

An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Liang Mountains, showing a dense forest covering the slopes and a river valley running through the center. The image is split vertically by a diagonal line, with the left side being a solid dark grey and the right side showing the landscape. The overall tone is dark and moody.

BMOP
sound

**LEI LIANG: A THOUSAND MOUNTAINS,
A MILLION STREAMS**

LEI LIANG b. 1972

XIAOXIANG

FIVE SEASONS

A THOUSAND MOUNTAINS, A MILLION STREAMS

GAO HONG pipa

CHIEN-KWAN LIN saxophone

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor

[1] **XIAOXIANG** CONCERTO FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE
AND ORCHESTRA (2009, rev. 2014) 10:39
Chien-Kwan Lin, alto saxophone

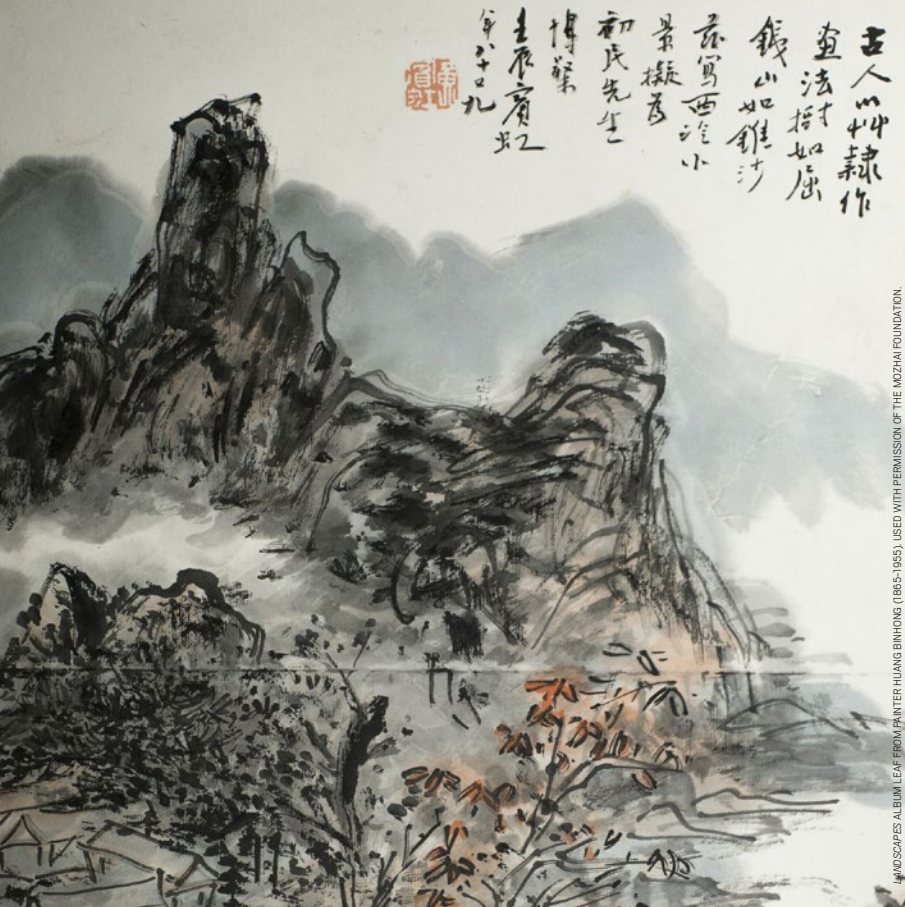
FIVE SEASONS (2010, rev. 2014)

- [2] I. Dew-Drop 3:39
- [3] II. Water-Play 2:55
- [4] III. Cicada Chorus 2:59
- [5] IV. Leaves-Fall 2:39
- [6] V. Drumming 3:58
Gao Hong, pipa

A THOUSAND MOUNTAINS, A MILLION STREAMS (2017)

- [7] Mountains in Darkness
and the Piercing Light 3:32
- [8] Mountains Gradually
Draw Closer 2:39
- [9] A Song Emerges 1:16
- [10] Flying Clouds 1:02
- [11] Admonition: the Breaking Down
of Landscapes 2:22
- [12] Opening the Inner Eyes 2:40
- [13] Vibration and Pulsations 1:09
- [14] Ethereal Lights and
Distant Mountains 0:32
- [15] Mountains Breathing 0:34
- [16] Mountains in Motion 0:23
- [17] Mountains Take Flight 0:48
- [18] The Shredding of
Landscapes 2:04
- [19] Healing Rain Drops/Part I 3:17
- [20] Healing Rain Drops/Part II 2:12
- [21] Landscape's Heartbeat
Returns 5:46

TOTAL 57:06



LANDSCAPES ALBUM LEAF FROM PAINTER HUANG BINHONG (1865-1955), USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE MOZTAI FOUNDATION.

By Lei Liang

I always wanted to create music as if painting with a sonic brush. I think in terms of curves and lines, light and shadows, distances, the speed of the brush, textures, gestures, movements and stillness, layering, blurring, coloring, the inter-penetration of ink, brushstrokes, energy, breath, spatial resonance, spiritual vitality, void and emptiness.

In my earliest works, I often tried to evoke an image, a landscape, or scenery. Over the years, I started to draw ideas and techniques from paintings — Chinese landscape paintings in particular — and apply them to composition, using sound as its medium.

The three works on this disc may be described as the sonic landscapes of the aftermath — the aftermath of the shattering of humanity, the destruction of cultural heritage, and the damage to our environment. Writing these pieces is my personal journey to reclaim my home: a cultural, spiritual, and actual physical home. The more I study about what has been lost or what is being lost, the more I wish to reclaim that heritage. I wanted to evoke the idea that underneath the ruins, there's the heartbeat of our nature and the possibility of our home coming back.

