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HEIDELBERG CONCERTS
BUN-CHING LAM

Mutable 17543-2

BUN-CHING LAM HEIDELBERG CONCERTS

CD 01

1 **Run** (1993) (7:25)
Min Xiao-Fen (pipa)

Nachtgesänge (2000)

Text by Friedrich Hölderlin

2 I. Hälfte des Lebens (3:32)

3 II. Der Winkel von Hahrdt (2:33)

4 III. Lebensalter (3:53)

Susanne Serfling (soprano),

Willi Fischer (saxophone), Claba

Asboth (trombone), Naoko Kikuchi (koto),

Bernd Mallasch (percussion)

5 **Lotosträume** (2009) (5:48)

Text by Heinrich Heine

Thomas Buckner (baritone),

Isabelle Courret (harp)

Omi Hakkei (2000)

6 I. Night Rain at Karasaki (2:41)

7 II. Awazu on a Fine Breezy Day (2:21)

8 III. Wild Geese Descending in Katata (2:31)

9 IV. Autumn Moon at Ishiyama (1:57)

10 V. The Evening Glow of Seta Bridge (2:29)

11 VI. Sails Returning to Yabase (2:35)

12 VII. The First Snow of Mt. Hira (1:49)

13 VIII. The Evening Bell of Mii Temple (1:49)

Angelika Bender (flute), Wolfgang

Wendel (dizi/xiao), Mariette Leners (viola),

Zhang Zhenfang (erhu), Xu Fengxia

(zheng), Isabelle Courret (harp),

Bun-Ching Lam (conductor)

CD 02

1 **Lü** (1983) (15:38)

Gilles Durot (solo percussion)

Six Phenomena (1998)

2 I. Phantasm (3:21)

3 II. Dream (3:32)

4 III. Bubbles (3:15)

5 IV. Shadow (3:52)

6 V. Dew (3:39)

7 VI. Lightning (1:29)

Dimitri Vassilakis (solo piano)

8 **Bittersweet Music II** (1981) (13:20)

Jeanne-Marie Conquer (solo violin)

9 **...Like Water** (1995) (27:32)

Jeanne-Marie Conquer (violin),

Dimitri Vassilakis (piano),

Gilles Durot (percussion)

All compositions except
Nachtgesänge, *Lotosträume*,
and *Omi Hakkei* are published by
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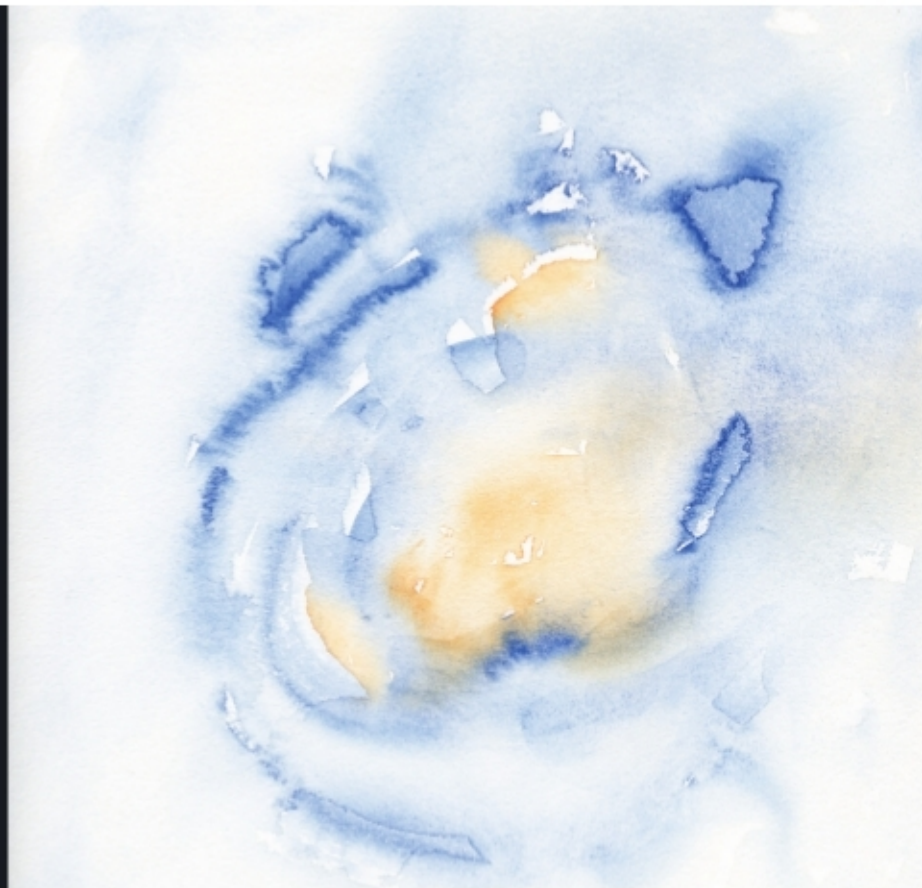
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Mutable 17543-2

