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## EAST WEST WEEK FINAL CONCERT

### Tales of the Exotic!

#### University Symphony Orchestra & Combined Choirs

APRIL 27 & 28, 2012 • GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL, UCA

#### PROGRAM

*Leonore Overture No. 3* Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

*The Yellow River Cantata* Xinghai Xian (1905 - 1945)

- I. *Song of the Yellow River Boatmen*
- II. *Ode to the Yellow River*
- III. *Yellow Water Ballad*
- IV. *Musical Dialogue on the River Bank*
- V. *Yellow River Lament*
- VI. *Defend the Yellow River*
- VII. *Roar! Yellow River*

*Scheherazade* Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 - 1908)

- I. *The Sea and Sinbad's Ship*  
(Largo e maestoso — Lento — Allegro non troppo — Tranquillo)
- II. *The Kalendar Prince*  
(Lento — Andantino — Allegro molto — Vivace scherzando — Moderato assai — Allegro molto ed animato)
- III. *The Young Prince and The Young Princess*  
(Andantino quasi allegretto — Pochissimo più mosso — Come prima — Pochissimo più animato)
- IV. *Festival at Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman*  
(Allegro molto — Lento — Vivo — Allegro non troppo e maestoso — Tempo come I)

Sponsored in part by:



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Juliana Byess, Asst. Concertmaster  
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Nicole Fassold  
Natalie Jones  
Kathryn Kiefhaber  
Rachel Napper  
Allison Rickel  
Jaclyn Salts  
Patrick Weseman

## Violin II

Karmen Mitchell, Principal  
Royston Hunget, Asst. Principal  
Jayme Cole  
Melissa Gross  
Haley Heer  
Courtney Peterson  
Brittany Schaeffner  
Lucas Thompson  
Olivia Trinko  
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Lindsey Noble, Asst. Principal  
Sam Hood  
Mando Surita

## Piccolo

Sam Hood

## Oboe

Caleb Bradley, Principal  
Shane Werts, Asst. Principal

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Shane Werts

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Tom Wilson, Principal  
Nicole Jensen, Asst. Principal

## Bassoon

Jessie Sawyer, Principal  
Lynn Bonomo, Asst. Principal

## Horn

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Christie Bass  
Kevin Olson  
Lindsey Poppe

## Trumpet

Tony Whitehead, Principal  
Scott Weber, Asst. Principal  
Jon Gray

## Trombone

Dave Ellis, Principal  
Logan Kingston, Asst. Principal

## Bass Trombone

Jesse Sylvester

## Tuba

Chris Krueger

## Percussion

Mark Coup, Principal  
Colin Constance, Asst. Principal  
Brandon Arvay  
Ben Justis  
Anthony Lederhos  
Collin Sitgreives

## Harp

Hannah Pensack-Reinhart  
Katie Miksch

## *Scheherazade*

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was the most accomplished of a group of 19th century Russian composers referred to as “The Mighty Handful.” A career Navy-man that had no formal musical training, Rimsky-Korsakov taught himself most of the skills needed to become an accomplished composer. He was eventually appointed the composition teacher at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music (now known as the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory of Music), and wrote a book on orchestration that is still studied today.

*Scheherazade* encompasses several different musical elements that were important to Rimsky-Korsakov and his fellow Russian composers: a fascination of the Orient and music that tells a story. The story of *Scheherazade* comes from the well-known *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. The story tells of a king who is angry at the untrustworthiness of women. He vows to marry a new woman every night and have each executed the next morning before she can betray him. After a string of women are subjected to this brutal fate, *Scheherazade* volunteers to marry the king. On their wedding night, she begins to tell him a story. She does not finish it, however, making him wait until the next night to hear the ending and thereby extending her life. This goes on for one thousand and one nights, after which time the king finally renounces his vow and allows *Scheherazade* to live.

Rimsky-Korsakov originally decided to set this story to music after seeing some paintings depicting scenes of *Scheherazade* telling her tales. When he first wrote the music, the composer did not provide any programmatic titles. After consulting some friends, however, he eventually gave each movement a name that is loosely related to *Scheherazade*'s stories. Still, like many composers of programmatic music in the 19th century, he tried to keep the titles vague to allow the listener a chance to write his or her own story.

