

The Shanghai Quartet has a long history of championing new music and juxtaposing traditions of Eastern and Western music. In 2013, the La Jolla SummerFest commissioned a sextet for piano, string quartet and bass from David Del Tredici. The Tucson Winter Festival commissioned “Fantasie,” a piano quintet by Australian composer Carl Vine; and Korean composer Jeajoon Ryu wrote a concerto for string quartet and symphony orchestra. 2008 featured premieres from the three continents that comprised the quartet’s artistic and cultural worlds: Penderecki’s String Quartet No. 3, “Leaves From an Unwritten Diary;” Chen Yi’s “From the Path of Beauty” co-commissioned with Chanticleer; String Quartet No. 2 by Vivian Fung; and jazz pianist Dick Hyman’s “String Quartet.” Other important commissions and premieres include works by Bright Sheng, Lowell Lieberman, Sebastian Currier, Marc Neikrug, Lei Liang, and Zhou Long. Bright Sheng’s “Dance Capriccio” premiered in spring 2012 with pianist Peter Serkin. Later that year, “Sweet Suite,” a piano quintet by Stephen Prutsman, was premiered with the composer at the piano. Dan Welcher’s “Museon Polemos” for double quartet premiered with the Miro Quartet at the University of Texas at Austin.

The Shanghai Quartet’s extensive discography of more than 30 recordings range 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. Delos released the quartet’s most popular disc, “Chinasong,” in 2003. In 2009, Camerata released the Shanghai Quartet’s recording 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 Bartok’s String Quartet No. 4 in Woody Allen’s film *Melinda and Melinda*, to PBS television’s *Great Performances* series. Violinist Weigang Li performed in the documentary “From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China,” and the family of cellist Nicholas Tzavaras was the subject of the 1999 film *Music of the Heart*, starring Meryl Streep.

The Shanghai Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the John J. Cali School of Music, Montclair State University in New Jersey, 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.

For more information about the Shanghai Quartet, please visit <http://shanghaiquartet.com>. Exclusive Management for the Shanghai Quartet: California Artists Management, www.calartists.com.



Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet

A Night in Ancient and New China

Friday, April 1, 2016
Crowell Concert Hall

Center for the Arts
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut
www.wesleyan.edu/cfa

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PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

CFA
2015–2016

Center for the Arts and Music Department
Wesleyan University
present

Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet

A Night in Ancient and New China

Connecticut Debut

WU MAN

Pipa

THE SHANGHAI QUARTET

Weigang Li, *violin*

Yi-Wen Jiang, *violin*

Honggang Li, *viola*

Nicholas Tzavaras, *cello*

A Crowell Concert Series event presented by
the Music Department and the Center for the Arts.

Co-sponsored by the College of East Asian Studies.

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and the Expeditions Program of the New England Foundation for the Arts.



This Crowell Concert Series event is made possible in part by the
Wesleyan Student Assembly, which subsidizes student tickets.

Thank you to Associate Professor of Music Su Zheng for giving this evening's pre-concert talk.

Concessions and CDs will be available for sale in the lower lobby during the intermission.

In case of emergency, please note that exits are located on each side of the seating area
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The use of audio or video recording devices or photography is strictly prohibited during the performance.
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PROFILES

About Wu Man

Recognized as the world's premier *pipa* virtuosa and leading ambassador of Chinese music, 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.

Having been 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 the Bunting Fellowship at Harvard University in 1998, and was the first Chinese traditional musician to receive the United States Artist Fellowship in 2008. She is also the first artist from China to perform at the White House. Wu Man's discography includes over 40 albums including the Grammy Award-nominated recordings "Our World in Song," "Traditions and Transformations: Sounds of the Silk Road Chicago," her recording of Tan Dun's *Pipa Concerto* with Yuri Bashmet and the Moscow Soloists, and "You've Stolen My Heart" featuring Wu Man and the Kronos Quartet.

During the current season, in addition to the North American tour with the Shanghai Quartet, Wu Man travels to Brussels and Geneva to collaborate with Uyghur singer Sanubar Tursun for performances presented by the Aga Khan Music Initiative, an interregional music and arts education program. Wu Man continues her championing of Zhao Jiping's *Pipa Concerto No. 2* with orchestras across the globe, as well as touring with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble.

