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iSING! Suzhou and The Philadelphia Orchestra present

***Echoes of Ancient Tang Poems  
in Celebration of Lunar New Year***

**Performances Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of  
The Philadelphia Orchestra's Historic 1973 China Tour**

**Led by Former Assistant Conductor Lio Kuokman  
with 15 Singers from 10 Countries Performing  
Works by Young Composers from Six Countries**

**January 6 at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts  
and January 7 at Lincoln Center**

(Philadelphia, December 6, 2022)—In celebration of Lunar New Year, and in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of The Philadelphia Orchestra's historic 1973 tour of China, the iSING! Suzhou International Young Artists Festival announces the North American premiere of *Echoes of Ancient Tang Poems* on Friday, January 6, 2023, at 7:30 PM at the Kimmel Center's Verizon Hall in Philadelphia, and Saturday, January 7, at 7:30 PM at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York.

**Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of The Philadelphia Orchestra's Historic China Tour**  
[The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)'s Lunar New Year Concert celebrates the 50th anniversary of the ensemble's historic 1973 tour of China, the first by an American orchestra, as well as the Orchestra's ongoing relationship with the people of China. Over the past 50 years, the Orchestra has returned to China 12 times, more than any other U.S. orchestra. The Lunar New Year concert is the first of several upcoming events that will commemorate the milestone. The concert is a co-production of The Philadelphia Orchestra; the Suzhou Culture and Arts Centre, which hosted the program's world premiere in Suzhou, China, in late 2020; and the Asian Performing Arts Council (APAC).

### **Event Culminates the 2020 iSING! Composition Competition**

This landmark program, led by former Philadelphia Orchestra Assistant Conductor [Lio Kuokman](#), features settings of ancient Chinese lyrical texts by young composers from around the world. The production is the culmination of the **2020 iSING! Composition Competition**, a five-month process of selecting winning composers from more than 200 entries. The panel of judges included [Hao Jiang Tian](#), renowned bass and iSING! Founder and artistic director; [Robert Blocker](#), the Henry and Lucy Moses Dean of Music at Yale University; [Hao Weiya](#), Chair of the Composition Department at the Central Conservatory of Music; Italian composer [Mauro Montalbetti](#), currently Composer in Residence at the Stadttheater Bremerhaven; [Katherine Chu](#), Dean of The Tianjin Juilliard School; and renowned conductor [Thomas Rösner](#).

The winning composers include [Conrad Asman](#) (South Africa), [Nicholas Bentz](#) (USA), [Fernando Buide del Real](#) (Spain), [Nono Tongyan Chen](#) (China), Maishuo Luo (China), [Evan Mack](#) (USA), [Tomàs Peire](#) (Spain), Xiao Su (China), [Roydon Hoi Chak Tse](#) (Canada), [Cong Wei](#) (China), [Cynthia Lee Wong](#) (USA), [Sam Wu](#) (Australia), Leishuo Ye (China), and Jiao Zhang (China).

Tang dynasty poets featured in this program of works for voice and orchestra include Li Bai (Li Po), Bai Juyi, Du Fu, Du Mu, Zhang Ji, and Wang Bo, among others.

“I was initially worried about being able to connect both historically and culturally,” says Fernando Buide del Real, who is from Santiago de Compostela. “But I soon realized Tang poetic

sentiments are universal and transcend geographical boundaries. During the COVID lockdown, I found resonance in Wang Bo's poem about friendship, loneliness, and separation. The precision and depth of the Chinese language is astounding. Every character and phrase is filled with meaning.”

“Old poems are great treasures,” explains Hao Jiang Tian. “Their beautiful language and deep meaning continue to inspire all of us. This project brings some of the world's most ancient poems to the modern stage, which is particularly appropriate now as an inspiration to bring the world together in harmony.”

### **iSING! Suzhou Artists Bring Compositions to Life**

Interpreting these new settings of immortal Tang texts are 15 veterans of the pioneering [iSING! Suzhou International Young Artists Festival](#), including two GRAMMY® winners and a Broadway headliner. The full roster includes sopranos [Holly Flack](#) (USA), [Deborah Solange Martinez](#) (Nicaragua), [Raquel Suarez Groen](#) (Canada), [Paula Malagón](#) (Mexico), [Esther Maureen Kelly](#) (USA), [Milica Jovičić](#) (Serbia), and [Juliet Petrus](#) (USA/Italy); mezzo-soprano [Melisa Bonetti](#) (Dominican Republic/USA); tenors [Thomas Glenn](#) (Canada) and [Kyle Tomlin](#) (USA); baritones [Ihor Mostovoi](#) (Ukraine/Canada), [José Rubio](#) (USA), [Valdis Jansons](#) (Latvia), and Lewei Wang (China); and bass [Wei Wu](#) (China).