The first movement, *The Sea and Sinbad's Ship* begins with the theme of the Sultan. Heavy, dark, and presented by the low instruments of the orchestra, the anger and harshness of the bitter king is immediately apparent. The Sultan is answered by *Scheherazade* herself, heard as a sweet melody from a solo violin with harp punctuation. The sea is then represented throughout the first movement in the rise and fall of string arpeggios with undulating themes riding atop the waves.

The second movement, begun this time by only *Scheherazade*'s theme, tells the story of the Prince-Kalandar. A kalandar was a kind of traveling monk, and in this story, he is a disguised noble. After *Scheherazade* begins her story, a solo bassoon enters, accompanied only by four sustained basses. The bassoon's theme is picked up by the oboe and then passed onto the rest of the orchestra as the music builds in intensity. The action is briefly paused, first by a clarinet and then a bassoon cadenza. The music intensifies at the end of the movement, culminating in an exciting flourish.

The third movement begins without any preamble from *Scheherazade* or the Sultan. The lilting melody set forth immediately by the violins can describe nothing but a love story, as indicated by the title of the movement, *The Young Prince and Princess*. The gentle melody eventually gives way to a dance. The dance and opening melody are both interrupted by *Scheherazade*'s theme in the middle of the movement and, while the opening melody then returns, *Scheherazade* continues to underpin the story for a few measures. The movement ends with a playfully brief nod to the first movement.

The final movement encases several stories: *Festival in Baghdad*; *The sea*; *The ship breaks up against a cliff surmounted by a bronze horseman*; *Conclusion*. The movement begins similarly to the first, with the Sultan's heavy theme answered by *Scheherazade*'s sinuous one. This time, however, there is a bit of dialogue between the two before the theme of the festival begins. The energy of the movement continues to build until we hear the melodies of the first movement as the story returns to the sea. After the ship crashes against the rocks, *Scheherazade* and the Sultan are heard one last time, although this time the Sultan's theme is more subdued, almost tender, as he finally gives in to *Scheherazade* and her stories.

*Notes by Christy Muncey*

## Graduate Teaching Assistants

Karmen Mitchell  
Christy Muncey  
Sabrina Romney  
Lydia Demi-Smith

## Graduate Conductor

Christy Muncey

### 5. *Yellow River Lament*

#### Recitation

Friends! We will fight to regain our homeland!  
Our country is in such disarray!  
Can any man with wife and children bear the enemy's  
humiliation?  
Dear compatriots, listen to a woman's sorrowful and tragic  
singing.

Between us there was no hatred or grudge, yet you  
consigned me to a nameless existence in this world!  
  
Oh wind, do not howl!  
Oh dark clouds, do not hide!  
Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!  
Tonight, I will throw myself into your embrace, to wash away  
my sorrows and sufferings!

#### Solo

Oh wind, do not howl!  
Oh clouds, do not hide!  
Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!  
Tonight, I stand before you and tearfully pour out my hatred  
and grief.

Oh, husband, you're as far away as the horizon!  
We shall reunite again below the earth!  
Think how your wife and children died so tragically!  
You must avenge this blood debt!  
You must make them pay for their atrocities!

Oh fate, so bitter!  
Oh life, so hard!  
My enemy, you have no conscience!  
My precious child, you died so horribly!

### 6. *Defend the Yellow River*

#### Recitation

Sons and daughters of China, who among you is willing to  
be slaughtered like pigs and sheep?  
We must resolve to be victorious, to defend the Yellow River!  
To defend northern China!  
To defend all of China!

Amid the thousands of mountains there are many heroes!  
Inside green muslin tents live valiant guerilla warriors!  
Armed with guns made here and elsewhere, waving large  
knives and long spears, they defend our hometowns!  
Defend the Yellow River!  
Defend northern China!  
Defend all of China!

#### Chorus

The wind howls, horses neigh, the Yellow River roars!  
To the west stands a towering hill, East and north of the  
river, sorghum has ripened.