BUN-CHING LAM HEIDELBERG CONCERTS



HEIDELBERG CONCERTS
BUN-CHING LAM

BUN-CHING LAM, a composer born in Macao, and
New York and Paris, have been working together for more than twenty-five years.
The artistic outcome of their collaboration was presented in an exhibition of
artist books and three evening concerts featuring compositions by Bun-Ching
Lam, held in Heidelberg in the fall of 2009. (The exhibition can be visited online
(www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/conf/kaldewey2009/). The CDs included here
contain the opening concert of October 26th, and the final concert of
October 28th, featuring vocal and chamber music written for
Asian and European instruments.

The Exhibition-cum-Concert-and-Lecture-Series was
a joint project by Heidelberg University's Cluster of Excellence
"Asia and Europe in a Global Context – Shifting Asymmetries in Cultural Flows"
and the newly founded Confucius Institute in Heidelberg with funding
provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Heinz-Götz-
Stiftung. The concerts took place in the magnificent acoustics
of the ballroom of the Portheim Palace of Heidelberg.



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HEIDELBERG CONCERTS
BUN-CHING LAM

Bun-Ching Lam Heidelberg Concerts

CD 01

The compositions featured in the first concert attempt to translate poetic or artistic sentiments into sound. It presents the many different cultural traits, from Heine to Hiroshige, from Europe to Asia, from Debussy from *lunzhi* (running finger techniques on the pipa) to *Run*, that have merged in the musics of Bun-Ching Lam. These pieces show Lam “thinking as a citizen of the world” as one critic, Ken Gallo, put it. *Omi Hakkei* “Eight views of Lake Biwa” (2000), for example, is inspired by Claude Debussy’s *Sonate en trio pour flute, alto et harp* (1915): Lam uses a double trio which juxtaposes the Chinese instrumental counterparts with Debussy’s set of instruments: flute-*dizi* 笛子, viola-*zhonghu* 中胡 and harp-*zheng* 箏, thus denaturing what’s usually assumed as natural, in a postmodernist manner. The piece is based on the composer’s personal experience during a three-month stay in Japan of visiting the eight sights near Kyoto that had also inspired woodcut artist Ando Hiroshige (1797-1858). The movements are named after Hiroshige’s prints. The music attempts to make up an imaginary landscape, trying to capture the atmosphere in the woodcuts.

The original purpose for the composer’s visit to Japan had been to “find ancient China in Japan.” Hiroshige’s woodcuts were one such discovery as Japanese landscape woodcuts are inspired by early Chinese landscape painting. Debussy in turn had been interested in Japanese art, and Japanese composer Takemitsu—to whom the piece is dedicated as an homage—was influenced by Debussy. Lam admits, “it’s all related, if not convoluted” and indeed, it may be impossible to disentangle these different levels of (trans)cultural significance, the many circulations of forms and forms of circulation (as Appadurai would have put it) in *Omi Hakkei*.

Lam reminisces: “Half of my life I have lived in the United States and I grew up in Macao. So I was well versed in Western culture; but still deeply rooted in my Chinese culture. I have the best of both worlds. Actually, I don’t think of it as two worlds. It’s one world.” Her

toire includes the Piano Concerto by György Ligeti, *Oiseaux exotiques* and *Un vitrail et des oiseaux* by Olivier Messiaen, the complete piano works by Pierre Boulez, the complete works for piano solo by Iannis Xenakis, *Klavierstück IX* by Karlheinz Stockhausen, and *Petrouchka* by Igor Stravinsky.

