

George Gao



Erhu soloist, composer

**1700 years old ancient scores
discovered on the Silk Road now for
erhu and symphony orchestra!**

Demo CD Inside:
An-lun Huang's
Four Ancient Scores from Dunhuang

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Quotations

- "The sound was exotic, the style foreign, the repertoire esoteric. ... performed with mastery and expressiveness". –Wilma Salisbury, dance/music critic. *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), Friday, April 1, 1988.
- "The four performer, all bearing impressive academic credentials from their homeland, ... their sense of ensemble was well-nigh perfect. They are obviously first-rate musicians well used to playing together. What is always so fascinating about the concerts are the combination of familiar and unfamiliar. The instruments -- the fiddles in particular -- make sounds unfamiliar to the western ears. They are more shrill in timber than western violins. But the music itself has some undeniably western sounding elements of rhythm, interval and cadence. ... One piece, a highly rhythmic thing called 'Da Qiban', might have been written by a Chinese Khachaturian; ... notably the **Erhu** ... Fascinating music with its recurrent small melodic and rhythmic cells." -- Robert Finn, Music critic. *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), March 12-31, 1988.
- "... to hear the brilliant George Gao, the Royal Conservatory of Toronto's first Erhu teacher, ... was to appreciate how some instrument are best left to their time-tested inclination." -- William Littler, music critic. *Global Mail*, March 12 (or 13 14), 1994.
- "Any way you look at, George Gao's credentials are incomparable ...". CBC, *Global Village -- Canadian Artists' profile*. March 23, 24, 1996.
- "George Gao, one of the top virtuosos in the world", -- Andy Barrie, CBC, 1996.
- "... fusion of Chinese music and jazz, the Erhu master and composer, George Gao, has created a new genre ... ". Sing Tao Daily (Toronto, Chinese newspaper), 1996.
- "George Gao, le soliste étonne par son extrême virtuosité: sur cet instrument apparemment très fruste, le musicien, par une série de glissandos, de vibratos, d'effets techniques très recherchés, produit une musique immédiatement séduisante, très colorée et souvent riche en descriptions imagées. L'association de l'instrument traditionnel à un orchestre symphonique, bien loin de choquer, suscite l'intérêt et la sympathie du public, qui fut gratifié de deux «bis» joués cette fois sur le *erhu* seul....." –Gérard GOUTIERRE, Lille Métropole, LAVOIX DU NORD, Jeudi 17 Septembre 1998.

Four Ancient Scores from Dunhuang

for Erhu and Orchestra

An-lun Huang, Op.53(1997)

Dunhuang is a small town in northwest China. This city is more than one thousand seven-hundred years old, and it sat on the border of a large desert, right at the end of the Silk Road. In 1900, a collection of ancient scores were found in a cave in the Dunhuang region. As they are more than seventeen hundred years old, these musical scores are no doubt the oldest musical scores of human civilization. This collection consists of 25 pieces composed for the pipa, one of the oldest Chinese plucked instruments.

Specialists around the world have tried to decipher the musical notation system used in the scores. They discovered that the strange symbols in the scores are actually instructions for the fingering for the pipa through each piece. As the performer would follow these finger positions, corresponding pitches would sound. However, the real difficulty of the deciphering was finding the suitable dynamics, articulations, rhythm and tempo.

Although the true interpretation of the scores will always be discussed and argued by scholars, many musicians have performed the different versions. Huang An-lun's "Four Ancient Music Scores from Dunhuang", written for the Erhu and Orchestra, is the latest attempt to interpret the scores.

The book "The Translations of the Music and Scores in the Tang Dynasty", by Professor Ye Dong of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, is one of the most influential published studies in this field. In order to structure a new piece for the erhu and the orchestra, Huang An-lun chose four Dunhuang ancient scores from this book. Since the scores only contained melodic notes, Huang had to use his imagination to create all the other elements of the music - the tempo, the articulations, rhythmic patterns among many others. Through his music, Huang had musically interpreted the essence of poems from the Tang dynasty. He had also intricately woven elements of both Western and Eastern musical traditions into his scores.

There are four sections in this piece . They are:

- I Larghet, from No. 24 of the Dunhuang ancient scores, "Yi Zhou",
- II Allegretto, from No. 3, "Qing Bei Yue"
- III. Lento, from No.1, "Pin Neng", and
- IV. Allegro, from No.10, "Yiu Man Qu Zi".

This composition was completed in the summer of 1999. It was dedicated to the composer's close friend, Peter Tam, an erhuist in Hong Kong. The world premiere was performed by Ma Xiang-Hua and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer himself, in 1999. The cadenza of the performance was composed by Ma's teacher - Professor Liu Chang-Fu.

This CD was recorded by George Gao and the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra of Moscow in 2002. It was conducted by Tak-Ng Lai.. The very unique cadenza in this recording was created by Gao.

Duration: 19 minutes.

George Gao, composer and Erhu soloist
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GEORGE GAO

George Gao is extraordinary Erhu virtuoso and an excellent composer who has had a tremendous musical influence in both China and here in Canada. Any way one looks at, George Gao's credentials for mastering the two-stringed instrument, Erhu, and the world music are incomparable: He was born in 1967 in China and started learning the Erhu at the age of six. After two years, his talent was revealed in his open performance as an Erhu soloist in a concert of performing arts organized by Gansu Province. In 1979, when he was 12 years old, he entered the affiliated secondary school of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, a prestigious school for talented children. He took Erhu as his major. Meanwhile he also learned piano and composition. In 1985, he was exempted from examinations due to his outstanding achievements and began his bachelor degree courses in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music where he studied both Chinese and western music as well as conducting. He graduated with honor in 1988. During the period 1979 – 1989, George won prizes in numerous competitions. Most notably were the three highest Prizes for Beijing China National Invitational Erhu Competition (1985) – the first prize, the best performance prize of compulsory works and the best performance prize of the optional works. He initiated his own music band “the Red Leave” and “Snow man”, during his stay in Beijing (1988 – 1991). He made Toronto, Canada, his home in 1991 and became a teacher of Erhu at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He has given numerous concerts and toured in a number of countries, including Canada, USA, China, Hong Kong, Japan etc. During the last 10 years he received numerous prizes and grants, including those from the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council.

In music composition, George has pioneered in introducing into the Erhu music a vast range of new musical influences which has expanded its musical horizons and helped extending its influence on the stage of world music. Since the years when he studied Shanghai Conservatory for Music, and in particular, since his settlement in Canada,

George has been experimenting with the fusion of traditional Chinese music and the western music styles, including classical and contemporary music, Pop, New Age and, most recently, jazz music. In the foreword of his newly-released album “George Gao: Chinese Classical, Jazz, New Age Pop”, George says: “Chinese folk song is the root of Chinese music. Jazz is the product of the combination of African and American music. Both Chinese music and jazz involve much improvisation, but with different methodologies. Chinese music stresses on the improvisation and variation of melody, while jazz stresses on the improvisation of harmonic functions. These similarity and differences make the combination of the two very meaning and interesting.” Indeed, the fusion of the two different musical traditions is challenging. George Gao has done an excellent job in this area. There can be no doubt that he is creating a new genre by melding the beautiful melodies of Chinese folk music with the colorful, richly harmonic and swinging rhythms of jazz, in which George has struck a wonderful balance between the richness of tradition and inspired spontaneity. After a number of TV shows, including CCTV's 1997 Chinese New Year program, which was watched by millions of people around the world, George's Chinese jazz pieces have aroused a tremendous response from audiences.