### 7. *Roar! Yellow River*

#### Recitation

Listen, the Pearl River roars angrily!  
The Yangtze River is raging on!  
Ah! Yellow River!  
Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows,  
sound the battle cry for all of China's oppressed people!

But for China, a new day is already dawning; four hundred  
and fifty million people have united, pledging their lives  
to defend this soil!  
  
Listen: the Songhua River is calling, the Heilong River is  
calling; the mighty Pearl River roars its defiance:  
all along the Yangtze River, beacon lights are burning!

#### Chorus

Roar, Yellow River!  
Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows!  
Workers across the land cry out for battle!

Ah! Yellow River! Roar on!  
To all of China's suffering people, sound the battle cry!  
To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!

For such an ancient nation to suffer so much!  
Our cruelly oppressed people can no longer bear the torment!

*Notes by Karmen Mitchell*

## Chamber Choir

Dr. James Kim, Conductor  
Stacy Miller, Assistant Conductor  
Karen Stody, Accompanist

## Concert Choir

Dr. Ryan A. Olsen, Conductor  
Serena Eichhorn, Assistant Conductor  
Gay Slade, Accompanist

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Whitney Simmonds, Conductor  
Gay Slade, Accompanist

## University Chorus

Serena Eichhorn, Conductor  
Paul Stever, Accompanist

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Leslie Stewart

### Clarinet

Wesley Ferreira

### Percussion

Eric Hollenbeck

### Viola

Margaret Miller

### Bassoon

Gary Moody

### Harp

Rachel Ellins

### Cello

Barbara Thiem

### Horn

Matthew Evans

### Piano

Janet Landreth  
Silvana Santinelli

### Bass

Forest Greenough

### Trumpet

Steven Marx

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Tiffany Blake  
Gregory Brookes  
Susan Hochmiller

### Flute

Michelle Stanley

### Saxophone

Peter Sommer

### Trombone

Greg Harper

### Oboe

Gary Moody

### Tuba

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Aubrey Aronson	Talia Fischer	Mira Madorsky	Kirsten Roybal
Miranda Bashore	Dalie Geist	Erica Marshall	Danica Smeltzer
Caitlin Britt	Kayla Gerkin	Laura Marshall	Sarika Steinhaus
Abi Carlton	Angela Gesicki	Rebekah McIntyre	Sasha Stone
Blair Carpenter	Anastasia Gray	Stacy Miller	Lexi Strickland
Caitlin Cassel	Ruth Harrell	Rachael Napper	Emily Thomas
Allison Chase	Katie Hirschfeld	Susan Palfey	Kelly Thompson
Laura Conrad	Hannah Hudson	Marianne Pascoe	Hillary Thompson
Renée Del Vecchio	Anna Isernia	Crystal Pelham	Jackie Valdez
Katie Deuschle	Sarah Jensen	Kelsey Peterson	Emily Wang
Alex Diessner	Jamie J. Johnson	Laura Petrilli	Brittany Wetzel
Audrey Dorsher	Kayla Kawasaki	Alea Pinch	Katie Wetzel
Gina D'Silva	Emma Kett	Jennifer Pipp	Julia Whitney
Caylen Eckman	Michelle Kim	Grace Pomeleo	Laurel Wiley

<b><u>Basses</u></b>	Estevan Crispin	Justin Little	Erik Raab
A.P. Adair	Andrew Deem	Matthew Marcen	Matt Telsey
John Behm	David Dimmen	Nick Marconi	Alec Walsh
Arthur Beutel	Michael Harland	Kerry McKean	Jack Wheeler
Charles Boehlke	Matthew Hodak	Ryan McPeck	Bradley Williams
Eric Campbell	Bryan Z. Holm	Alexander Meyer	
Quinn Cerovski	Trent Jones	Josh Ooms	

<b><u>Tenors</u></b>	Noel Houle-Von Behren	Dean Rieger	Brenton Spendlove
Mark Allwein	Kyle Howes	Ryan Rohlfing	Jace Spraker
Nate Alpers	Sebastian Lawrence	Eric Schrumm	Paul Stever
Moises Amaro	Ryan Lewis	André Short	Jacob Thompson
Chris Collins	Graham Lier	Westin Sorrel	Michael Willette
Brandon Earle	Andrew Madden	Gene Stenger	