Wolfgang Wendel, di/xiao

Born in 1962 in Germany, Mr. Wendel studied flute in the German Conservatories such as Darmstadt, Karlsruhe and Freiburg (with Hans-Peter Schmitz, Berlin and Robert Aitken, Toronto). As a freelancer he played concerts and made CD-recordings with the Radio Symphony Orchestra Baden-Baden/Freiburg and the opera house Orchestra Karlsruhe. He gave master classes and solo recitals mainly on contemporary subjects throughout Germany (i.e. with the German Flute Society in Frankfurt), Australia, Taiwan (National Concert Hall, Taipei 2005), Austria, Russia (Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory, St Petersburg), Ukraine and U.S. (National Flute Convention Las Vegas, 2003 and New York, 2009). He also is a current member of juries like the “International Evgeni Mravinsky” contest in St Petersburg/ Russia and the Final contest of “Jugend musiziert” in Germany. <http://www.wolfgang-wendel.com>

Xu Fengxia, zheng

Ms. Xu was born in Shanghai/China. She began to play Chinese string instruments when she was 5 years old. Because of her exceptional talent she was accepted to study at the renowned Shanghai Conservatory where she learnt the guzheng, sanxian, Guqin and Liuguqin, and performed all these four instruments in solo concerts of traditional Chinese music. After her graduation she joined the famous Shanghai Orchestra for Traditional Chinese Music. After her move to Germany in 1991 Xu Fengxia began to discover new musical ideas and material and developed her own personal style: a mixture of everything from traditional sounds all over the world to more abstract and avantgarde material. Xu Fengxia has performed contemporary compositions with many European orchestras, including the orchestra of Bavarian Radio, Ensemble Recherche, Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam, and Neue Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

competition and eventually becoming a first class artist in China. She came to the United States in 1992 and was invited by Jazz at Lincoln Center to play a solo set of the music of Thelonious Monk. She received a commission, *Return of the Dragon*, from The Kitchen, followed by a performance with her Asian Trio. She was a featured composer and performed her solo piece, *Blue Pipa*, for the American Composers Orchestra's "Composer Out Front" series. She was a featured soloist at the Macao Arts Festival, the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival and the Great Mountains International Music Festival in Korea. Min is also the founder of Blue Pipa, Inc. (www.bluepipa.org) and currently lives in New York City.

Susanne Serfling, soprano

Susanne Serfling initially received a classical ballet training before she studied at the Hochschule Hanns Eisler in Berlin. She attended the 'lied' class of Wolfram Rieger and the master class of Julia Varady. Guest engagements took her, the winner of numerous scholarships and competitions, to the Berlin Staatsoper, the Komische Oper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival and the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, where she performed under Riccardo Muti as Iphigénie (*Iphigénie en Aulide*). She participated as a concert singer in Mahler's 8th Symphony, *Seven Early Songs* by Alban Berg and in world premieres of works by Johannes Wallmann. From 2002 to 2005 she was engaged at the Theater Erfurt. Since 2005 she has been a member of the Opera Ensemble at the Staatstheater Darmstadt. Here she sang, among others, Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Poppea, Iphigénie (*Iphigénie en Aulide*), Evita, and was also in *The Diary of Anne Frank* and as Rachel in *La Juive*.

Dimitri Vassilakis, piano

Dimitri Vassilakis has been a member of the Ensemble intercontemporain since 1992. Born in 1967, he began studying music at the age of seven in Athens. He continued his training at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, where he graduated with the jury's unanimous highest honors in piano (under the tutelage of Gérard Frémy) in chamber music and accompaniment. He also received guidance from György Sebök and Monique Deschaussées. Dimitri Vassilakis has performed as a soloist in Europe (Salzburg Festival, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino), North Africa, the Far East, and the U.S. His reper

musical interpretation of the occidental Other, her potential reverse exoticism in a reading of the oriental Other—never forgetting that exoticism did produce a lot of beautiful music in spite of its somewhat negative repute today—her music with its peculiar shares of ethnocentrism, relativism, regionalism, transculturalism and universalism all of which remain to be studied in detail, certainly has a lot to say to the world, but not because it is simply Chinese but because it speaks in many other languages, too. New Chinese Music like hers, in its ever more polyphonic transculturality is not national but truly international music.

