A Thousand Mountains A Million Streams

SATURDAY **APRIL 21, 2018** 8:00

BMOP

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams

SATURDAY **APRIL 21, 2018** 8:00

JORDAN HALL AT NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

Pre-concert talk by Robert Kirzinger at 7:00

YU-HUI CHANG Pixelandia (2015)
(world premiere)

I. 1943
II. HoMM3
III. The Boss
IV. Game Over

Made possible through a grant from The Fromm Foundation

HUANG RUO Unscrolled, Concerto for solo piano and orchestra (2015)

Vivian Choi, piano

INTERMISSION

ANTHONY PAUL DE RITIS The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl, Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra (2018)

Beibei Wang, percussion
(world premiere)

Chinese percussion instruments provided by Chi-Sun Chan of the Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association Chinese Music Ensemble

LEI LIANG A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams (2017)
(world premiere)

Part I: A Thousand Mountains

Part II: A Million Streams

Made possible through a grant from The Jebediah Foundation

GIL ROSE, conductor

CLIVE GRAINGER

TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

FLUTE
Sarah Brady
Jessica Lizak

OBOE
Jennifer Slowik
Catherine Weinfield

CLARINET
Jan Halloran
Amy Advocat

BASSOON
Jensen Ling
Gregory Newton

HORN
Neil Godwin
Alyssa Daly

TRUMPET
Dana Oakes
Andrew Sorg

TROMBONE
Victoria Garcia

BASS TROMBONE
Philip Hyman

TUBA
Ken Amis

PERCUSSION
Robert Schulz
Nick Tolle
Matt Sharrock

PIANO
Linda Osborn

HARP
Krysten Keches

VIOLIN I
Gabriela Diaz
Klaudia Schlachta
Susan Jensen
Amy Sims
MaeLynn Arnold
Sean Larkin
Sonia Deng
Nicole Parks

VIOLIN II
Megumi Stohs
Piotr Buczek
Julia Cash
Micah Ringham
Lilit Hartunian
Nivedita Sarnath
Kay Rooney-Matthews
Aija Reke

VIOLA
Joan Ellersick
Noriko Futagami
Abigail Cross
Emily Rideout
Lauren Nelson
Dimitar Petkov

CELLO
Katherine Kayaian
Miriam Bolkosky
Velleda Miragias
Darry Dolezal

BASS
Bebo Shiu
Scot Fitzsimmons

PROGRAM NOTES

By Robert Kirzinger

China is a vast place, encompassing an infinite array of intercultural connections. Tonight's Boston Modern Orchestra Project concert makes no pretense of presenting anything like an overview or cross-section or any other all-embracing idea of what "Chinese music" might mean, but the program shows, in its diversity, some of the many possible ways Chinese music has affected four very different composers from the same generation. Among the three composers of Chinese heritage, three different native languages are represented: Lei Liang and Huang Ruo were both born in the People's Republic of China, Liang on the mainland near Beijing (where Mandarin is dominant) and Huang Ruo on the southern, Hainanese-speaking island of Hainan. Yu-Hui Chang was born in Taiwan and grew up speaking Taiwanese as well as Mandarin. All three have made their homes primarily in the U.S. for more than two decades. Originally from New York, American composer Anthony Paul De Ritis has been deeply engaged with Chinese culture (including studying Mandarin) and music since the mid-1990s. Blends of Western and Chinese elements permeate this program, but more significant and apparent will be the strong, highly individual musical personalities emerging in these works. Two—those by De Ritis and Huang Ruo—are concertos; Yu-Hui Chang's and Lei Liang's works could be called, broadly speaking, tone poems, but from very different perspectives.