The search for a lost spiritual home that has been violently destroyed is at the core of my artistic discovery. Born at the end of China's brutal Cultural Revolution, I experienced the devastating cultural destruction, and the profound human cost of government-enforced social reform. Living in the dangerous times of the world today, we bear witness to the threats upon our physical homes, as well as the effects of global warming, exacerbated by human irresponsibility, that cause violent disruptions to the living things of this planet.

I consider music-making a determined act of artistic defiance against such violence. In the concerto, *Xiaoxiang*, the music for saxophone solo is marked by silences, representing the protagonist's inability to articulate her grief. Yet, her defiant silences are more piercing than the orchestral explosions.

Five Seasons offers a different take on China's past. It celebrates the rich tradition of *pipa*, highlighting its nuanced art of inflections and intonations that were preserved and passed down to us by the few surviving masters. Transcending the barrier between pitch- and noise-based sonic realms, its vitality and expressivity are recontextualized, infused with a new life.

The last piece on this disc, *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams*, meditates on the loss of landscapes of cultural and spiritual dimensions. Using a sonic brush, I paint an inner journey: darkness, hints of luminosity, emergence, pulsing impulses, shattering, and fragmentation ... showers of light ... the return of the tender heartbeat. The work implies an intention to preserve and resurrect parallel landscapes — both spiritual and physical — and sustain a place where we and our children can belong.

XIAOXIANG, for solo alto saxophone and orchestra, was commissioned by Chien-Kwan Lin and The College of Music of Mahidol University. Lin premiered the work with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Allan McMurray conducting, on July 12, 2009, at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand.

FIVE SEASONS, for *pipa* and string quartet, was commissioned by the Shanghai Quartet and Wu Man, and was premiered on September 12, 2010, at Montclair State University in New Jersey. The version for *pipa* and string orchestra was arranged in 2014.

A THOUSAND MOUNTAINS, A MILLION STREAMS, scored for full orchestra, was commissioned by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose, Artistic Director, and received its premiere on April 21, 2018, at Jordan Hall in Boston, MA.

By Robert Kirzinger

Lei Liang's music embodies a remarkable mindfulness regarding Chinese culture, his family heritage, and the details of his own life and interests — nothing less, really, than the whole of his own identity. His biggest orchestral work to date, *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams*, is a culmination and continuation of his lifelong aesthetic and scholarly immersion in a wide variety of fields: music and musicology, language and calligraphy, visual art and aesthetics, philosophy, history, politics, and folklore. Musically, all three works on this CD demonstrate Liang's proficiency within the tradition of the symphonic poem, or perhaps as a musical landscapist: imaginative invention of instrumental timbres create almost painterly contrasts of line versus textural fields and the dynamic flow of narratives.

Five Seasons for pipa and strings, and *Xiaoxiang* for saxophone and full orchestra, both concertos, are also intricately detailed tone paintings with their own pictorial and narrative elements drawn from extramusical sources.

Though nourished by numerous other activities in scholarship, historical and ethnomusicology, and teaching, the practice of music has been central to Liang's life since his childhood. He was born to musical parents in the midst of the devastating Cultural Revolution in Tianjin, where his mother had been resettled as a farmworker. The Cultural Revolution ended when he was four, and he was given piano lessons. Western art music made up most of his practice repertoire, but because his parents were musicologists, he was exposed to a wide range of indigenous Chinese music from an early age. It was only later, after he had traveled to the United States for study, that he began to revisit that music seriously as part of his own artistic purpose. His piano teacher encouraged him to compose freely, and before long he was recognized as a phenomenal talent both as a pianist and as a composer; and to this day some of his youthful piano pieces are included among the required repertoire for Beijing's Xinghai Cup Piano Competition (whose prizewinners have included such pianists as Yuja Wang and Lang Lang). The practice of performance, the experience of physicality, remains a key catalyst for Liang's investigations into both western and eastern (primarily but not exclusively Chinese) instruments.

In 1990 Liang moved to the U.S., initially studying piano in Austin, Texas, before shifting his focus definitively to composition and moving to Boston. He attended the New England Conservatory and earned his Ph.D. at Harvard University. It hasn't been unusual in the generations since the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) for Chinese composers to travel to the west for study; Professor Chou Wen-chung at Columbia University exerted a strong gravitational pull particularly for the first new generation of graduates of the Central Conservatory. (Although Lei Liang never studied formally with Chou, he considers him an important mentor and model, and has written about his work.) A determining factor in

Liang's decision to leave China was the government crackdown and massacre following the protests at Tiananmen Square during the student-led Democracy Movement in June 1989. Sixteen at the time and with friends among the protesters, he was a potential target for official scrutiny, so his family encouraged the move. He embraced life in the U.S., becoming a citizen in 2006.

Ironically, it was in Boston and Cambridge that Lei Liang began to rediscover his homeland's wealth of history and culture. His family heritage gave him an excellent foundation for his intellectual and aesthetic curiosity; his parents were researchers and teachers, and his grandfather was the important philosopher, historian, and Episcopal Church leader Ts'ai Yung Ch'un (1904–83). Having grown up with simplified modern Chinese, Liang taught himself traditional Chinese in order to investigate primary sources in aesthetics, history, and philosophy. He sought out scholars, experts in their fields, building a network of mentors that foreshadowed his own later role at the University of California, San Diego, where he joined the faculty in 2007. This kind of collaborative thinking and research ultimately led to the later connection with the art historian Jung Ying Tsao, whose expertise is in the work of Huang Binhong, which inspired Liang's piece *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams*.

