

CHINA NOW MUSIC FESTIVAL

CHINA AND BEETHOVEN



BEETHOVEN IS US

Monday, December 14, 2020

7:30pm

China Now Music Festival Livestream

Jindong Cai

Artistic Director, China Now Music Festival

With (in order of appearance)

Gao Ruijia

Director, “Ludwig
Beethoven: The Piano”

Jiang Yuanlai

Playwright, “Beethoven in
China”

Li Weijie

Musical Director, “Ludwig
Beethoven: The Piano”

Bing Yue

Director, “Beethoven in
China”

Jia Fan

Leading role, “Ludwig
Beethoven: The Piano”

Fang Jing

General Manager, Shanghai
Concert Hall

Zhou Keren

Leading role, “Ludwig
Beethoven: The Piano”

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Jindong Cai, Artistic Director, China Now Music Festival

LUDWIG BEETHOVEN: THE PIANO

Presented by He He Musicals

I. Video Presentation

II. Interview

Gao Ruijia, Director

Li Weijie, Musical Director

Jia Fan, actor, leading role

Zhou Keren, actor, leading role

BEETHOVEN IN CHINA

Presented by Tianyu Theater Company

I. Interview

Jiang Yuanlai, Playwright

Bing Yue, Director

II. Video: a Scene from 'Beethoven in China'

THE BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE

Presented by Shanghai Concert Hall

I. Video Presentation: Shanghai Concert Hall and the Beethoven Experience

II. Interview

Fang Jing, General Manager, Shanghai Concert Hall

PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG BEETHOVEN: THE PIANO (2018)

He He Musicals

Ruijia Gao, Director

Weijie Li, Musical Director

Originally a Korean production first staged in 2018, the musical “Ludwig Beethoven” comes to China in a new production in Shanghai from December 22 to 27, 2020.

This production focuses on the strife between Ludwig and Karl, who wants to be a soldier but has to follow Ludwig's dream instead of his own.

The musical features three different actors to portray different stages of Ludwig's life. From a child actor and a young Ludwig to the elderly Ludwig who recollects his life, the musical shows various aspects of the composer's life.

As Ludwig suffers from hearing loss, the fictional character Marie brings him hope. Marie is described as an ambitious woman who dreams of becoming an architect and inspires Ludwig to think outside the box. Her addition makes the musical take a step forward from being a simple biographical one, adding contemporary elements.

— Excerpted from the article “Korean musical ‘Ludwig’ makes way to China” by Kwon Mee-you, Korea Times, 8-3-2020

BEETHOVEN IN CHINA (2000)

Tianyu Theater Company

Jiang Yuanlai, Writer

Bing Yue, Director

The 6-act stage play ‘Beethoven in China’ has been performed in numerous community theaters around China since the beginning of this century, most recently in October 2019 at the Penghao Theater in Beijing.

PLAYWRIGHT'S SYNOPSIS

It is universally acknowledged that European classical music shines as one of the greatest gems of human civilization. Among the numerous European classical composers, the most influential one in China can be no other than Beethoven, the Mater Composer.

Beethoven passed away in 1827. Only then did he realize his long-cherished wish. His soul traveled on, roaming the land of China, as his works journeyed through the East, witnessing one after another various musical epiphanies until the dawning of the twenty-first century. His epic music has been appreciated and understood more and more deeply by the Chinese people, becoming part of their lives. "Beethoven in China" is a traditional stage-play where music itself becomes the real protagonist. The emergence and development of the characters and plots are all centered around Beethoven's music.

The whole play, spanning time and space vastly, begins with Beethoven's funeral in Vienna in the 19th century, and ends with the activities of music lovers in Shanghai in the early 21st century, though Guangzhou, Shandong and Shenyang, one period after another. From the late Qing Dynasty to the contemporary era, six wonderful musical stories echo with one another back and forth, vividly presenting more than thirty musical characters ranging from music experts to ordinary music fans. The vicissitudes of the plot imply the profound reception of and the poetic reflection on music, history and humanity itself. As such, it has been described as "the first epic drama on the modern and contemporary history of the cultural exchange between China and the West across three centuries".

This play has been wildly popular in the nearly two decades since the beginning of this century. In October, 2019, a group of art and music fans in Beijing once again bring this play to the stage, despite it's huge scale and major production requirements.

Extensive musical selections of Beethoven's best works flow through this nearly three-hour grand drama.

— Jiang Yuanlai

THE BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE (2020)

Shanghai Concert Hall

LWA Loire Culture

“The Beethoven Experience” opened on September 19, 2020, on the fourth floor of the magnificent Cadillac Shanghai Concert Hall. This multimedia, multi-sensory exhibit is co-presented by the Shanghai Concert Hall and LWA Loire Culture. 10 exhibition areas run through Beethoven's life, musical works, and life stories, interspersed with immersive interactive technology, interactive visual projection, and Beethoven's symphony works specially recorded for this exhibition.

The show uses multi-sensory environments to invite visitors to explore Beethoven's music, to imagine being a musician in Europe in the era of Beethoven's life, and even to experience the sensation of deafness that Beethoven was famously afflicted with.

The exhibition is the first event held in a newly created exhibition space in the historic building, which has just undergone an extensive renovation. The show will run for six months.

BIOGRAPHIES

Conductor **JINDONG CAI** is artistic director of the China Now Music Festival, director of the US-China Music Institute, professor of music and arts at Bard College, and associate conductor of The Orchestra Now. Over his 30-year career in the United States, Cai has established himself as an active and dynamic conductor, scholar of Western classical music in China, and leading advocate of music from across Asia. Cai founded the US-China Music Institute at the Bard Conservatory in 2017 and created the Institute's the annual China Now Music Festival in the following year. In its first two seasons, China Now presented new works by some of the most important Chinese composers of our time, with concerts performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Bard's Fisher Center, and Stanford University.