YU-HUI CHANG (b. 1970)
Pixelandia (2015)

Yu-Hui Chang grew up in Taiwan, where her family has lived for many generations. At age six she began her musical training, which included voice, piano, and music theory, some violin, and eventually a bit of erhu, the Chinese traditional violin. Although little traditional Chinese music theory and practice was taught in these courses, Chang often encountered festival and ritual music taking place in the community. Chinese percussion has helped shape her taste in instrumental color, precision, and energy. On the whole she is less conscious of the influence of Chinese music specifically than that of Chinese literati painting and philosophy.

At National Taipei Normal University Chang was introduced to techniques of Western avant-garde music, which she has assimilated into her multifaceted personal style. After graduation she earned her master's degree at Boston University and her doctorate from Brandeis University, where she joined the faculty in 2006 after teaching for seven years at the University of California, Davis. She has been active in Boston as co-artistic director of both the Empyrean Ensemble and Dinosaur Annex and has been Guest Composer of the Wellesley Composers Conference at the invitation of Mario Davidovsky. Her music has been played by many of Boston's ensembles, internationally in North America, Europe, Oceania, and Asia, and has been recognized by such organizations as the Guggenheim Foundation, Radcliffe Institute, American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Taiwan Ministry of Culture.

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Chang's most recent piece is *Incredulous* for large chamber ensemble, written for a March 2018 concert at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in response to recent political events. Her orchestral music includes the erhu concerto *Amid Haze*, commissioned by ALEA III, and a flute concerto, *Mountain is Mountain*, for the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. Among her large chamber music catalog are two string quartets for the Lydian String Quartet. In 2017 she wrote *The Path in Front of Me* on commission from the advocacy group Shelter Music Boston.

Although most of her pieces are for Western instruments, Chang has also written for mixed Asian and Western ensembles. Her *Pu Songling's Bizarre Tales*, for erhu, pipa, yangqin (hammer dulcimer), flutes, clarinet, and percussion was commissioned by Meet the Composer for Music From China; she conducted the premiere in New York City in 2011. Other mixed works are *Toil, Live, Sing* for ajaeng (Korean zither), violin, and cello; incidental music for the play *The Orphan of Zhao* for erhu, yangqin, viola, cello, and percussion, and the percussion ensemble piece *Dou Zhen* for Ju Percussion Group.

Pixelandia, for Western orchestra with a large percussion section, was commissioned by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project with funding from the Fromm Music Foundation. She finished the piece in 2015, making a few further touch-ups this year prior to this world premiere performance. The composer writes,

> *The idea of Pixelandia came when one day I saw my husband teaching my two little daughters how to play "The Legend of Zelda", a series of Nintendo video games that first started in 1986. It occurred to me how my generation was the first to grow up with video games when they were in their earlier developing stages in the 70s and 80s, before they became multi-billion dollar business, and before they exist ubiquitously in everyone's smart phone. I began to recall my first encounters with some of the games when I was a child, such as "Space Invaders," "Breakout," and "Pac-Man." I wanted to write a piece commenting on this unique experience, when kids could have tremendous joy with 2D games and with graphics so primitive that every scan line and pixel was visible. After the piece was finished, I realized what I wrote was not just about video games, but about a simpler time, and the youth that will never return.*

Pixelandia is in four movements, with some similarities to a symphony: a fast opening movement, a slow, broad second movement, and a tension-filled third movement, plus a brief "finale," Game Over. 1943 refers to the 1980s video game "1943: The Battle of Midway," in which the player controls an airplane (viewed, as is the whole scene, from above) to battle squadrons of enemy planes and increasingly large ships. Strata of instrumental colors and patterned figures moving at different speeds in the movement are musical responses to the layers of activity in the game—e.g., the player's fast-moving plane versus the immense, slowly revealed ships requiring frantic activity to destroy. The second movement, HoMM3, was inspired by the role-playing video game "Heroes of Might and Magic III," in which one's avatar explores a medieval fantasy world. Soloistic and non-traditional instrumental techniques create the movement's wondrous atmosphere. A sudden expansion, recalling sunrise depictions in Debussy's *La Mer* or Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, is the movement's peak, suggesting the moment the avatar's awareness of the world opens up after an encounter with a more knowledgeable denizen.