In recent years, George has composed theme music and soundtracks for several films, including the Canadian film "Yellow Wedding" directed by the award winning directors Yan Cui & Qi Zhang . His Erhu performances have been used in numerous films and TV dramas, in particular, for the popular sci-fi TV drama “Earth: Final Conflict” (by the award winning composers, Micky Erbe and Maribeth Solomon of Toronto, Canada), which has been nominated by EMMY as "Outstanding Main title Theme Music".

People from both Chinese and western traditions listening to George's performances experience something familiar and new, yet magnificent and exciting. It is thus not surprising that George has been recognized as one of the most innovative and exciting musical talents in the world today.

高韶青与张海京简历

George Gao and Jenny Zhang

高韶青与张海京是当今风靡国际乐坛的音乐人，他们音乐会的足迹遍及加拿大，美国，日本，中国，香港，台湾等国家地区，他们的音乐作品被众多国家的电影，电视，电台选用及播放，获奖无数，被公认为在“世界音乐”演艺圈内有影响的华裔音乐人之一。

高韶青不仅是闻名世界的二胡演奏家，他还应邀为电影，电视，百老汇音乐剧作曲，配乐，同时，还为许多音乐家，艺人担任制作人。在作曲方面，他为许多加拿大电影，电视，广告谱曲，其中包括电影“Landing”，“Yellow Wedding”，广告包括获加拿大广告总协最佳广告音乐金奖的加航广告。最近，他与美国曾获过二十多次Grammy大奖及题名的美国作曲家Brian Keane合作为美国超级电视网PBS配写名为“Becoming American – the Chinese Experience”三集纪录巨片，此片已定于在三月隆重首映。在音乐制作上，高韶青合作过的伙伴包括许多加拿大名艺人，团体及中国大陆歌星周冰倩。在二胡演奏方面，高韶青是世界上公认的当今最优秀的，最创新的二胡大师之一，是现代二胡音乐的代表。他曾是北京全国二胡邀请赛一等奖，最佳指定曲目，最佳自选曲目三大奖得主。他的代表作有著名的超高技巧的二胡改编曲“卡门幻想曲”，“吉普赛之歌”，他首演的二胡曲包括“秋韵”，“中国畅想曲”，“随想曲”等。高韶青是第一位把爵士乐，摇滚乐，环境音乐，中东音乐，印度音乐，南美音乐及乡村音乐等介绍给二胡音乐的音乐人，真正把二胡推向了“世界音乐”。他被公认为对中国音乐现代化有巨大的影响艺术家，他的音乐启发了中国音乐的新潮流 – 新民乐。高韶青曾与许多著名交响乐团合作，其中包括多伦多交响乐团，上海交响乐团，中央民族乐团，香港中乐团，法国Lille交响乐团，加拿大广播公司交响乐团，加拿大国家艺术中心交响乐团，台湾国立实验国乐团等。每年上百场的演出，使他成为世界上最忙碌的二胡演奏家之一。他的二胡演奏被许多好莱坞电影，电视所录制，其中，他演奏的收视率极高的科幻电视连续片“Earth, Final Conflict”被著名的Grammy大奖提名为“最佳主题音乐奖”。

张海京是加拿大最受欢迎的华人女歌手之一，她的歌声已经跨越了国家和语言，在加拿大，美国，日本，中国，香港，台湾等国家地区处处演出受到观众的爱戴。她融汇流行音乐，传统音乐，爵士音乐，R & B，摇滚乐等，演唱自成一家，情真意浓。她的演唱被许多电影，电视，广告录用，其中，她为福特汽车广告演唱的中西合璧的Bossa Nova板本的“青春舞曲”成为加拿大家喻户晓的演译版本。她也曾为最近世界上非常流行的好莱坞电视连续片“Relic Hunter”录音。与她合作过的著名加拿大音乐人有Maribeth Solomon, Donald Quan, Ron Korb, Rick Lazer等。张海京曾几次应邀为世界性的“新秀歌唱大赛”多伦多大赛担任评判并嘉宾表演。

高韶青与张海京夫妻搭档，演译音乐风格新颖多样，台上表演活跃自然，声情并茂，在北美大陆受到了巨大哄动，以下是一些观众，乐评的评价：

“I think it is the most beautiful concert that I have ever attended.....” Elise
“我认为那是我有生以来参加的最美好的音乐会.....” 爱丽丝

“The George Gao Trio dazzled the audience.....” Wayne Gibson, The Clarion
“高韶青三人小组耀亮了观众.....” 威恩 基普森，克拉里昂报

“The sweetness and softness of her voice blended perfectly in with the tones of erhu.....” Stephen Pedersen, The Mail-Star
“她（张海京）甜美轻柔的嗓音与二胡的音色融和得天衣无缝.....” 斯狄芬 帕德森，邮电新报

Feb. 12/03

Gao charms audience with traditional Chinese erhu

By Stephen Pedersen
Arts Reporter

George Gao should have no trouble making a living even though he plays an instrument most audiences have never heard of. He plays it so superlatively well he captures attention, holds it from first note to last and compels unrestrained admiration for both his skill and his musicianship.

Gao plays the traditional Chinese erhu, a two-string violin, while his trio partner Lin Zhang plays the yang-qin (a Chinese version of the European hammer dulcimer) — also with superlative virtuosity — and Jenny Zhang sings beautifully and plays percussion instruments.

The George Gao Trio played in The Music Room on Monday night in the St. Cecilia Series concluding the Nova Scotia leg of their Debut Atlantic tour.

The erhu is picturesque with its long, thin, stick-like fingerboard inserted into the end of a horizontal, hexagonal box serving as resonator. Far less dramatic to be sure than the western violin, but not less expressive, with a dynamic range in which its thin, sweet sound floats like a cloud, or, in a flash of instrumental temper swells into the deep-throated rage of a thunder storm spiked with lightning.

Your first impression is simple awe. The hair of the bow slides between the two strings, which are separated by two centimetres at the most, allowing the player to draw the resin-coated hair by pulling it across one string and pushing it across the other.

In a program mixing his original writing with Chinese classics, pop song, folk song, composed fantasias as well as dramatic and narrative pieces, Gao drew out the simplicity of the erhu.

In talking about his instrument and the music written for it Gao's boyish enthusiasm and joy in the instrument charmed and delighted the audience as it informed them. His short trip through traditional Chinese music styles sampled traditions from three or four of China's 56 minority sub-cultures, clearly presented and significantly differentiated.

Zhang's performance on the large Chinese dulcimer, a complexly strung instrument with a history going back to the Middle Ages (it resembles the psaltery of those days), bore witness to his



Rich Schultz / The Associated Press

NEW JERSEY ROCK

Jon Bon Jovi performs at Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford, N.J., during his current tour.

