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## Shanghai Quartet with Wu Man

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**Peak Performances**

2015 | 2016 SEASON

Quartet-in-Residence

# Shanghai Quartet with Wu Man, pipa



December 18, 2015 • 7:30pm  
Alexander Kasser Theater



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Photo by Ben Doyle

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President

Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts

Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Quartet-in-Residence

# Shanghai Quartet

**Weigang Li**, violin

**Yi-Wen Jiang**, violin

**Honggang Li**, viola

**Nicholas Tzavaras**, cello

Guest Artist

**Wu Man**, pipa

## PROGRAM

### ***Xi Yang Xiao Gu* (Flute and Drum Music at Sunset)**

Traditional, arr. Wu Man (b. 1963)

The Sound of Bells and Drums from a Distant Temple along the River

Moon on the Eastern Mountain

Breeze over the Quiet Water

Shadows of Flowers

Clouds and Water Far Away Become as One

A Fisherman's Song in the Evening

Waves Lapping at the Shore

The Returning Boat

### ***Küi: Song of Kazakhstan***

Traditional, arr. Wu Man

## **Chinese Folk Song Suite for Pipa and String Quartet**

Traditional, arr. Yi-Wen Jiang (b. 1963)

“The Butterfly Lovers” He Zhanghao (b. 1933) and Chen Gang (b. 1935)

“Yao Dance” Mao Yuan (b. 1926) and Liu Tie-Shan (dates unknown)

## ***Ghost Opera*, for Pipa and String Quartet (chamber version)**

Tan Dun (b. 1957)

### **~~Intermission~~**

## **String Quartet in F Minor No. 11, Op. 95**

(“**Serioso**”)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serioso – Più Allegro

Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato – Allegro

Premiere!

## ***Red Lantern*, Quintet for Pipa and String Quartet**

Zhao Lin (b. 1973)

*Based on Zhao Jiping's film score Raise the Red Lantern*

1. Prelude – Moonlight

2. Wandering

3. Love

4. Death

5. Epilogue

Exclusive Management for Wu Man: Opus 3 Artists, [www.opus3artists.com](http://www.opus3artists.com)

Exclusive Management for the Shanghai Quartet: California Artists Management, [www.calartists.com](http://www.calartists.com)

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 in the theater.

# Program Notes

**Traditional** (arranged by **Wu Man**)

## ***Xi Yang Xiao Gu* (Flute and Drum Music at Sunset)**

A handwritten score for this pipa piece first appeared in 1875 as a piece with seven untitled sections. It was later discovered with subtitles among Chen Zijing's handwritten collection of pipa music in 1898. The present score, having ten sections with subtitles, is taken from Li Fangyuan's *New Collections*, 1895. This composition is of the "civil" style of pipa music.

**Traditional** (arranged by **Wu Man**)

## ***Küi: Song of Kazakhstan***

Wu Man made this arrangement for pipa of a Kazakh folk tune that she heard performed on the dombıra, the two-stringed plucked lute that is widely regarded as a cultural symbol of Kazakhs. Kazakhstan shares a long border with western China, and nomadic Kazakhs have long represented an ethnic minority in China's Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region. In Xinjiang, Kazakhs speak their own language and maintain their own musical traditions. The pipa is believed to have entered China long ago through contact between Chinese civilization and the peoples that ancient Chinese sources described as "northern barbarians," which is to say, nomads. By performing this virtuosic nomadic melody on the pipa, Wu Man brings her instrument full circle, back to its Central Asian origins.

**HE ZHANGHAO** (b. 1933) and **CHEN GANG** (b. 1935)

(arranged by **Yi-Wen Jiang**)

## **"The Butterfly Lovers"**

One of the most famous violin pieces in China, *The Butterfly Lovers* concerto was composed in 1959. At that time the two composers were

still students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. *The Butterfly Lovers* uses a famous love story as a theme, adopting Chinese opera music performance practices combined with the western genre of the concerto. The use of charming melodies, lively music images, strong ethnic style, and distinctive local characteristics made this work deeply rooted in people's hearts. Affectionately referred to as China's own symphonic music, it has been performed and appreciated internationally.

This arrangement for pipa and string quartet uses the final section of the concerto and is called "Transformation into the Butterfly." With the peaceful atmosphere, the pipa again plays the opening cadenza-like introduction. At this time, muted strings play the lyrical and slow love theme, adding hazy fairyland colors. Here, the composers used a romantic expression, as if winter were over, the bright spring had come back to earth, and a pair of butterflies were flying as partners. This is the *Butterfly Lovers'* incarnation. They cannot be married before the hero's death. Only his tragic death could free them to fly together. Finally, the full ensemble joins the love theme, which represents the deep feeling pouring out from the hearts of the people, expressing their deep sympathy and sorrow towards the lovers' tragic fate and praying for their better life in their next lives.

