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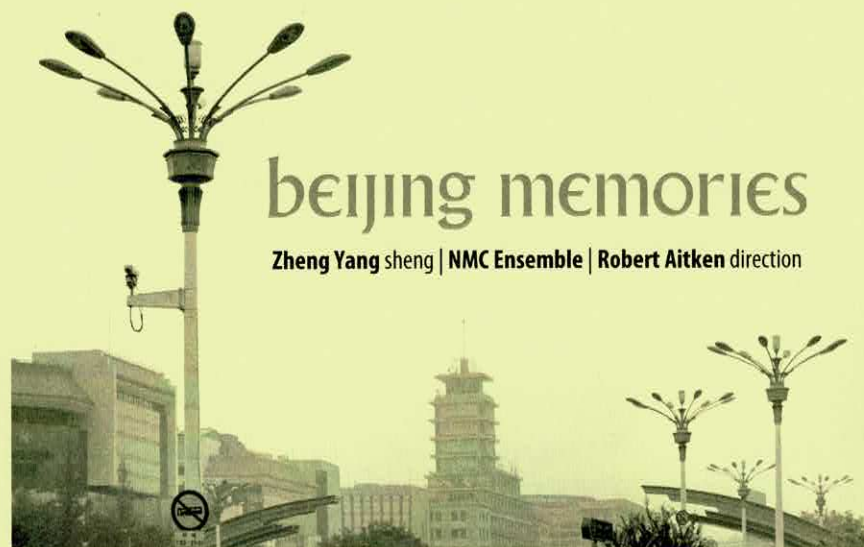


46<sup>th</sup> season | 382<sup>nd</sup> event

**Friday September 30, 2016**

The Music Gallery, 197 John St., Toronto

**New Music Concerts and The Music Gallery present:**



# beijing memories

Zheng Yang sheng | NMC Ensemble | Robert Aitken direction



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**New Music Concerts and The Music Gallery present:**

# BEIJING MEMORIES

**Zheng Yang sheng | NMC Ensemble | Robert Aitken direction**

**Introduction @ 7:15:** Introduction to the Sheng with Zheng Yang:

**Li Bo** (China 1988) – *Reminiscing Snow* | Zheng Yang sheng Stephen Clarke piano

**Concert @ 8:00:**

**Brian Current** (Canada 1972) – *Shout, Sisyphus, Flock* (2016) Toronto premiere  
for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin and cello | **Brian Current** conductor

**Lei Liang** (China/USA 1972) – *Aural Hypothesis* (2010) Canadian premiere  
for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin and cello | **Robert Aitken** conductor

**Omar Daniel** (Canada 1960) – *Chamber Concerto No.2* (2016) Canadian premiere  
for flute, oboe, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola and cello | **Robert Aitken** conductor

— *Intermission* —

**Yang Qing** (China 1991) – *Memory of Tashilhunpo Monastery* | Zheng Yang sheng

**Zhao Ye** (China 1986) – *A Gaze at the Evening Sky on August 3rd* (2016) Canadian premiere  
for sheng, piano, percussion, violin, viola and cello | Zheng Yang sheng **Robert Aitken** conductor

**Wen Deqing** (China/Switzerland 1958) – *Divination* (1997) Canadian premiere  
for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin and cello | **Robert Aitken** conductor

**NMC ensemble:** Dianne Aitken flute Keith Atkinson oboe Max Christie clarinets  
Stephen Clarke piano Rick Sacks percussion Erika Raum violin Doug Perry viola Paul Widner cello

*Please join us in the Friendship Room for a reception following the concert.*

Paul Hodge recording engineer | Sandor Ajzenstat stage manager  
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# New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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## CONCERT NOTES

