

48th International Viola Congress – Salaya, Thailand

Sound Images from Formosa : chamber music from Taiwanese composers

Friday, 9 June 2023, 11:30 AM at PC607, College of Music, Mahidol University

Program

1. I-Chuun LEE : ‘*La fête de l’arbre*’ duet for viola and piano (2017)

Shu-Ching HSU, viola
Mehdi GHAZI, piano

2. Tung-You SU : Selections from ‘*Four Seasons of Love*’ for viola quartet (2022)

- I. *Autumn Tango*
II. *Summer Sunshine*

3. Yi-Cheng CHIANG : ‘*Tâi-uân*’ for viola quartet (2023-World Premiere Performance)

- I. *Thâu*
II. *Kū-ê*

Taiwan Radiant Ensemble

Ming-Li WU, viola
Shu-Ching HSU, viola
Yvonne Yung-Hwa LIU, viola
Chia-Hsin CHANG, viola



Brief description from composer

1. I-Chuun LEE : ‘*La fête de l’arbre*’ duet for viola and piano

“Using music ‘notes’ to ‘color’ my music is what I want to do when composing. The idea itself is a bit abstract and hard to explain, but it originated from the impressive greenery we were exposed to when we first moved to the City of Diamond Bar years ago. The many trees and shrubs planted on the sides of the roads changed gradually from green to yellow to red throughout the four seasons.

From my daughter’s drawings of the local plant life and the landscape of the city, I have found the greenery to be a calm, yet sometimes exciting presence depending on the time of the year, presenting me with new color palettes that are inspiring and thrilling. Hopefully, my music can reproduce the same feelings that the colorful scenery gave to me.”

2. Tung-You SU : Selections from ‘*Four Seasons of Love*’ for viola quartet

【*Autumn Tango*】 The poet chanted in the forest of Aowanda: "*Let life be as gorgeous as summer flowers, and death as quiet and beautiful as autumn leaves.*"

The old tree disagreed and shook his head violently.

So the golden leaves, with the remaining enthusiasm and demeanor of summer,

Accompanied by the autumn wind, dancing the last tango all over the sky...

【*Summer Sunshine*】 The summer sun is like a passionate prodigal son, full of vitality.

He crossed the snow-capped mountains, walked through dense forests, and crossed streams to visit the flowers that had been waiting for a long time in the dark.

So he hugged and kissed passionately, leaving a happy and warm light on her face.

‘*Autumn Tango*’ and ‘*Summer Sunshine*’ are two movements from Viola Quartet Suite ‘*Four Seasons of Love*’ like musical love talk about the four seasons in Central Taiwan. The theme depicts the changes of the four seasons, conveying strong local emotions through musical language.

3. Yi-Cheng CHIANG : ‘*Tâi-uân*’ for viola quartet

Taiwan, known as Formosa, is called *Tâi-uân* in Taiwanese. The identity of multiculturalism and Ethnicity is a main issue in Taiwan.

The idea of this piece which is called *Tâi-uân* is from the music of Taiwan reflects the diverse culture of people and culture. This piece is for viola quartet, and consists of four movements named in Taiwanese, including *Thâu* which means overture, *kū-ê* means “old” and the original settler. The government indigenous Taiwanese aborigines recognizes 16 groups and the most famous music with the unique feature in these groups is Pasibutbut from Bunun. This movement is inspired from the eight part polyphony of Pasibutbut and some ancient folks from other groups of aborigines.

In addition, the exploring of the new colour of viola is the main intention and trying to explore the unique vocabulary.

Performers

Ming-Li WU | Violist

The prominent Taiwanese violist and pedagogue Ming-Li Wu is a graduate of The Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) and Manhattan School of Music (MSM), Wu has studied with distinguished artists including Emanuel Vardi and Leonard Davis.



Wu has performed in various countries including United States, France, Canada, Austria, Belgium, Slovenia, Japan, Myanmar, and others. She is often invited to serve as a judge in various national music competitions and important examinations.

Wu is currently a full-time associate professor for the Department of Music at Shih Chien University and an adjunct associate professor at National Taiwan University of Arts and Soochow University.