Ms. **FANG JING** has been the General Manager of Shanghai Concert Hall for nine years. During these years, she has not only introduced many world-renowned musicians and orchestras to perform at SCH, but also focused on the exploration of various possibilities and potentials of music. At the same time, she highlights the importance of arts education, and has launched numerous influential projects and series to high acclaim, such as the Lunchtime Concert, Ginkgo Concert etc. Fang has rich experience in performance planning, market promotion, as well as learning and participation and venue management.

Director **FENG QINGXIA** (stage name **BING YUE**), holds a master's degree from The Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong. In 2017, she founded Tianyu Theater Company, for which she directed the play *Beethoven in China* In 2019. Currently, she is directing a radio show about the play. In 2018, she performed at a synagogue in Israel. In 2019, she directed a play for the Destination Imagination Competition in China.

Director **GAO RUIJIA** trained at Shanghai Theatre Academy. His work in theatre includes Thrill Me; Mama Mia Chinese Production and Tomato Remarkable.

Actor **JIA FAN** trained at The Juilliard School. His work in theatre includes A Beautiful Sunset of Life; Rachmaninoff Chinese Production.

Playwright **JIANG YUANLAI** is a native of old Shanghai. He once went down to a remote village of Heilongjiang Province and settled down there for over three years. After graduating from college, he worked in the municipal government and research institute for environmental planning and field environmental research in scenic spots and nature reserves. He converted to Christianity in the 1980s, successively abandoned his previous professional achievements and embarked on the career of folk culture. Jiang began his drama writing from the end of 1990s, and was recognized as one of the most important folk playwrights in Chinese mainland by critics and known as “Floor Playwright” because he was living in a tiny room during his playwriting. His representative works are the four large-scale dramas: “Beethoven in China”, a six-scene musical drama, has been popular in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Beijing, and performed many times in the past 20 years; “Shakespeare in Jiaxing”, a six-scene modern drama, is a historical and ideological drama for intellectuals; “The Christmas Eve of Yandang Mountain”, a six-scene church epic, was once performed in Beijing Church as a tribute to commemorate Robert Morrison’s coming to China 200 years ago; and his latest work, “Lanlin Easter”, a six-scene drama.

Musical director **LI WEIJIE** graduated from Musikhochschule Lübeck and Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg. His work in theatre includes Telephone; She Loves Me; Rent; Spring Awakening Chinese Production; Journey Under the Midnight Sun; Flames.

Actor **ZHOU KEREN** graduated from Shanghai Conservatory of Music. His work in theatre includes Rachmaninoff Chinese Production; My Bucket List Chinese Production; Tegami; Murder For Two Chinese Production; The Poetic Age.

CHINA NOW MUSIC FESTIVAL

Jindong Cai, *Artistic Director*

Kathryn Wright, *General Manager*

Hsiao-Fang Lin, *Producer*

Weiber Consulting, *public relations and marketing*

Liminal Entertainment Technologies, *editing and broadcast*

Zhou Long, *China Now opening music*

The China Now Music Festival is an annual series of events produced by the US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music. Dedicated to promoting an understanding and appreciation of classical music from contemporary China, each year's festival explores a singular theme. The inaugural festival, *Facing the Past, Looking to the Future: Chinese Composers in the 21st Century*, took place in 2018. The following year, the festival presented *China and America: Unity in Music*, featuring the world premiere of a major new symphonic oratorio by Zhou Long, 'Men of Iron and the Golden Spike.'

US-CHINA MUSIC INSTITUTE

Jindong Cai, *Director*

Kathryn Wright, *Managing Director*

Hsiao-Fang Lin, *Director of Music Programming*

The US-China Music Institute was founded at the Bard College Conservatory of Music in 2017 by conductor and classical music scholar Jindong Cai and Robert Martin, a cellist, philosopher, and the founding director of the Bard Conservatory. The Institute's mission is to promote the study, performance, and appreciation of music from contemporary China, and to support musical exchange between the United States and China. It is the most comprehensive institution for Chinese music in the West, with unprecedented degree programs and research and performance opportunities for students, artists, composers, and scholars around the world. barduschinamusic.org

BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Tan Dun, *Dean*

Frank Corliss, *Director*

Marka Gustavsson, *Associate Director*

Bard College Conservatory of Music expands Bard's spirit of innovation in arts and education. The Conservatory, which opened in 2005, offers a five-year, double-degree program at the undergraduate level and, at the graduate level, programs in vocal arts and conducting. At the graduate level, the Conservatory also offers an Advanced Performance Studies Program and a two-year Postgraduate Collaborative Piano Fellowship. bard.edu/conservatory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to He He Musicals, Tianyu Theater Company, Shanghai Concert Hall, and Weiber Consultants for their contributions to tonight's program.

MAJOR SUPPORT FOR THE 2020 CHINA NOW MUSIC FESTIVAL PROVIDED BY

Corinna Larkin and Nigel Dawn

The Mona Foundation

Shining Sun

Shirley Young

SUPPORT THE US-CHINA MUSIC INSTITUTE

Please consider making a gift in support of our programs. The China Now Music Festival would not be possible without the generous contributions of friends and supporters of the US-China Music Institute. Your contribution of any size is greatly appreciated and will help us continue our work to build bridges and connect people together through music.

USCHINAMUSIC.ORG/SUPPORT