The **iSING!** Suzhou International Young Artists Festival has garnered international recognition over the last 11 years as the first-ever young artist program introducing Mandarin as a lyric language and Chinese vocal music as a representative classical music genre.

### **Asia Society Panel Discussion on the Genesis of Echoes of Ancient Tang Poems**

On December 8, 2022, at 6:30 PM, the Asia Society New York will host a panel discussion on the genesis and development of *Echoes of Ancient Tang Poems*. Click [here](#) for more details.

*Echoes of Ancient Tang Poems* is supported by the China International Culture Association, Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in New York, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, and Suzhou Municipal People's Government, with special thanks to the Bank of China.

## **CONCERTS & TICKETING**

**Friday January 6, 2023, at 7:30 PM**

Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia

Ticket: \$10–\$55

[Philadelphia Orchestra Lunar New Year Concert Information](#)

[Purchase Tickets Here](#)

**Saturday January 7, 2023, at 7:30 PM**

Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City Ticket: \$50–\$100 (50% discount for students)

[Alice Tully Hall Lunar New Year Concert Information](#)

[Purchase Tickets Here](#)

## **ECHOES OF ANCIENT TANG POEMS (PROGRAM)**

Huanzhi Li	<i>Spring Festival Overture</i> 《春節序曲》
Maishuo Luo	<i>Drink to Me</i> 《將進酒》 / Li Bai (Li Po)
Sam Wu	<i>Quiet Thoughts by Night</i> 《靜夜思》 / Li Bai (Li Po)
Tomàs Peire	<i>Bamboo Shoots</i> 《竹枝詞》 / Liu Yuxi
Xiao Su	<i>Farewell on the Prairie</i> 《賦得古原草送別》 / Bai Juyi
Fernando Buide del Real	<i>Sending Off Du Shaofu</i> 《送杜少府之任蜀州》 / Wang Bo
Conrad Asman	<i>Drinking Song</i> 《涼州詞》 / Wang Han
Cong Wei	<i>Farewell to Dong Da</i> 《別董大》 / Gao Shi
Nicholas Bentz	<i>Enlisting</i> 《從軍行》 / Yang Jiong
Evan Mack	<i>News of Victory</i> 《聞官軍收河南河北》 / Du Fu
Tongyan Chen	<i>Singing of Goose &amp; Song of Snow</i> 《詠鵝·詠雪》 / Luo Binwang, Zhang Dayou
Cynthia Lee Wong	<i>Snow on the River</i> 《江雪》 / Liu Zongyuan
Evan Mack	<i>Up on the Crane Tower</i> 《登鶴雀樓》 / Wang Zhihuan
Jiao Zhang	<i>To the Assistant Magistrate Han Chuo</i> 《寄揚州韓綽判官》 / Du Mu
Leishuo Ye	<i>Docking by Bridge at Night</i> 《楓橋夜泊》 / Zhang Ji
Roydon Hoi Chak Tse	<i>Yellow Crane Tower</i> 《黃鶴樓》 / Cui Hao

## **ABOUT iSING! Suzhou**

Launched in 2011, **iSING! Suzhou International Young Artists Festival** (formerly **I SING BEIJING**) piqued the imagination of classical music lovers and industry professionals with its innovative concept of teaching Mandarin as a lyric language in Western operatic singing. With a distinguished faculty including Metropolitan Opera coaches and seasoned professionals in China and worldwide, iSING! has been featured on the international stage, including Alice Tully Hall (2013) and the Closing Concert of the Shanghai Music in the Summer Air (MISA) festival (2015). Since its founding, more than 350 young singers from 38 countries have participated in iSING!, including more than a hundred singers from the United States. Reports on the iSING! Festival have appeared in more than 1600 media, radio, and television outlets. Among iSING! participants are both alumni and current members of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and the San Francisco Opera Adler Program, as well as opera studios of the Opéra du Rhin in Strasbourg, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genova, Zürich Opera, Scuola dell'opera italiana di Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Curtis Institute, the Juilliard School, and Manhattan School of Music. [HOME | isingfestival](#)