Veteran actor Duvall knocks Canadian actors

WASHINGTON (CP) — Veteran actor Robert Duvall says he doesn't think Canadians make good actors.

Duvall, 71, was in Washington on Monday for the world premiere of Ted Turner's epic Civil War drama *Gods and Generals*.

"I prefer not to work in Canada. I prefer to work in my own country," Duvall said. "There are better actors down here. That's why they have to import so many actors for their Canadian productions."

Last summer, Duvall spent 13 weeks in the Calgary area filming the western *Open Range* with Kevin Costner and Annette Bening.

Duvall said he insisted *Secondhand Lions*, the film he made with Michael Caine shortly after *Open*

Range, be shot in Texas.

"I said I wasn't interested in shooting it in Canada. It was a Texas story and had to be shot in Texas."

His comments puzzled some actors in Calgary.

Actor Pat Benedict, who worked for 10 days on *Open Range* in scenes with Costner and Duvall, said "it was never apparent by (Duvall's) demeanour that he was displeased with the level of acting by Calgary actors."

"He seemed to be having a great time. He was very funny and very friendly. He ate with the crew and with the supporting actors, which is not always the case with visiting stars."

Jackie Lind, who did Canadian casting for *Open Range* through her company Jackie Lind Casting

Ltd., insists Duvall's sentiments were not shared by Costner, who directed and stars in the film.

"At the wrap party, Kevin said he was impressed not just with the calibre of talent in Canada, but in particular the talent pool in Calgary."

IN THE MATTER OF:
The Companies Act, Chapter 81,
R.S.N.S., 1989, as amended.

- and -

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application by 724 Solutions SRL
Holdings ULC for leave to surrender its
certificate of incorporation

NOTICE

is hereby given that 724 Solutions SRL
Holdings ULC intends to make an application to
the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies for leave
to surrender its certificate of incorporation.

DATED this February 12, 2003.

Charles S. Reagh
Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales
Solicitor for 724 Solutions SRL
Holdings ULC

IN THE MATTER OF:
The Companies Act, Chapter 81,
R.S.N.S., 1989, as amended;

- and -

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application by Applied Analytics
Limited for leave to surrender its
certificate of incorporation.

NOTICE

is hereby given that Applied Analytics Limited
intends to make an application to the Registrar of
Joint Stock Companies for leave to surrender its
certificate of incorporation.

DATED this February 12, 2003.

Charles S. Reagh
Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales
Solicitor for Applied Analytics Limited

...live!

Take a lo
Ca

Time

Monday February 13
8:00 pm

February February 14,
8:00 pm

Saturday February 15
8:00 pm



George Gao Trio a highlight of Arts Council season so far

WAYNE GIBSON
of The Clarion

Who knew it would sound like that?

The George Gao Trio dazzled the audience at Monday's third presentation of the Kinderstey and District Arts Council season.

From a distance it looked like little more than a thin broomstick wedged into the side of a wooden cup, but George Gao demonstrated that the traditional Chinese erhu could provide sounds every bit as haunting and lyrical as the violin, but even more subtle.

Gao is truly a master of the instrument - displaying both a virtuosic talent and a finely-tuned musical sensibility, moving as much with the sounds in his head as with what he created on stage.

But from the onset, it was apparent the other two members of the Trio were no slouches either.

In their opening selection - a part of Gao's own film score to a "not so famous Canadian movie" - Jenny Zhang's vocal resonance was astonishing. As though she was singing from within an enclosed structure, her tone shifted effortlessly to a brilliantly rich soprano, and back to the strring echo from which it came. Later, she performed a beautiful solo work written by Gao, and also attended to auxiliary percussion.

Meanwhile, Zhang Lin's work at the vanguard (Chinese

dulcimer) revealed the musician's nimbleness, accuracy, and intensity throughout the entire performance. Lin's accompaniment was essentially the backbone for the other instruments, and created a wonderful texture to the sounds in the Norman Fitchie Centre.

Of course, great performers are even more notable with great music, and the Trio's blend of Chinese and Western elements was a pleasure. Several of the pieces were written by Gao himself, who has composed many scores for television and motion picture. This genre suits him well, as his work evokes vivid pictures and stories in their melodies.

Gao also introduced most of the pieces, and best of all, he was funny. From his initial comments, Gao had a relaxed charm to his presentation, interacting well with his fellow performers, and providing humorous anecdotes and descriptions which helped the audience get a sense of what he hoped to communicate through his repertoire.

The George Gao Trio is part of the Prairie Debut, a touring network which draws together the resources of the Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Council of the Arts, Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta, and the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils.

Lynne Bailey, Executive Director who has been traveling with the Trio, said the network



George Gao's amusing introductions gave him an instant rapport with the audience at the Arts Council presentation of the George Gao Trio January 20. The Trio of musicians presented an enjoyable program of Chinese influenced classical music at the Norman Fitchie Centre, provides both audience enrichment and job opportunities for performers.

"We bring world class professional musicians to communities which might not otherwise be able to have them... and it's a wonderful experience for the audience." Lynne Bailey, Executive Director of the Norman Fitchie Centre said.

The George Gao Trio did more than their part on Monday night, raising the bar on other notch for the quality of Arts Council performances this season.

THE MUSICAL VOICE OF YOUR SOUL

*Touched by the enchanting sounds of your Erhu,
How could I not detect the spiritual identity of your soul?
Endless beauty softly emanated from your finely tuned instrument.*

*Magic easily flowed from your soul to your talented fingers.
Under the gentle spell of every one of your musical creations, I
Sensed the presence of exquisite beauty and ultimate inspiration.
Incredible musical notes moved and mesmerized my heart and soul.
Challenged by the haunting sound of your Erhu, I remained very silent.
Appreciating how you enlightened my days, I thanked you from a distance.
Loving listening to each one of the pieces you played, I gently calmed my mind.*

*Voicing musically what your sensitive soul deeply felt profoundly moved my whole being.
Only by attentively listening to your wonderfully mystical and enchanting music was
I also better prepared to more thoroughly enjoy the beauty of the Chinese soul.
Cherishing the depth of your talents, I heard the voice of your creative soul.
Every time I felt moved by your music, I was inspired to write poetry.*

*Of all the Chinese music I've heard so far, yours was extra special.
For relaxation as well as inspiration, your music is so soothing.*

*Yearning to visit China one day, my soul felt sensitized by you.
Old and young alike seem fascinated by the sound of the Erhu.
Unity of my heart and my soul felt nurtured by your music.
Reaching deeper within my creative well, I found solace.*

*Searching for peace of mind, I found it in your music.
Oh, I played it for extended periods for I loved it.
Unless I relaxed, my muse remained very silent.
Loving your creations, she visited me often.*

*Poem composed by Raymond D. Tremblay (Ottawa) in appreciation
of George Gao's wonderful musical creations with the Erhu - Nov/02*



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ART BY BALINT ZSAKO

Just the facts

WHAT: Books, by Balint Zsako
WHERE: Ryerson Gallery, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 305,
WHEN: To Sat., March 2
HOURS: Call 416-703-2235