<b><u>Altos</u></b>	Camrenne Dubler	Holli Machmer	Cynthia Santos
Leah Aragon	Ashlyn Dunn	Kaelin McDonald	Haleigh Silz
Maggie Babb	Keili Elliott	Chaazi Munyanya	Jamie Simmonds
Lisa Baker	Jenna Farmer	Megan Murphy	Nicole Smith
Danika Barbour	Annie Freymuth	Mariah Nelson	Sarah Soltysik
Jamie Barringer	Logan Gannon	Gracie Padilla	Katie Spendlow
Cassidy Bible	JoDee Hambright	Sophia Paton	Patricia Stephens
Nicole Bishop	Kristen Holdsworth	Courtney Peterson	Caitlin Stroup
Tess Bloom	Lindsay Holmes	Amy Ratliff	Carly Swanson
Bethany Bohnenblust	Bethany Homan	Kimberli Render	Shawna Thompson
Kelsey Butler	Tracy Kaiser	Consuelo Reyes	Candida Velásquez
Jenae Campbell	Elizabeth Kerner	Rachel Rice	Sara Wise
Chelsea Combs	Sara Kirkpatrick	Kat Robinson	Hannah Zelman
Regina Coy	Deanna Kraft	Michelle Roach	
Samantha DeBey	Jessica Lauer	Mary Sue Rowan	

### 3. Yellow Water Ballad

**Recitation**

We are sons and daughters of the Yellow River, who  
arduously strive toward victory with each passing day!  
But each day that the enemy lives, is one more day that we  
cannot rest.  
If you doubt this, then listen to the painful groans of the  
multitudes on the river to the east.

**Chorus**

Yellow water, rushing eastward, flowing for ten thousand miles.  
Swift waters, high waves, racing rapids sound like cries of  
tigers and wolves.

Open canals and build embankments, for to the east lies  
level soil fertile for sprouting wheat and fragrant soy  
flowers.

Men and women, young and old, live in happy prosperity.  
  
But since the enemy came, these common people have  
suffered great calamities!  
Treachery, wickedness, burning, and murder create a desert  
of desolation; people escorting the elderly and carrying  
the young disperse in all directions to flee death;  
losing fathers and mothers, they are unable to return to  
their home villages!

Yellow waters rush along day and night, as families are  
torn apart!

### 4. Musical Dialogue on the River Bank

**Recitation**

Families torn apart, wives and husbands, children and parents!  
Will we forever be refugees?  
Listen, as two villagers dialogue on the Yellow River's bank.

**A:** Zhang No. 3, let me ask you, Where is your hometown?

**B:** My home is in Shaanxi, three hundred miles from the river.

**A:** Let me ask you, in your hometown, did you farm the land  
or trade?

**B:** I held the hoe, plowed the fields, planted sorghum and  
millets.

**A:** Why then are you here, wandering the bank, lonely and  
sorrowful?

**B:** Please don't bring up painful matters; my home was  
destroyed and I know not the fate of my family.

**A:** Zhang No. 3, don't be sad, my fate is worse than yours!

**B:** Why, Wang No. 7, where is your hometown?

**A:** I used to do business in the northeast; eight long years  
I've had no news from home.

**B:** All this said, you and I, both have homes we can't return to!

**A & B duet**  
Within our hearts, enmity and hatred swirl like the rapids of  
the Yellow River!  
On the Yellow River bank, let us both resolve to fight back!

For our country, we will become soldiers, go up Taihang  
mountain to fight as guerillas!  
From this day, you and I together, will fight to regain our  
homeland!

