

## Shih-Hui Chen: *Returning Souls*—Composing East and West

Chinese composer Chou Wen-chung (Zhou Wenzhong) once said about the Asian composer: “The pressing need for bi-cultural competence is indeed his advantage over his Western colleagues.”<sup>1</sup> His younger colleague, Tan Dun, says: “I think it is a tragedy for today’s composers if they are only interested in one culture, it is not enough to develop your own language.”<sup>2</sup> Asian composers often have the privilege of growing up with at least two musical languages: they are taught the compositional traditions from the West and come across musical traditions from the East in their everyday experiences. While few of them are as well-trained and as knowledgeable in the Eastern as they usually are in Western musical traditions and while there is a fair degree of alienation from their “own” music, partly because the conservatory system through which most of them have been trained largely keeps the two areas—Asian and Western-style music—apart, many Asian composers nevertheless call on these traditions to compose. In a postmodern age of eclecticism, bi-cultural competence (or more) has become an asset and many an Asian composer chooses to write in an “ethnic/national style” (*minzu fengge*), and with “ethnic/national characteristics” (*minzuxing*)—to great effect.

Born in Taipei (Taipei), Taiwan, in 1962, composer Shih-Hui Chen (Chen Shihui) graduated from the National Academy of Arts in Taipei in 1982. She continued her education at Northern Illinois University (M.M. 1985) and at Boston University (D.M.A. 1993). What she remembers from her musical childhood was that “we mostly studied Western music.” Her father was an aficionado of Chinese local opera forms, however, and so she remembers: “I often went to see it, too. Also, living with my grandmother in the countryside until I was ten, I listened to some Taiwanese folk music and opera.”<sup>3</sup> Her early works, such as her first and second string quartets (1979/1987), *Water Ink* (1988), and *Moments* (1995) are accomplished modernist paintings in sound, but they do not immediately speak to her Taiwanese or Chinese background. And yet, from the beginning, there are also other pieces, such as *Mime* (1988) for soprano, harp, and percussion, which use vocal and percussion techniques from Chinese opera. Indeed, Chen’s oeuvre is punctuated with Chinese motifs: *Fu I & II* (for solo pipa and for pipa and ensemble, 1999) elaborate on a specific technique for the Chinese lute pipa—the abrupt and thus very percussive muffling of the strings after a strong attack. In *66 Times* (1993), a silent piece full of melodic charm, the Chinese musical concepts of a single sound (which is embellished in all kinds of ways) and of heterophony (by which one describes a linear musical structure which becomes vertically connected by making use of slight deviations from a common melodic line in different instruments) are applied.

The set of compositions collected on this recording are in “ethnic/national style” as well: they reflect her experiences of being able to return to Taiwan, for a year, in 2010, as a Fulbright Scholar to study, specifically, the musics of Taiwan. Yet, there are a multitude of different forms that this style may take. Something one could call “pentatonic romanticism” has been employed

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<sup>1</sup> Chou Wen-Chung, “Towards a New Mainstream,” *Final Report of the ACL Conference and Festival 1979*, 44–51, 49f, Christian Utz: *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität von John Cage bis Tan Dun*, Stuttgart 2002: 483.

<sup>2</sup> Tan Dun: Interview with Christian Utz, May 13, 1998. Christian Utz: *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität von John Cage bis Tan Dun*, Stuttgart 2002: 487.

<sup>3</sup> Shih-Hui Chen: Interview with Barbara Mittler, September 6, 1992. Barbara Mittler: *Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China*, Wiesbaden 1997: 198.

by Chinese composers since the 1910s and 1920s. The well-known *Butterfly Violin Concerto* (1959), composed in the tradition of late romantic virtuoso concertos, is a good example for this style. Pentatonic romanticism takes Chinese musical “raw materials” such as pentatonic melodies from instrumental music, folksong, or opera and stylizes them, by transferring them onto foreign instruments and by adapting them to a foreign system of notation and into the musical language of functional harmony (not unlike a practice common to “exoticist” compositions in the West, such as Puccini’s *Turandot*). Chinese instrumental music, folksong, and operatic singing, however, are characterized by a changing irregular meter; they make use of elaborate ornamentation and tonal inflections, accurate notation of which is hardly possible. These idiosyncracies cannot be retained in stylized composition. In another mode of “ethnic style,” therefore, prevalent especially since the 1970s and 80s with first examples already to be found in the 1940s, Chinese composers have attempted to capture precisely these characteristic elements of Chinese melody, thus highlighting its microtonality, the importance of a single sound and its embellishments, and its polyrhythmic qualities.