### **ABOUT Hao Jiang Tian**

Hao Jiang Tian has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera for 20 years in 26 operas and is highly praised for his performances on such international stages such as the Staatsoper Berlin, Teatro Comunale in Florence, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Arena di Verona, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Washington National Opera, and opera houses in France, Belgium, Spain, Holland, Portugal, Chile, Russia, Japan, and China. His roles in modern Chinese operas include Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* and Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* based on Amy Tan's novel, as well as the title role in Guo Wenjing's *Poet Li Bai*. Tian's autobiography, *Along the Roaring River: My Wild Ride from Mao to the Met*, was published by Wiley and a 2009 PBS special based on this book aired nationwide. CNN featured him and his one-man show *Sing Brother Sing* in "Talk Asia" in 2012. His honors include a Lifetime Achievement Award from Denver University (2014) and an Honorary Doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music (2021). He is the founder and artistic director of iSING! Suzhou International Young Artists Festival.

### **ABOUT Lio Kuokman**

Praised by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as "a startling conducting talent," Lio Kuokman is currently Resident Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Macao Orchestra, and Programme Director of the Macao International Music Festival. While serving as The Philadelphia Orchestra's Assistant Conductor, he won second prize in the 3rd Svetlanov International Conducting Competition in Paris. The first Chinese conductor to conduct a Vienna Symphony Orchestra subscription concert, he was invited by the French government to lead the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse on its first tour of Saudi Arabia. Other orchestra appearances include the Detroit Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, the Seoul Philharmonic, the Moscow Philharmonic, and the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. Educated at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the New England Conservatory, Lio has received numerous citations from the governments of both Hong Kong and Macao.

### **ABOUT The Philadelphia Orchestra**

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. It strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust educational initiatives, and commitment to the community, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society.

### **ABOUT The Philadelphia Orchestra's History in China**

The Philadelphia Orchestra has a long and distinguished touring history, connecting with people throughout the world through music, and is one of the most-traveled American symphonic ensembles. In 1973, under the direction of Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra became the first American orchestra to perform in China at the special request of President Richard Nixon. Twenty years after its first tour of China, the full Orchestra returned in 1993, and again in 1996, 2001, 2008, and 2010, when it helped to open the World Expo in Shanghai, prior to return visits in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2019.

**ABOUT the Suzhou Culture and Arts Centre**

Suzhou Culture and Arts Centre (SCAC), originally designed by the world-famous architect Paul Andreu, occupies an area of 150,000 square meters and houses 12 theaters, including the Grand Theatre, Da Dao Comedy Theatre, the Jinji Lake Concert Hall and Guo Feng Theatre as well as a cineplex, the Jinji Lake Contemporary Art Museum, SIP Cultural Center, SCAC Art School, restaurants and retail stores. The Suzhou Symphony Orchestra and Suzhou Ballet Theatre are the SCAC's resident troupes. SCAC is a subsidiary of Suzhou Culture Investment and Development Group, and also a member of the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres. It has become a city landmark and a sanctuary of art in Suzhou, as well as a renowned culture and art space in China since its grand opening in 2007.

**ABOUT the Asian Performing Arts Council**

The Asian Performing Arts Council (APAC) was established in 1987 as a non-profit organization to foster cultural exchange between the United States and Asia, particularly China. Founded by Dr. Martha Liao, a former geneticist who was one of the earliest scientists to introduce recombinant DNA technology to China, APAC has organized countless gala concerts, recitals, community outreaches, exhibitions, TV and radio programs, and other events reaching numerous audiences in both the United States and China. Under Dr. Liao's leadership as chairman since its founding 35 years ago, APAC has assisted more than a hundred Chinese performing artists from all disciplines—instrumentalists, composers, singers, dancers and traditional Chinese musicians—in their training and career development. APAC has been the producer of the iSING! project since its inception in 2011. In 2014, the program moved to the historic city of Suzhou. Since that time APAC, together with the Suzhou Culture and Arts Centre, has been producing iSING! Suzhou and continues to attract artists and audiences worldwide.

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