

2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Loyd Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Music under the Moon

Lantern Festival Celebration

SPECIAL EVENT

SUPPORTING PARTNER

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

Saturday 11 February, 8pm



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sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL



Music under the Moon

Lantern Festival Celebration

GUAN XIA A Hundred Birds
Paying Homage to the Phoenix
BARTÓK The Miraculous Mandarin: Suite
TAN DUN Nu Shu – The Secret Songs of Women
Tan Dun conductor • **Liu Wenwen** suona
Louise Johnson harp

Supporting Partner
The University of Sydney
Confucius Institute
Sat 11 Feb 8pm

Illustration: Cobby Malpas



Organ Grandeur

Joseph Nolan in Recital

LISZT Fantasy and Fugue on 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam', S.259
WIDOR Organ Symphony No.5
Joseph Nolan organ

Tea & Symphony
Fri 17 Feb 11am
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Vengerov plays Brahms

Tchaikovsky 5

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TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5
David Robertson conductor • **Maxim Vengerov** violin

Special Event
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Robertson conducts Tchaikovsky

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BARTÓK Four Orchestral Pieces
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5
David Robertson conductor

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Mon 20 Feb 7pm



Colour & Movement

Ravel's Bolero

LIGETI Romanian Concerto
WESTLAKE Oboe Concerto **PREMIERE**
BARTÓK Four Orchestral Pieces
RAVEL Bolero
David Robertson conductor • **Diana Doherty** oboe

Meet the Music
Wed 22 Feb 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 23 Feb 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 24 Feb 8pm



Young Russians

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RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.1
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.1
Gustavo Gimeno conductor • **Daniil Trifonov** piano

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Kreisleriana
SHOSTAKOVICH 24 Preludes
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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SPECIAL EVENT

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY, 8PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

MUSIC UNDER THE MOON

Lantern Festival Celebration

Tan Dun *conductor*

Liu Wenwen *suona*

Louise Johnson *harp*

GUAN XIA (born 1957)

**100 Birds Flying Towards the
Phoenix – Suona Concerto**

BARTÓK BÉLA (1885–1945)

The Miraculous Mandarin: Suite

Introduction

The Girl and the First Victim

The Girl and the Second Victim

The Girl and the Mandarin

The Girl Dances before the

Mandarin

The Mandarin's Capture of the

Girl

INTERVAL

TAN DUN

Nu Shu: The Secret Songs

of Women –

Symphony for 13 micro films,

harp and orchestra

Prologue: Secret Fan

Mother's Story:

Mother's Song

Dressing for the Wedding

Cry-Singing for the Marriage

Nu Shu Village

Sisters' Intimacy:

Longing for Her Sister

A Road without End

Forever Sisters

Daughter's Story

Daughter's River

Grandmother's Echo

The Book of Tears

Soul Bridge

Epilogue: Living in the Dream

Estimated durations:

10 minutes, 21 minutes,

20-minute interval, 40 minutes

The concert will conclude at
approximately 9.45pm

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the SSO

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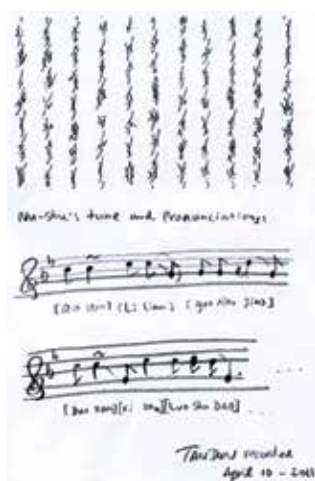
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Photos and documents from Tan Dun's research into Nu Shu culture (tandun.com)



Music Under the Moon

Each time composer and conductor Tan Dun visits Sydney, he brings his own creations – some originating from his film soundtracks, some composed for the concert hall, but always as rich visually as they are musically. In this concert we'll hear the Sydney premieres of *Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women* together with Guan Xia's new concerto for suona, *100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix*. As the companion to these two Chinese works, Tan Dun has programmed the suite from Béla Bartók's 1920s ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*.

