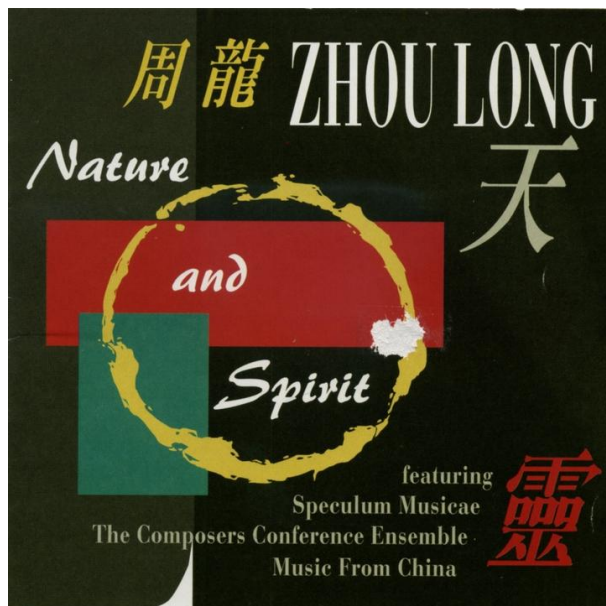


## Zhou Long



1. *Tian Ling* (Nature and Spirit) for pipa and 14 players (1992) ..... (15:34)  
Wu Man, pipa; The Composers Conference Ensemble: Rachel Rudich, flute; Marcia Butler, oboe; Marianne Gythfeldt, clarinet; Lester Cantor, bassoon; Ronald Anderson, trumpet; Paul Basler,

horn; Robert Wigness, trombone; Rolf Schulte, violin; Betty Hauck, viola; Michael Finckel, cello; Donald Palma, contra bass; Stephen Paysen, percussion; Dominic Donato, percussion; Randall Hodgkinson, piano; Efrain Guigui, conductor

2. *Su* (Tracing Back) for flute and harp (1990) ..... (6:42)  
Barbara Siesel, flute; Victoria Drake, harp
3. *Wu Ji* for piano, zheng, percussion (1991) ..... (10:07)  
Music From China: Gwendolyn Mok, piano; Wu Man, zheng; Erik Charlston, percussion
4. *Ding* for clarinet, percussion, double bass (1990) ..... (9:15)  
Speculum Musicae: Allen Blustine, clarinet; Frank Cassara, percussion; Victor Kioulaphides, double bass
5. *Dhyana* for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano (1989-90) ..... (9:36)  
Speculum Musicae: Elizabeth Brown, flute; Allen Blustine, clarinet; Cyrus Stevens, violin; Eric Bartlett, cello; Christopher Oldfather, piano; Donald Palma, conductor

Total playing time: 52:00

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## Notes

**Zhou Long** was born in 1953 in Beijing, China. As a youth, he received the artistic influence of his parents who painted and taught vocal music. Though he began piano lessons at a young age, he was unable to escape the fate of most of his generation in China whose education was halted during the Cultural Revolution. He was sent to a state farm in a remote area where the natural scene—roaring winds and fierce land fires—made a profound impression on him. It was music which helped him to survive the difficult life. In 1973, Zhou restarted his musical training, studying composition, music theory, and conducting as well as Chinese music. When the school system was resumed in 1977, Zhou enrolled in the exclusive Central Conservatory in Beijing to study composition under Su Xia. After graduation in 1983, he was appointed the composer-in-residence with the Broadcasting Symphony of China. Zhou came to the United States in 1985 under a fellowship to attend Columbia University. There he studied composition with Chou Wen-chung, Mario Davidovsky and George Edwards and received his doctorate in 1993. Currently, he is the music director of Music from China in New York City and a Visiting Professor at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music.

During his years as a composer in China, Zhou Long drew heavily on the traditional Chinese methods in which he was long immersed, first while living in rural China and later while studying at the Conservatory. While folk-like melodies and tonal harmonies do characterize much of his writing during this period, the works in the years leading up to his

arrival to the West show a modernist, experimental musical sensibility already in development. His string quartet *Song of the Ch'in* from 1983 transfers to the modern string quartet the idiomatic sounds and techniques of the ch'in, a seven-string instrument dating from the Tang dynasty (618–906). The work received first prize in the Chinese National Composition Competition in 1985 and has been recorded by the Shanghai Quartet on the Delos label. The *Los Angeles Times* described it as "an evocative, eight-minute tone painting applying sophisticated compositional techniques to what sound like fragments of traditional Chinese melodies."