Players of shooter or challenge games are familiar with the concept of The Boss, a final obstacle or character to defeat to "win" a game or level. Both the Boss itself and the battle action are represented in the dark, churning music, which begins with "menacing" contrabassoon, double basses, and bass drum; sharp dynamic and timbral contrasts and complex knots of superimposed and alternating gestures depict the action. After an increasingly fraught battle, a brief respite prepares the forces for a last encounter. The conclusion for the casual player: the all-too-predictable Game Over, with a tempo marking of "insert coin to continue." A gentle but sarcastic razzing is the last word.

HUANG RUO (b. 1976)

Unscrolled, Concerto for solo piano and orchestra

In 2015 Chinese-American composer Huang Ruo was named the first-ever composer-in-residence for the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. To kick off this residency, Huang's piano concerto *Unscrolled*, commissioned by NTR ZaterdagMatinee, was premiered at the Concertgebouw by the Residentie Orkest under Emilio Pomarico's direction and featuring soloist Emanuele Arciuli. This is Huang's first concerto for piano, but as an outstanding performer himself, he composed a piece intensely focused on the physical object that is the piano, and the physical phenomena of its sound and that of the orchestra.

Now a U.S. citizen, Huang Ruo was born in 1976 on Hainan, a large Chinese island in the South China Sea between Macau and Vietnam. He studied piano with his father, the established film and television composer Huang Ying-Sen, and listened to Chinese opera with his grandmother. Born at the end of the highly restrictive Chinese Cultural Revolution, Huang attended the Shanghai Conservatory, where he not only absorbed Chinese traditional music but also the big influx of Western music—classical, jazz, rock, avant-garde. In 1995 Huang Ruo came to the U.S. to attend Oberlin University in Ohio, where he studied with Randolph Coleman. He earned his doctorate at the Juilliard School, and he has kept New York City as his base. He was a principal in forming the International Contemporary Ensemble with Claire Chase, and later conducted that group in a Naxos recording of his Chamber Symphony cycle. He also founded and is artistic director of the Future In REverse (FIRE) ensemble.

Huang Ruo is also active as a film and theater composer and as a Chinese folk-rock singer, has collaborated with artists in other media, and is increasingly involved in stage, installation, and other theatrical projects. His opera *Dr. Sun Yat-sen* was premiered by Opera Hong Kong in its Chinese instrument version in October 2011 and in Santa Fe in its Western-instrument version in 2014. His opera *An American Soldier*, a collaboration with playwright David Henry Hwang, was premiered in a one-act version at Washington National Opera in 2014, and an expanded, two-act version will be premiered at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in June 2018. Other recent works include his audience-participation *Resonant Theatre* works *Woven* and *The Great Sonic Wall* and the orchestral piece *Becoming Another*, a commission from the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan. His work has been performed by such traditional concert ensembles as the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, ASKO Ensemble, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and New York City Opera, and under such conductors as Wolfgang Sawallisch, Marin Alsop, James Conlon, and Dennis Russell Davies.

Huang Ruo's music blends and synthesizes styles, using extended techniques and indeterminate notation alongside traditional methods in the service of direct communication. Since he himself is a performer in a variety of styles and media, he embraces the chance to challenge and engage the musicians for whom he writes: the physical nature of much of his music conveys, and is conveyed through, the energy and spontaneity of the sound itself.