Chen’s string quartet *Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossom* (2007) is one such example. The composition is based on an old tune, which exists in the form of solo music for different Chinese instruments and which is also one of the most popular tunes in *nanguan* music as practiced in Taiwan today. This is where Chen drew her inspiration. The piece, in all three of its movements, takes up elements from the *Plum Blossom* melody, which becomes most prevalently audible in the last movement. The composition thus realizes a principle from Chinese traditional musical practice, that of playing variations with a theme crystallizing at the end of the piece. There is no first introduction of the theme in its original form—rather, it is hinted at, again and again, and only in the end appears in full form. The composition favors horizontal, heterophonic, canonic movement over vertical structures. It makes holistic use of the four conventional string instruments in a string quartet, including a lot of *spiccato* and *pizzicato* effects, reminiscent of the sonic timbre in traditional Chinese musical ensembles. It also includes plenty of dialogic structures, repeatedly reducing the texture to one or two instruments rather than making full use of the entire sound body all the time. The piece thus appears as transparent and everchanging, impressionist and atmospheric.

Similarly, *Returns* for flute, percussion, and cello (2009), while not citing a particular melody, is infused with wavering pentatonic motivic lines which are presented in an everchanging structural web, vacillating between more contrapuntal passages where the motivic fragments appear, moving in opposite directions, and other passages where these pentatonic motifs are presented in a more linear dialogic set-up, with one instrument echoing, mimicking, or inspiring the other. The piece also features a lot of trill passages, grace notes, and glissandi as well as harsh percussion interpunctuation, reminiscent of Chinese instrumental practice.

As can be seen in these compositions, apart from Chinese melody, particular Chinese instrumental techniques, too, have been used frequently by composers of Chinese descent and could thus be considered marks of an “ethnic style” or of “Chineseness.” A more stylizing approach would transfer Chinese instrumental techniques (such as frequent tremolos, arpeggio or trill structures, or a fixation on single sounds) onto foreign instruments, leaving out their peculiar effects, such as *bruitisms* or microtonalities. A more idiosyncratic approach in turn changes the foreign instrument into one that is treated as Chinese. In *Returning Souls: Four Short Pieces on Three Formosan Amis Legends* (2011) (adopted from the documentary film *Returning Souls* by Hu Tai-Li), this practice can be observed: the violin is not primarily bowed as would be conventional

practice, but played in constant change between double-stopping, sighing glissandi, and harsh pizzicati, which evokes the practices of Chinese and Amis instrumental traditions—the jaw harp being one prominent example.

Yet another way of including “ethnic/national style” in one’s composition is to draw on Chinese myths, history, philosophy, and literature. This is an element prevailing in almost all of the compositions presented on this program, in varying degrees: they are not program music but abstract retakes of the ideas expressed in some of their programmatic titles, texts, or in the stories behind them. In traditional readings, the plum blossom which appears in Chen’s string quartet *Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossom*, is said to weather snow and wind in its quiet beauty. Pure and white, it represents the steadfast and ideal (Confucian) gentleman. *Returning Souls*, in turn, reflects upon three Amis legends of genesis, the making of earth, firmament, and mankind: these tales of birth and destruction, of failure and remorse and of the vicissitudes of the world are not immediately translated into a musical structure, but rather mediated into an abstraction of sounds.

Only in *Sweet Rice Pie, Six Songs on Four Taiwanese Nursery Rhymes*, for voice and chamber ensemble (2005), written for her three-year-old daughter, does Chen actually become rather more “literal” in her translation of image/text into sound: the cheeky text of the first (and last) movement (Sweet Rice Pie), is translated into a musical structure that is quite percussive, determined by rhythm and meter. In the second movement, a lullaby (Swing High, Swing Low) the actions of swinging and rocking the baby are made audible. Most “visual” in its act of translating the text into sound is perhaps the third movement (Crybaby) which uses different onomatopoeic elements to indicate the crying as well as the soothing laughter in later passages. The fourth movement (Firefly), too, is very concrete: it is characterized by very unsteady, constant repetition in the melodic instruments and by an equally erratic but incessant percussion movement, and the use of pentatonic melodies very high and very low, including large vertical jumps, somehow reminiscent of the capricious movements of a firefly.

