

Washington State University School of Music Presents

A Night of Chinese Choral Music

The Graduate Lecture Recital of Joseph To, Choral Conducting

In partial fulfillment for the Master of Arts in Music: Choral Conducting



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, February 18th, 2020 | 7:30pm

Bryan Hall Theatre | 605 Veterans Way | Pullman, WA 99163

Program

<i>Huxi</i>	Yin Ng
<i>The Joy of the Snowflake</i> (雪花的快樂)	Jenny H. Chou
<i>A Stranger</i> (路人)	Alex Tam
<i>By Chance</i> (偶然)	Jenny H. Chou
<i>Singing Voices of the World</i> (我唱出了世界的聲音)	Yin Ng

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Artistic Personnel

Director/Presenter: Joseph To

Collaborative Pianist: Miles Sutton

Soprano: Sophia Janssen, Josie Hillis, Skye Reynolds*

Alto: Anya Guadamuz, Abigail Hillis, Jacqueline Southwick*

Tenor: Anthony Martinez*, Levi Policarpio

Bass: Jared Peterson*, Charlie Pierson, Jeremie Pope, Andrew Wilkins-Fontenot

*Section Leader

Acknowledgements

Washington State University School of Music

Dr. Dean Luethi, *Director* | Fran Meserve, *Principle Assistance* |

Michele White, *Program Assistance*

Sandra Albers, *Performance Arts Facilities Coordinator* | Shaun Sorensen, *Stage Technician*

Joseph's Graduate Studies Committee Members

Dr. Lori Wiest, *Committee Chair* | Dr. Aaron Agulay | Dr. Chris Nakielski | Dr. Danh Pham

Director's Biography



A Hong Kong Native, Joseph To graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Music (Music Education with vocal emphasis) where he studied choral conducting with Dr. Geoffrey Boers. Currently he is pursuing a Master of Arts in Music (Choral Conducting) at Washington State University under Dr. Lori Wiest's guidance. Joseph has sung with some prestigious choirs in the Pacific Northwest, including Chor Anno and Opus 7. A believer in music education, Joseph has worked with all ages in many musical settings, from novice to professional. He has worked and studied with internationally recognized conductors, including Diane Wittry (USA), Kåre Hanken (Norway) and Helmuth Rilling (Germany). Joseph is passionate about promoting multi-cultural music, specifically Chinese choral music. He is currently preparing a document entitled "A Practical Performance Edition of Select Chinese Choral Music with Annotations, and Rehearsal and Diction Guidelines." Joseph is the Director of Music Ministries at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, SeaTac.

Coming Events

NWACDA Interest Session:

Learning Chinese Choral Music and Diction from a Native
Davenport Grand Hotel-Maple BR, Spokane

March 12 • 8:30 AM

**Chinese Choral Music Lecture Recital
for Choral Educators and Directors**

Japanese Baptist Church, Seattle
Guest: Lindbergh High School Choir, Renton

April 18 • 3 PM

Program Notes

Huxi

Composer: Yin Ng

Lyricist: Youseehand

"I wrote the music of *HuXi* with Jessie You's lyrics on hand. The creative process evoked many past memories of choral singing, which is reflected in the music. *HuXi* is a fusion of musical style from foreign to Chinese choral music, with a twist of my own.

Huxi (Breathing), commissioned by the Hong Kong Treble Choir Association in 2015, is the theme song for that year's World Youth & Children's Choir Festival Hong Kong. This piece starts with the sound of breathing. The tender melody leads through the piece above the flowing piano accompaniment. Similar to "Fly Me to the Moonlight," the lyrics consists of both Putonhua (Mandarin) and English, which enables choristers from different parts of the world to sing this piece. Through breathing and singing, singers can express to each other a gesture towards unity among humankind." (Notes by the composer.)