This is amply evident in his piano concerto *Unscrolled*, in two continuous parts. The piece grows from the initial low D on the piano, its resonance extended by an Indonesian gong. The piano's role is to create, through sharply struck sustained tones, repeated chords, and intervallic oscillations, the timbral/harmonic ripples broadcast throughout the orchestra. Brass, winds, and strings pick up on and sometimes expand harmonic cues; unpitched sounds in those instruments and in percussion create ambiguity, which translates to possibility. The first part is a long expansion, its active surface in contrast with the stately harmonic movement. The highly varied second part begins without a break with a series of eight-note strikes on a gong, with the piano holding a tremolo in the highest register. Quick, sweeping arpeggios mark shifts of musical character. A period of repose is immediately balanced by an aggressive, percussion passage; this is followed by ghostly sounds in winds and strings paired with piano rumbling in its lowest range. The final long passage centers on a persistent, rhythmically vibrant F, occasionally expanding into fragments of melody. After an upward swoop and a high trill, the piano drops precipitously to its final bold E-flat.

ANTHONY PAUL DE RITIS (b. 1968)

The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl (2018)

Anthony Paul De Ritis arrived at Chinese music in the mid-1990s via electronic music, when he made samples of a pipa for a proposed electro-acoustic work during a trip to Hong Kong for the annual International Computer Music Conference. Although the result wasn't immediate, in 1999 the project became his first piece involving a Chinese instrument, *Plum Blossoms*, which exists in both its original electro-acoustic guise and as a version for pipa, orchestra, and electronics. It was during this time that he met the great pipa artist Min Xiao-Fen, with whom he worked in developing the idiomatic nuances of the solo part. He also wrote his concerto *Ping Pong* for her; for pipa artist Wu Man he wrote the solo piece *Zhongguo Pop*. (This spring De Ritis has a residency at the MacDowell Colony to expand *Zhongguo Pop* to an ensemble piece.) The practice of working closely with players, all the more critical with less familiar Chinese instruments, has been a key component of De Ritis's method. Although tailored to particular players, the solo writing in his concertos—whether for guitar (*Pop Concerto*, for Eliot Fisk), bassoon (*Riflessioni*, for Patrick de Ritis), pipa, or in this new work for percussion soloist—is well-balanced and idiomatic, as well as being brilliantly virtuosic. His new percussion concerto is dedicated to Beibei Wang, whom De Ritis first met at a concert sponsored by Unesco a few years ago.

De Ritis's involvement with the culture and people of China goes well beyond music. He travels frequently to China, has studied Mandarin for many years, and was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. De Ritis has also created networks of cooperation with musicians and teachers in the U.S., France, Canada,

and Germany, where he has been in residence at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg. A longtime member of Northeastern University's music faculty (including several years as head of the department), he has had a stable base from which to further not only his compositional career, but also innovative educational, cultural, and entrepreneurial enthusiasms. To his degrees in music composition from Bucknell and Ohio universities and a doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley, he added an MBA from Northeastern, and has been an appointee to the university's cross-disciplinary Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group of the D'Amore-McKim School of Business. BMOP has released two CDs of his music on BMOP/sound, with plans for a third, including the present piece.

Electronic music was a major part of De Ritis' training, especially at UC Berkeley, where he worked closely with the legendary electronic music guru David Wessel; many of his works include electronic components, including *Devolution*, a concerto for turntablist DJ Spooky, and *Legerdemain* for orchestra and electronics, both of which were performed and recorded by BMOP. De Ritis' approach to purely instrumental music has been influenced by his work with electronics. He employs instruments to expand and "hold" harmonies like a resonance filter; builds chords spectrally following timbral analysis; distributes sound and resonance in space, and even "edits" form as if splicing tape or using sequencing software. Another influence is the use of pattern and process of classic minimalism. These techniques and ideas are melded and transformed via the composer's great sonic imagination and inviting expressiveness.

The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl takes its title and narrative from a Chinese folk tale, one of the group known as the Four Great Folktales in Chinese culture. Although he has rarely based works on explicit narratives, De Ritis was interested in the challenges of creating musical reflections of particular characters and ideas. The percussionist doesn't play a character role, but rather spins out the emotional thread of the narrative, while the orchestra illustrates key story moments and creates the overall atmosphere.