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 thirteen, Wu Man's 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 she participated in many premieres of works by a new generation of Chinese composers. Wu Man's 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, she made her first visit to the United States as a member of the China Youth Arts Troupe. Wu Man moved to the U.S. in 1990, and currently resides with her husband and son in California.

For more information on Wu Man, please visit <http://www.wumanpipa.org>. Exclusive Management for Wu Man:
Opus 3 Artists, 470 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016, www.opus3artists.com

About the Shanghai Quartet

Renowned for its passionate musicality, impressive technique and multicultural innovations, 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 including traditional Chinese folk music, masterpieces of Western music, and cutting-edge contemporary works.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the Shanghai Quartet has worked with the world's most distinguished artists and regularly tours the major music centers of Europe, North America, and Asia. Recent festival performances range from the international music festivals of Seoul and Beijing to the Festival Pablo Casals in France, 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. The quartet has appeared at Carnegie Hall in chamber performances and with orchestra; in 2006 they gave the premiere of Takuma Itoh's *Concerto for Quartet and Orchestra* in Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium. Among innumerable collaborations with noted artists, they have performed with the Tokyo, Juilliard, and Guarneri Quartets; cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell; pianists Menahem Pressler, Peter Serkin and Jean-Yves Thibaudet; and the male vocal ensemble Chanticleer. The Shanghai Quartet regularly performs at many of North America's leading music festivals, including the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamberfest Ottawa, and Maverick Concerts.

(Continued on back page)

An Evening of Sonic Discovery with Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet

The *pipa* is a lute-like instrument with a history of more than two thousand years. During the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 B.C. – 220 A.D.), instruments with long, straight-necks and round resonators with snakeskin or wooden soundboards were played with a forward and backward plucking motion that sounded like “pi” and “pa” to fanciful ears. Hence, all plucked instruments in ancient times were called “pipa.” During the Tang dynasty, by way of Central Asia, the introduction of a crooked neck lute with a pear-shaped body contributed to the *pipa*’s evolution. Today’s instrument consists of twenty-six frets and six ledges arranged as stops and its four strings are tuned respectively to A,D,E,A. The *pipa*’s many left and right hand fingering techniques, rich tonal qualities and resonant timber give its music expressiveness and beauty that are lasting and endearing.

—Notes by Wu Man, “What is a pipa?”

The *pipa* was a major instrument in the teaching of Buddhism in early China, as witnessed by its portrayal in numerous murals in the Buddhist caves near Dunhuang, along the ancient Silk Road in western China. Throughout Chinese history, the *pipa* has also been a prominent instrument for female entertainers at the imperial courts in rich households, and at teahouses or pleasure houses, where the performers were known as singsong girls. Depictions of these singsong girls’ expressive performances and graceful voices constitute an important aspect of classical Chinese literature. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1911), literati (or scholar-bureaucrats) began to take an interest in playing pipa and, as a result, more elaborate compositions were created, and preserved in the earliest pipa music collection, published in 1818.

What kinds of new sounds and songs will emerge when a classical string quartet is in conversation with the ancient *pipa*? What emotions will this music evoke for childhood friends and schoolmates who meet again on tonight’s stage, and for those in the audience? To find out, I spoke with Wu Man, widely recognized as the world’s premier *pipa* virtuoso and as a leading ambassador of Chinese music in the West.

When she was just 13, Wu Man was accepted into the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. It was there that she met Yi-Wen Jiang, the Shanghai Quartet’s second violinist. “He was my classmate at the conservatory. A few years later, I met Honggang Li, the viola player, at the same conservatory. Through him, I met his brother Weigang Li, a very talented violin player.” But Wu Man didn’t collaborate musically with her friends back then. “We took many cultural and required political doctrine courses together, but we never played music together. We belonged to different departments. They played Western instruments, and I played a Chinese instrument. We were separated by two different musical worlds.”

After conservatory, Wu Man came to realize that her lifelong creative journey would be to combine her instrument, her voice, and her body to create unprecedented sounds and new modes of performance for the pipa. “I feel *pipa* is my voice. I communicate with people through my *pipa*.”