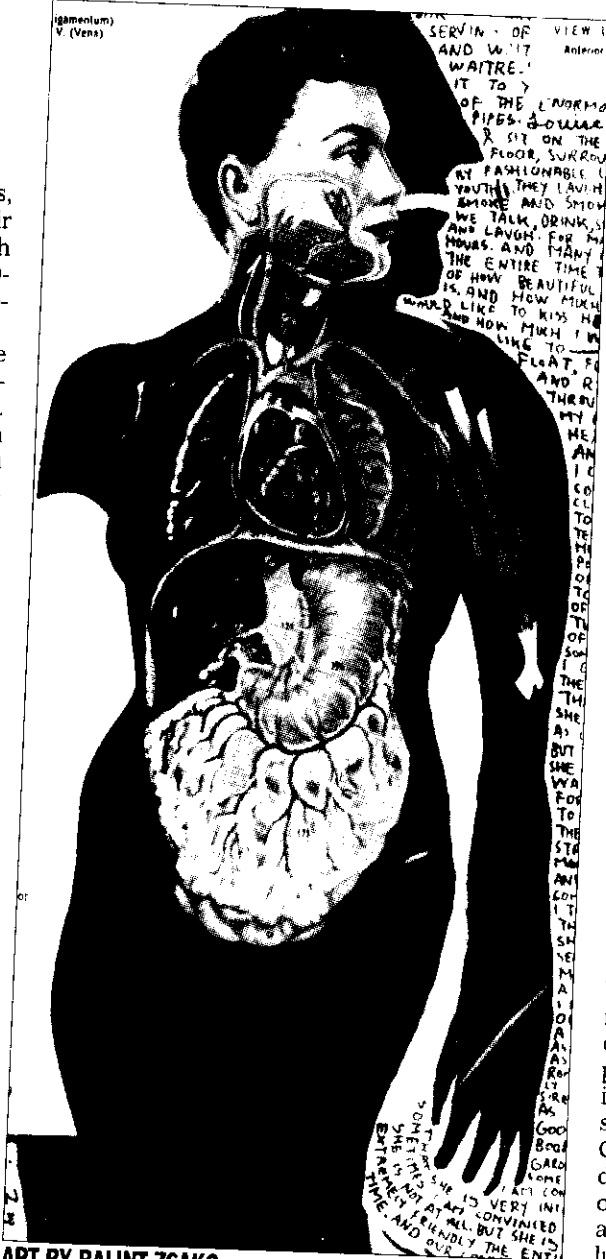
ICEBERG FLOATING, 2001:
Doris McCarthy's show of
new paintings at the
Wynick/Tuck closes
Saturday.

9515): Exhibit by photographer April Hickox ends
Sat.

MATERIAL MATTERS (741 Queen St. W. 361-
1518): Exhibit of recent work by glass artist Ta-
nya Zaryski closes Sun.

MONTE CLARK GALLERY (752 Queen St. W.):
Exhibit by Vancouver artists Douglas Coupland,
Chris Gergley, Scott McFarland and Graham Gill-
more closes Fri.

DAVID MARINI GALLERY



The Global City

City alive with music of China

BY SUSAN WALKER
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

An erhu is an ancient Chinese stringed instrument. Its two metal strings stretch over a narrow bridge from a mahogany sound box covered with snakeskin and it is played with a bamboo horsehair bow. Just looking at an erhu you could never imagine the range of sounds, as emotive as the human voice, it could make. Virtuoso erhu players, such as Toronto's George Gao, are as highly revered in the classical music world as great violinists, and Gao is often invited to play with symphony orchestras.



GEORGE GAO

He's also leader of his own ensemble of Chinese musicians, players of instruments such as the Chinese dulcimer, or the dizi, a Chinese flute, or the pipa, a Chinese lute. The music they play can include pieces that are centuries old. Or it can be as contemporary as the music composed by Tan Dun for the soundtrack to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. In fact, Gao himself has been commissioned as one of two composers of a soundtrack for *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*, a PBS documentary series now in production.

You don't have to go too far out of your way in Toronto to hear classical Chinese music, including Peking and Cantonese opera. In fact, one of Gao's ensemble musicians, pipa player Wendy Zhao, will join Jowi Taylor in a workshop on Saturday in U of T's Hart House to play and to talk about Chinese music in Toronto.

Canada is fortunate to have attracted Chinese musicians such as Gao and Zhao and Montreal pipa player Lui Feng.

Gao, born in China in 1967, entered the Shanghai Conservatory of Music when he was 12. He studied piano and composition and conducting and he played erhu, winning prize after prize.



45 Avenue Rd. 515-
e paintings by Richard
) to March 14.

W. Suite 452): Show
Off and Shéndan

169 King St. E. 977-
Onward, to March 9.

Richmond St. W. 977-
ture, by Ly a Rye, brings
itions together, to

GALLERY (24 Spadina
ian Pilgrims In Jerusa-
an Eisenberg closes Sat.

5 Eglinton Ave. W.):
: drawings of Homer,
ne Simpsons closes Sat.

(60 Randa Dr. Picker-
ack Histor, Month exhib-
James, Wayen Headley,
loper and others) closes

3 Ossington Ave. 535-
urt Basin, Astrid Ho, Pa-
Waters, etc. ends Sat.

E CENTRE Exchange
, 214-0389 : Group show
, Stephen A kenhead,

(122 Scollard St.): Exhib-
bert Berlin closes Sat.

Richmond St. W.): Installa-
: wraps up today.

(230 Queen St. E.): Show
laide and Yechel Gagnon

Richmond St. 506-9595):
a works by Ivan Stojakovic

Dumberland St.): David At-
xes and clocks ends Sun.

JAR (226 Carlton St.): Ex-
and installations by Jerry Ni-

een's Park, 4th floor): Show
n Xollacott closes Sat.

(936 Queen St. W.): Exhibit
eremy Benning ends Sat.

(4588 Bathurst St.): Kelly
: Sound Bites and show of
ine Widgery in the main gal-

ERY (80 Spadina Ave. 504-

ings by Sadko Hadzichanovic wraps up Sat.

POWER PLANT (Harbourfront, 231 Queens
Quay W. 973-4949): *Magnetic North* closes
Sun.

PREMIERE DANCE THEATRE (Queen's Quay
Terminal, 207 Queen's Quay W.): John Oswald's
collection of portraits from the dance community
closes today.

PROPELLER GALLERY (984 Queen St. W. 504-
7142): Exhibit of drawings and mixed media
works by Nicola Woods closes Sat.

RED HEAD GALLERY (96 Spadina Ave. 504-
5654): Shows by Yvonne Singer and Merjean
Morrissey close Sat.

RIVER RESTAURANT (413 Roncesvalles Ave.):
Paintings of High Park by Japanese artist Shinya
Kumazawa closes Sun.

SIXTY FOUR STEPS (1164 Queen St. W.):
Group show *Grope for Luna* (Carlo Cesta, Lee Go-
reas, Lisa Neighbour and others) closes today.

SOF ART HOUSE (688 Richmond St. W.): Pho-
to-based group exhibit (Pedro Alderete, Royane
Coldwell, Cheng-Li Ku and others) ends Sat.

S.P.I.N. (156 Bathurst St. 530-7656): Exhibits
by Johannes Zits Dana Velan both end today.