Cowherd Star (Altair) and the Weaver Girl Star (Vega) fall in love, which is forbidden. The Queen of Heaven—also Weaver Girl's grandmother—banishes the Cowherd Star to Earth to become an actual cowherd, and dooms Weaver Girl to weave clouds perpetually. One day a group of fairies begs permission of the Queen of Heaven to descend to the land of mortals for a holiday at a healing lake, and ask to take Weaver Girl along. The Queen agrees. Meanwhile, the Cowherd, who has been unfairly abandoned by his mortal family, lives alone with his bedraggled Ox, who, as it happens, was once Golden Ox Star and has magical and intuitive powers. On the day the fairies and Weaver Girl bathe in the lake, Ox says to Cowherd out of the blue, "If you steal a dress from beside the lake, the girl will be your wife." Destiny determines that the dress belongs to Weaver Girl; they recognize each other, and marry. The Queen of Heaven finds out and has Weaver Girl abducted back to heaven. Fortunately, Golden Ox Star has the ability to fly Cowherd back to heaven as well, but with a wave of her hairpin the Queen creates the Milky Way to separate the two stars. One day a year, though, the Queen of Heaven allows the Magpie Bridge to bring them together.

De Ritis worked with Beibei Wang in crafting the solo part and consulted with BMOP percussionist Robert Schulz to determine components of the large and varied orchestral percussion section. The harmonic profile of much of the piece is derived from samples of a unique array of gongs. Some of the sounds we hear are literal translations of action, e.g., the plodding of the Ox at the start of the piece, accompanied by ambient nature sounds. The percussion soloist begins with vibraphone, moving into a detailed, casually virtuosic gloss on the music heard in harp and middle strings, which we might identify as the "love theme" and which accounts for the reuniting of the lovers. For the wedding, the soloist switches to traditional wedding drum, improvising on a set pattern along with a verbatim transcription of ceremonial wedding music (woodwind chorus). The soloist switches to Paigu and other drums for an exchange with the orchestral percussion, leading to the Queen of Heaven's wrath and Weaver Girl's abduction; a recurrence of the opening music for the Cowherd his Ox, and their flight to heaven. After the big improvised cadenza, the magpies enlisted to form the bridge—transcribed from actual birdsong—bring a recapitulation of the "love theme" in high metallic percussion. Stars fill the sky.

LEI LIANG (b. 1972)

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams (2017)

The work that gives this concert its name is Lei Liang's biggest orchestral work to date, a converging of many threads of his immersion in Chinese culture. The score was commissioned by BMOP through a grant from the Jebediah Foundation, whose principal, longtime new music supporter Rob Amory, is a dedicatee of the piece along with the late scholar and art collector Jung Ying Tsao. The title refers to the idea of an object or phenomenon embodying multiple identities, shifting with the perception of the viewer; it references on another level the kaleidoscopic diversity of Liang's home country. The piece is a kind of fantasia on the work of the literati (ink wash) painter and aesthetician Huang Binhong (family name Huang; 1865-1955), one of the most significant Chinese artists of his era.

It was a long conversation with Jung Ying Tsao that triggered Liang's deep study of Huang's work, but that research is just one facet of the composer's exploration of Chinese history. Liang was born in Tianjin and grew up in Beijing, where his education included learning about Western classical music through piano lessons. He progressed quickly, winning acclaim both as a performer and as a composer at a young age. His mother worked at the Research Institute for Music in Beijing, through which Liang learned about a wide swath of Chinese indigenous music. In 1989 he was convinced by his family to further his studies in the U.S. following the Tiananmen Square Massacre, because some of his classmates were among the protest organizers. After starting out in Texas, he moved to Boston to attend the New England Conservatory, then Harvard University, where he earned his Ph.D. He has taught at the University of California, San Diego, since 2007.