*Our Names*, a composition for narrator and chamber ensemble (2011), takes up a political theme: the neglect of Taiwan’s indigenous people and their history in the writing of Taiwanese history books. The male and female voice of the narrators keep repeating the same small set of phrases: “Our names are forgotten in the pages of Taiwan’s history . . . our destiny is respected and valued only in the papers of anthropologists. . . . What is left for us? . . . Please record our mythologies, we want to stop being wanderers in our own lands . . . restore our names and dignity.” Throughout, the English text is interspersed with words from the indigenous language. Within each set of phrases, relentless repetition is practiced, so as to create the effect of someone being constantly interrupted (and thus silenced). The use of instruments is evocative: there is constant change between passages accompanied by one single instrument and, with incessant repetitions of the text, more and more instruments are added. This provides an ever greater urgency to the message—clearly, it can no longer be silenced. By de-naturalizing what is taken as natural or given, the piece involves the audience, offering a new interpretation of history—should one perhaps get up and join the shouting?

The compositions by Shih-Hui Chen on this recording can thus be considered variations of an “ethnic style.” Particular Chinese/Taiwanese myths and ideas stand behind these compositions. Melodies and instrumental techniques, topics and texts, the use of Chinese musical structures such as heterophony, and the peculiar stretta effects which can be seen both in terms of metric as

well as in terms of sonic arrangements, are all elements that can be explained as derived from Chinese and Taiwanese musical practice. Each of the pieces revolves around a small number of notes and motifs which are continually reinterpreted. The compositions feature colorful sounds; they exemplify Chen's particular predilection for effective timbres, for the potent qualities of "noise" as well as of "silence" as part of a comprehensive musical whole. So one could argue that this is music in "ethnic/national style." Not unlike many other composers of Chinese descent, who consider it important to express their "Chineseness" in music, Chen employs this style to great effect. And indeed, in recent years such compositions have been quite successful internationally. In an age of postmodernism where elements from different "authentic traditions" play an increasingly important role, composers of Chinese descent have been able to move to center stage in a globalized world of performance. This is so in spite of the fact that we are observing here something of a paradoxical revival: the idea of the "national composer" was an invention of the nineteenth century which has long since been unmasked as a socio-cultural construct, with no base in empirical musical evidence. Not ethnic but personal, individual differences are today considered pivotal in the works of composers once praised for their "national style": Chopin, Smetana, Dvořák, Liszt, and Fauré. Why, in the beginning of the twenty-first century does not the same apply for composers of Chinese descent? Are there not as many Chinese styles as there are Chinese composers?

What we observe is an asymmetry of perception which is twofold: the history of what one could call "New Chinese Music," i.e., music by Chinese composers, employing instruments and compositional genres and techniques which once originated in Western traditions but which have become rooted in China since the first decades of the twentieth century, has been dominated by constant demands to compose in "ethnic/national style" (*minzu fengge*), and with "ethnic/national characteristics," (*minzuxing*). Foreign music critics as well as critics within China will often judge Chinese compositions deficient if they do not "sound Chinese." Indeed, it had been a foreigner, Alexander Tcherepnin, with his 1934 competition for "Piano Pieces in Chinese Style," who may have been the first to publically demand that Chinese composers write their music in "national style." He was convinced and mentions this in an important essay published in the influential *Musical Quarterly* that "Great musical activity is going on in China. The Chinese composer has under his hands one of the richest sources of native music. . . . The more national his product, the greater will be its international value."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the question of "ethnic/national style"—as important and interesting to look at as it is—may not be the only context in which such compositions could be perceived: seen from a different vantage point, they stand up equally well. For even when they deal with particular events in Chinese or Taiwanese history or politics—as does Chen in *Our Names*, for example, which is based on her experience of meeting with Taiwan's indigenous people, such as the writer Mu Langeng, and of understanding their claims to history—compositions such as *Our Names* are *not just* about one group of Taiwanese, but about the experiences of *any* people written out of history. And from the purely musical perspective, too, one could easily laud these pieces for their atmospheric nature and their refined structure without pointing out any cultural specificities.

One of the reasons why this is so is, in fact, a long history of convergences: when Western composers turned away from their own heritage in the early twentieth century, Eastern musical traditions became an attractive alternative. Debussy's gamelan sounds, Mahler's *Das Lied von der*

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Tcherepnin, "Music in Modern China," *Musical Quarterly* 1935.21/4: 391–400, 399.