SUSAN HOBBS GALLERY (137 Tecumseth St.):
Exhibit by Max Dean closes Sat.

360 GALLERY (CN Tower Restaurant, 301 Front
St. W.): Exhibit of Howard Ross closes Sat.

WYNICK/TUCK GALLERY (401 Richmond St.
W. 504-8716): Show of new oil paintings, water-
colours and sketches by Doris McCarthy closes
Sat.

Long run

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO (317 Dundas St. W.
979-6648): *Yes Yoko Ono* is the artist's first
North American retrospective and features 150
works — installations, film, video, performance
art — from the 1960s to the present, to May 20.
■ *Ultrabaroque: Aspects Of Post-Latin Ameri-
can Art* features works by 15 artists from six Latin
American countries, to April 28. ■ Present
Tense Contemporary Project Series installation
Fragments & Figments: Works On Paper by Artu-
ro Herrera, to April 28.

CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES (255 Spadina
Rd. 397-5000): *Your Home, Our City: 100 Years
Of Public Control Over Private Space* looks at how
Toronto's residential neighbourhoods have been
shaped by local government and private inter-
ests, through June.

HARBOURFRONT CENTRE (235 Queen's Quay
W. 973-3000): Exhibits closing Sunday: *20X10:
The Annual Craft Studio Residency Exhibition*
(York Quay Gallery I); *Cells: Jewellery By Paul Mc-
Clure* (York Quay Gallery II); Ceramic platters by
Dale Pereira and group ceramic flower arrange-
ments (Uncommon Objects, Case Studies). ■
Alvin Comiter: Building A Nova Scotia Archive
(Photo Passage), to April 21.

MARKET GALLERY (95 Front E.): *From The
Ground Up: Progressive Housing In Toronto
1900-2000* is a retrospective on the progressive
housing movement in the first half of the 20th
century, to March 31.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM (100 Queen's Pk.
586-8000): Great Asian Dinosaurs! Unique
creatures From Russia's Vaults, to March 31.
■ *More Than Keeping Cool: Chinese Fans &
Fan Paintings* is the first public exhibit of fans ob-
tained in 1918, to May 12. ■ Touring show
*From Plaster To Bronze: The Sculpture Of Au-
guste Rodin*, held over to March 17.
(\$18-\$20/\$12).

TEXTILE MUSEUM (55 Centre Ave. 599-5321):
Out Of This World: Textiles From The Spirit Realm
features 17 Islamic prayer rugs from Persia, Tur-
key and the Caucasus, to June 2.

moved to Toronto, where he teaches
at the Royal Conservatory of Music —
when he's not on tour.

"As early as Bruce Lee's films, West-
erners were beginning to appreciate
Chinese music," says Gao. Tan Dun's
haunting score for *Crouching Tiger*
opened even more North American
ears. Gao's music makes him a much
sought-after performer, and he can be
heard on a number of CDs available
from his Web site, www.georgegao.com.

In China, women are often encour-
aged to play the pipa, says Zhao. "The
shape is like a female body and the
sound is so delicate." And, she adds
with a bit of a laugh, "Sitting there
playing the pipa you look so good, so
quiet. It's not an instrument you play
standing up."

After graduating from the Beijing
Normal University in 1985, Zhao con-
tinued her studies at the University of
London. She lived in London for eight
years and played with a number of
symphonic groups, including the Lon-
don Chinese Orchestra. She came to
Canada in 1997 when her husband got
a job here. They live in Mississauga
and Zhao teaches at a Montessori
school.

China recognizes 56 minority cul-
tures, each with its own distinct music.
"The music I've been playing is from
the Yi people," says Zhao. "The music
from there is so beautiful. People
there dance and play music every
day." Zhao's musical travels also took
her to the northwest provinces of Chi-
na, where there are large Muslim pop-
ulations and the music sounds middle
eastern.

Because Chinese traditional music
is so tied to particular minority cul-
tures, it often serves a role in preserv-
ing the history of a people. One piece
Zhao plays is called "Ambush": it's
2,000 years old and commemorates a
historic conflict.

In Toronto, there is no particular
place where Chinese music is played,
although concerts are sometimes held
at the Markham Theatre or the Toron-
to Centre for the Performing Arts.
More often, Chinese opera and en-
semble performances will take place
in malls or community halls. Lately,
says Gao, Chinese Torontonians have
been forming Cantonese opera clubs.
"they'll hire musicians to accompany
them. It's like karaoke with live
musicians."

WHO/HOW/WHERE

Wendy Zhao and Jowi Taylor con-
duct a workshop on Chinese music in
the Multi-musical Toronto series on
Saturday at Hart House, University of
Toronto, from 3 to 5 p.m. For more in-
formation, go to www.worldsofmusic.ca.

Symphony sets table with some rare China

BY GEOFF CHAPMAN
MUSIC CRITIC

Reach out and hug someone — or at least reach out and play to a different audience.

That's what the Toronto Symphony is doing to restore its battered image and to earn a higher profile with communities not usually found in Roy Thomson Hall seats.

Our world is getting smaller, and cultural possibilities correspondingly bigger, so the Symphony ventured last night to the mainstage of the Performing Arts Centre (which you may remember as the Ford Centre's Apotex Theatre in Drabinsky glory days), to play works by two leading Chinese composers and showcase 13-year-old pianist Simon Ng.

The TSO under Boris Brott, in its venue debut, put on a fascinating show — what a treat for an audience to hear serious music again in this excellent theatre — as prolific composers An-Lun Huang, founder of the Canadian Chinese Music Society (and involved in the musical *Tiananman Dreams* that played Toronto) and Wen-Jin Liu, president of the China Opera and Dance Drama Theatre, displayed their wares.

The concert, begun by Brott with welcoming words in Chinese, opened with Huang's *Two Pieces In Saibei Folk Style*, music from north-western China beyond the Great Wall. It was full of abrupt melodic shifts, with the first piece a gentle sustained soundscape over which solo instruments

made delicate statements before strings deepened the palette of instrumental colours. Then came a sprightly folk piece with universal rather than regional appeal.

Putting these creations before the slightly-built Ng worked over Mozart's radiant *A Major Piano Concerto* was not a great idea. The mood change was too severe but the St. Michael's School student showed a solid grasp of fundamentals.

Unsurprisingly, he was short on expression and inhabited a narrow tonal and dynamic range but he handled the fleet sections with some aplomb.

The night's highlight was Liu's four-part *The Great Wall Capriccio*, which celebrates China's history, power and people. It often delivered like an epic movie score, with thunderous climaxes, but it was soloist George Gao who stole the show. He's a master of the erhu, a traditional two-stringed instrument with a very real bow that has the standing of the violin in Western music. Gao superbly exploited its haunting sound that's close to the human voice. The instrument has no fingerboard, which makes it hard to play but allows greater versatility, so that in the third movement, Gao delivered whistling sounds, pained cries and even barks as well as dramatic, emotional phrasing as pleasing as any violin virtuoso could create. The work as a whole was absorbing.

The TSO clearly won new friends with this project. Let's hope it's not the last of its kind.