At first glance (and even allowing for Bartók's subject matter) the inclusion of Hungarian music might seem surprising. But Tan Dun has long felt an affinity for Bartók's music. In the wake of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, he was part of a new generation of Chinese composers who paid close attention not only to Bartók's music but to his deep interest in folk music and his incorporation of indigenous folk elements into his music. During his studies at the Central Conservatory of Music, for example, Tan Dun took a field trip to his home province, Hunan, to collect folk songs. Later, when composing *The Map*, he visited Xiangxi to collect folk music and, as in tonight's *Nu Shu*, mixed his orchestral material with video recordings of the villagers singing and playing instruments – acknowledging the influence of Bartók in this compositional approach.

For a Chinese composer writing for Western as well as Chinese audiences, Bartók provides an unparalleled model for how a composer of concert music can find inspiration in the folk heritage of their homeland – each enriching the other. Guan Xia's *100 Birds...* similarly has an anthropological underpinning: his research into the songs of Henan and the disappearing traditional suona repertoire is also an attempt to preserve and bring back to life an endangered heritage. For Tan Dun, his research over five years resulted in more than 200 hours of documentation of the fading Nu Shu culture. And so, not only is there music – something contemporary and impassioned – for us to enjoy in the concert hall, there is also an archive to preserve an ancient and truly unique language. 'Originally whispered in corridors or hidden on paper fans, the music now explores and crosses new boundaries in time, space and culture.'



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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Guan Xia

100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix – Suona Concerto

Liu Wenwen *suona*

If you're unacquainted with Chinese music, the first thing that might strike you about this new concerto is the solo instrument: the suona. Introduced to China nearly 2000 years ago from Central Asia, the suona is a double-reed woodwind instrument essentially comparable to the oboe, although its metal bell gives it a shriller sound similar to a muted trumpet. This quality has made it a mainstay of marching bands, ceremonial and outdoor music for generations.

100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix is a reimagining of an old folk tune well-known throughout China's core provinces, traditionally played on the suona by virtue of the instrument's amazing ability to mimic birdcalls. Guan Xia first heard the melody when he was a boy growing up in Henan province, and it has held a special place in his heart ever since. Henan possesses a strong and unique school of suona playing, and Henanese musicians have built up a formidable repertoire for the instrument. It is this tradition that Guan Xia seeks to recapture and exalt in his new concerto, which is an enchanting immersion of ancient folk music within a modern, orchestral sound world.

The folk tune itself is based on a legend about the genesis of the East Asian phoenix. Unlike the immortal, fiery beast of Greek mythology, the Chinese fenghuang started life as an unremarkable, yet diligent and frugal bird who would carefully store the fruits and nuts discarded by her avian peers. In a time of severe drought, the other birds began to starve and die, so the phoenix opened her cave and shared her hoard with the beleaguered flocks. After the famine, each bird picked the most stunning feather from its plumage and gave it in adoration to the phoenix, transforming her into the most beautiful creature on Earth. Every year thereafter the birds congregated on her birthday, paying homage to her generosity and magnanimity.

DOUGLAS RUTHERFORD © 2016

The orchestra for *100 Birds...* calls for piccolo with pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani with glockenspiel, xylophone and marimba; harp and strings.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra gave the premiere of *100 Birds...* with tonight's artists in a Chinese New Year concert last week.

Keynotes

GUAN XIA

*Born Kaifeng (Henan Province),
1957*

In addition to his impressive array of concert music, including symphonic and operatic works and the *Earth Requiem* (composed in commemoration of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake), Guan Xia has become something of a household name throughout China on account of the cornucopia of music he has composed for some of the country's most beloved television series. He is currently the Executive Director of the China National Symphony Orchestra, and his talents have been recognised with awards from the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Vienna State Opera.

100 BIRDS...

This short concerto combines the traditional Chinese suona (a cross between an oboe and a trumpet) with the sounds of the symphony orchestra. After an energetic beginning, the soloist emerges from the texture to play gentler music with the flute and harp, leading into the first appearance of the folk tune that provided the inspiration for this virtuosic and colourful music.