The piece begins with a clear illustration of struggling against the strength of the river while crossing it, but this soon becomes a metaphor for the war against the people of Japan. The first movement, *Song of the Yellow River Boatmen*, signifies fighting the waves while crossing the river. Listen for the tension in the beginning and the sense of relief when the boatmen “arrive at the shore” in the end. *Ode to the Yellow River* illustrates the praise given to the Yellow River’s might and intensity. The strong and flowing currents are depicted in the accompaniment. The third movement, *Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends*, is a recitation song. The rolling of waves can still be heard in the accompaniment alongside excerpts from two famous Chinese songs, “Man Jiang Hong” and “March of the Volunteers”. The folksong style of the fourth movement, *Yellow Water Ballad*, has simple wording to express hope and a fighting spirit. The fifth movement, *Yellow River Musical Dialogue*, is also composed like a folksong and has a call-and-response format that reflects domestic tensions caused by the war. In the sixth movement, *Yellow River Lament*, a strong and emotional melody reflects the humiliation of women during the war, many of whom were abused. *Defend the Yellow River* is a round, building from one voice to four. Its melodic and dynamic flow reflects waves and is also a figurative way to signify the vanishing and reappearing of the guerilla soldiers. The final movement, *Roar! Yellow River*, is an expression of enthusiasm and excitement, one intended to motivate the Chinese people in the midst of war. It ends by proclaiming, “To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry! To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!”

#### TRANSLATION:

##### 1. *Song of the Yellow River Boatmen*

###### Recitation

Friends! Have you seen the Yellow River?  
Have you crossed the Yellow River?

Do you remember scenes of the boatmen risking their lives  
to battle the perilous waves?  
If you have forgotten, then listen!

###### Chorus

Hai-yo! Row!  
Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo!  
Stormy clouds veil the sky!  
Surging waves as high as mountains!  
Cold winds slap our faces!  
Surfs crash into the boat!  
Fellow boatmen, keep a lookout!  
Helmsman, hold firm!

Stay alert, do not slack off!  
Fight for your lives, do not be afraid!  
Hai! Row!

Do not fear the mountainous waves!  
Boating on the Yellow River is like fighting at the front,  
Unite and forge ahead! Hai! Row!  
Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo! Hahaha!

The shore is in our view,  
Now we have reached the shore.  
Hearts, calm down, catch a breath.  
Soon, we will again risk our lives fighting those raging waves!  
Hai-yo! Row! Hey!

##### 2. *Ode to the Yellow River*

###### Recitation

Ah! My friends!  
The heroic spirit of the Yellow River dominates the plains of  
Asia, representing the vigor of our nation, mighty and  
strong!  
Here, facing the Yellow River, we sing our song of praise.

You have nurtured five thousand years of ancient culture;  
many heroic tales have taken place on your shores!

Ah, Yellow River!  
You are mighty and strong, like a giant you appear on the  
plains of Asia, using your heroic physique to build our  
people’s defense.

###### Solo

I stand on the mountain peak, gazing at the Yellow River  
rolling towards the southeast.  
Golden waves surge, lofty waters rise; muddy swirling rapids  
mark its sinuous course down from the Kunlun  
mountain, rushing toward the Yellow Sea; dividing the  
central plains of China into southern and northern parts.

Ah, Yellow River!  
You rush along to the horizon, majestic, extending your  
arms like countless strips of iron towards both northern  
and southern shores.

Our people’s mighty spirit will flourish under your nurture!

Ah, Yellow River!  
You are the cradle of the Chinese people!



**Wes Kenney** is Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University where he conducts the CSU Symphony and Chamber Orchestra as well as CSU Opera productions and teaches graduate conducting. He is also currently in his ninth season as Music Director of the Fort Collins Symphony. In the summer of 2004 he was named to an additional post of Music Director of Opera Fort Collins helping that organization establish a full season of three productions a season. A month ago he spent 10 days in Shanghai as an ambassador for CSU conducting concerts with the East China Normal University Symphony Orchestra. Last season he renewed a relationship

with bands stepping in to conduct CSU’s Wind Ensemble while a search for a permanent director began. Mr. Kenney was named the 2009 Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado American String Teachers Association. He was also awarded the Grand Prize in the Summer 2007 Varna (Bulgaria) International Conducting Competition. He traveled back to Bulgaria in March 2008 for concerts in Vidin and to conduct *La Traviata* in Stara Zagora. Mr. Kenney is a frequent guest conductor of professional and educational ensembles. He has appeared in the past four seasons with the Alabama All-State Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony, the Symphony of Southeast Texas, the Vallejo (CA) Symphony and the New Mexico All-State Orchestra. Prior to that, Maestro Kenney has guest conducted at the Edinburgh Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Buffalo Philharmonic, returned to the New Mexico Symphony for tours and performances of *The Nutcracker* and had debuts with the Williamsburg Symphonia (VA), and the Acadiana Symphony (LA). He has appeared with orchestras both nationally and internationally including Europe and Asia. He has also given orchestra clinics in all corners of Colorado as well as being sought after for sessions at the Colorado Music Educators Association Conference. He is a former president of the Conductors Guild and serves currently on their advisory board.