CD 02 This CD presents more chamber music by Bun-Ching Lam under the title of Seeing Sounds—Like Water, Like Ritual: Chamber Music. Each of the pieces is an expressive painting in sound, allowing the audience a multiplicity of sensual experiences: it is not enough to hear, but one must see and smell, taste, feel and be touched by this music. In *Lü* 旅 (Journey) for percussion solo, composed in 1983, an atmospheric piece with a refined structure, the audience is led, slowly from the preparation for a journey to holy grounds to the performance of a sacrifice. The composition makes use of the ancient Chinese eight sounds *bayin* 八音 classification which arranges all instruments according to the material they are made of and hence by the timbre they produce. The eight sounds *bayin* are metal, stone, earth, skin, silk, wood, gourd and bamboo. Lam uses three of these: metal, wood and skin and thus comes very close to the range of instrumental timbre used in traditional sacrificial music: bells (metal) and sounding stones, wooden percussion instruments (wood) and drums (skin). Moreover, the set-up Bun-Ching Lam designed for the arrangement of the instrumental groups on stage (most probably for practical reasons) turns out to fit almost exactly the directional correlations attributed to the *bayin* in traditional cosmology, with skin related to North, metal to West etc.

The Chinese ritual context is particularly pronounced in the last two movements of the composition. In *Collect*, the dignified steps of a ceremonial procession are hinted at in the second timpani part, which is marked "ceremonially." By convention, the music at an imperial sacrifice stopped when the emperor entered the temple and so it does here. Then, the leader of the musicians would beat his instrument three times, which is echoed in the com-

position too. Next, the emperor was expected to kneel twice and knock his forehead three times on the ground. This is depicted in the first timpani part which, in a glissando, makes the lowering of the head audible. The second timpani part hints at the thrice knocking of the forehead to the ground. The Sacrifice itself is then rung in with bells. This again tallies with ritual conventions: at the beginning of each sacrifice, the attention of the gods was attracted by cutting the ear of the sacrificial animal with a knife which had bells attached to it. The composition can thus be interpreted as a powerful example of New Music deeply indebted to Chinese cultural heritage. One could argue that Lam's use of tradition as that of many other Chinese composers is a sign of the ease and naturalness with which they can draw on a culture in which they have been steeped. Is *Lü* Chinese music by a Chinese composer, then? Not necessarily: one could read the piece entirely differently. One could argue that the interpretation given here writes more Chineseness into the composition than ever was consciously conceived. If this composition had not been composed by Lam but, say, a German composer, had anyone even considered a Chinese interpretation? Most probably not. And not for the worse! It is possible to listen to this piece without the Chinese explanation. One can laud it for its sensibility to instrumentation, the creation of interesting and new timbre effects, for its inventiveness in terms of rhythm, and its deliberate and effective use of sounds and silences. One need not know of China to listen to this piece as accomplished New Music.

Barbara Mittler, Director,
Institute of Chinese Studies Center of East Asian Studies
University of Heidelberg

several engagements with the biggest French national symphonic orchestras, he discovered contemporary music. As a consequence, he had the opportunities to perform with ensembles like TM+, Multilatérale, 2e2m, Squillante, Accentus, Sequenza 9.3 and Ensemble intercontemporain, which he joined in 2007. In 2008, along with accordion player Anthony Millet and eclectic percussionist Bachar Khalife, he founded the K/D/M Trio, involved in the mixing of contemporary musics. Gilles Durot is a scholarship prize-winner of the Association des Amis du Royaume de la Musique and of the Fondation Meyer for the cultural and artistic development.

Willi Fischer, saxophone

Willi Fischer studied the saxophone with Linda Bangs (Raschèr Saxophone Quartet), and is a member of the South German Saxophone Chamber Orchestra and the Saxophone Trio "trioSAXissimo". He teaches at the Heidelberg School of Music and the Musikhochschule Mainz (department "Schulmusik").

Naoko Kikuchi, koto

Born in Sendai Japan. As a child, Naoko studied koto with her grandmother and mother. Starting in 1989 she took lessons from Tadao Sawai and Kazue Sawai. At Sophia University, Tokyo, she joined the Sawai Kazue Koto Ensemble world tour and participated in recordings (d'c records). Naoko graduated from the NHK (Japanese National Broadcasting Company) School for Performance of Traditional Japanese Instruments and received a master license with the highest score; she also received honor prizes from several contests. Naoko has been active as a musician commissioning new works for koto from composers and collaborating widely with artists in other fields (dance, drama and art). She has a large repertoire, which includes classical koto and chamber music, as well as modern, contemporary compositions and improvisation. Naoko performs and teaches regularly in a foothold in Tokyo (Japan) and Frankfurt (Germany). www.naokokikuchi.com

Min Xiao-Fen, Pipa

Pipa player and composer Min Xiao-Fen is known for her fluid style. She is a world-renowned virtuoso in both orchestral and underground projects. Ms. Min was a pipa soloist with the Nanjing Traditional Music Orchestra in China, winning the Jiangsu national pipa

recordings, including six of his own solo albums. For the past twenty years, Buckner has co-produced the Interpretations series in New York City. He also created the Mutable Music record label to produce new recordings and reissue some important historic recordings, previously unavailable in CD format.