Béla Bartók

The Miraculous Mandarin: Suite

Introduction

The Girl and the First Victim

The Girl and the Second Victim

The Girl and the Mandarin

The Girl Dances before the Mandarin –

The Mandarin's Capture of the Girl

In August 1917, the Hungarian literary magazine *Nyugat* published a libretto, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, intended by the writer, Menyhert Lengyel, to catch the eye of the impresario Serge Diaghilev, supremo of the Ballets Russes. Bartók became intensely interested in the subject matter and wrote to Lengyel asking if he could set the scenario to music. The story – which Bartók described as 'beautiful' – was right up Bartók's alley: elements of distorted sex, an ostensible battle between good and evil, a dose of mystery (Bartók covered up the female character's name – Mimi).

Bartók began sketches for the ballet, or pantomime as he preferred to call it, the same month. The draft was completed in May 1919, and scoring begun in 1923. He made further cuts and revisions to the score between April and November 1924, and only really decided on an ending sometime between 1926 and 1931.

The original ballet follows Lengyel's scenario closely. Nearly every musical idea has an illustrative function, and Bartók actually wanted to designate this concert suite (which you are hearing in this performance) 'Scenes' from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, to express the faithfulness of the music to the dramaturgy.

But there was always a tussle with the musical aspects. Later amendments to the ballet enhanced its musical qualities, emphasising the musical symbolism rather than the pantomime, and there are clear formal symmetries both in the ballet and the suite; a sense of musical inevitability about the progress of both versions even if the listener can't readily detect the structure.

The suite – an expanding sequence of three similar scenes framed by fast, almost hectic, segments – is taken from the first two-thirds of the ballet. An understanding of the scenario up to that point is helpful in following the musical events.

An awful clamour, clatter, stampeding and blowing of horns... lead the highly respectable listener from the crowded streets of a metropolis into an apaches' den.

Bartók's description of the the opening to his wife.

The story concerns a girl and three ruffians (Bartók's 'apaches'). The first ruffian goes through his pockets vainly looking for money

Keynotes

BARTÓK

*Born Nagyszentmiklós (Hungary)
now Sînnicolau Mare (Romania),
1881*

Died New York City, 1945

Bartók is one of Hungary's most famous composers and an important figure in 20th-century music. He was also a collector and student of folk music (an early ethnomusicologist) and this influenced many of his works, especially in his use of melody, ornamentation and compelling, non-standard rhythms. He was also influenced by Debussy, Stravinsky and even Schoenberg. While piano students will probably recall his *Mikrokosmos*, he is best-known in the concert hall for his brilliant and evocative *Concerto for Orchestra*. Bartók himself considered *The Miraculous Mandarin* one of his finest scores.

THE SUITE

Bartók composed *The Miraculous Mandarin* – a one-act ballet or 'pantomime' – in the 1920s. This concert suite is drawn from the first 20 minutes of the ballet and is organised in six movements, the last two of which are played without pause. Listen for the sinuous sound of the clarinet (The Girl) as three victims are seduced in turn: the old rake, the shy young man, and the strange Chinese mandarin. Listen, too, for some of Bartók's signature gestures, including the fiercely rhythmic dances and sometimes otherworldly use of orchestral colours.

(violas playing speech-like music). The second rummages through drawers (violins entering faster against the chugging of the lower strings and piano) – no luck either. The third ruffian gets up from his bed (rising motifs from trombones and tuba), and orders the girl to stand in the window and lure men up to their apartment. Thus begin the three seduction scenes, which will become more and more musically elaborate.

A sinuous and freely played clarinet solo represents the girl enticing men upstairs. She sees a man who looks interested (shrill chirping clarinets). He comes up the stairs; the ruffians hide (a metrically shifting ostinato, rather like the 'Sacrificial Dance' from *The Rite of Spring*). The man, an old rake, makes comic gestures of love (trombone glissandos, with violas and cellos playing a slow, ardent theme that is undermined by its dissonant harmonisation in seconds). 'Got any money?' asks the girl. 'Never mind money,' says the sleaze, 'what matters is love.' The ruffians leap out from their hiding place, seize the old rake and throw him out (clattering woodwinds, recalling the opening).

The girl begins a second seduction (clarinet again). A shy young man appears (oboe solo). Hesitantly he begins to dance with the girl (bassoon solo, followed by strings). The dance becomes faster and more impassioned (high violins playing the bassoon melody). The ruffians jump out, seize the youth and throw him out (clattering woodwinds again).