*Erde* based on Chinese poetry, Cage's philosophy of silence and his *Music of Changes* originating in his interpretation of a Chinese divinatory classic, the *Book of Changes*, Messiaen's synesthetics, Britten's *Curlew River* reconceiving the traditions of Japanese *noh*, or Lou Harrison's use of Asian instruments, are all manifestations of a widespread fascination. Having to find ever new techniques and methods, the Western composer of New Music began to travel far.

Evidently, in the process of creating New Music, both in China and in the West, the Western composer was not just the missionary but also the convert: indeed, as Chou Wen-chung once said, "fundamental Asian concepts and practices in music are gradually and unobtrusively being integrated into the mainstream of Western contemporary music."<sup>5</sup> This merging cannot be explained alone by a strong Western interest in Asian culture. Rather, there are fundamental similarities, certain affinities between Eastern old and Western new techniques. The breakdown of Western harmony was the first step in creating New Music in the West. Conventional vertical structures gave way to more linear, horizontal structure in music, the latter being typical of Chinese traditional music in the first place. The concept of sound compositions, of layered heterophonic structures rather than melodic developments, of micro-movements within static clusters, a technique prevalent in New Music, exemplified in compositions by Ligeti, Lutoslawski, and Scelsi among others, is a common feature in Chinese music. Complicated and polyrhythmic structures, another of the "discoveries" of New Music, are customary in China's music practice, and even the use of speech-voice is similar to some of the vocal effects used in Chinese opera.

Coming from a non-Western tradition, and employing it in composition, the Chinese composer is thus inscribed in a continuous and typically postmodern process of questioning and reconsideration. By integrating Chinese as well as other traditions, New Chinese Music uses but also abuses, installs but also subverts, Western as well as Chinese musical conventions. Employing both Western and Chinese traditional and new forms and expectations and at the same time undermining both, New Chinese Music points to these as conventions. And yet, it not only subverts but also inscribes itself into various aspects of these musical cultures and thus perpetuates particular asymmetries of perception; however critical the subversion, there is still a complicity that cannot be denied.

Whether really, then, these compositions are "Taiwanese" or "Chinese" after all, is perhaps not the most important question to ask. While we may attempt to disentangle the many different layers in these musics that tell us more about these composers' interpretations both of the occidental Other and of their potential reverse exoticism, while we might find ethnocentrism, relativism, regionalism, and universalism in some of this New Chinese Music, most important is the fact that it has a lot to say to the world, not only because it is Taiwanese or Chinese but because it speaks in many other languages, too. New Chinese Music—and the compositions by Shih-Hui Chen are one magnificent example—in its ever more polyphonic transculturality is not national but truly international, or dare one say, global music that stands in its own right: the pieces recorded here are by an accomplished individual, a composer who chose her every note and structure with commitment and feeling.

—Barbara Mittler

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<sup>5</sup> Chou Wen-Chung, "Towards a New Mainstream," *Final Report of the ACL Conference and Festival 1979*, 44–51, 46.

## Sweet Rice Pie; Six Songs on Four Taiwanese Nursery Rhymes

### I. & VI.

|       |                                 |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| 一的爆米香 | Number one, make sweet rice pie |
| 二的炒韭菜 | Number two, scallion to fry     |
| 三的沖沖滾 | Number three, pot at a boil     |
| 四的炒米粉 | Number four, noodles in hot oil |
| 五的五將軍 | Number five, soldier's leader   |
| 六的乞食孫 | Number six, son of beggar       |
| 七的分一半 | Number seven, take half amount  |
| 八的爬梁山 | Number eight, go up the mount   |
| 九的九嬭婆 | Number nine, old as grand mom   |
| 十的撞大鑼 | Number ten, strike the tam-tam  |

### II. (mostly hummed by voice with occasional fragments of the text) & V. (complete text)

|          |                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 搖呀搖      | Swing high, swing low             |
| 搖到內山     | Into the hills we go              |
| 去挽茄      | Where eggplants grow              |
| 挽若多      | Plenty we'll pick today           |
| 挽夠一飯籬    | 'Nough for a rice basket          |
| 也好吃      | Yummy to the last bit             |
| 也好賣      | So hot on the market              |
| 也好給嬰仔作度晬 | Perfect for babe's first birthday |

