Lie Still (piano solo)	Melissa Hui
Solstice	Melissa Hui
Lu: Offer (vibraphone solo)	Bun-Ching Lam

Conclusion

Spiral	Chinary Ung
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MATTHEW WRIGHT, Director
LYNDA PETO, Costume Designer
HUGH HINTON, Script Editor and Musical Advisor
DAVID BUGHER, Stage Manager
MICHAEL PAROLA, Executive Producer

Program Notes

HO XUAN HUONG

Ho Xuan Huong (c. 1770s-c. 1820s), widely known in her native Vietnam, is regarded as her country's greatest woman writer. Little is definitively known about the facts of her life, except that she lived as a concubine, as had her mother. However, based on hints found in her poetry, a legend has grown up around her life, which is widely accepted in Vietnam, although disputed by some modern scholars. It is upon this legend that our scene is based. Ho wrote forcefully against the concubine system and often mocked political and religious figures in her poems. Her poems are known for their earthy sexual humor and double entendres.

IZUMI SHIKIBU

Izumi Shikibu (c. 970s-c.1030s) is commonly regarded as one of Japan's greatest women poets. She was one of the many women writers, including Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shonagon, who flourished at the Heian imperial court. All forms of artistic accomplishment were highly valued at the Heian court, and women were given the space to actively participate, resulting in the unprecedented situation of all the leading writers of the day being women. Izumi was the daughter of a provincial governor and was brought up at court. Although it was common for the upper classes to have many amorou affairs at that time, Izumi shocked the court when she had affairs with two royal princes, Tametaka and Atsumichi, both of whom died unexpectedly while involved with her. This earned Izumi the reputation of a *femme fatale*, and her passionate nature is reflected in her poetry of frank intensity.

LI QINGZHAO

Li Qingzhao (1084- c.1150) is generally accepted as China's greatest woman poet. She lived during a tumultuous time in Chinese history—the fall of the Northern Song dynasty and the establishment of the Southern Song. The daughter of a high government official, she married a young official who went on to serve as a provincial governor. After his early death, Li, a childless widow, spent many years wandering as a refugee with no fixed home. A master of poetry in the *ci* style, she often wrote of her longing for her husband and of her sensitivity to nature and her surroundings. Our scene is composed entirely of excerpts from her poems, progressing from her early days with her husband to her later poems of absence and old age.

The musical entr'actes and interlude are composed of various sections of the Triple Concerto "A Sonorous Path" by the Cambodian-American composer Chinary Ung. Ung emigrated to the US before the rise of Pol Pot and has done much to keep Cambodian musical traditions alive during the past 30 years. While the music within the three scenes reflects the three countries depicted—Vietnam, Japan, and China—we represent a fourth country, Cambodia, in purely musical terms.

Bios

FIONA CHOI, actress

Fiona Choi is an Australian-born Chinese from Melbourne currently residing in New York. In 1997 she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theatre from W.A.A.P.A (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts), and has been combining a love of travel and performing ever since. Ms. Choi was an original cast member of *RENT*, directed by Michael Greif, and played many roles throughout its Sydney/Melbourne season, including that of bohemian performance artist Maureen. Other theatre credits include *PLAINSONG*, an original Australian musical for Black Swan Theatre Company, *ELEGIES*, *ASSASSINS*, *FOLLIES* and *COLD LIGHT OF DAY*, a play reading for MTC. Television credits include guest roles on *NEIGHBOURS*, *BLUE HEELERS*, and the ABC pilot *DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM*. In 2001, Ms. Choi traveled to New York where she spent six months studying at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Fiona has just completed 18 months as an original cast member of *MAMMA MIA!* Australia under the direction of Phylida Lloyd, and performs regularly with the acclaimed cabaret group *SHUSH*.

TAHIRAH WHITTINGTON, cello

Tahirah Whittington, cellist, is a native of Houston, TX, and has performed for audiences in the U.S., Chile, France, Italy, and Japan. Solo engagements include a performance with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, at Merkin Hall in New York City, and with the New England Conservatory Symphony in Boston, MA. Ms. Whittington is a first-prize winner of the Sphinx Competition for Black and Latino String Players 1999. She is formerly a member of the Acacia String Quartet, winner of the 1999 Artists International Competition. A recipient of the Irene Diamond and C.V. Starr Scholarships, she holds a Master of Music Degree from the Juilliard School, where she studied cello and chamber music with Joel Krosnick and Joel Smirnoff of the Juilliard Quartet. She received her Bachelor of Music Degree from the New England Conservatory, under the tutelage of Laurence Lesser.