Third seduction: the clarinet once again, with violin harmonics adding a greasy sheen. The girl and the three ruffians see a weird figure in the street – a Chinese mandarin. He can be heard coming up the stairs (trombone and tuba pounding, flute flutter-tonguing, piano and violin glissandos). The girl tries hard to lure him (building to an atonal waltz), but the mandarin watches the girl with immobile gaze. Finally – the one thing that works – she embraces him, and he begins to shake in a feverish excitement. She tries to pull away from him, and eventually breaks free, but he gives chase (violas beginning a mad and barbaric dance, furiously whirling above an insistent stamping motif).

This is as far as the suite takes us, but the ballet continues with attempts by the girl and the three ruffians to rob and kill the mandarin. When they try to hang him on a lamp hook, he emits a strange green glow. 'I know what will kill him,' says the girl, and she embraces him. All at once his wounds begin to bleed, he weakens and dies.

According to one writer, the mandarin's death makes the girl human, but, without the mandarin, she is left isolated, surrounded by evil.

Bartók considered *The Miraculous Mandarin* one of his finest scores. Though it still operates within the confines of tonal music,



Béla Bartók, 1922

...the three seduction scenes will become more and more musically elaborate...



The Girl and the Mandarin – from the 1956 Hungarian State Opera production

harmonic variety is gained from the equal use of all 12 tones. 'We have at our disposal a previously undreamed of wealth of transitory nuances,' Bartók wrote in *Melos* in 1920, not long after drafting the work, and listing harmonic combinations that could express blankness, daintiness, even forcefulness.

The orchestration, dating from 1924 and representing the last artistic layer, is of an extraordinary richness. There are moments, says biographer Paul Griffiths, where 'the orchestra seems to embody a corporeal sensation as when the mandarin begins to "tremble in feverish excitement".'

The rhythmic life of the work is one of its immediately endearing features, not only the metric shifts, but the drive of the triplet opening and the 'forceful binary propulsion of the "chase" theme, which bores itself forward like a bayonet,' according to György Kroó writing in *The Bartók Companion*.

Although Bartók was influenced in places by Stravinsky – *The Rite of Spring* and perhaps the *Song of the Nightingale* – the work is characteristically his in its melody and ornament (influenced by the rural folk music of Eastern Europe and Northern Africa, despite the urban setting), its compositional techniques, its

typical Bartókian motifs – barbaric allegros, erotic waltzes – and its expressive world. 'It...completed the trilogy of stage works [the others are *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Wooden Prince*] in taking another look at the hopelessness of male-female relationships in a civilisation which curbs and corrupts the animal nature of human beings,' claims Paul Griffiths.

Though some may see something askew in Kroó's view of the unearthly mandarin as representing 'elemental life force... courage in opposition...the very triumph of man', and Bartók's view of male-female relationships which, when considered in conjunction with *Bluebeard's Castle*, is punitive towards women, the work is perhaps merely typical of the tradition of lurid psycho-sexuality of other works of the expressionist era such as Richard Strauss's operas *Salome* and *Elektra* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. There is something quintessentially early 20th-century in its expressionistic conjunction of urban poverty, crime and sex.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1998

Bartók's orchestra for *The Miraculous Mandarin* suite is a large and colourful one with three flutes (two doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling cor anglais), three clarinets (doubling E flat clarinet and bass clarinet) and three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); four horns three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and five percussionists; harp, celesta, piano and organ; and strings.

The SSO first performed this suite in 1966 with John Farnsworth Hall, and most recently in 2008, conducted by Matthew Coorey.

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Tan Dun

Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women – Symphony for 13 micro films, harp and orchestra

Louise Johnson *harp*

Tan Dun is well known to the world for his film scores: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), *Hero* (2002) and *The Banquet* (2006). And his previous concerts with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra – most recently the ‘Martial Arts’ concerto trilogy – have emphasised his interest in the relationship between the music and film.