## East China Normal University Guests

#2 – Liu Kun, baritone

#4 – Cao Jin, soprano – Friday  
Gao Linyuan, soprano – Saturday

#5 – Feng Yuan, baritone  
Zhang Yifei, tenor

Tan Yaru, Assistant Conductor  
Cao Jin, Vocal Professor  
Lu Bo, Head of Music Department  
Chang Lin, Assistant Chair  
Hou Runyu, Conductor  
Wang Zhouyue, Assistant

Students: Liu Kun, Huang Jinming, Gao Linyuan, Wang Yang, Zhang Yifei, Feng Yuan

**Dr. Hou Runyu** holds the titles of President of School of Fine Arts, East China Normal University, Distinguished Professor, and Vice Music Director of Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra. He graduated with a Bachelor's Degree majoring in conducting from Shanghai Conservatory in 1969. In 1981, Mr. Hou was awarded the DAAC scholarship to advance his studies in Germany. He received his Master's Degree in piano and Doctoral Degree in conducting and Artistic Diploma from Koeln Music Conservatory. During his studies in Germany, he received a scholarship from the Wagner Academy of Koeln. Mr. Hou took part in the Wagner Opera Festival and studied with Sir George Solti in 1985. He also attended the First International Conductor Workshop and conducted the Rheinisch Orchestra in Koblenz at the event. Mr. Hou was appointed Vice President, Vice Music Director and Conductor of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in November of 1985. As music director, he led the orchestra and played 16 piano concertos, including one performed in Carnegie hall during a visit to the United States in 1990. He also led the orchestra to Europe and performed in the famous Leipzig Gewandhaus Hall in 1992.

In his conducting career, Mr. Hou has conducted numerous orchestras, including the Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, the Beijing Central Philharmonic, the China Radio Symphony Orchestra, the China Film Orchestra, the Shanghai Opera, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Dr. Cao Jin** graduated from Shanghai Conservatory of Music under the supervision of Professor Ni Chengfeng for the Bachelor degree. Later on she joined Shanghai Opera House as an opera singer. From 1998 to 2002 Dr. Cao Jin studied at the University of Art in Berlin, Germany and achieved Master Diploma in Vocal Music. In 2004 with the support of China Scholarship Council, she further studied at University of Music and Drama Art in Vienna, Austria and got the doctor degree in Vocal Music with excellence.

Dr. Cao Jin has been awarded for three times in the international vocal contests and she has played the leading roles in a lot of operas, such as Turandot, Rosenkavalier, LaBoheme, DieZaubefloeter, DonGiovanni, Ariadner. With the cooperation with das Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, Brandengburger Symphoniker, Bulgaria Radio Symphony Orchestra, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, etc., Dr. Cao Jin has held considerable concerts home and abroad.

In 2002 Dr Cao Jin was appointed as Vocal Music discipline setter by East China Normal University. In 2007 she was promoted to be full professor and doctorate supervisor. In terms of the teaching activities, Dr. Cao Jin has directed quite a few students who won the awards in the significant vocal contests in Germany, Italy and China. Because of the outstanding instruction, she has achieved seven teaching awards both on the level of nationwide and Ministry of Education. In the recent years, Dr. Cao Jin was invited as jury for the international vocal contests held in Germany, US, Bulgaria, Italy and China.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Leonore Overture No. 3*