In 1984, the China Record Company produced a disc of Zhou's original compositions for traditional Chinese instruments. Among his many works in this genre is *Valley Stream* (1983) for a quartet of Chinese instruments (di, guan, zheng and percussion). The composer described his goal in the work as "to preserve the idiomatic nuances of traditional Chinese music while experimenting with instrumentation, performance techniques, rhythm and sonority." Ethnomusicologist Qiao Jianzhong remarked: "In *Valley Stream*, composer Zhou Long has dealt a blow to the established formulas of Chinese music of the last thirty years."

Though Zhou Long considered his compositional profile to be well established before his arrival in the U.S., his techniques and means of expression have since undergone many changes. He is now concerned primarily with a merging of Eastern and Western cultures through music. That has meant, specifically, the combining of ancient Chinese musical traditions and free

atonal composition into a coherent and personal statement. Zhou has compared his integration of Western musical theory into his essentially Chinese compositions to the accretion of Buddhist principals into Chinese culture during the Tang dynasty. Buddhist thought itself has been a direct influence in a number of his works including *Wu Ji*, *Ding* and *Dhyana*.

As displayed in the works on this disc, which all date from the last five years, Zhou Long draws on the entire spectrum of his Chinese heritage, including folk traditions and philosophical and spiritual ideals, as well as musical instruments and gestures. Throughout, there are musical traits directly reminiscent of China: sensitive melodies, expressive glissandi in various solo statements, and, in particular, an undercurrent of tranquility and meditation.

Zhou Long has received much recognition for his work including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has received commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Fromm Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts as well as a Meet The Composer Consortium Commission for the Shanghai, Chester and Ciompi String quartets, and a Meet The Composer's Composer/Choreographer Commission for a collaboration with Chen and Dancers. His works have been performed and recorded by the Central Philharmonic of China, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sacramento and Virginia symphonies, the Women's Philharmonic, the Russian Philharmonic, Kronos Quartet, New York's New Music Consort, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and soprano Rao Lan with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, among others. Zhou Long has been a guest composer at the Pacific Music Festival in Japan, the Ravinia Festival, and the Holland Festival, among other festivals and residencies. In 1991, he was elected "Famous Chinese Musician of the Year" by the *Chinese Musical Chronicle*.

—Joseph R. Dalton

Please note that in the Chinese tradition, Zhou Long's family name is ZHOU, and his personal name is Long. Thus, he can be properly referred to as Zhou Long, Mr. Zhou, or Zhou, but not as Mr. Long, or Long.

The age-old tradition of Chinese instrumental music has bequeathed us immortal classical music and folk arts with rich taste and spirit. The question facing composers, such as myself, who are devoted to the creation of new Chinese music, then, is how to carry on and enhance this splendid heritage.

For every generation, traditional culture is something already formed. What is crucial is how to rediscover and comprehend it more fully. In this process of understanding and discovery, culture will become a living tradition, maintaining its long historical continuity. While this continuity undeniably impacts on the creativity of a given period, artists of one culture or tradition can also choose to absorb and extract the essence of various other cultures in the service of a lasting tradition. Such has been my goal in the pieces recorded here—to bring Western music theory concepts into my music which is always the result of my Chinese heritage.

*Tian Ling* (Nature and Spirit) for pipa and fourteen players was commissioned and premiered by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and the virtuoso pipa soloist Wu Man on the occasion of Music Lives!, the 1992 Pittsburgh International Music Festival, and won the First Prize of Barlow International Competition in 1994. The idea of this piece is

based on ancient Chinese thought—the solo Chinese lute pipa represents the spirit, while the ensemble represents nature. At times the interaction of the soloist and the ensemble resembles that in a traditional Western concerto.

*Su* (Tracing Back) was first written in 1984 as a duet for flute and guqin (a seven-string Chinese instrument similar to the zither) at the request of the guqin master Wu Wenguang and the Chinese Qin Society. This version for flute and harp dates from 1990. The work directly incorporates musical features of the oldest extant piece of guqin music, "Youlan" (Orchid).