Born in Hunan province, Tan Dun grew up in a world where modern China intersected with indigenous traditions (shamans could communicate with the past and the present, with leaves and stones). Tan Dun attended the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing before moving to New York where he studied composition at Columbia University with Chou Wen-Chung, a student of Edgard Varèse. Now based in New York, he is perhaps the most successful exponent of bringing non-Western cultures into orchestral music. This partly reflects his personal biography,

Keynotes

TAN DUN’S NU SHU

Following in the footsteps of his idol Bartók, Tan Dun returned to his home province of Hunan to research and capture on film the unique Nu Shu culture and its ancient music – both of which have been fast disappearing to the point of near extinction. He spent five years in the fields, filming over 200 hours of footage, researching, composing, and conceptualising a new way of presenting the music.

Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women is notable for employing Tan Dun’s counterpoint concept in three ways: 1. ‘the present’ vs ‘the past’; 2. the music vs the visuals; 3. ancient Nu Shu culture vs culture of the future. The solo harp acts as a bridge to connect the past with the future. This triple counterpoint flows through the work’s 13 chapters, woven together by a clear storyline (see page 15).

Nu Shu represents the foremost effort to record and gather the ancient Nu Shu culture through digital audio-visuals. Think of it as a visual symphony that echoes with the Nu Shu chants and live orchestra in dialogue with the calligraphy. Each of the 13 micro films, regardless of duration, was filmed in one take. The visuals thus captured, says Tan Dun, ‘maintain their authenticity, with a sort of anthropological feel, in a visual tempo that does not interfere with that of the music.’

What is Nu Shu?

Nu Shu is an ancient syllabic script developed by women, in secrecy, over hundreds of years in feudal China. Created during a time in China when only men received any kind of formal education, and women were kept illiterate, Nu Shu was passed on through the generations from grandmother to granddaughter, aunt to adolescent niece, mother to daughter. It is the only known language that is gender specific, used and understood only by women. Nu Shu has only recently been exposed to the modern world.

Nu Shu contains up to seven hundred characters, some derived from the Chinese language, others based upon specific stitches in embroidery. A large part of the Nu Shu tradition is steeped in the creation of San Chao Shu or ‘Third Day Missives’, which were a way for the women to secretly express their thoughts and emotions to one another in a book that was given on the third day of marriage ceremonies. It is usually written on women’s most intimate and beautiful objects: handkerchiefs, fans, silk, belts, journals, etc.

Unlike most languages, Nu Shu is not spoken, but sung. It has survived for over eight hundred years, but its existence is now threatened as China rapidly expands and the last remaining women fluent in Nu Shu grow old.

and is partly due to his broad concept of counterpoint as reaching beyond sound to encompass the working together (or meshing together) of sound and image, West and East, nature and culture, past and future. *Nu Shu* is a case in point.

Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women originated in Tan Dun's discovery several years ago that in the county of Jiang Yong in his home province there are women who have had their own means of communication since the 13th century. 'Nu Shu' means 'women's writing'. Advice, messages, instructional tales and life lessons have been passed down in song form and in a distinct form of writing from mother to daughter and sister to sister over the past 800 years. Nicknames for the script include 'mosquito legs writing' to distinguish it from the square shapes of Hanzi, traditional Chinese writing. Tan Dun prefers its other moniker, 'music note writing'. The language has been the province of women only (often written on intimate items, such as fans), but is now under threat. Gao Yinxian, described by Tan Dun as the most important woman in Nu Shu village, died some years ago, and the composer promised the villagers that he would create an orchestral piece which might help position the language in the future.

It would be better not to think of Tan Dun's *Nu Shu* as an anthropological record; his response to the *Nu Shu* culture is more poetic. But in creating this work, filming and recording the songs, he developed a vast archive that might assist in preserving the culture, an aim he regards among his highest. It is somewhat ironic that a man has finally stepped into this role.

Nu Shu: Secret Songs of Women sees an orchestral frame around traditional nüshu songs sung on film by women of the village (including He Jinghua, Pu Lijuan, Zhou Huijuan, He Yanxin, Jiang Shinu, Hu Xin, Mo Cuifeng and Hu Meiyue). Tan Dun's use of film is true to his concept of counterpoint, in this instance incorporating a counterpoint of time. The 'archival' footage denotes nu shu's past; the orchestra its future.