Liang's music is performed worldwide, and is published by Schott. Some of his most important collaborators are his colleagues at UC San Diego, including the pianist Aleck Karis, soprano Susan Narucki, percussionist/conductor Steven Schick, and the double bassist Mark Dresser. His music has been released on several important monograph recordings by such groups as the Arditti Quartet, Callithumpian Consort, Palimpsest Ensemble, and Taipei Chinese Orchestra. A work performed here by BMOP, *Xiaoxiang*, concerto for saxophone and orchestra, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams* will be recorded for a future BMOP/sound release along with other works by the composer.

Liang's intensive study of Chinese culture actually began after he arrived in the U.S. He read treatises on painting, Buddhist sutras, the works of Taoist philosophers, Chinese history, and traditional Chinese music, and made—still makes—a practice of seeking out experts in his fields of interest. But his erudition is lived, organic to his teaching and his art. His music has a richness in keeping with the range of his knowledge, while its tactility and presence grows out of his own experience as a performer as well as his work with other highly dedicated, inquisitive musical artists.

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams has a multimodal connection to Huang Binhong's work—physical, perceptual, cultural, historic, philosophical. Liang's study of the artist's life and writings affords him insight on Huang's aesthetics and the circumstances of his creation, including the long trajectory of his style, all of which on some level informs the piece. Liang's response to Huang's art is not unlike that of a younger painter carefully copying the work of an older master in order to better understand the style and the artist.

The sonic textures of *A Thousand Mountains* evoke lines and brushstrokes, dark density or absence of ink on paper. The overall form of the piece suggests a possible traversal of the work by a viewer's eye: lingering on certain details, swooping up a curve, parsing the meaning of a written character. As the piece unfurls, the different sections of the piece reflect a present, idealized experience of a Huang landscape: some details, such as "Mountains in Darkness and the Piercing Light," are explicit imagery; others, such as "Opening the Inner Eyes," suggest an imagined dialog with the painter. We move back and forth between "seeing" and examining philosophical ideas. Part II, "A Million Streams," takes a step back, contemplating the persistence and power of an artist and his work.

Lei Liang has written the following comments about his piece.

A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams *(for orchestra) is a musical landscape that I painted with a sonic brush.*

The journey of this work started about 25 years ago when I was a college freshman. While immersed in the study of Chinese shanshui *(mountain-stream, or landscape) paintings, I came across the writings and landscape paintings of Huang Binhong (1865-1955). I fell in love with it.*

I hand-copied Huang Binhong's essays, visited Hangzhou, China where he had his last residence, and museums to search for his original paintings. His works never cease to inspire me.

In 2009, I met the Berkeley-based scholar and connoisseur Jung Ying Tsao. After a ten-hour conversation about Chinese landscape paintings, Mr. Tsao took out a fan, put it in my hand and let me unfold it: it was hand-painted and inscribed by Huang Binhong. That was the first time I held a Huang painting in my own hands—a sensation I can never forget.

The following year, Mr. Tsao invited me and my small family (including our son who was then only a few months old) to Berkeley and put on a display of his Huang Binghong collection in his gallery. Scrolls after scrolls, albums after albums, seals after seals (chopped by Huang), accompanied by tea—those were some of the happiest days of my life.

> *"A mountain looks this way close by, another way a few miles away, and yet another way from a distance of a dozen miles. Its shapes change at every step, the more the farther one goes. It looks this way from the front, another way from the side, and yet another way from the back. Its aspects change from every angle, as many times as the points of view. Thus, one must realize that a mountain contains in itself the shape of several dozen or a hundred mountains. It looks this way in spring and summer, another way in autumn and winter, the scene changing with the seasons. It looks this way in the morning another way at sunset, yet another in rain or shine, the manner and appearance changing with morning and night. Thus, one must realize that one mountain contains in itself the manner of several dozen or a hundred mountains."*
>
> *—Guo Xi (11th-century), English translation by Wai-Lim Yip*

A particular album in Mr. Tsao's collection caught my attention. It was painted in 1952, when Huang was nearly blind from cataract. The master painter (then aged 87) continued to paint in blindness, and these landscapes became some of his most magical works. It is an inner landscape, the magical projection of an internal vision.