The year 1992 marked the first time in history for musical dialogue between a string quartet and a *pipa*, and a new musical form was born. One of the most memorable performances is Wu Man’s collaboration with the Kronos Quartet on Tan Dun’s *Ghost Opera* in 1995.

What is unique and exciting about Wu Man’s present tour with the Shanghai Quartet is that it not only promises the cross-cultural and genre-defying musical experiences that Wu Man is now well known for around the world, but the collaboration has also been a deeply personal one for the performers. “We have the same cultural heritage. We are so familiar with the repertory. We have a visceral understanding of the meanings of these folk songs and contemporary compositions because we grew up in China in these sounds. In rehearsals, we were able to ‘jump into’ the music immediately. We were transported back to our childhoods by the music; all the memories came back with the music. It is something very special to us.” After a brief pause Wu Man added, “very emotional.”

Wu Man and the members of the Shanghai Quartet are particularly looking forward to sharing their musical journey and emotions with college students. “I love to answer [students’] questions about *pipa*. I love to share my creative processes with them, and it’s so inspiring to see the sparkles in their eyes. I am always thrilled by their curiosity.”

Wu Man’s adventurous journey with the pipa seems to have radically departed from the aesthetics of those *pipa* masters recorded in China’s historical texts. Her journey could never have been imagined by innumerable *pipa* singsong girls throughout China’s long history. Yet, Wu Man plays a *pipa* that belonged to one of her teachers and that was bestowed upon her when he passed away, a significant gesture to recognize her central role both as a guardian of the *pipa* tradition and a pioneer of a new path for this ancient instrument.

Su Zheng, Associate Professor of Music
Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
October, 2015

PROGRAM

The Shanghai Quartet

Selections from *China Song*

Yao Dance (after Tie-Shan Liu & Mao Yuan)

Shepherd’s Song (after Han-Kuh Sha)

Harvest Celebration (after Jing-Ping Zhang)

arr. Yi-Wen Jiang

(b. 1963)

Song of the Ch’in

Zhou Long

b. (1953)

Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet

Red Lantern (Connecticut Premiere)

Derived from Zhao Jiping’s *Raise the Red Lantern*

Prelude: Moonlight

Wandering

Love

Death

Epilogue

Zhao Lin

(b. 1974)

INTERMISSION

The Shanghai Quartet

String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, “Serioso”

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serioso

Larghetto: Allegretto agitato

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770–1827)

Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet

Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa

Tan Dun

(b. 1957)

NOTES

Selections from *China Song*

Arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang (b. 1963)

Some years ago I developed the idea of arranging a few sets of Chinese folk songs along with popular music by various Chinese composers. I grew up with many of these pieces, and played some as solo works for violin and piano during the difficult days of the Cultural Revolution.

These works are short and diverse, some based upon traditional folk songs, and others composed recently. Although their musical style is not structured or sophisticated, the pieces seem to be accessible and enjoyable for a general audience. The themes speak to the individual listener because they are expressive, direct, and easily absorbed and understood. I asked myself: “Why not arrange them for string quartet, which is the form I love the most? That way I can play beautiful Chinese music again and also bring it to a wider audience with my group, the Shanghai Quartet.

I sifted through many songs and began arranging them for string quartet or small ensemble. Some of the folk songs are usually performed by a singer, violin, or piano; or by Chinese traditional instruments such as the *pipa*, *erhu*, or *suona* (a double-reed wind instrument, almost like an oboe), and bamboo flute. But, I didn’t want simply to imitate traditional Chinese instruments when we play those pieces. I tried to make the harmony and the structure closer to traditional western styles. The idea is that Chinese music can be played on western instruments and thus can be enjoyed internationally.

The use of folk materials of China’s minority nationalities was extremely popular among Chinese composers from 1960 to 1980. The *Yao Dance* was originally written by Mao Yuan and Tie-Shan Liu, based on a folk song of Yao, a mountain village in GuiZhou, in the south-west 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 plays a simple but expressive melody as a beautiful young girl starts to dance. The rest of the dancers join her soon after. The theme suddenly takes on an ardent and rough character, suggesting a group of young men that cannot refrain from dashing into the group of dancing young girls. 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 comes together in a loud and fast coda, suggesting the climax of the evening celebration.