Soggy symphony

But nasty weather couldn't sink SUTS

by Jerry OZIPKO

If nothing else, this year's Enbridge Symphony Under the Sky Festival presented not only the usual variety of music, but variety weather as well.

The highlights were not unexpected, but there were a few surprises and challenges as well. Canadian soprano Agathe Martel, who performed Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* during the opening night, possesses a powerful voice of astonishing variety. These songs plumb the depths of vocal technique and of human emotion, and Martel demonstrated a command of her instrument which one is hard put to compare with any other singer of her calibre.

Friday evening's mainstage concert included an unusual diversion. The first work following intermission was Leopold Mozart's *Cassation in C Major* (a piece which had formerly been attributed to Franz Joseph Haydn as his *Toy Symphony*). Conductor David Hoyt had previously arranged for local celebrities, representing several of the various sponsors of the festival, to perform on toy instruments in front of the orchestra. Because one of the celebrities previously called upon to perform this task failed to appear, one member from the

R Symphony Under the Skies
Aug. 30 - Sept. 3
in Hawrelak Park

audience who bore some previous experience with the ESO was called upon, with barely two minutes notice, to blow a toy trumpet.

The weather during the first two evenings could be described as ideal. Saturday evening proved to be something else. The evening opened with a pre-concert performance by Edmonton's own Pre-Tenors — three members of Pro Coro Canada who have already gained an international reputation for giving an irreverent take on the performances of the Three Tenors (Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and José Carreras). Their wonderfully artistic and musical parody had the audience in stitches throughout their all-too-brief appearance. On the heels of Naida Cole's magnificent performance of Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G Major*, a fierce storm began to build and blow into the amphitheatre with sudden and almost frightening speed and

force, causing the remainder of the concert to be cancelled.

Sunday was another beautiful day which produced a phenomenon of a different sort. Local prodigy Jessica Linnebach, now a young woman with a wealth of musical maturity, was brought back home from the Manhattan School of Music in New York, where she is currently a student, to perform the Beethoven *Violin Concerto*. In the midst of the final cadenza in the third movement of the work, Linnebach, who had up to that time delivered a beautiful and relaxed interpretation of the piece, had to stop suddenly to retune her instrument. One of the pegs had popped loose — likely a combination of the sudden change in temperature as the sun was setting and her vigorous bowing. She handled the situation with great professionalism and completed the work as though nothing had happened.

As expected, the highlight of Monday afternoon's concert was guest artist George Gao, who dazzled both the audience and the orchestra with his superb performance of Pablo de Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs)*, and Chen Yao Xing's *Gallop of Horses*. The latter piece, an eastern work combines the *William Tell Overture*, *The Flight of the Bumblebee* and *The Theme from 'The Green Hornet'* in its musical depiction of a herd of galloping horses, including whinnying and neighing. This mesmerizing performance brought the audience spontaneously to its feet.

FESTIVAL D'ÉTÉ DE QUÉBEC

LE SOLEIL - JEAN MARIE VILLENEUVE
George Gao donne trois spectacles aujourd'hui.

GEORGE GAO

Le monde sur deux cordes

REGIS TREMBLAY

Le Soleil

QUÉBEC — Sur deux cordes, il fait vibrer toutes les musiques de la planète ! George Gao a donné au erhu, un filiforme instrument régional chinois, une résonance mondiale ! Il n'est pas étonnant de retrouver le virtuose du erhu au Festival d'été, qui fait une place de plus en plus grande aux musiques de notre petite planète.

George Gao ne se contente pas d'exporter la musique traditionnelle chinoise, celle dont les accents aigus et tenus célèbrent avec ferveur et retenue les beautés de la nature. *Sablés battus par les flots... Lune printanière sur la rivière... Fleuve de cif argent...* Ces titres évocateurs, qu'ils soient des airs anciens ou des compositions originales de Gao, reflètent fidèlement l'idée que l'on se forge de la Chine éternelle. Mais il y a plus...

Ceux qui ont vu et entendu George Gao, en début de semaine, à Place d'Youville, jammer avec le guitariste Bob Brozman, ou se joindre à des musiciens traditionnels venus de l'Inde, ceux-là n'en reviennent toujours pas ! Quant à ceux qui préfèrent entendre un Gao plus traditionnel, au sein de son Silk Ensemble, ils ont encore la chance de le faire cet après-midi, alors qu'il donne trois autres spectacles, en trois endroits différents : à 12h30, il est à Place d'Youville, puis se dirige au parc Montmorency, à 14 h, avant de se rendre au parc de l'Esplanade, à 16h30.

La grande ouverture musicale de George Gao vient de loin. Né en 1967 dans la province de Gansu, il joue déjà du erhu à six ans. Il lui faut seule-

ment deux ans pour devenir soliste, sur son gracieux instrument. Plus tard, au Conservatoire de musique de Shanghai, il étudie également le piano et la composition. Fait important, il y aborde tant la musique chinoise qu'occidentale. On ne compte plus les prix et les distinctions obtenues par Gao dans son pays natal.

En 1991, le musicien fait un autre pas dans sa mondialisation artistique en s'installant à Toronto, où il devient professeur de erhu au Conservatoire royal de musique, mais où il s'imprègne aussi de la musique populaire occidentale. Voilà

pourquoi le Silk Ensemble vous réserve des surprises. Parmi les compositions de Gao, certaines mélangent intimement les phrases musicales traditionnelles chinoises à d'autres accents qui nous sont étrangement familiers : jazz, classique, new age...

Outre Gao et son erhu, le groupe comprend Wei Zhou et sa flûte dizi, Xue-Ying Guo, avec sa mandoline chinoise nommée pipa, Shang-e Fan, virtuose du zhieng, un instrument apparenté à la citare, et Jenny Zhang, dont la voix cristalline se marie si bien aux fines sonorités des instruments.

Ancient erhu crosses over

World Music Reviews

GEOFF CHAPMAN

GEORGE GAO

Erhu Places (Roi)

This is real crossover music, basically jazzy versions of Chinese folk tunes that also incorporates classical, pop and new-age accents.

The classically trained Gao is a master of the ancient erhu — a two-stringed instrument that's played with a bow or plucked — and he gets effective back-up from the voices of wife Zhang Hai-Jing and Steven Ambrose, Michael Fonfara's piano and electronic doodads.

The erhu is difficult to handle because it has no fingerboard, yet Gao achieves very passionate sounds as he exploits the instrument's expressive range with adroit variations and ornamenting skills most apparent on "Blue Little Flower" and the chirpy "Herding The Flock."

Intriguing titles include "Sewing The Purse" and "Little Cabbage."

Le Duo Fang-Gao au Festival de musique de la baie des Chaleurs

Un concert de sonorités prometteuses

CAMPBELLTON - Dans la série Classique du monde du Festival de musique de chambre de la baie des Chaleurs, on peut s'attendre à une soirée sous le signe de la musique traditionnelle chinoise. C'est précisément ce style de musique que George Gao, du Duo Liu Fang-Gao, a indiqué qu'il allait jouer.

Steve Hachey

L'Académie NOUVELLE

George Gao, un Canadien d'origine chinoise, joue un instrument méconnu en Amérique du Nord, le erhu. Le erhu est un genre de violon, datant de 1 500 ans, avec seulement deux cordes d'acier et dont le caisson de résonance est recouvert de peau de serpent. Selon le virtuose du erhu, la peau de serpent est très importante pour la sonorité de l'instrument. L'archet quant à lui est fait de bambou et de crinière de cheval.