Liang's own impact on the musical and artistic world is already considerable. As a composer, he is among the most important voices of his generation regardless of origin; his work is published by Schott International, and is performed worldwide by such artists as the pianist Aleck Karis, soprano Susan Narucki, percussionist/conductor Steven Schick, and the double bassist Mark Dresser, all colleagues at UC San Diego, as well as such groups as the Arditti, Ying, and Shanghai string quartets, Callithumpian Consort, Palimpsest Ensemble, Taipei Chinese Orchestra, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Third Coast Percussion, the New York Philharmonic, and many others, and he was the focus of a Portrait Concert at Columbia University's Miller Theatre. His chamber opera *Inheritance*, which explores gun violence via the life of an heir of the Winchester family, was premiered at the University

of California, San Diego, in October 2018. The saxophone concerto *Xiaoxiang*, featured on this recording, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and he was also a recipient of the Rome Prize of the American Academy in Rome. His extensive discography includes seven monograph recordings, and he has also produced several CDs, including an album of works by Chou Wen-chung and two discs by his wife, the harpsichordist Takae Ohnishi. As an essayist, he has been widely published; in 2017 a volume of his articles, as well as essays by other writers about his music, was published by Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press.

The many links between Liang's music and his other interests create a unique multidimensionality, reflected in specific, definite ways in the musical details of his work. The nature of the narratives echo not only his deep humanity but, beyond that, a concern for the world beyond humanity—that is, with humanity's balanced relationship to the world. Liang's approach to programmatic or pictorial music resonates with Chinese instrumental music's general historical tendency, but he arrived at his own aesthetic philosophy following his immersion in western common practice and recent avant-garde practices. The music is distinctly modern, with its deep roots in two longstanding cultural traditions creating an extraordinary sense of artistic continuity.

The saxophone concerto *Xiaoxiang* equates the solo instrument with the human voice; the pipa soloist in *Five Seasons* is a stand-in for a variety of natural sounds, as well as commentary on pipa performance tradition. In *A Thousand Mountains, A Millions Streams* the role of the orchestra is strikingly layered in concept: the instruments depict both an imagined landscape and a hypothetical journey through a depiction (that depiction being, literally, Huang Binhong's painting) of an imagined landscape. Although there are dark aspects to these narratives, underlying them is a fundamental optimism that human nature can right itself, that human motivation can be steered toward positive ideas and actions.

* * *

Xiaoxiang [1] was commissioned by saxophonist Chien-Kwan Lin, who premiered the piece in Bangkok with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Allan McMurray in 2009; it was revised in 2014. *Xiaoxiang* (a region in Hunan Province at the confluence of the Xiang and Xiao rivers) is a double act of translation. During the Cultural Revolution, a woman's husband was killed by an official. Without recourse to justice, she drove him—and ultimately herself—mad by wailing like a ghost from the forest near his home. The saxophone's cries suggest the woman's inability to put her despair into words, her emotion amplified and clarified by the orchestra; there are also flashes of calm lucidity. This orchestral version is a "translation" of Liang's 2003 work *Memories of Xiaoxiang* for saxophone and electronics. Prerecorded human vocal sounds (sampled from the Xiaoxiang region) as well as abstract, atmospheric ones are recontextualized via the orchestral instruments, a process Liang has used numerous times; he took a similar approach in writing *A Thousand Mountains*. Each element of the underlying impulse is examined, reforged, and transformed into musical expression, both on a sonic level and on a physical one—the act of performance is deeply embedded in the music. A further detail is Liang's concern that each musical gesture, each note, have movement, depth, vivid and changing life. Performers are frequently called upon to change articulation and pitch subtly or boldly even within an ostensibly irreducible musical event, resulting in intricately animated moments reflecting the nature of human activity. The use of silence represents the inexpressible space beyond hope. The composer comments, "Instead of displaying technical virtuosity, the soloist in this piece portrays the protagonist's inability to articulate or deliver an utterance; in that sense, the composition may be perceived as an anti-concerto."

The title of the pipa concerto *Five Seasons* is a nod to Vivaldi's famous violin concertos, but at the same time underlines the distance between western and Chinese traditions, both musical and cultural. Pipa, the Chinese four-string lute, is perhaps the most familiar Chinese instrument in the west today due to the efforts of such players as Wu Man, Min Xiao-Fen, and Gao Hong, who is featured on this recording. Gao Hong was a student of the

great Pudong school pipa master Lin Shicheng, whose work Lei Liang studied extensively in his exploration of traditional Chinese music. The idiomatic techniques of the pipa are resistant to western notation, so even common gestures can be a matter of experiment; let alone specialized techniques of a unique virtuoso. In that sense, *Five Seasons* is a study in the transmission, via notation and recording, of a performance tradition. Some of the techniques employed in *Five Seasons* are unique to Gao Hong—perhaps an encouragement to a new generation of pipa players to continue to push the envelope. (*Five Seasons* was originally composed for pipa with string quartet, and was composed for Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet.)

A common idea in Liang's catalog is the traversal of acoustic space from noise—e.g., unpitched percussion—to pitch, e.g., the human voice. The solo pipa here plays full chords, melodic lines, and ambiguously pitched gestures like glissandos, as well as masquerading as unpitched percussion. The string orchestra complements and mimics pipa sounds via pizzicato and Bartók pizzicato (snapping the string against the fingerboard), also expanding the sonic palette of the piece with bowed gestures. The concerto's sonic range mirrors its aesthetic basis: the "five seasons" idea is a manifestation of *wuxing*, "five elements," which relate changes in natural states to the essential qualities of wood (spring), fire (summer), metal (autumn), water (winter), and earth, which the composer relates corresponds to *changxia*, the transition from summer to fall. The five sections of the piece are: Dew-Drop [2]; Water-Play [3]; Cicada Chorus [4]; Leaves-Fall [5]; Drumming [6]. The work's harmonic world is another example of the inclusivity of Liang's thinking. It's derived from five characteristic chords of the Japanese *sho* (the mouth organ related to the Chinese *sheng*) in Gagaku court music to represent each of these elemental qualities. Using these materials was a way of connecting the piece to the ancient Chinese origins of Gagaku. The string ensemble, playing harmonics, is able to approximate the *sho*'s unique timbre. Additionally, the overall harmonic space of the piece is strongly founded on the pipa's traditional tuning of ADEA. The solidity and transparency of the harmonic framework allows the intricate,

virtuosic details of performance to stand out. The piece also gives room for the virtuoso soloist to improvise around particular gestures and figures, increasing the concerto's feeling of spontaneous creation.