**MAO YUAN** (b. 1926) and **LIU TIE-SHAN** (dates unknown)  
(arranged by **Yi-Wen Jiang**)  
**"Yao Dance"**

The use of folk materials of China's minority nationalities was extremely popular among Chinese composers during 1960–1980. The *Yao Dance* was originally written by Mao Yuan and Liu Tie-Shan, based on a folk song of Yao, a mountain village in Guizhou, in the southwest region of China. The work has three large sections, and within each section there are two themes. In the opening, the viola and cello, playing a soft pizzicato, hint at the arrival of nightfall. Some Yao dancers, dressed in floating, colorful garments, gather in the moonlight. The second violin then plays a simple but expressive melody as a beautiful young girl starts to dance. The rest of the dancers join her soon thereafter. The theme suddenly takes on

an ardent and rough character, suggesting a group of young men who cannot refrain from dashing into the group to join the dance. The strong contrast in the music depicts the striking personalities of the Yao people. The middle section is in 3/4 time, and its melody moves back and forth between a singing quality and a rhythmic dancing figure, as if two young lovers are expressing their adoration for each other. In the recapitulation, the viola starts the first theme before being joined by the other strings. The second theme is more vivid and passionate, with each voice alternating its entrance until the whole quartet plays together in a loud and fast coda in a culmination of the evening's celebration.

**TAN DUN** (b. 1957)

***Ghost Opera*** (chamber version)

*Ghost Opera* is a five-movement work for string quartet and pipa. The composer describes this work as a reflection on human spirituality, which is too often buried in the bombardment of urban culture and the rapid advances of technology. It is a cross-temporal, cross-cultural, and cross-media dialogue that touches on the past, present, future, and the eternal; employs elements from Chinese, Tibetan, English, and American cultures; and combines performance traditions of the European classical concert, Chinese shadow puppet theater, visual art installations, folk music, dramatic theater, and shamanistic ritual.

In composing *Ghost Opera*, Tan was inspired by childhood memories of the shamanistic “ghost operas” of Chinese peasant culture. In this tradition, which is over 4,000 years old, humans and spirits of the future, the past, and nature communicate with each other. Tan’s *Ghost Opera* embraces this tradition, calling on the spirits of Bach (in the form of a quotation from the Prelude in C-sharp Minor from Book II of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*), Shakespeare (a brief excerpt from *The Tempest*), ancient folk traditions, and earth/nature (represented by the Chinese folk song “Little Cabbage”). The Bach excerpt acts, the composer says, as “a seed from which grows a new counterpoint of different ages, different sound worlds, and different cultures.” In the final movement, the gradual transformation of the counterpoint brings

the spirits of Bach and Shakespeare, the civilized world, and the rational mind, “this insubstantial pageant,” into the eternal earth.

**ZHAO LIN** (b. 1973)

### ***Red Lantern, Quintet for Pipa and String Quartet***

Zhao Lin was invited by Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet to compose a new work for pipa and string quartet. This piece is a tribute to his father, the composer Zhao Jiping, and to the great tradition of music from China. *Red Lantern* is derived from his father’s original music, scored for the great Zhang Yimou film *Raise the Red Lantern*. Inspired by Chinese traditional Beijing Opera, this work explores its unique musical style and language with the many colors of China’s traditional music. The quintet is a suite of stories that take place in a traditional Chinese private courtyard through the centuries. It tells an emotional story of Chinese family relationships in older times and the impact of the family’s isolation from society.

—*Opus 3 Artists*

## About the Artists

### **Wu Man**

Recognized as the world’s premier pipa virtuoso and leading ambassador of Chinese music, Grammy Award–nominated musician Wu Man has carved out a career as a soloist, educator, and composer, giving her lute-like instrument—which has a history of over 2,000 years in China—a new role in both traditional and contemporary music. Through numerous concert tours, Wu Man has premiered hundreds of new works for the pipa, while spearheading multimedia projects to both preserve and create awareness of China’s ancient musical traditions. Her adventurous spirit and virtuosity have led to collaborations across artistic disciplines, allowing Wu Man to reach wider audiences as she works to break through cultural and musical borders. Wu Man’s efforts were recognized when she was named *Musical America*’s 2013 Instrumentalist of the Year, the first time this prestigious award has been bestowed on a player of a non-Western instrument.



Brought up in the Pudong School of pipa playing, one of the most prestigious classical styles of Imperial China, Wu Man is now recognized as an outstanding exponent of the traditional repertoire as well as a leading interpreter of contemporary pipa music by today's most prominent composers. She was awarded Harvard University's Bunting Fellowship in 1998, was the first Chinese traditional musician to receive the United States Artist Fellowship in 2008, and was the first artist from China to perform at the White House. Wu Man's discography includes over 40 albums including the Grammy-nominated recordings *Our World in Song*, *Traditions and Transformations: Sounds of the Silk Road Chicago*, Tan Dun's *Pipa Concerto* with Yuri Bashmet and the Moscow Soloists, and *You've Stolen My Heart* with the Kronos Quartet.