«Le son du erhu ressemble beaucoup à une voix humaine, avec beaucoup de modulations, de mouvements possibles. Le erhu peut jouer de la musique traditionnelle chinoise, mais on peut aussi s'en servir pour jouer d'autres styles de musique, comme le jazz, la musique populaire, etc. Le erhu est vraiment populaire en Asie», a expliqué le musicien lors d'une entrevue téléphonique.

«Je joue un peu tous les styles avec mon erhu, mais cette fois le concert en sera un de musique chinoise traditionnelle. Quelques pièces proviennent de l'ancien temps et on ne se souvient même plus qui les a composées et d'autres ont été écrites par des

compositeurs contemporains. Émotionnellement la musique varie du dramatique au plus joyeux. La sélection des pièces, varie dans les styles et dans les émotions», a révélé George Gao.

George Gao a commencé à apprendre à jouer le erhu à l'âge de 6 ans. À 11 ans, il s'inscrit au Conservatoire de musique de Shanghaï. Depuis cet âge il a commencé sa carrière professionnelle pour finalement devenir, à 32 ans, un musicien de renommée internationale. Malgré tout, M. Gao reste modeste.

«Vous savez ce sont les autres qui disent que j'ai une renommée internationale, moi je ne peux pas dire. Je sais que je joue beaucoup à travers le monde mais je ne sais pas si je suis vraiment renommé.»

«Pour moi, le erhu me permet d'exprimer mes sentiments intérieurs quand je ne peux le faire par la parole. Quand je joue pour un auditoire, il y a une sorte de communication qui s'établit entre l'auditoire et moi-même et ça me procure énormément de satisfaction, partage-t-il.»

«Je dirais que je suis un musicien versatile. Mes racines sont surtout traditionnelles mais j'essais aussi de jouer de la musique classique occidentale, de la musique populaire, du jazz, enfin un peu de tous les styles», a-t-il noté.

Le concert du Duo Liu Fang-Gao aura lieu le samedi 10 juillet, à 20 h, à l'église Our Lady of the Visitation, à Benjamin River. Liu Fang quant à lui joue du pipa et du zheng et l'artiste invité Ye Xu-Ran est un maître du pipa.



George Gao et son instrument, le erhu.

LAVOIX DU NORD

Orchestre national de Lille

JEUDI 17 SEPTEMBRE 1998

Premier concert réservé aux abonnés hier soir au Nouveau-Siècle

Sur un air de erhu

Les visiteurs qui se sont déjà rendus dans le *China-town* de Londres ont peut-être eu l'occasion d'assister à des concerts de rue où des musiciens chinois interprètent de jolies mélodies sur un tout petit instrument à deux cordes, au son frêle et aigrelet. Cet instrument très populaire dans certaines régions de Chine, le *erhu*, est celui que les auditeurs de l'orchestre national de Lille ont pu découvrir hier soir au Nouveau-Siècle, lors d'un concert organisé un an après celui que l'orchestre de Lille avait donné à Hong Kong même, au *Midsummer Festival*. Le chef chinois Henry Shek avait ac-

cueilli les musiciens lillois ; Jean-Claude Casadesus le reçoit à son tour pour deux soirées réservées aux « abonnés privilégiés » de la nouvelle saison.

George Gao, le soliste (qui dut remplacer le musicien initialement prévu, Chen Jun ; ce dernier, cadre de l'armée a été réquisitionné par les autorités chinoises afin de participer à la lutte contre les inondations qui ravagent le pays) étonné par son extrême virtuosité : sur cet instrument apparemment très fruste, le musicien, par une série de glissandos, de vibratos, d'effets techniques très recherchés, produit une musique

immédiatement séduisante, très colorée et souvent riche en descriptions imaginées. L'association de l'instrument traditionnel à un orchestre symphonique, bien loin de choquer, suscite l'intérêt et la sympathie du public, qui fut gratifié de deux « bis » joués cette fois sur le *erhu* seul.

Changement complet de décor en seconde partie avec la quatrième symphonie de Brahms ; l'excellent chef Henry Shek fait preuve d'une direction chaleureuse, d'une grande lisibilité, rendant à ce monument de Brahms toute sa grandeur, parfois entachée d'un certain pathos.

Gérard GOUTIERRE



En répétition, le joueur de erhu George Gao, avec le chef chinois Henry Shek : l'association de la musique populaire traditionnelle et d'un orchestre symphonique. Ph. Luc MOLEUX

Lille - Métropole



Provocative Chinese music entices

By ROBERT FINN
MUSIC CRITIC

82, 12-31

Every two or three years, thanks to the interest of a small but totally devoted group of local enthusiasts, Cleveland gets to hear the exotic sounds of authentic Chinese music played by expert native musicians on their own instruments. It never fails to be an ear-opening, mind-stretching musical experience.

It happened again Wednesday night at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Four fine musicians from the Chinese Music Ensemble of Shanghai presented a free concert to a large and delighted audience. Heard were the eerie wails of various types of Chinese violins, the soft impulses of what might irreverently be described as Chinese lutes and banjos, the plaintive tones of a Chinese zither, the solid thwack of beautiful Chinese drums and the brilliant clashing of Chinese cymbals and gongs.

The four performers, all bearing impressive academic credentials from their homeland, were two men, Li Minxiong and Gao Shaoping, and two women, Zhou Lijuan and Wu Qiang. The men were dressed in sober black, the women in brilliant red. Together with their visually beautiful instruments, they made an arresting stage picture indeed.

The music was a collection of short pieces, some solo and some for small ensemble. A few pieces amounted to miniature concertos for a soloist with the backing of three colleagues. As seems usual with Chinese music, the pieces bore wonderfully picturesque titles: "Rain on the Banana Trees," "Ducks Quarrelling," "Moon Mirrored in the Clear Pool."

What is always so fascinating about these concerts is the combination of familiar and unfamiliar. The instruments — the fiddles in particular — make sounds unfamiliar to western ears. They are more shrill in timbre than western vio-

lins. But the music itself has some undeniably western-sounding elements of rhythm, interval and cadence. In the middle of some picturesque Oriental-sounding piece, there will suddenly pop out at you a phrase or cadence that could have been written by any number of western composers. And the endings of many of these pieces have about them the definite sound of similar moments in western symphonic music.

One piece, a highly rhythmic thing called "Da Qiban," might have been written by a Chinese Khachaturian; and the pipa solo, "Ambush on All Sides" (played by Zhou Lijuan) was a Chinese version of the battle piece.

Instruments on which these virtuoso musicians performed included several varieties of fiddle, notably the erhu, banhu and zhonghu; the small, lute-like liuqin; the high-pitched jinhu; the large banjo-like ruan; the large pipa and the zheng, or Chinese zither.

The music was in no way monotonous. The players demonstrated expert command of dynamic subtleties and shifts, and their sense of ensemble was well-high perfect. There was evidently a large element of improvisation in what they played, and they coordinated tempo changes or sudden shifts of dynamics by eye contact. They are obviously first-rate musicians well used to playing together.

