

“Chinese Memories”

旧词新曲 / 中国记忆

10 poems from the Tang and Song Dynasty

Composer Johan Famaey presents his newest composition. West meets East. Johan based his music on ten ancient Chinese poems and composed in a Eastern-Western style. The result is a beautiful song cycle with Western and Chinese influences, a unique treat for the listeners. Chinese Memories is an unforgettable musical - literary encounter!

Duration: 70 minutes without break (a break is possible though)

Program: 旧词新曲 - Jiu ci Xin qu 中国记忆 Zhong guo Ji yi

1. 孟浩然 春晓 A Spring Morning Meng Haoran (689-740)
2. 李煜 乌夜啼 Crows Crying at Night Li Yu (937-978)
3. 虞美人 The Beautiful Lady Yu Li Yu (937-978)
4. 相见欢 Happy Meeting Li Yu (937-978)
5. 浪淘沙令 Waves against Sand Li Yu (937-978)
6. 苏轼 春宵 Spring Night Su Shi (1037-1101)
7. 定风波 In the rain Su Shi (1037-1101)
8. 饮湖上初晴后雨 After Rain Su Shi (1037-1101)
9. 李清照 如梦令 Like A Dream Li Qing-zhao (1084-1151)
10. 声声慢 Pit-a-pat Li Qing-zhao (1084-1151)

The ensemble: Soprano 1
Soprano 2
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Contrabass
Organ
Yangqin
Timpani and percussion

Poets and their poems:

Meng Hao Ran 孟浩然 (689-740)

The oldest writer in this poem cycle lived during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), which heralded the beginning of the golden age for Chinese poetry. There were two forms: a strict form and a free form. 'Chun Xiao (春晓)' is written in the strict form: it is a rhyme with 5 characters per line and 4 lines. Both forms are called 'Shi'-style.

Li Yu 李煜 (937-978)

Later during the Tang Dynasty, a new genre was created. New poems were written on traditional melodies. This is called the 'ci'-poem. 'Ci' means 'word' in Chinese. Ci-poems are complex and flourished during the Song Dynasty. The mean representative of the Tang ci-poem was the last Tang emperor Li Yu (李煜).

Yu mei ren (虞美人), Wu ye ti (乌夜啼), Xiang jian huan (相见欢) and Lang tao shao ling (浪淘沙令), stem from the time that the Song Dynasty (960-1279) ended the reign of Li Yu. Li Yu and his family were captured and taken to the new capital Kaifeng. His work reflects his sadness for the loss of his empire. Themes in his poems are love, history and philosophy.

Su Shi 苏轼 (1037-1101)

Chun Xiao (春宵), Ding Feng Bo (定风波) and Yin Hu Shang Chu Qing Hou Yu (饮湖上初晴后雨) are written by Su Shi. Su Shi wasn't only a well-known poet but also an important statesman of the Song Dynasty. He was the governor of Xuzhou.

Because he dared to criticize the policy in his poems, he was banished to Huangzhou. During this period he began to meditate and wrote his best poems.

Li Qingzhao (1084-1151)

Li Qingzhao, known for Ru meng ling (如梦令) and Sheng sheng man (声声慢) was a Chinese writer and poet and is considered by many as the first female writer in China.

Her father was a friend of Su Shi. Before she married Zhao Ming Chen in 1101, her poetry was already known within the elite circles. Both loved poetry and wrote poems for each other. She never recovered from the loss of her husband in 1129. Since then, her poems are characterized by heartbreak and transience.

Presentation of composer Johan Famaey



“As a teenager, I started arranging and composing music for the orchestras and choirs I conducted at that time. In 2002 I graduated at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven for organ with professor Luc Ponet, harmony with professor Carl Van Eindhoven and counterpoint with professor Hans Vervenne.

In 2005 I went to Qingdao, China. During my four years in Qingdao, I met the Chinese traditional music. This led to cooperation with Chinese musicians. I have arranged and composed music for organ with Yangqin, Sheng, Pipa and Dizi. Furthermore I've improvised and composed music for organ solo on Chinese themes. Ever since, I also try to make the organ more accessible to the general audience.

End 2009, I went back to Belgium. In the mean time, I had ideas for new compositions with a Chinese touch. Eventually I felt attracted to the ancient Chinese poems of the Tang and Song Dynasty. The poets are all considered to be among the main representatives of Chinese poetry.

It is my wish with this composition, to let everyone share in the beauty of the appealing Chinese literature. The poetry is picturesque and the music is very beautiful. An unforgettable musical-literary moment for everyone.”

Conductor Dirk Van den Hauwe:



Dirk Van den Hauwe studied with Rudolf Werthen at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent, with Jerrold Rubinstein at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp and with Radovan Lorkovic at the 'Musikhochschule' Bazel, Switzerland. Dirk was concertmaster of the 'Westvlaams Jeugdorkest' and of the chamber orchestra Musica Aeterna.

He played as freelance violinist with the Flemish Opera, The National Orchestra of Belgium and 'De Munt' Opera House in Brussels.

From 1988 till 1996, Dirk was leader of the second violins of the Belgian Chamber Orchestra, later called 'De Beethoven Akademie'. Between 1991 and 2005, Dirk performed with the Rubio String Quartet many concerts with highlights at Wigmore Hall, Sydney Opera House, the Purcell Room, Daichi Semai Hall, Carnegie Hall, De Singel, Concertgebouw Amsterdam.....