Beethoven's only opera has a troubled history, beginning with its name. The composer wanted to call it *Leonore*, the title associated with the original Bouilly play on which the story is based, but the Vienna theatre where it was first presented insisted on the title *Fidelio*. The work met with little success during its first performances in November of 1805, so Beethoven made multiple revisions in an attempt to remedy what others thought were weaknesses of the opera. His new rendition, performed about five months after the original work's debut, received only two performances before an argument with the theatre's director led Beethoven to withdraw it from the stage. A final, more successful third version was performed in 1814. Each of these three productions opened with a different overture. A fourth version of the overture (composed third, but titled *Leonore Overture No. 1* due to a dating error) was written for a Prague premiere that never took place. *Leonore Overture No. 3* is the overture that was included with Beethoven's second attempt and is the version most frequently heard today. It has become a staple of the standard orchestral repertoire and is considered one of Beethoven's great works for orchestra. Its merits have also led to its frequent performance between scenes of the full opera *Fidelio* (the 1814 version) when presented on the contemporary opera stage.

The plot of *Leonore* revolves around the title character, a woman who disguises herself as a young boy, calling herself Fidelio. She secures work in the jail where her husband is supposedly held captive, hoping to engineer a rescue of her beloved. The overture's opening adagio sets an anticipatory mood and the following descending strain vividly creates the image of Leonore making her way down the stairway into the dungeon where her husband is imprisoned. As is common in overtures, themes heard at varying points later in the opera are presented in quick succession, foreshadowing for the audience what will follow. Beethoven's inimitable use of dramatic and programmatic elements assured this overture's ability to stand on its own as the audience favorite it is today.

*Notes by Sabrina Romney*

### *The Yellow River Cantata*

Chinese native Xinghai Xian was born in the Portuguese colony of Macau (just west of Hong Kong) in 1905, but spent most of his childhood with his grandfather in Panyü (north of Macau). His father was absent from the time of his birth and when his grandfather died in 1912, he and his mother relocated to Singapore. There, he began his primary education, studying both Chinese and English, and was first exposed to Western music through hymn-singing and piano lessons. In 1918, Xian returned to China for his secondary education. He studied violin, Western Classical music and philosophy, clarinet, was in a Brass Band, and even became a member of the local YMCA. After graduating in 1928, he spent some time at the recently opened Shanghai National Conservatory before moving to Paris in 1930 to continue his music education. Although he lived a sort of cosmopolitan existence influenced by a variety of cultures both in and out of China, he also struggled with poverty and many challenges throughout his life. These struggles began early, were prominent while in Paris, and continued through his travels back to China and to Moscow, where he died at a relatively young age in 1945.

Xian's style of music was often politically motivated and many did not like it. However, this style allowed Xian to stand out among other artists in China. He was surrounded by strong national tensions due to the Second Sino-Japanese War between China and Japan (1937-1945). In fact, the *Yellow River Cantata* portrays the challenges faced by the Enemy Resistance Third Drama Troupe when crossing the Yellow River at the Hukou waterfall at Shanxi. This troupe, like many other troupes of musicians and actors, was part of China's attempt to spread national awareness and to strengthen the efforts of the entire nation during this war. Weiran Guang, leader of the troupe, wrote a 400-line poem, and Xian set the poem to music the following year.

Written in 1939, the *Yellow River Cantata* was the first Chinese multi-movement choral composition to gain popularity and performance outside of China. Many revisions were made during Xian's life and even after his death (six different versions exist), including an English singing translation. Yet, it is difficult for Western performers to gain access to the piece at all. For tonight's performance, the Mandarin text will be utilized.

The name of the Yellow River comes from its yellowish-brown color, caused by silt picked up as it moves downstream. The composition of *Yellow River Cantata* was motivated by the desire to create new forms of art, rather than using traditional Western models. In his essay entitled "On National Form in Chinese Music," Xian stated, "Personally, I propose that we let content determine form, and use the modern advanced musical viewpoint to produce new content. We should ensure that the content of the music can reflect reality – the thoughts, feelings and lives of the nation." In the *Yellow River Cantata*, Xian used Western forms and Eastern musical instruments and material. Although this piece was originally scored for eleven Chinese instruments and harmonica (Xian claimed not to have the resources to score it for Western Orchestra while in Yan'an), Xian revised the entire orchestration in 1941 while in Moscow to the instrumentation you will hear this evening.