Shu-Ching HSU | Violist

Shu-Ching is a native of Taiwan and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Viola from National Taiwan Normal University under Ting-Hui Chen, then continuing advanced programs at Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne-Billancourt in France and Université de Montréal in Canada studied with Simone Feyrabend, Stéphane Marcel, and Jutta Puchhammer.



Shu-Ching was former violist in various orchestra, including National Symphony Orchestra, Chimei Philharmonic Orchestra in Taiwan, and Ensemble Instrumental de Nice in France. She is currently an adjunct assistant professor at National Taiwan University of Arts, and Director of Radiant Ensemble, which founded in 2021, has been commissioned and premiered several chamber works dedicated for viola.

Yvonne Yung-Hwa LIU | Violist

Adjunct Associate Professor, Shih Chien University since 2015.
Former Associate Professor, University of Taipei, 1995-2017
Author of “Revealing the Mystery of Viola Teaching Method”, the first viola teaching guide published in 2003, Taiwan.



Ms. Liu has invited to join many distinguished orchestras and chamber ensemble in Taiwan, and served as a member of the judging and oral examination committee for various famous university graduate school programs in Taiwan.

Chia-Hsin CHANG | Violist

Chang received her Ph.D. from National Taiwan Normal University in 2015. Currently she is Adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Music of National Dong Hwa University.



Chang has a passion for chamber music. She is the violist of Quartet

Allegro Cantabile and a founding member of Taiwan Viola Ensemble. She also plays aperiodically with other ensembles like Piano Quintet Yoen, Quartet BuGua, the Islands' Ensemble, Radiant Ensemble and many others. She plays irregularly with Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Pro Arte, the Century Orchestra, and the Taipei Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.

Mehdi GHAZI | Pianist

Mehdi Ghazi was described as a “sensitive pianist” (Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times) and “a great pianist” with a power of “communicating emotions comparable to that of Wilhelm Kempff” (Claude Gingras, La presse, Montreal).



Ghazi is a laureate of the 2020 Campillos International Piano Competition and Medalist of the 2014 Hilton Head International Piano Competition. He was awarded the second prize and the “Audience Award” at the 2018 Orford Music Award. In 2015, Ghazi was selected as one of “30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30” by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Ghazi has performed in several venues around the world such as UNESCO’s Great Hall in Paris at age 12. He also worked and collaborated with renowned conductors Daniel Barenboim, Yoav Talmi, John Morris Russell, Pavel Baleff and Raffi Armenian. He performed with celebrated musicians such as pianist Conrad Tao, violinist Valeryi Sokolov, cellist Aleksey Shadrin, singer Julie Nasrallah and the Montreal based wind ensemble Pentaèdre. In 2010, he was selected by The Glenn Gould Foundation to perform before the Governor General of Canada as part of a tribute to the late Glenn Gould.

After moving from Algeria to Canada in 2006, he was awarded several prizes and awards: The 2014 Sylva Gelber Award, First Prize at the “Festival de musique classique du Bas-Richelieu”, and First Prize at the Canadian Musical Competition, as well as school chamber and concerto competitions and special scholarships. He is often featured on radios, televisions and newspapers: CBC (2011), Classical 96.3 (2012), The Globe and Mail (2011), Algerian Radio and Television (2006) among others.

Ghazi graduated with the highest distinctions from the Montreal Conservatory and the Glenn Gould School where he studied with pianists John Perry, André Laplante, Marc Durand and Jean Saulnier while taking master classes with internationally acclaimed artists such as: Daniel Barenboim, Leon Fleisher, Emanuel Ax, Menahem Pressler, Dang Thai Son, Michel Beroff, Jean-philippe Collard, Robert McDonald and John O’Conor.

Ghazi holds an Algerian Science Baccalaureate and recently completed a Doctorate degree in piano performance at the University of Montreal under the tutelage of Jean Saulnier.

Composers

Dr. I-Chuun Lee (1965-) | Born in a middle-class family, Dr. I-Chuun Lee is the 3rd child among the four siblings. She began her primary music education with Yamaha music courses at age of 5. From elementary to high school, she participated various piano, electone*, and composition contests. She received all kinds of prizes, ranked from participation to championships. From these activities, she found writing music to be more interesting than performing.