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams was commissioned by BMOP through a grant from the Jebediah Foundation via longtime new music supporter Rob Amory, who is a dedicatee of the piece along with the late scholar and art collector Jung Ying Tsao. It was premiered by BMOP under Gil Rose's direction at Jordan Hall, Boston, in May 2018.

Although the composer had become enamored of the work of literati artist Huang Binhong (1865–1955) as a freshman in college, it was a ten-hour conversation with the connoisseur Jung Ying Tsao in 2009 that triggered his deep study of Huang's work, eventually leading to an unprecedented exploration of his paintings using sophisticated imaging technology. While composer-in-residence at California Institute of Information Technology (Calit2) and Qualcomm Institute at the University of California, San Diego, 2014–16, Liang worked with a group of scientists to conserve and explore Huang Binhong's art. The composer writes, "Huang's album leaves were captured, then reconstructed for high-resolution projection, revealing to the viewers details of the work that have never been seen before. Through audio software development, the magical world hidden within the paintings' brushstrokes is rendered sonically in an immersive space. It enables a viewer to fly through this landscape, as if riding on a drone." He was particularly drawn to a 1952 album Huang created when he was nearly blind, at age 87.

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams has a multimodal connection to Huang Binhong's work—physical, perceptual, cultural, historic, philosophical. The composer's intensive study of the artist's life and writings affords him insight on Huang's aesthetics and the circumstances of his artistic process, all of which informs the piece. Liang's response to Huang's art is not unlike that of a younger painter carefully copying the work of an older master in order to better understand the style and the artist. Over the years the study of

brushwork in calligraphy has familiarized the composer with the physical gestures of that discipline. A drawn line or a wash of ink can trigger the mental process of making the mark, just as a performer's actions are mirrored in the mind of an observer. Liang translated his intimate experience of immersion in Huang's work into the articulated details of *A Thousand Mountains*, each note, rhythm, timbre a tiny mark in the larger canvas of his piece. The sonic textures evoke lines and brushstrokes, from dark density to the complete absence of ink on paper.

As is typical of Liang's work, other levels of experience obtain as well. The piece's overall form suggests a possible traversal of the work by a viewer's eye: perhaps taking in the whole, then lingering on particular details—the slightly slanted wall of a structure, tiny amorphous blots that together form a perfect tree, the delicate curve that depicts a forbidding limestone cliff, or the Chinese calligraphy in one corner of the picture. As the piece unfurls, the different sections reflect a present, idealized experience of a Huang landscape. That experience is more than a metaphor: as a fully realized sketch for *A Thousand Mountains*, Liang embarked on a collaborative multimedia piece, *Hearing Landscapes*, to create an electro-acoustic score in conjunction with ultra-high-resolution scans of Huang Binhong's paintings. This served as a sketchbook for the expansive orchestral work. Yet another aspect of the piece is the composer's contemplation of the *meaning* of Huang's landscape and the significance of the painter's life—and how that contemplation leads to greater respect for the world around us.

An observation by the 11th-century Chinese landscape painter Guo Xi (trans. Lin Yutang) gives a strong clue to Liang's title: "A mountain looks this way close by, another way a few miles away, and yet another way from a distance of a dozen miles. Its shapes change at every step, the more the farther one goes.... [A] mountain contains in itself the shape of several dozen or a hundred mountains." The through-composed piece is laid out in sections that reflect its variety of perspectives. At the most concrete level—that of direct musical

illustration—these titles remind one of another landscape-journey, Strauss's *Alpensinfonie*. Note the Straussian directness of some of these descriptions, for example "Mountains in Darkness and the Piercing Light," versus "Opening the Inner Eyes," whose introspection suggests an inner dialogue with the painter.