Jeanne-Marie Conquer, violin

Born in 1965, Jeanne-Marie Conquer won first prize for violin at the age of 15 at the Paris Conservatory, subsequently she pursued her studies in classes of Pierre Amoyal (Violin) and Jean Hubeau (chamber music). She joined the Ensemble Intercontemporain in 1985. Jeanne-Marie Conquer has developed intense artistic relationships with many composers of today. She has worked in particular with György Kurtág, György Ligeti (for the Horn Trio and Concerto for violin), Peter Eötvös (for his opera *Le Balcon*) and Ivan Fedele. As a soloist of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, she has made numerous concert tours under the direction of Pierre Boulez, David Robertson and Jonathan Nott ranging from Australia to United States, from Argentina to Finland.

Isabelle Courret, harp

Isabelle Courret began studying harp in Bordeaux, her birthplace. She entered the Paris National Conservatory of Music at the age of 14, working with Jacqueline Borot, then Marie-Claire Jamet for the harp, and Christina Larde for chamber music. She received the 1st Prize in harp unanimously at the age of 17 and she began an international career, playing recitals, concertos and chamber music in France and Europe and in Seoul. In addition to the above, she has studied with Marielle Nordmann and Suzanna Mildonian. In 1991, Ms. Courret joined the La Scala of Milan Orchestra as 1st harp soloist, working under the direction of Riccardo Muti, Lorin Maazel, and Semyon Bychkov. In 1993, she was finalist of the Lily-Laskine International Competition. She plays in concerto and recitals all over the world.

Gilles Durot, percussion

Born in 1983, Gilles Durot is currently the youngest soloist of Pierre Boulez's famous Ensemble intercontemporain. He studied percussion in the Conservatory of Paris with Michel Cerutti and was awarded in 2007 with the coveted First Prize of the Superior Diploma. After

Friedrich Hölderlin – *Nachtgesänge*

I. Hälfte des Lebens
Mit gelben Birnen hänget
Und voll mit wilden Rosen
Das Land in den See,
Ihr holden Schwäne,
Und trunken von Küssen
Tunkt Ihr das Haupt
Ins heilignüchterne Wasser.
Weh mir, wo nehm ich, wenn
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
Den Sonnenschein,
Und Schatten der Erde?
Die Mauern stehn
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Klirren die Fahnen.

II. Der Winkel von Hahrdt
Hinunter sinket der Wald,
Und Knospen ähnlich, hängen
Einwärts die Blätter, denen
Blüht unten auf ein Grund,
Nicht gar unmündig.
Da nemlich ist Ulrich
Gegangen; oft sinnt, über den Fußtritt
Ein groß Schicksal
Bereit, an übrigem Orte

I. Half of Life
With its yellow pears
And wild roses everywhere
The shore hangs in the lake,
O gracious swans,
And drunk with kisses
You dip your heads
Into the sobering holy water.
Ah, where will I find
Flowers, come winter,
And when the sunshine
And shade of the earth?
Speechless, in the wind
Walls stand cold
The weather vanes creak.

II. The Shelter at Hahrdt
The forest sinks off
And like buds, the leaves
Hangs inward, to which
Flowers up the valley floor below,
Not much under-age,
This is where Ulrich has walked;
Often broods over his footprint
A great destiny
Ready, among the remains.

Biographies

III. Lebensalter

Ihr Städte des Euphrats!

Ihr Gassen von Palmyra!

Ihr Säulenwälder in der Ebne der Wüste,

Was seid Ihr?

Euch hat die Kronen,

Dieweil ihr über die Grenze

Der Othmenden seid gegangen,

Von Himmlischen der Rauchdampf und

Hinweg das Feuer genommen;

Jetzt aber siz ich unter Wolken darin

Ein jedes eine Ruh hat eigen, unter

Wohleingerichteten Eichen, auf

Der Heide des Rehs, und fremd

Erscheinen und gestorben mir

Der Seeligen Geister.

