2010-2011 PEAK Explores the Answer: Experiments in Arts & Technology

9-12-2010

Shanghai Quartet with Guest Artist Wu Man

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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The Chinese pronunciation of winter, dong, is homonymous to drumming sounds, therefore the piece concludes with the quintet inimitating percussion. The end may link back to the beginning of the piece, reflecting the cyclical nature of seasons.

Five Seasons was completed during the rainy season in Osaka, Japan. It was written for and dedicated to Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet.

—Lei Liang

About the Shanghai Quartet

Renowned for its passionate musicality and impressive technique, the Shanghai Quartet has become one of the world’s foremost chamber ensembles. Its elegant style melds the delicacy of Eastern music with the emotional breadth of Western repertoire, allowing it to traverse musical genres from masterpieces of Western music to cutting-edge contemporary works.

Wu Man, pipa

Renowned internationally as a virtuoso pipa performer, Wu Man has also carved out a career creating and collaborating on projects that approach pipa as a Chinese instrument in a new role in today’s music world, not only introducing the instrument to new audiences but greatly enhancing and growing the core repertoire.

Cited by the Los Angeles Times as “the artist most responsible for bringing the pipa to the Western world,” Wu Man continually collaborates with some of the most distinguished musicians and conductors performing today. She is a principal soloist of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project and performs with the Kronos Quartet, the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and the Shanghai Quartet. She has performed with many orchestras and has been described by The New York Times as “hauntingly beautiful and sonically colorful.”

The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Aaron Copland Award, Liang has had commissions and performances from the New York Philharmonic and its music director Alan Gilbert, the Heidelberg Philharmonisches Orchester, the Taipei Chinese Orchestra, the Fromm Music Foundation, Mary Flanagan and the New York Philharmonic, Stanford University, Boston Musica Viva, Rastatt Paul Robison, and percussionist Steven Schick. Among others, Liang’s music is recorded on Telarc, Naxos, Virgin Classics, Naxos, and New World (forthcoming) Records. As a scholar, he is active in the research and preservation of traditional Asian music.

Liang studied composition with Richard Birtwistle, Robert Cogan, Chaya Czernowin, and Mario Davidovsky and received degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music (BM and MM) and Harvard University (PhD). He is currently serving as associate professor of music at the University of California, San Diego.

Wu Man performed as soloist with many of the world’s major orchestras, and her tour has taken her to the major music halls. A Grammy-nominated artist, Wu Man will release Immovable Light, a new solo recording of early pipa works from the 12th centuries and new compositions, in September 2010 on Traditional Crossroads.

In Hangzhou, China, Wu Man studied with Lin Shicheng, Kuang Zhong, Chen Zemin, and Liu Dihai at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she became the first recipient of a master’s degree in pipa. Wu Man also played in Canada, the United States, and Europe, performing as a soloist with many orchestras and chamber ensembles. It was during this period that she formed the Shanghai Quartet, for which she is a founding member. Their repertoire, ranging from the classical core of European and American repertoire to contemporary works, has received widespread acclaim.

As a scholar, Wu Man has performed as soloist with the Taipei Chinese Orchestra in three concerts. The Taipei Chinese Orchestra musicians all perform with traditional Chinese instruments. Wu Man will perform a pipa concerto, The Yang’s Sage by composer Xu-Yan-Chung.

Last year Wu Man curated two concerts at Carnegie Hall as part of “The Ancient Paths/Mediterranean Voices” festival celebrating Chinese culture. Her travels in China to find the instruments that inspire her work often yield a film, Discovering a Musical Heartland—Wu Man’s Return to China. In November 2009 Wu Man and the Kronos Quartet presented the world premiere of A Chinese Honeymoon, directed by Chen Shi-Zheng. In addition to playing the pipa, Wu Man sings, acts, and plays percussion when performing this piece.

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Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman, Dean, College of the Arts
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Peak Performances presents:

Quarter-in-Residence

Shanghai Quartet

featuring

Weigang Li, violin
Yi-Wen Jiang, violin
Honggang Li, viola
Nicholas Tsavaras, cello
and guest artist
Wu Man, pipa

Program

String Quartet in D Major, op. 18, no. 3
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Allegro
Andante con moto
Allegro
Presto

“Dance of the Yi People” for pipa solo
Wang Huiran (b. 1936)

World Premiere!
Five Seasons for pipa and string quartet
Lee Liang (b. 1972)

Duo-Drop
Water-Ray
Cicada Chorus
Leaves-Fall
Drumming

A Chamber Music America and Meet the Composer commission.

--- Intermission ---

String Quartet in A Minor, op. 41, no. 1
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Introduzione (Andante Espressivo—Allegro)
Scherzo (Presto)—Intermezzo
Adagio
Presto

Since 2002 the Shanghai Quartet has been “Quartet-in-Residence” at Montclair State University. The Shanghai Quartet proudly coaches chamber music, coaches individual lessons, and acts as coordinator of the string department of the John J. Cali School of Music.

Five Seasons has been commissioned by the Shanghai Quartet. This commission has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Commissioning Program, with funding generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and the Chamber Music America Endowment Fund. Additional support provided by the Meet the Composer Commissioning Fund 50 program, which is made possible by generous support from the Mary Sligh Cary Charitable Trust, the Ford Foundation, the France Cooke Charitable Lead Trust, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Helen F. Whitaker Fund.

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Additional support provided by the Meet the Composer, Commissioning Music/USA, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. The 2010/11 season is made possible in part by funds from:

- The National Endowment for the Arts
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- Discover Jersey Arts
- Chamber Music America
- Meet the Composer
- Alison and James T. Crena
- The Honorable Mary Mochary
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Kent Whipple

Dili Lag Program Editor

Shanghai Quartet with Wu Man, pipa
World Premiere!
Five Seasons
Lei Liang, Composer

September 12, 2010 • 3:00pm
Alexander Kasser Theater
Montclair State University