### III.

|       |                            |
|-------|----------------------------|
| 愛哭神   | Crybaby, a chicken         |
| 愛哭神   | Crybaby, a chicken         |
| 剃頭剃一邊 | Hair of his half shaven    |
| 欠錢無愛還 | Money not his he's taken   |
| 給虎咬一邊 | By a tiger he's half eaten |

### IV.

|         |                                 |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| 火金姑     | Firefly, firefly                |
| 來食茶     | Tea party do come by            |
| 茶燒燒     | So hot a cuppa                  |
| 配弓蕉     | Eat a banana                    |
| 茶冷冷     | When the tea gets so cold       |
| 配龍眼     | A longan makes you bold         |
| 龍眼會開花   | Flowers on the longan tree      |
| 蒲仔換菜瓜   | Gourd for loofa let it be       |
| 菜瓜好煮湯   | Loofa soup will lift you off    |
| 蒲仔換粗糠   | So trade the gourd for chaff    |
| 粗糠好起火   | Use the chaff a fire to make    |
| 九嬭婆仔賢炊粿 | For nanny sweet cake will bake  |
| 炊到臭火焦   | And the cake will burn to black |
| 又個兼著火   | All around a fire will crack    |

*Translated by Tao-Lin Hwang*

## **Our Names**

From “primitive” to “indigenous people”  
Our names are  
Forgotten in the pages of Taiwan’s history  
From mountain to the plain  
Our destiny, oh, our destiny  
Is respected and valued only in the papers of anthropologists

A flood of power  
Has washed away the glory of  
Our ancestors  
The shadow of inferiority at the edge of society  
Has overflowed in our hearts

Our tribal names  
Are submerged in the name space of the National ID  
Our selfless view of life  
Swaying on the scaffolding  
Wandering at the demolition yards,  
The mines and the fishing boats  
The solemn mythology has turned into  
The plot of a tasteless soap opera  
The traditional morality  
Is trampled in the smoky red-light district  
Our noble spirit and tender simplicity  
Have diminished with the tolling of church bells

What is left for us?  
The footprints that wander destitute on the land?  
What is left for us?  
Our once great aspirations now dangling off the cliff

If, one day, we refuse to be wanderers in history  
Please record our mythologies and traditions  
If, one day, we want to stop being wanderers in our own land  
Please restore our names and dignity

*Translated by Teresa Huang*

Born in Taiwan, **Shih-Hui Chen** (born 1962) has lived in the United States since 1982. Since completing her D.M.A. at Boston University, Chen has received significant recognition for her work, including a Koussevitzky Music Foundation Commission, a Fromm Foundation Commission, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Fellowship, and an American Academy in Rome Prize. Chen, whose compositions integrate Taiwanese and Western music, spent two years in Taiwan studying Indigenous music and Nanguan music (2010 Fulbright Scholar Program and a 2013 Taiwan Fellowship). Recent projects have taken her outside of the concert hall into a variety of exciting venues. In the spring of 2013, Chen coordinated a multimedia event for Asian Studies programs at six universities across the United States. The event included a screening of the documentary film *Returning Souls (Hu Tai-li)*, a live performance of Chen's solo violin work *Returning Souls*, based on music she composed for the film, and a booklet of essays by scholars introducing various aspects of Taiwanese indigenous culture. In addition, Chen worked on a soundtrack for an animated film presented in Dharma Drum Mountain's (法鼓山) *Water and Land Dharma Ceremony (水陸法會)*, attended by more than ten thousand people; is organizing an international tour with the Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra; and is planning to publish a series of essays from her Taiwanese research. Shih-Hui Chen currently serves on the faculty at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University. [www.shihhuichen.com](http://www.shihhuichen.com)

**Leone Buyse** is the Mullen Professor of Flute at Rice University. Formerly a principal flutist of the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops and a member of the San Francisco Symphony and Rochester Philharmonic, she has performed with the Juilliard, Tokyo, and Brentano Quartets, Boston Musica Viva, Da Camera of Houston, and at such festivals as Sarasota, Aspen, Music Academy of the West, and Norfolk. She has presented recitals and master classes throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and South America. In 2010 she received the National Flute Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding contributions to the flute community worldwide.