不知不覺
We come to life

*Unwittingly,
We come to life*

一呼一吸
I feel my soul

*Every single breath,
I feel my soul*

吸入你的故事
呼出我的記憶
吸入你的語言
呼出我的道理

*Breathing in your stories
Exhaling my memories
Breathing in your language
Exhaling my belief*

We sing louder when we all breathe as one
We are stronger when we all stand as one
Breathe as one
Sing as one to the hearts of million
Feel as one
Live as one
Breathe as one we sing as one
Feel as one we live as one
In the power of resonance
We are one
天大地大
We are all the same

*In this world,
We are all the same*

同呼同吸
We are connected

*Breathing together,
We are connected*

吸入你的笑容
呼出我的善意
吸入你的激情
呼出我的動力

*Breathing in your smile
Exhaling my goodwill
Breathing in your passion
Exhaling my inspiration*

The Joy of the Snowflake (雪花的快樂)

Composer: Jenny H. Chou

Poet: Xu Zhimo

“Xu Zhimo portrays the purely white snowflake wandering and struggling until it was able to find its destination (love). In my musical setting, it starts with a river-flowing-like piano introduction representing the poet’s snowflake dancing and wandering in the music. Then, I tried to create a gentle and elegant mood for the texts “flying” *fei yang* 飛颺 and “melting” *syau rung* 消溶. It leads the listeners to snowflake’s yearning for love with the joyful and peaceful tune.” (Translated from notes by the composer.)

假若我是一朵雪花
翩翩的在半空裡瀟灑
我一定認清我的方向
飛颺，飛颺，飛颺，
這地面上有我的方向

*If I am a snowflake
Gracefully in the air dancing
I am certain that I know my direction
To fly, to fly, to fly,
On this ground I have my direction.*

不去那冷寞的幽谷
不去那淒清的山麓
也不上荒街
去惆悵
飛颺，飛颺，飛颺
你看，我有我的方向

*I will not go to that cold and empty valley
I will not go to that desolated hillside
And not going to the deserted street
to be melancholy
To fly, to fly, to fly,
Behold, I have my direction.*

在半空裡娟娟
的飛舞，
認明了那清幽的住處，
等著她來花園裡探望
飛颺，飛颺，飛颺
啊，
她身上有硃砂梅的清香

*In the middle of the air, I am gracefully
flying and dancing
I determined that where the peace-live
Waiting for her to the garden to visit
To fly, to fly, to fly,
Ah,
her body has plum blossom’s fragrance.*

那時我憑藉我的身輕，
盈盈的，沾住了她的衣襟，
貼近她柔波似的心胸
消溶，消溶，消溶
溶入了她柔波似的心胸。

*I’d be so light
Happily, stick to her coat
Getting closer to her ripple-liked bosom
To melt, to melt, to melt,
Dissolve into her ripple-liked bosom.*

A Stranger (路人)

Composer: Alex Tam

Poet: Xu Xu

"I was very interested in Chinese poetry during the time I was studying at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. After a good chat with a schoolmate on this genre, she lent me a copy of *Question Without A Title* 《無題的問句》, a collection of poems by Xu Xu. In the entire collection, A Stranger 《路人》 impressed me most, and I always have the urge to set this poem to music. Sadly, I lost contact with her after graduation, and the book was returned. Many years passed, I got to know Mr. Wong Kin-kwok, a poet who happened to know the late Xu Xu in person. I mentioned to Wong about this book, which was already out-of-print. Surprisingly, Wong found the collection in a second-hand bookstore and later presented it to me as a gift. Revisiting the poem, A Stranger brought me much reminiscences. I finally completed the musical setting of this poem after my first reading over a decade ago, that happened at the right time as my musical and life experiences matured me through these years... In the poem, a man spent his life passed by for an unrequited love, and I wished to express such intense feeling through music. I dedicate A Stranger (2012) to the Academy Choir (2011-12)." (Notes by the composer.)

不要當我是陌生的路人，
且把我當作窗外的黃鶯，
它在你清醒時對你歌唱，
在你就寢時飛往樹林。

*Don't treat me as a stranger,
But as an oriole at your window,
will sing to you in daytime,
And retreat to the forest at night.*

或者你且把我當作長年
遠掛在雲霄的孤星；
它在你起身時
悄悄的隱去，
在你熟睡時偷窺你倩影。

*Or think of me as a lonely star,
Hanging eternally over the sky
Which will hide itself in daytime,
And catch a glimpse of you at night.*