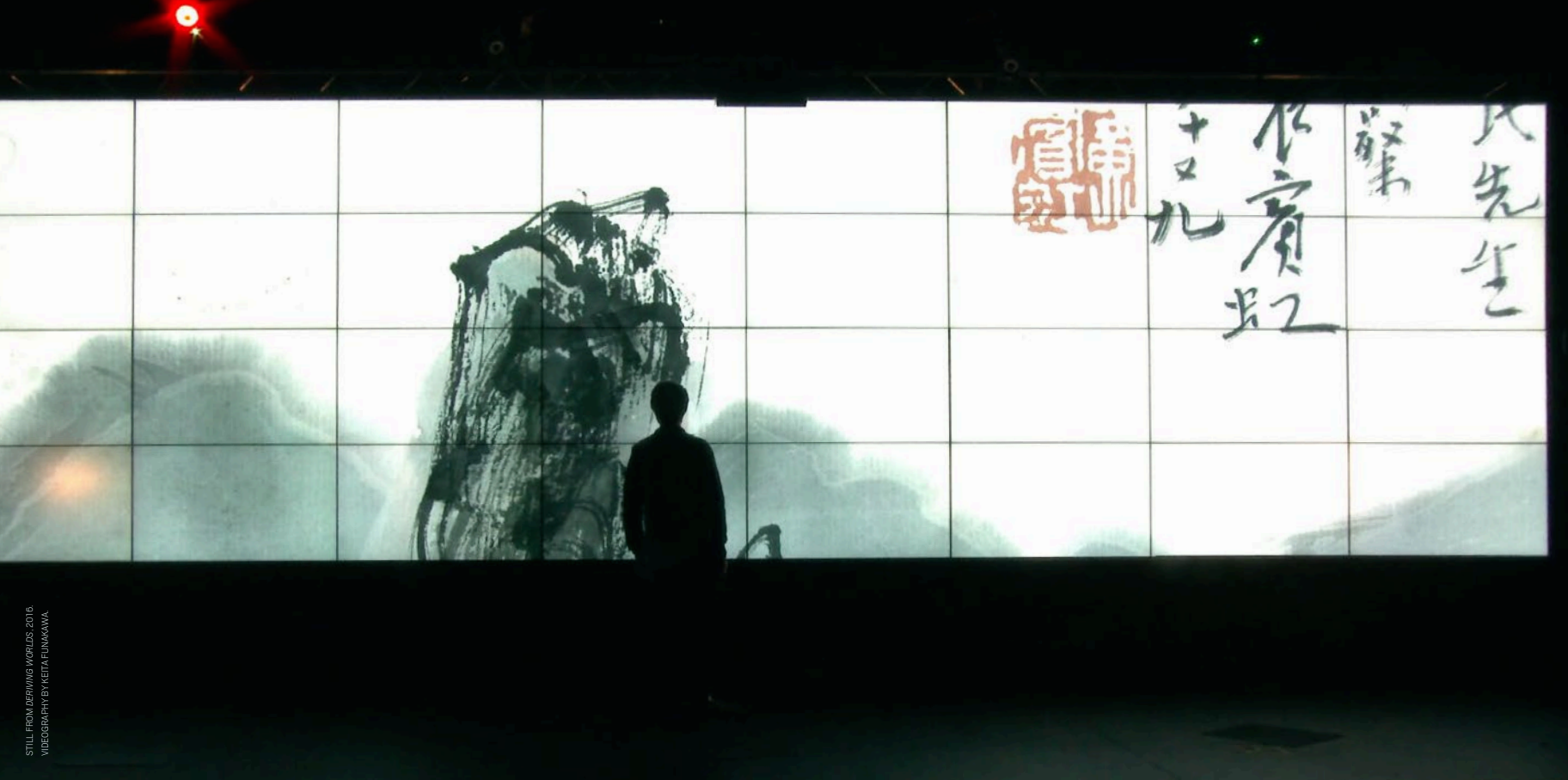
Part I: A Thousand Mountains

Mountains in Darkness and the Piercing Light—Mountains Gradually Draw Closer—A Song Emerges—Flying Clouds—Admonition: the Breaking Down of Landscapes—Opening the Inner Eyes—Vibration and Pulsations—Ethereal Lights and Distant Mountains—Mountains Breathing—Mountains in Motion—Mountains Take Flight—The Shredding of Landscapes

Part II: A Million Streams

Healing Rain Drops/Part I—Healing Rain Drops/Part II—Landscape's Heartbeat Returns

The trajectory in Part I moves from the tangible encounter with the image through an increasingly abstract, imaginative relationship with its elements, as though animated by the viewer's imagination. (This flight of imagination is modeled on the computer-guided viewing of Huang's work in the multimedia *Hearing Landscapes*.) As in *Five Seasons* and *Xiaoxiang*, the orchestra encompasses a timbral range from unpitched percussion to lyrical, sustained figures. The players also are asked occasionally to vocalize, adding a dry, percussive, but still recognizably human element to the texture. "Mountains in Darkness and the Piercing Light" [7] cedes to the sustained, warm harmony of "Mountains Gradually Draw Closer" [8] which slowly fills into the bass register before subsiding again. "A Song Emerges" [9] begins with violins playing a melodic fragment (g-f-g) with a glissando, the extension of the melody gradually making its way through the orchestra, punctuated by sparkling figures in the piano and percussion. "Flying Clouds" [10] starts with a dark, Bartók-pizzicato chord in the lower strings, bringing a sense of foreboding quickly made manifest



in “Admonition” [11] with its sharper sense of pulse and stinging, accented chords with heavy percussion. (In another instance of multimodality, the composer actually derived the harmony from spectral analysis of recordings made with pieces of quartzite rock.) This ends with a percussion cadenza. “Opening the Inner Eyes” [12] is characterized by transparent brass chords and a new harmonic color; “Vibration and Pulsations” [13] self-descriptively animates this new harmonic world further. “Ethereal Lights and Distant Mountains” [14] brings us back to direct experience of the painting, the imagery of which takes on a life of its own in the three energetic sections: “Mountains Breathing” [15] through “Mountains in Motion” [16] to “Mountains Take Flight” [17], culminating in the aggressive “The Shredding of Landscapes” [18] which stems from a kind of vision. According to the composer, “In total darkness in 1952, the blind Huang Binhong envisioned a luminous landscape that seemed to arise out of the shredded fragments and ashes. It transcended brutal reality, offering a glimpse of a landscape to come, perhaps a place our children can call home.”

Part II acknowledges the persistence and power of an artist and his work, its transformational and healing potential. The visual imagery depicted here originates, as it were, from outside the paintings, being supplied by the composer’s imagination as another level of interpretation of Huang’s work with its essential optimism in the face of darkness. In “Healing Rain Drops/Part I” [19] the texture thins out remarkably, the first sound is a barely audible, pitchless scraping of bow hair on violin strings. The light sounds mimic a gentle rain that grows steadily more persistent until it clarifies in pizzicato violin pitches in “Healing Rain Drops/Part II” [20]. “Landscape’s Heartbeat Returns” [21] restores the world of the painting, and by extension the wider world, in the form of a musical coda revisiting the expressive and textural range of the whole work in swift, sure strokes.