In 2014-2016, the opportunity to continue my research into Huang Binhong came when I became the composer-in-residence at California Institute of Information Technology (Calit2) and Qualcomm Institute at the University of California, San Diego. With a group of scientists, we created a collaborative project that sought to conserve and explore Huang Binhong's art, through creative processes in musical composition and data visualization. Huang's album leaves were captured, then reconstructed for high-resolution projection, revealing to the viewers details of the work that have never been seen before. Through audio software development, the magical world hidden within the paintings' brushstroke is rendered sonically in an immersive space. It enables a viewer to fly through this landscape, as if riding on a drone.

The 1950s was a time when the cultural-political landscape in China began to change dramatically. Soon, China was to witness and undergo its most violent self-destruction—the Cultural Revolution—aiming at the destruction of its own heritage through unprecedented brutality against its people.

Around the same time, the world was starting to experience the catastrophic effect of global warming—the sea was to rise, the icecaps were to melt, cities flooded, species wiped out, caused by the climate change induced by the use of fossil fuel. The existence of many species on this planet is threatened. The landscape we inhabit will forever change.

In a total darkness in 1952, the blind Huang Binhong envisioned a luminous landscape that seemed to arise out of the shredded fragments and ashes. It transcended the brutal reality, offering a glimpse of a landscape to come, perhaps a place our children can call home.

A landscape emerges out of darkness, illuminated by an artist's inner vision;
distant contours, shapes, hints of color, and emptiness.
As the viewer draws closer and closer to the landscape, lines and human presence begin to emerge, sounds to resonate, until we become one with each of its brushstroke and ink splash, with its each breath.
The mountains are breathing, singing and roaring.

The landscape vibrates, pulsates and dances; it takes flight; it stirs, swells, rises,
grinds, surges, stretches and blooms;
trembling, jolting, and collapsing, it breaks into fragments.

* * * * *

Rain—drops and drops of rain—returns, to heal the landscape in ruin.
A prayer, a resurrection, the rain brings life back to the landscapes,
and it regains its gentle heartbeat.

GUEST ARTISTS

BEIBEI WANG, PERCUSSION

Genre-defying percussionist Beibei Wang is an acclaimed international virtuoso percussionist with both a Chinese and British musical education backgrounds. She received double Master Degrees from the Central Conservatory of Music (China) and the Royal Academy of Music (UK). Ms. Wang has enjoyed a meteoric rise in the classical music world, receiving international praise for her performances. In 2014, she was listed in the top 50 Chinese musicians in the "Sound of East" project by the Chinese Ministry of Culture. In 2015, she was endorsed by the Arts Council, England receiving an Exceptional Talent visa from British Government. Following a successful recital at SOAS, University of London, Ms. Wang now leads traditional Chinese percussion workshops to promote and preserve traditional Chinese percussion at SOAS. Most recently, she was featured on the front cover of China Music Life magazine and in iD China Magazine in 2017.

Since 2008, at the invitation of Grammy and Oscar winner, world renowned composer, and conductor Tan Dun, Ms. Wang was featured as a soloist in his *Organic Music Trilogy* (*Water Concerto*, *Paper Concerto* and *Earth Concerto*). She premiered the *Earth Concerto* at 2009 Grafenegg Music Festival in Austria with conductor Kristjan Järvi and Tonkünstler-Orchester.

As a soloist, Ms. Wang has appeared at many international music festivals including the Edinburgh International Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Bach Academy Musikfest Stuttgart, and Colour Scape Music Festival. She has collaborated with numerous leading Orchestras worldwide, including: the BBC Symphony Orchestra (UK), the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (Germany), Orchestra dell' Academia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Italy), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Canada).