再或者把我當作
你園裏的玫瑰，
或者是籬前的迎春，

*Even consider me as
roses in your garden,
Or on-the-fence jasmine,*

它在春天時為你開花，
在秋天時化為泥塵。

*Which will blossom in springtime,
And wither in the fall.*

我可能是一個陌生的路人，
但也有一片可憐的癡心，
為一個飄渺的夢幻，
我浪費過半生的生命。

*I could be a stranger,
But with a pathetic heart,
For a distant dream,
I wasted half of my life.*

By Chance (偶然)

Composer: Jenny H. Chou

Poet: Xu Zhimo

“The title of the poem *By Chance* 《偶然》 is quite abstract but that’s why I love Xu Zhimo’s poems. When read as a youth, the poem had a flowing feeling. However, reading with a more mature approach, it arouses more understanding and experience of life though the expression of the texts about the purity and the truth of life. The structure and the rhyming of the poem are my motivation for setting the text into music.

By Chance 《偶然》 was written by Xu Zhimo as a part of the libretto of *Bian Kungang* 《卞昆岡》 with Lu Xiaoman, his spouse, in May 1926. There are two stanzas, 5 lines in each, 10 lines in total. Xu Zhimo adopted English Limerick form in both stanza with the aabba rhyme scheme. In response to the usage of English Limerick form, I structured this piece in AABBA form. At the same time, I adopted different tonality for part A and part B 1. to emphasize the binary opposition and emotion between stanzas; 2. to reflect the difference of rhythm scheme between stanzas. The flowing piano accompaniment portrays the clouds in the sky or the running river to accompany the chorus.

This piece premiered by Chingyun Choir at the National Concert Hall, Taiwan in July 2014 under Weng Chiafen’s 翁佳芬 direction.” (Translated from notes by the composer)

我是天空里的一片雲，
偶爾投影在你的波心
你不必訝異，
更無須歡喜
在轉瞬間消滅了蹤影。

*I am a cloud in the sky
By chance projected in your bosom.
You no need to-be-surprised
Even no need to-be-delighted
Forthwith, vanished out of your sight.*

你我相逢在黑夜的海上，
你有你的，我有我的，方向；
你記得也好，
最好你忘掉，
在這交會時互放的光亮！

*You and I met in a dark night at sea
You have yours, and I have mine, destination
You might remember
it’d be best if you forget
the brightly shined glows at our star-crossing-
time.*

Singing Voices of the World (我唱出了世界的聲音)

Composer: Yin Ng

Lyricist: Youseehand

This piece is written by Hong Kong pop music composer Ng Yin with Youseehand’s collaboration in 2007 as the theme song of the “World Association of Chinese Youth Choirs.” Its flowing melody and the childlike lyrics express the longing to connect people through singing around the world. After its premiere, the piece became popular and was frequently chosen for performances by several Chinese speaking choirs in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. (Notes by Joseph To)

世界進入了我的眼睛
美麗化成了我的心情
激動的情緒
如鳥在鳴盤旋在心

*The world came into my eyes,
The beauty transformed into my mood
Exciting emotion
like birds' call that ringing in my heart*

世界在放送我的聲音
美麗牽動了你的心情
激動的共鳴
好比雷聲
雨後放晴

*The world is spreading my voice
The beauty moves your mood
Exciting resonance
Likes thunders
it becomes sunny after rain*

鳥兒為什麼在唱
我們也為什麼在唱
海浪在敲擊
笑聲在搖鈴
老人在感慨
孩子在憧憬

*Why are birds singing?
Why are we singing too?
Waves are beating
Laughs are ringing
Elderlies are sighing
Kids are longing*

那是自然的呼喚
是聽得到的風情
即使我們說着
不同的語言
天籟是一條巨龍
連起了我們的生命

*That is the nature's call
Which is the listenable scene
Even though we are speaking
different languages,
music is a giant dragon
Connected our lives*

世界在唱着各種聲音
美麗是因為它有感情
聲音的抑揚就是風景
陰晴雖有不定
流水淙淙不停

*The world is singing different sounds
She is beautiful because of her emotion
Dynamics of sounds are the view
It is hard to predict if it is cloudy or sunny
Running water have never been stopped*

它如不息生命將愛喚醒
豐富着我的心靈
讓我唱出了最動聽

*It likes everlasting lives to awaken our love
Enriching my soul
Let me sing the loveliest tune*

我唱出了世界的聲音

I have sung the voice of the world!