Chinese composers debuted at Lincoln Center

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By Judy Zhu in New York |   
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A group of Chinese prominent composers presented a debut concert highlighting the integration of Chinese and Western musical instruments at the Alice Tully Hall of Lincoln Center in New York on Saturday evening.  
Titled Music Contemporary From China 2018, the concert featured seven musical pieces composed by some of the most influential, robust and renowned composers teaching at the Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM), the country's top music school founded in 1950. Some of them composed for the 29th Beijing Olympic Opening ceremony.  
The Sunset Lake by composer Li Binyang is among the works staged. The piece uses traditional Chinese instruments such as dizi (a Chinese transverse flute), suona (double-reeded horn), erhu (a two-stringed bowed instrument), sheng (a Chinese mouth-blown free reed instrument), pipa (a four-stringed Chinese instrument) and guzheng (Chinese zither) and Western chamber ensemble to imitate seagulls, reflections of the hanging prayers in the water, the calm surface of the lake ruffled by the cold breeze, and the sparklings of the sunlight.  
"I am really enjoying hearing the traditional instruments from China together with Western classical instruments, and hearing the different sound colors, the different kinds of articulation, and the way that these instruments are working incredibly well together," said Susan Boynton, chair of the department of music at Columbia University, who was one of the many western audience at the concert.  
Composer Guo Wenjing's Recitative for Chinese Gong features a percussionist playing eight gong (a percussion instrument that takes the form of a flat, circular metal disc)-each with its own sound range-along with other Chinese and Western instruments.  
"This piece is a sacred rite. Along with special effects in the ensemble, the exquisite monologue on a single gong can lead one back to the ancient times," says Guo, 61, dean of the composition department and doctoral supervisor of CCOM.  
In 2008, Guo created the unique music for the performance themed "movable-type painting" at Beijing Olympic Games Opening Ceremony. His symphonic poem Lotus was performed as the gift presented to 2012 London Olympic Games by Beijing Municipal Government.  
"I've been trying to discover more sounds produced by traditional Chinese instruments for decades because I believe that the potential of such instruments has been underestimated." Guo said.  
The show for premiering new works by Chinese composers will become an annual event to be held in Beijing, New York and Austria.  
"In an effort to introduce and promote Chinese music, particularly contemporary music, CCOM encourages its composers to write about the new era and voice them on the international music scene by bringing its best artists of solo Chinese musical instruments and chamber musicians," said Yu Feng, president of the CCOM.  
"It's the conservatory's mission and responsibility to introduce modern Chinese music to the world." Yu said.

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