**Brian Current** studied music at McGill University and UC Berkeley. His music, lauded and performed internationally, as well as broadcast in over 35 countries, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Barlow Prize for Orchestral Music (USA), the Italian Premio Fedora for Chamber Opera and a Selected Work (under 30) at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris. Brian Current's pieces have been programmed by all major symphony orchestras in Canada and by the Indianapolis Symphony, the New York City Opera, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Oakland Symphony, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Warsaw National Philharmonic, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the American Composers Orchestra (Carnegie Hall), Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles) and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Recent performances of his music have been by the Toronto Symphony, the Montreal Symphony, The Gryphon Trio, The Nouvel Ensemble Moderne and the National Symphony of Taiwan. In October 2016 Kent Nagano will conduct the Montreal Symphony in the premiere of Current's *The Seven Heavenly Halls* for orchestra, chorus and tenor solo, the winning work of the Azrieli Foundation Commissioning Competition.

### Brian Current (Canada 1972) – *Shout, Sisyphus, Flock* (2016)

*Shout, Sisyphus, Flock* was commissioned by Montreal's Transmission Ensemble (in association with New Music Concerts, Toronto) with funds from the Canada Council for the Arts. As the title suggests, there are three movements of about 4 minutes each, each based on words I taped to the piano early in the composing process (*Shout, Sisyphus* and *Flock*) that I hoped described the feeling of each movement I was trying to write. In the first, *Shout*, I was interested in colouring crescendos in the woodwinds with bright overlapping patterns in the ensemble. Towards the end, everything rises to even brighter, higher textures. The second movement, *Sisyphus*, features rising and falling textures that are inexorably linked to one another. Like the myth of Sisyphus, the gestures evoke the frustration of an inevitable tumble that follows every hard-fought rise. The third movement, *Flock*, features droning textures that give way to flutter-like tremolos in the winds and strings. Rather than imitating an actual flock of birds, I was more interested in creating a dreamlike and intimate atmosphere, where fluttering gestures come and go.

With great thanks to the Transmission Ensemble and Lorraine Vaillancourt for their work on this music and for Transmission and New Music Concerts' commission of this piece. — *Brian Current*



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Heralded as “one of the most exciting voices in New Music” (The Wire), **Lei Liang** is a Chinese-born American composer whose works have been described as “hauntingly beautiful” by The New York Times, and as “far, far out of the ordinary, brilliantly original and inarguably gorgeous” by The Washington Post. Winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, Lei Liang is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Aaron Copland Award. He was named a finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music. Lei Liang was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert for the inaugural concert of the CONTACT! new music series. Other commissions and performances come from Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the Taipei Chinese Orchestra, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, pipa virtuoso Wu Man, the Arditti Quartet, Shanghai Quartet, the Scharoun Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, New York New Music Ensemble and Boston Musica Viva. Lei Liang’s music is recorded on Mode, New World, Naxos and Bridge Records. Lei Liang currently serves as Composer-in-Residence at California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) where his multimedia works combine computer technology, scientific research with cultural preservation and re-imagination.

Lei Liang studied composition with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Robert Cogan, Chaya Czernowin, and Mario Davidovsky, and received degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music (BM and MM) and Harvard University (PhD). A Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, he held fellowships from Harvard Society of Fellows and the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships. Lei Liang is Professor of Music and Acting Chair of the Music Department at the University of California, San Diego. His music is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).

**Lei Liang** (China/USA 1972) – *Aural Hypothesis* (2010)

Professor Chou Wen-chung once made the remark, “Calligraphy is music in ink, and music is calligraphy in sound.” Recalling many inspiring conversations with him, *Aural Hypothesis* is a quasi-fantastical study on how lines may find expression in sound. The lines in this piece, however, are not modeled after traditional Chinese calligraphy; they are something more basic or primal: a simple curve or a straight line, drawn with intense attentiveness or explosive speed.