The title *Wu Ji* is extracted from ancient Chinese philosophy. In Chinese "Wu" means 'nothing' or "the lack of...", and "Ji" means "polarity" or "the extremity." Literally "Wu Ji" means "the lack of polarities" or, more appropriately, "beyond the extremity." The word "extremity" here refers to "the infinity" which is beyond time and space, its presence preceding that of anything in the universe. The music itself consists of many variations ranging over a wide field on the piano with sound effects on percussion and plucking instrument (the zheng). *Wu Ji* was completed at Yaddo during the Fall of 1991, and is dedicated with gratitude to the legacy of Kristina Trask.

The meaning of the Chinese word "ding" (in Sanskrit, "samadhi") is the perfect absorption of thought into the one object of meditation. In order to transmit the great thought of Buddhist feeling and artistic conception into a piece of music, I chose an abstract, improvisation-like style in slow speed. The basic materials of *Ding* include a twelve-tone row and a tonal melody. Three kinds of instruments—blown (clarinet), struck (percussion) and bowed (double bass)—are used in full range, from very high to very low. In addition, each of the instrumentalists is called on to play microtonal grace notes in order to imitate the acoustic effect of Oriental traditional instruments. *Ding* was awarded the first prize of the International Ensemble Composition Competition in Monchengladbach, Germany in 1990, and is dedicated to professor Mario Davidovsky.

*Dhyana* derives its inspiration from the "cultivation of thought" in Buddhism and the process of gathering scattered ideas and focusing them to arrive at enlightenment. I designed the music based on the concept of "knowing with clear mind," of coming from existence into nothingness. To express the transformation from the mundane, to the serene and finally to purity, the musical structure goes from complex to simple in pitch, from dense to relaxed in rhythm, from tight to open in range, from colorful to monotonous in timbre, from foreground to background in space of sonority. I bring the distinguishing features of each instrument into full play in homage to ancient Chinese instruments and musical gestures. For instance, the Chinese sounds of bells, chimes, and gongs and the harmonics of the guqin (a Chinese long zither), are re-created by playing inside of the piano; the sound of temple blocks and the various sonorities of the guqin are re-created in the violin and cello; and the reciting style of the vertical Chinese bamboo flute is translated into glissandos and microtones in the flute and clarinet. *Dhyana* was composed in 1989 and completed in March of 1990. The composition, which won the Fifth International Composition Competition in d'Avray City, France on February 4, 1991 and the Dr. Rapaport Prize at Columbia University, is dedicated to professor Chou Wen-chung.

—Zhou Long

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## Production Notes

CD Produced by Zhou Long.

Executive Producer: Joseph R. Dalton.

*Tian Ling*: Recorded by the 48th Annual Composers Conference at Houghton Memorial Chapel, Wellesley College on August 15, 1992; Anthony F. Di Bartolo, Audio Engineer.

*Su*: Recorded by Zhou Long at M & I Recording Studios, New York City on November 18, 1992; Chaz Clifton, Recording Engineer.

*Wu Ji*: Recorded by Music From China at Merkin Concert Hall, New York City on October 27, 1991.

*Ding*: Recorded by Columbia Composers Concert at Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York City on April 23, 1991.

*Dhyana*: Recorded by Columbia Composers Concert at Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York City on May 16, 1991.

Mastered by Zhou Long, and Yuanlin Chen, Engineer at Zhou's Studio, New York City.

*Su*, *Ding* and *Dhyana* published by Theodore Presser.

Other works published by the composer (ASCAP).

This CD is dedicated to the memory of my parents, professors Zhou Zutai and He Gaoyong.

Special thanks to my wife Chen Yi, The Composers Conference at Wellesley College, Mario Davidovsky, Conference Director, and to Columbia Composers, and Music From China, Executive Director, Susan Cheng. CRI Art Direction & Production Manager: Ladi Odeku

Cover & Booklet Design: Patrick and Dale Chu, Loiminchay Inc.

Portrait of Zhou Long by Jim Hair, Berkeley, CA.

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Managing Director: Joseph R. Dalton.

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