**David Cho** was appointed Music Director of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra in May 2011 and began his tenure in July 2012. In 2007, Mr. Cho was awarded First Prize at the Eduardo Mata International Conducting Competition held in Mexico City, Mexico. This award has led to numerous guest conducting engagements in Europe and South America. He attended the Tanglewood Music Center as a conducting fellow in 1999, followed by conducting studies under Larry Rachleff at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. He has served as the Associate Conductor of Utah Symphony/Utah Opera and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. He has also served as the Bruno Walter resident conductor of the San Antonio Symphony.

**Jeanne Kierman Fischer**, artist teacher of piano at the Shepherd School of Music, has made a professional specialty of the contemporary American piano repertoire. As a chamber musician, she appears regularly at festivals such as Tanglewood, DaCamera of Houston, Mohawk Trail, and Juneau Jazz and Classics. In partnership with Norman Fischer, Ms. Kierman Fischer (as the Fischer Duo) has toured as Artistic Ambassador for the U.S. Information Agency in South America and South Africa; and the duo celebrates its 42nd season in 2014 with recitals in various American cities as well as the release of four CDs of the complete works of Beethoven for cello and piano.

**Norman Fischer** has performed in forty-nine of the fifty states and on five continents. He was the founding cellist of the Concord String Quartet, a group that, during its sixteen-year career, played more than 1,500 concerts, won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, two Grammy nominations, and an Emmy. Since 1971 he has also performed with pianist Jeanne Kierman Fischer as the Fischer Duo, known especially for its commissions and recordings. Mr. Fischer has taught at Dartmouth and Oberlin and is currently the Herbert S. Autrey Professor of Cello and coordinator of chamber music at Rice University. He holds also the Charles E. Culpeper Foundation Master Teacher Chair at the Tanglewood Music Center, where he coordinates chamber music.

**Timothy Jones**, baritone, performs widely in opera, concerts, chamber music, and solo recitals. A champion of new works, Jones has commissioned and premiered numerous pieces across the United States and Europe. An Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music, he has contributed to the cultural life of Houston for several years through his performances with CONTEXT, Musiqua, Ars Lyrica, and the Houston Symphony. His operatic career flourishes with leading roles in *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *La Traviata*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Carmen*, and *Romeo et Juliette*. Jones earned his DMA from the University of Michigan and his BM from Centenary College in his hometown, Shreveport, Louisiana.

Violinist **Cho-Liang Lin**, in a concert career spanning the globe for more than thirty years, is equally at home with orchestra, in recital, playing chamber music, and in a teaching studio. Performing on several continents, he has appeared as soloist with the orchestras of Detroit, Toronto, Dallas, Houston, Nashville, and San Diego, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; in Europe with the Bergen Philharmonic, Stockholm Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, and the English Chamber Orchestra; and in Asia with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Malaysia Philharmonic, and Bangkok Symphony. As Music Director of La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest since 2001, Mr. Lin has helped develop a festival that once focused primarily on chamber music into a multidisciplinary festival featuring dance, jazz, and a burgeoning new-music program commissioning composers as diverse as Chick Corea and Kaija Saariaho. He is currently professor of violin at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. He plays the 1715 "Titian" Stradivarius.

**Kevin Noe**, a passionate supporter and promoter of composers, creators, and the arts of our time, has commissioned and premiered more than sixty new works written for new-music ensembles and orchestras. Having a background in the theater, Noe serves regularly as conductor, stage director, actor, and filmmaker for a variety of mixed-media, operatic, and theatrical productions. He is currently the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, a group which has experienced a 600% growth in attendance under his leadership, and the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Conducting at Michigan State University.

Percussionist **Robert Schulz** is widely regarded as one of the finest new-music percussionists working today. He is principal percussionist for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Boston Musica Viva, Dinosaur Annex, and the Dogs of Desire. He also works with the Boston Symphony, Pops and Ballet Orchestras, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, and the Boston Chamber Music Society. In 2004, Mr. Schulz received a Grammy Award nomination

for Best Small Ensemble Performance on Yehudi Wyner's *The Mirror* and gave the premiere of Tan Dun's Water Concerto with BMOP. He tours nationally and internationally with pipa virtuoso Wu Man and was the featured soloist for the 2006 CrossSound Festival in Juneau, Alaska.