Nowadays Dirk Van den Hauwe is 1st violinist with the 'Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen' and leader of the 2nd violins of 'het Nederlandse kamerorkest Ty' and also freelance violinist with 'het Brabants orkest' in Eindhoven.

Soprano 1 Irene Carpentier:



Irene Carpentier graduated in 2006 with Stephanie Friede. In 2007 she graduated at Operastudio Vlaanderen. She attended master classes with Anthony Rolfe-Johnson, Trish Mc Caffrey, Gidon Saks, Graham Johnson, Ann Murray, John Norris, Pietro Rizzo and Barbara Bonney. As soloist, she sang Proserpina's role in *Zone Orfeo* (i.s.m. Muziektheater Transparant), Cis in *Albert Herring* by Benjamin Britten (with Operastudio Vlaanderen) and Ninfa in *La Dafne* by Marco Da Gagliano. Since 2003, she often sings with the choir of the Flemish Opera: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Richard III*, *Prova d'Orchestra*, *Nabucco*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Les Dialogues des Carmelites*.

In 2009 she was on tour as soprano in '*Ashes*' with Les Ballets C de la B , (led by Koen Augustijnen) and at the side of Steve Dugardin. In 2011 she founded ensemble A Muse and played in its first production 'Zout'.

Nowadays, Irene is working on a opera for children, called *Hänsel und Gretel* in cooperation with Ineke De Vylder and director Luc Frans. Irene is also working on an audiovisual creation with guitarist Kristof Selis and artist Paul Klaui.

Soprano 2 Ineke De Vylder:



Ineke De Vylder graduated at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp with Stephanie Friede. Ineke attended master classes with Jard Van Nes, Gidon Saks, Micaela Von Gegerfelt, Carol Yahr, Udo Reineman, John Norris and Trish McCaffrey.

As soprano soloist she performed with: Amanti dell' Arte and Dynamic Symphonic Band. In 2004, Ineke played 'Harry' in the Benjamin Britten opera *Albert Herring*, a production of 'Operastudio Vlaanderen' in cooperation with the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp.

Ineke sings regularly with the choir of the Flemish opera. She sang in *La Damnation de Faust*, *La Sonnambula*, *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Carlos*, *Peter Grimes*, *L'amour de loin*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Aida*.

In 2011 she founded ensemble 'A Muse' and played in its first production 'Zout'.

Together with Irene Carpentier, she works on an opera for children.

Sangeeta Sharma and Het Sangam Ensemble:



Sangeeta Sharma graduated in 2006 at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels with Professor Sebestyen and Professor Kowalski. She attended master classes with Professor Kugel, Christiaan Bor, Albrecht Breuninger and Angel Stankov.

Sangeeta plays as freelance violist with: the National Orchestra of Belgium, the Flemish opera, TY, Prima la musica, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, het kamerorkest voor Vlaanderen and orkest der lage landen. She can be heard on different CD recordings.

Since 2007, Sangeeta teaches violin at the music academy in Lokeren.

In 2011 she founded the ensemble Sangam. 'Sangam' is the Hindi word for 'meeting'. The ensemble Sangam is a young ensemble that strives for innovation en meetings of different cultures in music. Chinese Memories is Sangam's first successful combination of 'West meets East'.

Review

BELGIANS SING LIEDER IN CHINESE

"Chinese Memories' concert at Lokeren, Belgium

Review written by the Embassy of China in Belgium

SOURCE: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/gxh/tyb/ywcf/t881666.htm>

November 18th, 2012 was a special and an unforgettable day for the Lokeren residents. In the quiet town, people came together in the St. Anne's church to attend the concert 'Chinese Memories' by Belgian composer Johan Famaey.



Johan Famaey composed music on classical Chinese poems.

The ensemble was a mix of Chinese and Western instruments: 2 sopranos were accompanied by a string quintet, organ, yangqin, percussion, glockenspiel and timpani. The sopranos sang songs in Chinese, "Chun Xiao" by Meng Hao Ran, "Wu Ye Ti", 'May Yu Ren', 'Lang Tao Sha', "Huan Xiang Jian" by Li Yu, "Chun Xiao" "Ding Feng Bo," "Yin Yu Chu Shang Qing Hou Yu" by Su Shi and 'Ru Meng Ling', 'Sheng Sheng Man" by Li Qing Zhao.

The stylish music on the masterful old Chinese poems, moved the listener into a poetic and picturesque world, in a magical dream full of pathos.

The last song "Sheng Sheng Man" was also performed by the National Youth Choir of Belgium. It reflected the deep melancholy of the poet very vivid and intense and led up to a climax.

After the concert, the concertgoers gave standing ovation. It was a great success. Congratulations were all around and we heard constantly how "fantastic" it was. This concert was attended by officials from the cultural department of the Embassy of China in Belgium.

This concert is also amazing because it was solely performed by Belgian musicians.

The Belgian musician Johan Famaey loves Chinese culture. Previously he worked in Beijing and Qingdao as organist and teacher. After he returned to Belgium, he started the creative process for Chinese Memories. This concert with Chinese poems is a first for Belgium.

In recent years, as China develops, more and more Belgians want to know Chinese history and culture. This spectacular concert is one vivid example.

Music can be heard on:

www.myspace.com/johanfamaey