By exploring new possibilities and challenging assumptions, Beibei Wang and her collaborators have developed genre-defying projects, pushing boundaries and delighting audiences the world over.

VIVIAN CHOI, PIANO

Since her debut performance at the Mostly Mozart Festival at the Sydney Opera House at the age of 12, Vivian Choi has toured extensively throughout Australia, New Zealand, Europe, North America and Asia. She is the recipient of several prestigious honors, among them the New South Wales Premier's Award for Excellence in Music and the Australian Guild of Music and Speech for Outstanding Achievement. For her contributions to the arts, Ms. Choi was awarded the title of 2003 Achiever of the Year by the Australian-Korean Cultural Council, and, most recently, was honored with the Dame Joan Sutherland Fund grant from the American Australian Association. Highlights of Ms. Choi's recent seasons include tours of The People's Republic of China

and, as part of the Imago Sloveniae Festival, Slovenia and Croatia; a series of five all-Chopin recitals in ChopinFest Australia; the International Celebration of Music at the Sydney Town Hall; the Hopes, Talents and Masters Festival in Bulgaria; the Portland International Music Festival, and the Piano Future Festival in the USA. She made her debut with BMOP on our 2016 "American Masters" program, performing as soloist in Gail Kubik's *Symphony Concertante* and Harold Shapero's *Partita in C*. Vivian Choi's 2010 debut recording, comprising works of Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Godowsky, was released on the St. Petersburg Northern Flowers label.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Vivian Choi grew up in Sydney, Australia, where she received her earliest musical education. She continued her training at Russia's Saint Petersburg State Conservatory, graduating summa cum laude. She holds graduate degrees from the New England Conservatory and Carnegie Mellon University. Her principal teachers include Kyunghee Lee, Mira Yevtich, Alexander Sandler, Wha Kyung Byun, and Sergey Schepkin. Ms. Choi's studies have been generously assisted by the Australian Government through the Australian Council's Arts Funding and Advisory Body.

In addition to performance activities, Vivian Choi has served as a juror for numerous piano competitions, including, most recently, the 2015 Louisiana International Piano Competition. She has also conducted masterclasses worldwide for institutions that include Boston University, Italy's Academia Filarmonica di Camposampiero and Australian International Conservatorium in Sydney. Vivian Choi makes her home in New York City.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LIZ LINDER

GIL ROSE is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim.

As a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms, he made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country's most inventive and versatile opera conductors. He recently announced the formation of Odyssey Opera, an inventive company dedicated to presenting eclectic operatic repertoire in a variety of formats. The company debuted in September 2013 to critical acclaim with a 6-hour concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi*, and has continued on to great success with masterworks in concert, an annual fully-staged festival, and contemporary and family-friendly operas. Prior to founding Odyssey Opera he led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company's first Artistic Director. Mr. Rose led Opera Boston in several American and New England premieres including Shostakovich's *The Nose*, Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Hindemith's *Cardillac*, and Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*. In 2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

Mr. Rose and BMOP recently partnered with the American Repertory Theater, Chicago Opera Theater, and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers* (a runner-up for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music). He conducted this seminal multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010, and also led its United States premiere in Boston and a subsequent performance at Chicago Opera Theater.

An active recording artist, Gil Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

He has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, NH, since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, conducting several premieres and making his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento, as

well as conducting, directing and producing the world premier recording of Ned Rorem's opera *Our Town*.

He has curated the Fromm Concerts at Harvard three times and served as the first curator of the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. As an educator Mr. Rose served five years as director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University and in 2012 he joined the faculty of Northeastern University as Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Practice.

In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a three-time Grammy Award nominee.

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Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen's *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2003 to 2012.

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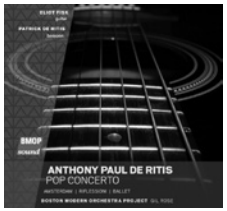

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