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Robert Kirzinger is a composer and writer living in Boston. He is on the staff of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and since 2006 has been the primary annotator for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project.



ALEX MATTHEWS

Lei Liang

Chinese-born American composer Lei Liang (b.1972) is the winner of the Rome Prize, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Aaron Copland Award, a Koussevitzky Foundation Commission and a Creative Capital Award. His concerto for saxophone and orchestra, *Xiaoxiang*, was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2015.

Lei Liang was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert for the inaugural concert of the CONTACT! new music series. Other commissions and performances come from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, MAP Fund, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Taipei Chinese Orchestra, the Scharoun Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Arditti Quartet, the Shanghai Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the New York New Music Ensemble, and pipa virtuoso Wu Man. Lei Liang’s six portrait discs are released on Naxos, New World, Mode, Encounter and Bridge Records. As a scholar and conservationist of cultural traditions, he edited and co-edited four books and editions, and published more than twenty articles.

From 2013–2016, Lei Liang served as Composer-in-Residence at the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology where his multimedia works preserve and reimagine cultural heritage through combining scientific research and advanced technology.

Lei Liang studied composition with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Robert Cogan, Chaya Czernowin and Mario Davidovsky, and received degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music (B.M. and M.M.) and Harvard University (Ph.D.). A Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, he held fellowships from the Harvard Society of Fellows and the Paul &

Daisy Soros Fellowships. Lei Liang serves as professor of music and chair of the composition area at the University of California, San Diego where he also served as Acting Chair from 2015 to 2016. His catalogue of more than seventy compositions is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).



Gao Hong, a Chinese musical prodigy and master of the pear-shaped lute, the pipa, began her career as a professional musician at age 12. She graduated with honors from China's premier music school, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she studied with the great pipa master Lin Shicheng. In both China and the U.S., Gao has received numerous top awards and honors, including First Prize in the Hebei Professional Young Music Performers Competition and an International Art Cup in Beijing. In 2005 Gao Hong became the first traditional musician to be awarded the prestigious Bush Artist Fellowship, and in 2012 she became the first musician in any genre to win four McKnight

Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians. The Minnesota State Arts Board has awarded her with an Artist Assistance Fellowship, an Artist Initiative Grant, and a Cultural Community Partnership grant. She has also received a LIN (Leadership Initiatives in Neighborhoods) Grant from the St. Paul Companies; three Jerome Foundation Travel and Study Grants; an Asian Pacific Award; and an Encore award, a Subito award, and two Performance Incentive Funds from the American Composers Forum.

Gao has performed throughout Europe, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, China, and the U.S. in solo concerts and with symphony orchestras, jazz musicians, and musicians from other cultures. She has performed at many major festivals worldwide. Her performances have included those at the Lincoln Center Festival; Carnegie Hall; the San Francisco Jazz Festival; the Smithsonian Institution; the Next Wave Festival; Festival d'Automne à Paris in Paris and Caen, France; the International Festival of Perth, Australia; and the Festival de Teatro d'Europa in Milan, Italy. Her performances of pipa concerti with symphony orches-

tras include several world, U.S., and regional premieres and performances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, Heidelberg (Germany) Philharmonic, the Women's Philharmonic in San Francisco, the Portland (Maine) Symphony, and the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, among others. In addition, she performed with the Lincoln Center production of *The Peony Pavilion*.

As a composer, she has received commissions from the American Composers Forum, Walker Art Center, the Jerome Foundation, Zeitgeist, Ragamala Music and Dance Theater, Theater Mu, IFTPA, Danish guitarist Lars Hannibal, and Twin Cities Public Television for the six-part series *Made in China*. Meet the Composer, Inc., in New York City has awarded her two Creative Connections grants and two MetLife Creative Connections grants.

In addition to Gao Hong's own solo performances of her compositions worldwide, her music has been performed internationally by many world class musicians. In 2000, *Song of the Pipa*, a play based on Gao Hong's life and the life of Chinese poet, Bai Juyi, received 20 performances by Theater Mu and featured live musical accompaniment and new compositions by Gao Hong. In 2007 her first choral composition, *The Coming of Spring*, was one of five pieces selected out of 128 applicants nationwide for a reading session by VocalEssence. The piece was premiered by VocalEssence at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul in 2008. *Awakening*—her newly commissioned piece from the Jerome Foundation—was premiered by Gao Hong and Speaking in Tongues at Muziekgebouw aan het IJ in Amsterdam in March 2007. In the same year she was also selected to participate in a composer's workshop hosted by the new music ensemble, Zeitgeist, and premiered her new composition *Courage*, for pipa and percussion, with Present Music in Milwaukee. In 2008, to celebrate Gao Hong's 35th anniversary of playing her pipa and 10 years as a composer, Hong headlined two major concerts featuring her compositions at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and Ted Mann Hall in Minneapolis. She composed a special pipa and sitar duet with guest artists Shubhendra Rao, a top disciple of Ravi Shankar, on sitar and rising young tabla star Biplab Bhattacharya. Three of her works received their world premieres and were performed by taiko drum master Kenny Endo, David

Hagedorn on percussion, cellist Michelle Kinney, Gao Hong on pipa, and Indian vocalist and veena player Nirmala Rajasekar.