Tan Dun gave considerable thought to the medium which should serve as the bridge between these two dimensions and settled on the harp as being the most feminine instrument and one bearing likeness to a nu shu written character. *Nu Shu* has a very poetic structure which could be considered under the themes of women, weeping, rivers and song. Tan Dun has organised this 13-movement work in six parts, which are outlined in his description that follows.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS © 2014



Tan Dun

'The beauty and romance contained with the Nu Shu language made me regard it as a language of tears.'

TAN DUN

PROLOGUE

1. Secret Fan

To express the love felt between mother and daughter, or among sisters, generations of women write in a common secret language, Nu Shu, on paper and fans. This forms the genesis of the ancient Nu Shu culture. The intimacy, compassion, and beauty of Nu Shu is a monumental tribute to women.

MOTHER'S STORY

2. Mother's Song

'Wisdom on educating daughters', the holy scripture that has been passed down from mother to daughter through countless generations, preserves the cultural traditions regarding family, ethics and child-rearing, and what it means to be a woman.

3. Dressing for the Wedding

Girls are typically married as early as age 15. Their wedding day is the most beautiful day of their life. Sisters, on the verge of parting with each other, help dress the bride. Underneath the dazzling head piece and the gorgeous wedding gown, is a reluctant heart bearing the weight of farewell. The fully attired bride captures the monumentality of life.

4. Cry-Singing for the Marriage

The wedding tradition features three days of consecutive crying. The resulting tear-soaked scarf serves as a link between mother and daughter, as well as between generations. After the wedding, any communication between mother and daughter is conducted secretly through rewriting the 'Wisdom on educating daughters'.

NU SHU VILLAGE

5. Nu Shu Village

Every race and culture has a Mother River. In Nu Shu Village flows such a river since the Song Dynasty. Beside the river the local women spend their lifetime nurturing their own language: Nu Shu. Nu Shu Village has never been relocated away from the river. The river has been serving as an emotional connection between mother, daughter, and sisters for generations.

SISTERS' INTIMACY

6. Longing for Her Sister

Besides the relationship between mother and daughter, sisterly love is also featured prominently in this work. Singing songs that reminisce about sisterly love gives the woman a chance to be reminded of her innocent, happy childhood. This serves as an anchor for her navigation of her current state of loneliness.

7. A Road without End

The life of a woman contains endless alleyways. She meanders from one to another, searching for her childhood sisters. Household after household, gate after gate, river after river,

Why the harp?

Tan Dun selected harp as the solo instrument for the piece, because of 'its beautiful feminine sounds' and distinctive physical shape – similar to one of the ancient Nu Shu characters. The harp is brought centre stage in a passionate, dramatic role, almost like in a ballad.

dynasty after dynasty...the woman continues on her endless journey.

8. Forever Sisters

Reunion between sisters dissipates all the sorrows, leaving behind laughter at childhood memories and tears at understanding adult life. The compassion shared between sisters often accompanies them into their marriages, providing strength in moments of hardship.

DAUGHTER'S STORY

9. Daughter's River

River, or a body of tears? Only the water knows the answer. River of Women is the river for daughters, mothers, and grandmothers of countless generations – as their tears form the melancholic melody on which float their boats of dreams.

10. Grandmother's Echo

Gao Yinxian was the most important woman of the Nu Shu Village as she helped pass down the language from generation to generation. Gao passed away at the age of 88. In her former residence, her granddaughter sits on the stool that Gao once sat on, as echoes of Nu Shu songs once heard by Gao as she sat there sewing come from afar...

11. The Book of Tears

Mo Cuifeng cries on remembering her wedding 50 years ago, when she was once a daughter to her own mother. Half a century went by; her mother passed away; Mo's tears remain.

12. Soul Bridge

A bridge where a daughter walks to remember her mother.

EPILOGUE

13. Living in the Dream

Despite the hardship encountered by the women of Nu Shu Village, why are their songs and lives filled with romanticism? That is because each day, when mothers, daughters and sisters gather together to sing, write and sew in Nu Shu, the happy time shared provides them with a wonderful, dreamlike reality.

© TAN DUN

In addition to the solo harp and the micro films, *Nu Shu* calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, three clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and four percussionists; and strings.