Shepherd’s Song is a popular folk song stemming from the Chinese autonomous region of Inner Mongolia. It was often played on a traditional two stringed Mongolian instrument called a “Horse-Head Qin,” because there is a hand carved horse’s head on the top of the qin instead of a scroll. There are several versions of this piece, including one by the famous Chinese composer Han-Kun Sha, who arranged *Shepherd’s Song* for violin solo with piano accompaniment. As the shepherd puts his cattle out to graze, the surroundings inspire him to express his love of nature and his feelings of nostalgia for his homeland. He sings, “White clouds are floating in the blue sky. Under the clouds there is a flock of snow white sheep.” The lyrical melody brims with deep emotion. The free rhythm and Dvořákian harmony in the lower strings’ arpeggio figures create a quiet, misty atmosphere, suggesting patches of soft clouds floating over the meadows. The music reaches a passionate climax before subsiding again into an atmosphere of tranquility and peace. We in the Shanghai Quartet were very honored that Mr. Han-Kun Sha was in the audience for our performance of this piece in Shanghai in November 2001. He was deeply moved and happy to hear his piece in a brand new form.

Harvest Celebration is an original piece by violinist and composer Jing-Ping Zhang. He composed this piece for violin with piano accompaniment while he was a professor at the Nanjing Arts Institute. The work is one of my favorites, and I have always kept it in my solo repertoire as a wonderful encore piece. For centuries the majority of the Chinese population has lived off the land, so the harvest celebration, coming after a year of hard plowing and weeding, has always been one of the great events in people’s lives. Based on four short phrases, the violin tries to imitate the sound of the Suona—a double reed wind instrument with a very loud and high pitch, similar to an oboe—while drums, cymbals and gongs (suggested by the lower strings) are beaten boisterously. The rapid switches of meter and rhythm suggest the competitive improvisations typical of traditional Chinese celebrations. The music evokes images of the peasants singing and dancing with boundless joy.

© Yi-Wen Jiang, 2002. *ChinaSong* is available on Delos Records.

Song of the Ch’in

Zhou Long (b. 1953)

Song of the Ch’in for string quartet was composed in 1982, published in the Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music in 1984 and won first prize in the Chinese National Composition Competition in 1985. The *ch’in* (pronounced gin), a traditional Chinese seven-stringed, plucked zither, has been associated with sages and scholars. The sophisticated technique of *ch’in* playing, exemplified in the earliest *ch’in* manuscript from the Tang dynasty (618-906), involves various ways of plucking the strings and the use of ornaments to produce changes in sonority, intensity, dynamics, range and timbre. This composition for string quartet, the first prize-winner in the 1985 Fourth Chinese National Composition Competition, intends to capture these special musical gestures frequently found in *ch’in* music.

According to the artistic conception of the piece, it is based on a poem titled “Old Fisherman” by Liu Tsung-yuan (773-819) who was a government official and outstanding thinker and writer during the middle of the Tang dynasty. He was removed from his post for advocating reform, but he never became despondent. He traveled to many mountains and valley in southwestern China and created many excellent works. In the “Old Fisherman,” he wrote: “The old fisherman moors at night by western cliffs; At dawn, draws water from the clear Hsiang, lights a fire with southern bamboo. Mists melt in the morning sun, and the man is gone; Only the song reverberates in the green of the hills and waters. Look back, the horizon seems to fall into the stream; And clouds float aimlessly over the cliffs.”

Zhou Long

Red Lantern

Quintet for Pipa and String Quartet

Zhao Lin

I was very honored to be invited by *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet to compose a new work for pipa and string quartet. This piece is a tribute to my father, the composer Zhao Jiping, and to the great tradition of music from China.

Red Lantern is derived from my 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 our traditional music. The quintet is a suite of stories that take place in a traditional Chinese private courtyard (四合院) 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.

There are five movements: I. Prelude: Moonlight; II. Wandering; III. Love; IV. Death; V. Epilogue.

Zhao Lin, October 2015 in Beijing

Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa

Tan Dun

Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa 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 Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa, 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 Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa 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.