Since her arrival to the U.S. in 1994, Gao Hong has been featured in over 100 newspaper and magazine articles, and television and radio documentaries, including the NPR radio show *Performance Today* (the most-listened-to classical music radio show in America, hosted by Fred Child), MPR's "The Joy of Pipa," hosted by Karl Gehrke, and The CBS Radio KMOX 1120 with Charlie Brennan Show in St. Louis. She has presented hundreds of educational workshops for elementary through college-age students, and has been on the faculty of Metropolitan State University and MacPhail Center for the Arts. She is currently on the music faculty of Carleton College where she teaches Chinese instruments and directs the Chinese Music Ensemble. She is also a Guest Professor at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and Tianjin Conservatory of Music in China. She is a roster artist with the Minnesota State Arts Board.

China's foremost music publication, "People's Music," wrote of Gao Hong that "like the famous Luoyang peony, she has gradually emerged as the best of all beautiful flowers...her performance has extremely strong artistic appeal and belongs under the category of 'fine wine'...the more you listen, the more beautiful it gets..."



FLORENT MILHAUD

Chien-Kwan Lin (b. 1972, Singapore) has appeared as soloist and guest artist with the United States Navy Band, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, the New World Symphony, the Portland (ME) Symphony, as well as the philharmonic and chamber orchestras of Boston, Rochester, Sichuan and Thailand.

Mr. Lin's performances have garnered excellent reviews by critics in New York and Boston. His critically-acclaimed Carnegie Hall recital prompted *New York Concert Review* to portray him as a performer "who has the passion and restraint and beautiful sense of line to take melody where it wants to go, fully and generously,"

while the *Boston Globe* has lauded him for "displaying chops," and has described his playing as "polished," "charismatic," and "appealing."

Recent appearances by Mr. Lin have included the World Saxophone Congress, North American Saxophone Alliance, Selmer Showroom (Paris), Steinway Hall (NYC), New England Saxophone Symposium, Texas Tech University International Saxophone Artists Series, U.S. Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, Saxorama Festival (Canada), Fromm Players of Harvard University, and the Formosa Chamber Music Society of New York. He has presented master classes across the U.S. and internationally, including the Paris Conservatory (CNSMDP), National Taipei University for the Arts, Mahidol University (Thailand), as well as the Shenyang, Sichuan and Central (Beijing) Conservatories in China.

Mr. Lin's recording of Lei Liang's *Memories of Xiaoxiang for Alto Saxophone & Tape* (Mode Records) was selected among "Amazon.com: Best 20th/21st Century Classical of 2009," and his recording of David Liptak's *Serenade for Alto Saxophone & String Orchestra*, which John Pitcher of the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* called "brilliantly recorded," is available on Bridge Records.

Since winning top prizes in Singapore's National Music Competition four consecutive times (violin category), Mr. Lin has enjoyed a multi-faceted career. He won a Best Conductor Award at Singapore's National Band Leaders Festival, and also worked for several years as a jazz violinist. In addition, he has appeared as orchestral violinist with the New Hampshire Symphony, the Indian Hill Symphony, and the Hanover (NH) Chamber Orchestra.

Mr. Lin is currently Associate Professor of Saxophone at the Eastman School of Music, where members of his studio have been frequent prizewinners at some of the nation's most prestigious competitions. He is the founder and director of the Eastman Saxophone Project (ESP), as well as the recipient of the 2012–2013 Eisenhart Award for Excellence in Teaching. Mr. Lin is an artist and clinician for Selmer and Vandoren companies, and performs exclusively on these products. He holds degrees from the New England Conservatory (BM, MM) and Eastman (Performer's Certificate, DMA). His teachers have included Ken Radnofsky and Ramon Ricker.



LIZ LINDER

Gil Rose is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim.

As a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms, he made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto and made his Japanese debut in 2015 substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country's most inventive and versatile opera conductors. He recently announced the formation of Odyssey Opera, an inventive company dedicated to presenting eclectic operatic repertoire in a variety of formats. The company debuted in September 2013 to critical acclaim with a 6-hour concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi*. Subsequent presentations have included concert performances of Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* and Massenet's *Le Cid*, along with two critically acclaimed Spring Festivals of staged opera. Prior to founding Odyssey Opera, he led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company's first Artistic Director. Mr. Rose led Opera Boston in several American and New England premieres including Shostakovich's *The Nose*, Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Hindemith's *Cardillac*, and

Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*. In 2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

Mr. Rose and BMOP partnered with the American Repertory Theater, Chicago Opera Theater, and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers* (a runner-up for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music). He conducted this seminal multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010, and also led its United States premiere in Boston and a subsequent performance at Chicago Opera Theater.

An active recording artist, Gil Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

Mr. Rose has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, NH, since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, conducting several premieres and making his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento, as well as conducting, directing and producing the world premiere recording of Ned Rorem's opera *Our Town*.

Mr. Rose has curated the Fromm Concerts at Harvard three times and served as the first curator of the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. As an educator, Mr. Rose served five years as Director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University and in 2012 joined the faculty of Northeastern University as Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Practice. In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a four-time Grammy Award nominee.