HUGH HINTON, piano

Hugh Hinton has performed widely as a chamber musician and recitalist, including concerts and residencies throughout the Middle East as a United States Information Agency Artistic Ambassador. Orchestral engagements include joining the Aequalis Ensemble in performances of Chinary Ung's *Triple Concerto* with the Phoenix, New Hampshire, and Honolulu symphonies. Mr. Hinton has performed at summer music festivals, including Tanglewood and Monadnock, and at such concert halls as the Gardner Museum in Boston and the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. His recordings of chamber and contemporary music have been broadcast internationally on "Art of the States" and can be found on the Etcetera, CRI, Albany, and Newport Classics labels. Mr. Hinton earned his Bachelor's degree from Harvard University and Master's and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from New England Conservatory, where his piano teachers included Russell Sherman, Wha-Kyung Byun, Lev Vlasenko, and Mykola Suk. A committed teacher, Mr. Hinton has taught music history at New England Conservatory and currently serves as instructor of piano at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA. He has been a member of the CORE Ensemble since its founding in 1993.

MICHAEL PAROLA, percussion

Michael Parola received his B.F.A. from State University of New York at Purchase and his M.M. and D.M.A. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His primary teachers were Raymond Des Roches and Richard Horowitz. Mr. Parola was a founding member and percussionist with the Aequalis Ensemble from 1984-1993. With Aequalis, Mr. Parola toured nationally, presenting hundreds of concerts and master classes in every region of the United States. During the 1992-93 season, he appeared with Aequalis in performances of the Chinary Ung *Triple Concerto* with the Phoenix, Honolulu and New Hampshire Symphonies. Additional work with Aequalis included national radio broadcasts on NPR's "A Note To You," international radio broadcasts for Voice of America and on CD, with a highly acclaimed 1991 release on New World Records. Michael Parola has commissioned many new works for solo percussion, with nationwide performances of pieces by composers such as Edward Cohen, Jorge Liderman, Armand Qualliotine, and James Baker III. As an orchestral timpanist, he has performed in the American premieres of works by Verdi, Donizetti and Shostakovich. Mr. Parola is active in teaching, with an appointment as percussion instructor at the Conservatory School of Music at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. In 1993 he founded the CORE Ensemble in which he serves as Percussionist and Executive Director.

WANG PING, writer

Wang Ping, born in Shanghai, immigrated to the US in 1985 and presently teaches at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has published the novel *Foreign Devil, Of Flesh and Spirit* (poems), *American Visa* (short stories), and *Aching for Beauty*, a scholarly work about foot-binding. She served as editor and co-translator of *New Generation*, an anthology of contemporary poems from China. In 1996 and 1997, she received a creative writing fellowship from the NEA and New York Foundation for the Arts. Wang Ping's poetry has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Best American Poetry 1993 and 1996*, and *Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry*.

MATTHEW WRIGHT, director

Matthew Wright is an actor, director and theatre educator whose work has taken him across the United States. As an actor he has appeared at such nationally acclaimed regional theatres as The La Jolla Playhouse, The McCarter Theatre, The Clarence Brown Company, The Studio Arena Theatre and Trinity Repertory Theatre. He has worked with many wonderful theatre artists including directors Des MacAnuff, Tina Landau, Anne Bogart, and Oskar Eustis and a roster of award-winning actors. His work as a director has included such diverse works as *BRAND*, *HEDDA GABLER*, *THREE SISTERS*, *IVANOV*, *MISALLIANCE*, *ON THE VERGE*, *HARVEY*, *HOLY GHOSTS* and two multi-disciplinary pieces with CORE Ensemble. He has served on the faculties of The Ohio State University, Wright State University, and Florida Atlantic University. He is currently Associate Professor of Theatre at Oberlin College.

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Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Friday 24

7:30 PM

***Chamber Music Concert**

Jodie DeSalvo, guest pianist and friends from the Florida Philharmonic.

All Beethoven program.

Sunday 26

4:00 PM

***Third Annual Mozart Birthday Concert**

Friday 31

4:00 PM

**Lynn University Philharmonia Orchestra
Florida Philharmonic Orchestra**

Joseph Silverstein, guest conductor

Arthur Weisberg, conductor

FEBRUARY

Sunday 2

4:00 PM

***Vienna and Paris:**

Constrasting Musical Philosophies

Phillip Evans, piano • Nelly Juarez, horn

Friday 7

7:30 PM

***Schwartz in Recital: The Romantic Violin**

Sergiu Schwartz, violin • Phillip Evans, Piano

Works by Brahms, Schubert, Bloch, Svendsen,

Wieniawski

Saturday 8

2:30 PM

***Violin Master Class: Playing to Win**

Sergiu Schwartz, violin

* Located at the Amarnick-Goldstein Concert Hall