Heinrich Heine – *Lotosträume*

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,

Herzliebchen, trag! ich dich fort,

Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges,

Dort weiß ich den schönsten Ort.

Dort liegt ein rotblühender Garten

Im stillen Mondenschein;

Die Lotosblumen erwarten

Ihr trautes Schwesterlein.

Die Veilchen kichern und kosen,

Und schau'n nach den Sternen empor;

Heimlich erzählen die Rosen

III. Ages of Life

Cities of the Euphrates!

Streets of Palmyra!

Columns wooding the desert plain,

What are you?

You are stripped of your crowns,

As you crossed beyond

The bounds of breath,

By the smoke and Fire of the gods;

But now I sit under the clouds,

In which each thing finds its peace,

Under a fine stand of oaks, by

The deer meadow, and strange

And dead, they appear to me,

The spirits of the blest.

On wings of song,

Lovingly, I carry you forth,

Away, to the banks of the Ganges,

Where I know the most beautiful place.

There lies a red-blooming garden,

In the still moonlight.

The lotus flowers await

Their beloved sister.

The violets giggle and cuddle,

And look up into the stars;

Secretly, the roses whisper in each other's ears

Bun-Ching Lam, composer, piano, conductor

Described as “alluringly exotic” (*The New York Times*), and “hauntingly attractive” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), the music of Bun-Ching Lam has been performed worldwide by such ensembles as the Macao Orchestra, American Composer's Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, The Vienna Radio Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the Albany Symphony. Born in Macao, Lam has recently been appointed the composer-in-residence of the Macao Orchestra. She began her piano study in her native city, then further pursued her music education in Hong Kong and the United States. She holds a B.A. degree in Piano Performance from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a Ph.D. in Music Composition from the University of California at San Diego. She has taught at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, and served as Visiting Professor at the Yale University School of Music and at Bennington College. She has been recognized by numerous awards including a Rome Prize, the highest Award at the Shanghai International Composers' Competition, two NEA grants, fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Guggenheim Foundation and the New York Foundation for the Arts. She has received commissions from the American Composers Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Macao Orchestra, Chamber Music America, CrossSound Festival, Bang On a Can Festival, Sequitur, Continuum, Ursula Oppens and the Arditti String Quartet. She also served as the Music *Alive!* Composer-in-Residence with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Bun-Ching Lam's work has been recorded on CRI, Tzadik, Nimbus, and Koch International. She now divides her time between Paris and New York.

Thomas Buckner, baritone

For more than 40 years, baritone Thomas Buckner has dedicated himself to the world of new and improvised music. Buckner has collaborated with a host of new music composers including Robert Ashley, Noah Creshevsky, Tom Hamilton, Earl Howard, Matthias Kaul, Leroy Jenkins, Bun-Ching Lam, Annea Lockwood, Roscoe Mitchell, Phill Niblock, Wadada Leo Smith, Chinary Ung, Christian Wolff and many others. Buckner is featured on over 40

quality, yet it is also very versatile, capable of producing chords, harmonics, and sounds in a wide range of timbres. In this work, I tried to explore this multi-faceted nature of the instrument. It begins on the two lower open strings (G and D), then slowly unfolds into a broad, soaring melody, and eventually ends in a series of ethereal sustain long tones on various harmonics. *Bittersweet Music II* was written for János Négyesi, the Hungarian violinist. He has also recorded the work in a compact disc released in 2006.

...Like Water (1995)

...*Like Water* consists of a series of short self-contained movements. It makes reference to images of water and its various manifestation such as ice, steam, and mist. I had in mind a few Chinese sayings while I was composing this work.

“Relations between gentlemen are plain like water”

“Years flow by like water”

“Love tender like water”

...*Like Water* was commissioned by June Watanabe for the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, with support from Meet the Composer's Choreographer/Composer Project.

Bun-Ching Lam

The composer wishes to express her gratitude to Prof. Dr. Barbara Mittler for her vision and enthusiastic support that made this project possible. Also special thanks to the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Heinz Götze-Stiftung and the Confucius Institute for their generous support which enabled the composer to assemble a group of internationally renowned musicians from four continents for the concerts.