The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A unique institution of crucial artistic importance to today's musical world, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) exists to disseminate exceptional orchestral music of the present and recent past via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen's *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured

at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of five Grammy Award nominations and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical "night at the symphony." Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Sarah Brady* (piccolo) [1, 3]
Rachel Braude (piccolo) [1]
Jessica Lizak (alto flute) [3]

OBOE

Laura Shamu [1]
Jennifer Slowik* [1, 3]
Catherine Weinfield
(English horn) [3]

CLARINET

Amy Advocat
(bass clarinet) [1, 3]
Gary Gorczyca (bass
clarinet) [1]
Jan Halloran* [1, 3]

BASSOON

Ron Haroutunian* [1]
Jensen Ling* [3]
Adrian Morejon [1]
Gregory Newton
(contrabassoon) [3]

HORN

Alyssa Daly [1, 3]
Neil Godwin* [3]
Whitacre Hill* [1]
Clark Matthews [1]
Lee Wadenpfohl [1]

TRUMPET

Terry Everson* [1]
Dana Oakes* [3]
Andrew Sorg [3]
Richard Watson [1]

TROMBONE

Hans Bohn* [1]
Alexei Doohovskoy [1]
Victoria Garcia-Daskalova* [3]
Bass Trombone
Christopher Beaudry [1]
Philip Hyman [3]

TUBA

Kenneth Amis [3]
Takatsugu Hagiwara [1]

PERCUSSION

Jonathan Hess [3]
Craig McNutt (timpani) [3]
Robert Schulz* [1, 3]
Matthew Sharrock [3]
Nicholas Tolle [3]

HARP

Krysten Keches [3]
Ina Zdorovetchi [1]

PIANO

Linda Osborn [3]

VIOLIN I

Maelynn Arnold [3]
Deborah Boykan [1]
Heidi Braun-Hill [1]
Piotr Buczek [2]
Sonia Deng [3]
Gabriela Diaz* [2-3]
Tudor Dornescu [1]
Lilit Hartunian [1]
Susan Jensen [3]
Sean Larkin [1, 3]
Jae Young Cosmos Lee [2]
Shaw Pong Liu [1]
Yumi Okada [1]
Nicole Parks [3]
Amy Sims [2-3]
Megumi Stohs [2]
Klaudia Szlachta [3]
Sarita Uranovsky [1-3]
Katherine Winterstein* [1]
Ethan Wood [1]

VIOLIN II

Elizabeth Abbate [1-2]
Colleen Brannen* [1-2]
Piotr Buczek [1, 3]
Sasha Callahan [2]
Julia Cash [1-3]
Tera Gorsett [1]
Lilit Hartunian [2-3]
Rebecca Katsenes [1]
Annegret Klaua [1]

Aleksandra Labinska [1]
Mina Lavcheva [1]
Kay Rooney Matthews [3]
Annie Rabbat [2]
Amy Rawstron [1]
Aija Reke [3]
Micah Ringham [3]
Nivedita Sarnath [3]
Megumi Stohs [3]

VIOLA

Abigail Cross [2-3]
Adrienne Elisha [1]
Joan Ellersick* [1, 3]
Nathaniel Farny [2]
David Feltner [1-2]
Noriko Futagami [1-3]
Lauren Nelson [3]
Dimitar Petkov [1, 3]
Emily Rideout [1-3]

Emily Rome [1]
Alexander Vavilov [1]

CELLO

Miriam Bolkosky [1, 3]
Brandon Brooks [2]
Nicole Cariglia [1]
Darry Dolezal [3]
Ariana Falk [1-2]
Holgen Gjoni [1]
Katherine Kayaian* [1, 3]

Velleda Miragias [3]
Rafael Popper-Keizer* [1-2]
David Russell [2]

BASS

Anthony D'Amico* [1-2]
Scot Fitzsimmons [1, 3]
Michael Hartery [1]
Robert Lynam [1]
Bebo Shiu* [2-3]

KEY

[1] Xiaoxiang
[2] Five Seasons
[3] A Thousand Mountains,
A Million Streams

*Principals

Lei Liang

Xiaoxiang
Five Seasons
A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams

Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction: Joel Gordon
Assistant Recording Engineer: Peter Atkinson
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

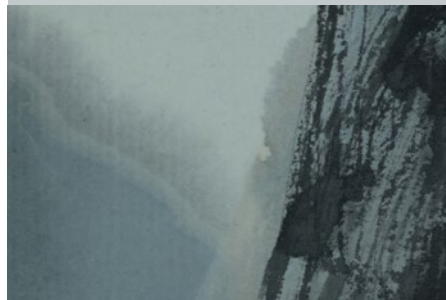
All works on this disc are published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation, New York.

Xiaoxiang was recorded on April 2, 2014, at Jordan Hall in Boston, MA. *Five Seasons* was recorded on June 30, 2015, at Jordan Hall. *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams* was recorded at Mechanics Hall in Worcester, MA, on April 23, 2018.

This recording was made possible in part by the Jebediah Foundation and the University of California, San Diego.

Thanks to my dear friend Chien-Kwan Lin, who has been a creative partner since our college years. Thanks to Gao Hong, for your extraordinary artistry. Thanks to the late Mr. Jung Ying Tsao, Elna Tsao, and the Mozhai Foundation for your friendship and support during my research on Huang Binhong's landscape painting. Thanks to Zachary Seldess, Falko Kuester, Gregory Surges, and Eric Hamdan. Our collaborative research inspired and transformed the way I compose. Thanks to Calit2/Qualcomm Institute and its Director, Ramesh Rao, for the generous support during my residency at the Institute. Thanks to Joel Gordon, the recording engineer of this disc, and Robert Kirzinger, who authored the insightful liner notes. It has been a joy to work with you. Thanks to my publisher, Schott Music, and especially my colleagues at Schott Music Corporation, New York, for your unwavering dedication. A very special thanks to Robert Amory, my ultimate enabler. I am so grateful for our friendship. As you said, "I put my shoulder behind yours." This is the third work commissioned by Rob; each time, the experience takes me to new artistic heights and challenges. And last but not least, an enormous thanks to Director Gil Rose, and the amazing musicians of BMOP, many of whom have performed and helped to improve my music over the past 25 years. You are my angels to whom I owe my deepest gratitude.

—Lei Liang



Cover image: High-resolution scan of a *Landscapes* album leaf from painter Huang Binhong (1865-1955). Used with permission of the Mozhai Foundation.

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Design: John Kramer
Editor: Chuck Furlong