Born in Hangzhou, China, Wu Man studied with Lin Shicheng, Kuang Yuzhong, Chen Zemin, and Liu Dehai at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she became the first recipient of a master's degree in pipa. Accepted into the conservatory at age 13, her audition was covered by national newspapers and she was hailed as a child prodigy, becoming a nationally recognized role model for young pipa players. She subsequently received first prize in the First National Music Performance Competition, among many other awards, and participated in many premieres of works by a new generation of Chinese composers. Her first exposure to western classical music came in 1979 when she saw Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra performing in Beijing. In 1980 she participated in an open master class with violinist Isaac Stern and in 1985 made her first visit to the United States as a member of the China Youth Arts Troupe. Wu Man moved to the US in 1990 and currently resides with her husband and son in California. For more information visit [www.wumanpipa.org](http://www.wumanpipa.org).

## Shanghai Quartet

Renowned for passionate musicality, impressive technique, and multicultural innovations, the Shanghai Quartet is 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 including traditional Chinese folk music, masterpieces of Western

music, and cutting-edge contemporary works. Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the Quartet has worked with the world's most distinguished artists and regularly tours the major music centers of Europe, North America, and Asia.

Recent performances range from the International Music Festivals of Seoul and Beijing to the Festival Pablo Casals in both France and Puerto Rico, the Beethoven Festival in Poland, Yerevan Festival in Armenia, and Cartagena International Music Festival in Colombia as well as numerous concerts in all regions of North America. They have performed with the Tokyo, Juilliard, and Guarneri Quartets; cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell; Menahem Pressler, Yuja Wang, and Chanticleer. They have been regular performers at many of North America's leading chamber music festivals, including the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and Maverick Concerts, where they recently made their 25th consecutive appearance.

The Quartet has a long history of championing new music, with significant composers writing music for them. Recent premieres include works by David Del Tredici, Lei Liang, Krzysztof Penderecki, Lowell Lieberman, Marc Neikrug and Zhou Long. Bright Sheng's *Dance Capriccio* was composed for them and pianist Peter Serkin in 2012. Dan Welcher's *Museon Polemos* for double quartet premiered that year with the Miro Quartet. And Du Yun's *Tattooed in Snow* premiered in 2015. The tradition continues with the October 2015 premiere of *Red Lantern* for pipa and string quartet by Zhao Lin and Zhao Ji-Ping, China's most renowned film composers, with Wu Man.

The Shanghai Quartet has an extensive discography of more than 30 recordings, ranging from the Schumann and Dvořák piano quintets with Rudolf Buchbinder to Zhou Long's *Poems from Tang* for string quartet and orchestra with the Singapore Symphony (BIS). Delos released the Quartet's most popular disc, *Chinasong*, a collection of Chinese folk songs arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang reflecting on his childhood memories of the Cultural Revolution in China. In 2009 Camerata released the Quartet's recordings of the complete Beethoven String Quartets, a highly praised, seven-disc project.

A diverse and interesting array of media projects include a cameo appearance playing Bartók's String Quartet No. 4 in Woody Allen's film *Melinda and Melinda* and PBS television's *Great Performances* series. Violinist Weigang Li appeared in the documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, and the family of cellist Nicholas Tzavaras was the subject of the film *Music of the Heart*, starring Meryl Streep.

The Shanghai Quartet currently serves as Quartet-in-Residence at the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, Ensemble-in-Residence with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and visiting guest professors of the Shanghai Conservatory and the Central Conservatory in Beijing. They are proudly sponsored by Thomastik-Infeld Strings. The Shanghai Quartet has been Quartet-in-Residence at Montclair State University since 2002. [shanghaiquartet.com](http://shanghaiquartet.com)

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**Office of Arts & Cultural Programming** (ACP) presents and produces remarkable works of dance, music, theater, and opera at the Alexander Kasser Theater under the banner Peak Performances. Specific to its mission is a willingness to offer work by artists whose ideas are singular and worthy examples of creative innovation. Notable past productions include Richard Schechner's *Imagining O*; Robert Woodruff's *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Robert Wilson's *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; David Gordon's *Shlemiel the First* by Robert Brustein, Arnold Weinstein, and Hankus Netsky; Ridge Theater's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang; and The Builders Association's *Elements of Oz*. ACP has commissioned works by Vijay Iyer, Liz Gerring, Bill T. Jones, Susan Marshall, Jan Fabre, Richard Alston, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor, Laurie Anderson (for the Kronos Quartet), Romeo Castellucci, Pat Graney, Fred Hersch, and Nora Chipaumire. ACP has fostered several unique initiatives, such as the Creative Thinking course, which takes the artistic process as impetus for problem solving in all academic disciplines,

and Dance for Film on Location at MSU, a multiyear project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

ACP is the proud recipient of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance/New Jersey State Council on the Arts Cultural Access Network Innovator Award and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Citation of Excellence and Designation of Major Impact.

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Holly and Robert Gregory

I. Michael Kasser

The Honorable Mary Mochary



To view our complete season and for more information, visit **peakperfs.org**.