Cellist **Bion Tsang**, winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Bronze Medal in the IX International Tchaikovsky Competition, has appeared with the New York, Moscow, and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestras, the Atlanta, Pacific, Civic, American, and National Symphony Orchestras, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Saint Paul and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestras, the Louisville Orchestra and the Taiwan National Orchestra. As a chamber musician, Mr. Tsang has collaborated with violinists Pamela Frank, Jaime Laredo, Cho-Liang Lin, and Kyoko Takezawa, violist Michael Tree, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, bassist Gary Karr, and pianist Leon Fleisher. Mr. Tsang is on the faculty at the University of Texas Butler School of Music.

**Michael Webster** is Professor of Music at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and artistic director of the award-winning Houston Youth Symphony. Formerly principal clarinetist with the Rochester Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, he has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Pops, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, the Tokyo, Cleveland, Muir, Ying, Enso, and Dover String Quartets, and many of North America's finest festivals. Webster has performed and taught all over the United States and in Canada, Central and South America, Europe, Japan, China, New Zealand, and Australia.

The **Formosa Quartet**, first-prize winners of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition, has toured the United States, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan extensively and recorded on the EMI label. Its members are widely recognized musicians, each of whom have been prizewinners in international competitions, played in leading chamber ensembles and orchestras, and held teaching positions at major universities. The Quartet counts as one of its missions the desire to bring great music to and from Taiwan, the land of its shared heritage.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*66 Times "The Voice of Pines and Cedars."* Elisabeth Weigle, soprano; Wu Man, pipa; Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose, conductor; Min-Ho Yeh, clarinet; Fischer Duo. Albany Records 858.

*Remembrance.* Hsin-Yun Huang, viola; Evergreen Symphony Orchestra, Gernot Schmalfuss, conductor. Bridge Records 9387.

Producer: Kurt Stallmann

Engineer: Todd Hulslander

*Returning Souls* was recorded in May 2012; *Returnings* was recorded in October 2012; *Sweet Rice Pie* was recorded in April 2006; *Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossom for String Quartet* was recorded in January 2013; *Our Names* was recorded in March 2013. All works were recorded in Stude Concert Hall, Shepherd School of Music, Rice University.

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This CD is dedicated to Kurt and Lia, for taking this wild and unconventional journey together with me.

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SHIH-HUI CHEN (b. 1962)  
*RETURNING SOULS*

80746-2

*Returning Souls: Four Short Pieces on Three Formosan Amis Legends* (2011) 9:16

讓靈魂回家:阿美族的三則傳奇四首歌

1. Introduction: Sun, the Glowing Maiden 序: 太陽, 會發光的女孩 1:43

2. Legend I: The Great Flood, the Descending Shaman 2:22

傳說一: 大洪水, 天上降臨的巫師

3. Legend II: Head Hunting, Ascending Spirit becomes a Star 2:19

傳說二: 出草, 上升的星星

4. Legend III: The Glowing Maiden, Returning Souls 2:39

傳說三: 會發光的女孩, 讓靈魂回家

Cho-Liang Lin, violin

5. *Returnings* (2009) 10:02

雁歸來

Leone Buyse, flute; Robert Schulz, percussion; Bion Tsang, cello

*Sweet Rice Pie: Six Songs on Four Taiwanese Nursery Rhymes* (2005) 13:16

6. I. Sweet Rice Pie 爆米香 1:07

7. II. Swing High, Swing Low 搖呀搖 2:25

8. III. Crybaby 愛哭神 2:17

9. IV. Firefly 火金姑 3:08

10. V. Swing High, Swing Low 搖呀搖 2:45

11. VI. Sweet Rice Pie 爆米香 1:34

Timothy Jones, baritone; Leone Buyse, flute; Michael Webster, clarinet; Nuiko Wadden, harp; Matthew McClung, percussion; Timothy Peters, violin; Norman Fischer, cello; Kevin Noe, conductor

*Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossom for String Quartet* (2007) 16:08

梅花操的迴響

12. I. *Fantasia* 暗香疏影 6:54

13. II. *Ten Thousand Blooms* 萬花競放 4:25

14. III. *Plum Blossoms* 釀雪爭春 4:39

Formosa Quartet: Jasmine Lin, Wayne Lee, violins; Che-Yen Chen, viola; Ru-Pei Yeh, cello

15. *Our Names* (2011) 13:38

請恢復我們的姓名

Norman Fischer, narrator; Leone Buyse, flute; Michael Webster, clarinet; Jeanne Kierman Fischer, piano & narrator; Brandon Bell, percussion; Ben Odhner, violin; Coleman Itzkoff, cello; David Cho, conductor

TT: 62:42