Recorded live at the Völkermuseum, Heidelberg.
Engineered and edited by Manuel Veronesi. Mastered by Tom Hamilton.
Watercolor by Gunnar A. Kaldewey.
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Sich duftende Märchen ins Ohr.
Es hüpfen herbei und lauschen
Die frommen, klugen Gazell'n;
Und in der Ferne rauschen
Die heiligen Stromes Well'n.
Dort wollen wir niedersinken
Unter dem Palmenbaum,
Und Liebe and Ruhe trinken,
Und träumen seligen Traum.

Their fragrant fairy-tales.
The gentle, bright gazelles,
Hop around and listen;
And in the distance murmur
The waves of the holy stream.
There we will lie down,
Under the palm-tree,
Drink of love and peace,
And dream our blessed dream.

Buch der Lieder, Lyrischer Intermezzo (poem IX)



Program notes

Run (1993)

Run, besides its meaning in English, it also means wheels or cycle in Chinese. It was the first work I ever wrote for solo pipa, the Chinese lute with four strings. Pipa is perhaps the most technically demanding of all the Chinese musical instruments, making use of many complicated finger techniques, among them “run” (or “lun” in Mandarin pronunciation) is the most difficult. It is executed by using five (or four, or three) fingers, taking turns to strike the string (or strings) rapidly and continuously, to produce an even and sustained tremolo. *Run* was subsequently incorporated in *Sudden Thunder*, my first pipa concerto. It was composed for Wu Man, who premiered the piece at the Interpretation series in New York in 1993.

Nachtgesänge (2000)

Commissioned by the CrossSound Festival of Alaska, *Nachtgesänge* is scored for soprano, baritone saxophone, trombone, marimba and koto, a rather unusual combination of instruments as specified by the commissioner. In dealing with this compositional problem I decided to set three poems of Friedrich Hölderlin in German, the first one being the famous *Hälfte des Lebens* (*Half of Life*). I envisioned the ensemble in two halves - the baritone sax with trombone, both wind instruments made of metal; the koto and marimba, instruments made of wood, while the singer is the medium that brings the two elements together, thus providing me with the rationale for making sense of the instrumentation. *Nachtgesänge* was premiered in Sitka, Alaska, in 2000.

Lotosträume (2009)

Written for Thomas Buckner as a present for Kamala Buckner's birthday, *Lotosträume* is a setting of Heinrich Heine's poem, which fittingly depicts their loving relationship. The premiere was given in Heidelberg on October 26, 2009, as recorded in this CD.

Omi Hakkei (2000)

Omi Hakkei refers to the eight scenic views of Omi by Lake Biwa, near Kyoto, Japan. These

views have been immortalized by the woodblock prints of Hiroshige, whose work was very much influenced by Chinese landscape paintings. I have visited these scenes during my three-month residency in Japan, under the auspices of the Asian Cultural Council in 1998. I was most intrigued by the cross-cultural references of the same subject matter, yet expressed by such different means. I also seek similar cross-cultural approach in my music by combining Chinese and western instruments; eastern aesthetics with western compositional techniques. I have quoted from Debussy and Takemitsu in two of the movements as homage to the masters. I would like to dedicate this piece to the memory of Toru Takemitsu.

Lü (1983)

Lü, which means journey in Chinese, was originally composed for a dance entitled “A Woman Who Roams”. It was scored for a large gamut of percussion instruments, ranging from wood, skin to metal. *Lü* was first performed in Seattle, Washington in 1983.

Six Phenomena (1998)

The idea of *Six Phenomena* came from the “Diamond Sutra”, as follows:

“Everything has Potential Dharma, even as a dream,
A faulty vision, a bubble or a shadow,
As dew drops or lightning flash,
It should be viewed as it is.”

There are six movements altogether, depicting each of the six phenomena. As the Buddhist believes that the physical world is just an illusion, I feel music shares the same illusive quality, hence this composition.

Bittersweet Music II (1981)

Bittersweet Music is the second of a series of pieces that I have composed for various solo instruments, mostly virtuosic in nature. It served as a vehicle for me to study and explore the capacity, and the performing technique of each instrument. So far, there are three musical pieces in this series, respectively for piccolo, violin and bass flute. Written in 1981, *Bittersweet Music II* is also the solo part for my violin concerto *Lang Tao Sha*. Being one of the most evolved and important instruments of Western music, the violin is most noted for its expressive melodic