Nu Shu was premiered in Tokyo in 2013 by the NHK Symphony Orchestra with Risako Hayakawa playing harp and the composer conducting. (The NHKSO commissioned the work, together with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.) The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra gave the Australian premiere in 2014 with Elizabeth Hainen as soloist, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra performed it in 2015 with harpist Yinuo Mu; Tan Dun conducted these performances. This is the work's Sydney premiere.

MORE MUSIC

TAN DUN

As yet there is no recording of *Nu Shu*, but excerpts and commentary can be found on YouTube and also on the composer's and publisher's websites: musicalesclassical.com/composer/work/48098 tandun.com/composition/nu-shu-the-secret-songs-of-women

In previous years, the SSO has performed Tan Dun's *Paper Concerto* and *Water Concerto*, highly visual concert works that are worth watching as well as hearing. Tan Dun and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra have recorded these for DVD with percussion soloists Rika Fujii, David Cossin and Tamao Inano.

OPUS ART E 1013 (Paper)

OPUS ARTE 1014 (Water)

Also in the SSO's repertoire is *The Map*, and this has been recorded for DVD by the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra with cellist Anssi Karttunen and Tan Dun conducting.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 000339009

The original soundtrack for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* features performances by the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai National Orchestra and Shanghai Percussion Ensemble, with cellist Yo-Yo Ma as soloist.

SONY 760859

The violin solo in the original soundtrack of *Hero* was played by Itzhak Perlman. You can also hear Liu Li, lute, and You Yan, soprano, joined by the Central Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus of China and the KODO Drummers of Japan.

SONY 87726

For a comprehensive discography, visit tandun.com/recordings

THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN

Want to hear how the ballet ends? Our Chief Conductor, David Robertson, has recorded the complete *Miraculous Mandarin* with the Orchestre National de Lyon, in an all-Bartók album released last year. It includes the Dance Suite for orchestra as well as the Four Pieces for Orchestra, which Robertson will conduct with the SSO later this month.

HARMONIA MUNDI 501777

Béla Bartók was also a concert pianist, as was his wife Dittá Pásztory, and they frequently performed in concert together. To enlarge their repertoire, Bartók arranged a number of his orchestral works for two pianos, including *The Miraculous Mandarin*, which you can find on *Bartók: Complete Music for Two Pianos*, recorded by Matteo Fossi and Marco Gaggini. The 2CD album is filled out with pieces by György Ligeti.

BRILLIANT CLASSICS 94737

If you'd like to explore more of Bartók's orchestral music, look for *Solti: Bartók*, a 6-CD collection from Decca. It begins with the popular Concerto for Orchestra and includes the suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, both with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Kyung Wha Chung plays the violin concertos (also CSO) and Vladimir Ashkenazy plays the three piano concertos with Georg Solti conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Also included is the one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (which the SSO will perform at the end of the year) and several pieces by fellow Hungarian Zoltán Kodály, including his thrilling Dances of Galanta (which you can hear the SSO perform in July).

DECCA 478 3706

Broadcast Diary

February



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

abc.net.au/classic

Monday 27 February, 10pm

ANZAC DAY SALUTE: CENTENARY CONCERT (2015)

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SSO concerts are regularly recorded for broadcast across Australia. Please check the ABC Classic FM website for further details.

SSO Radio

Selected SSO performances, as recorded by the ABC, are available on demand:

sydneyphilharmonic.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

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Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts.

Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONG HAO



Tan Dun *conductor*

As a composer and conductor, Tan Dun has made an indelible mark on the world music scene, with a repertoire that spans classical music, multimedia performance and Eastern and Western traditions. His accolades range from Grammy and Academy awards, to the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for classical composition. He has also been named Musical America's Composer of the Year and is a recipient of the Bach Prize of the City of Hamburg and the 2012 Shostakovich Award (Moscow).

Tan Dun's music has been presented throughout the world by leading orchestras, opera houses and festivals, and broadcast on radio and television. As a composer-conductor, Tan Dun has directed the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala and Munich Philharmonic, among others. In 2010 he served as Cultural Ambassador to the World for the World EXPO Shanghai.