Li Minxiong is a percussion specialist and he had great sport as featured artist in several pieces. In "Fast Drum in the Palace" he was a kind of Chinese Gene Krupa; in the two big percussion pieces that ended the program he clearly challenged his colleagues to a kind of "duelling cymbals" competition.

Listening to this fascinating music with its recurrent small melodic and rhythmic cells, one was struck by some superficial parallels to the work of the western minimalist school, the Philip Glass, John Adams axis. Like their music,

these Chinese pieces might seem merely repetitive, but a little investigation shows that they really have tremendous variety of structure and dynamics. Like all really worthwhile music, Chinese music does not yield up all its secrets to the casual first-time listener.

There were no wind instruments on this program. They may be heard on the group's second free concert, scheduled for the museum on March 30. There will also be a free open discussion with these expert musicians at the museum on Thursday afternoon.

Imaginative composer Schafer wins \$50,000

By WILLIAM LITTLER
MUSIC CRITIC

R. Murray Schafer walked away from the Jane Mallet Theatre Saturday night \$50,000 richer, as winner of the 1963 Canada Council Malson Prize for distinguished lifetime achievement in the arts.

In making the presentation, the Canada Council's Andrew Hanson pointed to the Ontario composer's special interest in the interdependence of cultures, hence the appropriateness of handing him his award at the end of an Esprit Orchestra concert conducted by Alex Paak, titled *Oriens/Occident*.

Notwithstanding the post Rudyard Kipling's skepticism, East and West have been meeting this way, on the field of esthetics, since long before Debussy heard his first gamelan at the 1889 Paris World's Fair, with Schafer's own music regularly continuing the practice of multiculturalism.

His 1961 score *Gitanjali*, a setting of five ecstatic poems from a collection of the same name by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, even brought Saturday's concert to a multicultural close.

It was interesting to hear the poems declaimed first without music, by Toronto actress Barbara Chiscott, the better to appreciate how much the imaginative composer's music segments them atmospherically. For Schafer's score is much more than an accompaniment to the words. His purely instrumental passages are as numerous as those in which he weaves arabesques around the voice.

The pure-toned lyric soprano of Donna Brown was the voice for which he wrote *Gitanjali* and it was her still pure-toned instrument that sang the music once again on this occasion, including the joyously rhythmic final song, in which she accompanied herself with rattles while

celebrating her singer's calling.

Equally celebratory were Manalita Thakkar's beguilingly performed dances to Tagore's songs about the seasons, though their inclusion on an already comprehensive program helped stretch its length to three hours.

Time does, of course, tend to pass in a more leisurely way in Eastern than in Western art, as the eight players of the Evergreen Club Gamelan Ensemble might easily have demonstrated, had their appearance not been confined to the presentation of *Poloce*, an almost tinseltastic piece written last year for their 10th anniversary by a former member, Jon Siddall.

By combining the use of all 13 pitches of the Western chromatic scale with the Balinese practice of creating a melody out of interlocking parts and weaving it through patterns of ornamentation, José Evangelista achieved even more of an organic synthesis of East and West than Siddall without using Balinese instruments at all in *O Boll*.

But perhaps the program's most daring exercise in cultural ecumenism found the sonorities of the 1,000-year-old Chinese bowed string instrument known as the erhu electronically altered for incorporation into the contemporary Western sound textures of He Xiantian's 1967 opus, *Four Dreams*.

Four Dreams certainly demonstrated how quickly today's Chinese composers have modernized since the Cultural Revolution, but to hear the brilliant George Gu, the Royal Conservatory of Toronto's first erhu player, depends in part, I think, by first playing Tim-Han Liu's traditional, unaltered *Bird Singing On The Empty Mountain* was to appreciate how some instruments are still left to their time-honored functions.

Shanghai quartet casts spell

By WANDA BALLANTYNE
DANCEMAGIC critic

The sound was exotic, the style foreign, the repertoire exotic. But the performance by the Chinese Music Ensemble of Shanghai was so communicative that it held a large audience spellbound for more than two hours Wednesday night at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The second of two concerts presented by the museum in cooperation with the China Music Project, the program consisted of 18 short pieces with poetic titles such as "Moon Mirrored in the Clear Pool" and "Waves Pounding on the Sand." The only familiar piece, an arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee," was translated as "Wild Wasps Flying and Dancing."

The polished four-member ensemble played a variety of traditional Chinese instruments ranging from the gentle pipa (an Oriental

lute with silk strings) to the raucous suona (the Chinese oboe).

The music consisted mostly of pentatonic melodies played without accompaniment. Variety was achieved with expressive microtonal ornamentation, subtle dynamic contrasts and frequent changes of timbre. Introductory mood pieces were followed by lively numbers in march rhythms. Most of the music was performed with a feeling of sweet sincerity. Some pieces were laced off with dramatic flair.

Adding to the pleasure of the performance was the gracious stage presence of the musicians. The men wore loose black suits with mandarin collars. The women were in tight red velvet gowns slit to the thigh. The instruments were also a visual treat, especially the

pipa with its carved dragon's head. The evening opened with two pieces of silk and bamboo music.

In the first, Li Minxiang, percussion and wind teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and leader of the ensemble, provided rhythmic accents on delicate finger cymbals. In the second, he doubled the melody with the pure sound of the diu (the horizontal bamboo flute). In these pieces, Gao Shaoqing, a student at the Shanghai Conservatory, was introduced in his specialty, the erhu (Chinese violin). Zhou Lijuan and Wu Qiang, faculty members at the conservatory, played the pipa (pear-shaped lute) and ruan (round lute).

In the opening group, the piercing suona made its only appearance. Expertly played by Li in "A Single Flower," the noisy instru-

ment sounded as though it were intended to be heard in outdoor festivals.

In the solo pieces, each musician performed with mastery and expressiveness. Gao gave lyrical interpretations of "River Waters" and "Moon Mirrored in the Clear Pool" on the erhu. In "The Hills and Villages Have Changed," his refined tone was supported by the harplike quality of Wu's ruan and the rapidly repeated notes of Zhou's pipa.

Zhou played four pipa solos, ranging in style from the lyricism of "Waves Pounding on the Sand" to the aggressiveness of "Dragon Boat."

Wu, a versatile artist, contributed solos on three different instruments. On the luguin (a small willow pipa comparable to the mando-

lin), she played an exciting sword dance and the amusing Rimsky-Korsakov arrangement. On the zheng (an Oriental zither), she played a toy-like song from a southern province and a showy folk tune traditionally played on drums and gongs at festivals. On the ruan (the round lute), she played an unusual piece that included a passage in Western harmonies.

The ensemble gave its most vigorous performances in its drum repertoire. In "Deep in the Night," Li beat a small drum with brilliant showmanship while his younger colleagues played the melodic line on pipas and jinghu (a small violin). For the grand finale, the ensemble performed exciting drum and gong music with sharp discipline and expert technique.

Members of the audience listened to each short piece with breathless attention. At the end, they brought the ensemble back for an encore, another colorful percussion piece.

— AMUSEMENTS —

— AMUSEMENTS —