After she entered the Music Department of National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), she began her first academic training in music. She became a music teacher at Kwan-Jen Elementary school in Taipei after graduating from NTNU. With a passion for composing, I-Chuun withdrew from her teaching job three years later (1990) and came to the US her advanced studies. At first she studied electronic music with Dr. Morton Subotnic at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). This introduced her to the concept of mixed usage between electronic devices and acoustic instruments. Prof. Mel Powell and Prof. Libby Larson were her mentors, playing significant roles in her musical career. Prof. L. Larson also commissioned her an electric grand piano project which was presented at the Minneapolis showcase in 90s. After receiving her degree in Master degree from CalArts (1992), I-Chuun continued her doctoral degree at USC and studied with Prof. Erica Muhl. It is at this time that her unique style started to build. At the same time, she took piano accompaniment and film scoring as her two minor fields. Studying piano accompaniment reinforced her piano technique. Solid piano technique can be seen in many piano parts of her compositions. Throughout the course of film scoring, I-Chuun had learned from soundtrack masters, such as Buddy Baker, Elmer Bernstein, Christopher Young, and more. These experiences, coupled with five years of doctoral training of composition at USC, helped I-Chuun develop her unique style in music. Her music style includes, but is not limited to, the mixed usage of modes, keys, chords, and compound meters. She considers musical notes a composer's language, used to convey their feelings and thoughts like people do with words. After received her doctoral degree (1997), I-Chuun taught at School of Music of USC, Music department of Irvine Valley College, and has been a long term Yamaha Musical Grade Examination Examiner and J.O.C. Jury. She received many commissions from musicians and organizations. For example La Fete de l'arbre was commissioned by the Prof. Carine Hsu in 2018. Others works include symphonic poems, harp quintets, ballet solo music, trio with narration...etc. More recently, an online concert of I-Chuun's composition was held in Dec 2021. I-Chuun is very grateful that her parents gave her a good musical background, especially when she was growing up. From the influence, her two children learned music from her during their childhood and joined different activities, such as orchestral performances and dance showcases, with her and her husband's full support. She thinks music is a great medicine for people's lives. It is I-Chuun's goal to compose more music to soothe people, especially during such a confusing period of time as the present.

*Electone is an electric keyboard instrument with one or two octave pedals which is similar to the traditional organ.

The name was created and developed by Yamaha Music Corporation of Japan in the 1960s till now. There's a complete history of Yamaha electone history at Wikipedia.

Tung-You SU (1963-) | Master of composition from National Taiwan Normal University, Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris. Tung-You have been engaged in music education for many years, and he believes that the meaning of art is to allow every student to put a song in their hearts, and to accompany them to watch the scenery of life, to be more elegant and calm. Knowing the existence of beauty is the greatest blessing that human beings received .



In addition to the practice of education, he never forgets his original intention and continues to compose. Most of the themes are taken from familiar scenes in life, and describe Taiwan's people, history, flowers, birds, religion, cities, coasts, and rivers in various musical forms, and rewrite traditional operas and local songs. In recent years, he has tried to bring in the jazz elements and integrate the local customs to form elegant, pleasant, sweet and approachable Taiwanese music. He just hopes to use his composing skills to do his best to repay the kindness of this land and continue to convey the beauty of music.

Dr. Yi-Cheng CHIANG (1979-) | Yi-Cheng had been received a scholarship from Tzu-Chi Buddhist Foundation to study her Bachelor at Fu-Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. She came to England to continue her master degree (MA) in Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and undertook studies at the University of Birmingham, where she was awarded a Ph.D. in Musical Composition in 2006.



Yi-Cheng has won awards including the prize winner of Judith Lang Zaimont International Composition Competition,(2009), had been selected in composers' shortlist by SPNM(Society for the Promotion of New Music, UK) from 2005 to 2008,Tsang-Houei Hsu composition competition in Taiwan(2004), the prize winner of literary and artistic creation of Taiwan(National Taiwan Arts Education Centre) in Ensemble(2004) and in Chorus (2005), etc. her music has been numerously performed by ensembles in the UK, USA, China and Taiwan.

Yi-Cheng is currently an associate professor in Musical composition at National Taiwan University of Arts.