Tan Dun's creative voice reaches a vast audience. His *Internet Symphony*, commissioned by Google/YouTube in 2009, has reached more

than 15 million people online. Last year he conducted the Disneyland Opening Concert in Shanghai, reaching a record-breaking global audience of 65 million viewers. He also conducted the China tour of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Japan's NHK Symphony Orchestra in highly praised performances. In the 2017-18 season he will conduct the NDR Symphony Orchestra in a tour of Germany, concerts in London and Paris with the LSO, and the US tour of the China National Symphony Orchestra, of which he is Honorary Artistic Director.

Tan Dun has previously served as Chair of Carnegie Hall's China Committee, Creative Chair of the 2014 Philadelphia Orchestra China Tour, Associate Composer and Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the festival Water Crossing Fire held at the Barbican Centre. He has also served as Cultural Ambassador to the World for World EXPO Shanghai and is a UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador.

Tan Dun's previous conducting appearances with the SSO were in 2003 (*Water and Crouching Tiger* concertos), 2006 (*Paper Concerto* and *The Map*) and 2013 (*Martial Arts Trilogy*).

www.tandun.com



Liu Wenwen

suona

Liu Wenwen is one of the most outstanding, up-and-coming suona players in China, and a 13th-generation inheritor of the suona instrument tradition.

She has received various awards at home and abroad, including the Gold Prize in the 2nd International Chinese Instrument Competition organised by the Hong Kong International Arts Platform (2011) and the Gold Prize in the National Tertiary Institution's Folk Music Competition organised by Chinese Music Foundation (2015).

In 2010 she toured 11 countries with the Shanghai Culture Bureau, including Australia and New Zealand. That same year she performed at the National Center of the Performing Arts in Beijing and performed for the Shanghai World Expo. In 2014, Liu Wenwen toured Kuwait with the Zhejiang Folk Music Orchestra and gave a lecture-recital at the Confucian Academy of Michigan in the United States.

She has appeared with orchestras around the world, including the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic and Nice Philharmonic Orchestra. Her performances have taken her to many countries worldwide, including the US, UK, France, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, Kuwait, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan.

Liu Wenwen graduated from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, having studied with Chinese suona master Liu Ying. In 2013 she became the first and only Masters degree candidate in suona studies.

This is her first appearance with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



Louise Johnson *harp*

PRINCIPAL HARP

Louise Johnson studied harp at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music High School, and later at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Salzedo Summer Harp School in the United States with Alice Chalifoux.

At 18, she was appointed Principal Harp of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, a position she held for one year before deciding to spread her wings and pursue a freelance career overseas. Between 1983 and 1985 she lived in London, performing as guest principal and guest second harp with the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Claudio Abbado and Richard Hickox. She also gave recitals in Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room.

Louise Johnson gave her first performance with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the age of 14, later joined the orchestra as a permanent member, and was appointed Principal Harp in 1985. She regularly appears as a soloist with the orchestra: performing Debussy's *Danse sacrée et danse profane* with conductor Mark Elder in 1998; Mozart's Flute and Harp Concerto with James Galway (1990), Janet Webb (2005) and

Emma Sholl (2011); and Spohr's Concertante for violin and harp with former SSO concertmaster Michael Dauth (2006) and Hindemith's Concerto for winds and harp (2013). In 2014 she gave the premiere of Lee Bracegirdle's *Legends of the Old Castle*.

She has performed with all the major Australian symphony and theatre orchestras, the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Australia Ensemble. She has also performed with artists such as Cher, Sammy Davis Jr and the Bee Gees; toured Australia with the Bolshoi and Sadler's Wells ballet companies and played for the Bolshoi Opera, as well as appearing with Luciano Berio in a concert of his own works. She performed the Ginastera Harp Concerto in Seattle for the 1996 World Harp Congress and was a featured artist of the 12th World Harp Congress, held in Sydney in 2014.

Louise Johnson has taught harp at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for more than 25 years. She is in demand as a tutor and teaches regularly at the AYO National Music Camp.

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on four occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux,

Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The SSO's award-winning Learning and Engagement program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This is David Robertson's fourth year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

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Stuart Challender, SSO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991

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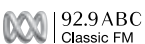
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