With a grant generously provided by the Jebediah Foundation, *Aural Hypothesis* was commissioned by Boston Musica Viva and dedicated to Prof. Chou Wen-chung. The first performance was given by Boston Musica Viva on October 1, 2010 at the Tsai Performance Center in Boston, MA. — *Lei Liang*

**Omar Daniel** received his DMA in composition from the University of Toronto in 1995, and before coming to Western University in 2000, he taught at Wilfrid Laurier University. He teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in composition, electronic music, analysis and orchestration. He is an active composer, and has composed extensively in solo, chamber, electronic, orchestral and operatic idioms, having received commissions from many of Canada’s leading ensembles and performing organizations. As well, his composition prizes include the CBC Young Composer’s Competition, the SOCAN Composer’s Competition, the K.M. Hunter Arts Award, and he was the 1997 recipient of the Jules Lèger Prize for New Chamber Music for the New Music Concerts commission *Zwei Lieder nach Rilke*.

Omar Daniel’s current research interests explore the inclusion of ancient Estonian folksong material in his original compositions: *Metsa Maasikad* (Wild Strawberries), Violin Concerto, *Mehetapja* (Husband Killer) and *Üheksa Eesti Regilaulud* (Nine Estonian Runo Songs) all explore this relationship. Daniel’s analytical interests are broad, but have a particular focus on composers from northern and eastern Europe including Kurtág, Schnittke, Ustvolskaya, Pärt, Gubaidulina and Rehnqvist.

**Omar Daniel** (Canada 1960) – *Chamber Concerto No.2* (2016)

I Toccata- Allegro Barbaro; II Elegia- Lento; da lontano;  
III Monody- Presto scintillare

*Chamber Concerto No. 2* is my fourth work written specifically for, and dedicated to, Robert Aitken and the musicians of New Music Concerts. My keen interest in the concerto idiom has resulted in seven concertos, including a chamber concerto and concerto for orchestra. The NMC ensemble is compact, but presents interesting challenges that are different from the large-scale concertos that I have written up until now. And, there are precedents for this in the literature: Ligeti’s Chamber Concerto and Kurtág’s *Grabstein für Sephan*, for example.

In relation to the idea of ‘concerto,’ Bartok comes to mind. His *Concerto for Orchestra* has influenced me over decades, and in 2013 I wrote *Giucoco delle Coppie*, the title being a direct reference to the second movement of Bartok’s work. My *Chamber Concerto No. 2* plays upon the idea of a concerto, but for a moderately sized group of instruments rather than full orchestra. So, the listener will hear different combinations of instruments as individual soloists or groups of soloists, often used in quite a virtuosic manner. This mimics the principle of the baroque concerto grosso, and indeed my work uses textures and rhythms that may well remind one of the Baroque style. — *Omar Daniel*

Born in Beijing in 1986, **Zhao Ye** enrolled at the Kunming University of Science and Technology in 2005 to obtain a bachelor degree in Computer Science and Technology. He dropped out of the university in 2008 and entered the Central Conservatory of Music where he studied successively with Associate Professor Zhang Shuai, Professor Jia Guo Ping and Professor Qin Wen Chen, obtaining his bachelor's degree in Composition and Theory in 2012.

**Zhao Ye** (China 1986) – *A Gaze at the Evening Sky on August 3rd* (2016)

The composer has a habit of gazing into the sky in a dark room, something he particularly cherishes when the dusk is gathering. But as a citizen, the conditions for sky-gazing are not ideal. On August 3rd, 2015, he caught a great opportunity and kept a finite record through music. In this piece, subtle variations reflect this gently changing vision. – *Zhao Ye*

Born in a small village in Southern China, **Wen Deqing** studied composition in China, Switzerland and France, with Guo Zu-Rong, Shi Wan-Chun, Luo Zhong-Rong, Jean Balissat and Gilbert Amy. He was a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York City from 2005 to 2006. He is currently a professor of composition, analysis and the performance of contemporary music at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he also serves as the Deputy Dean of the Composition Department, the artistic director of New Music Week and director of le Documentation Central de la Musique Contemporaine. He was composer in residence at the Davos Festival's young artists in concert series in 2009. His music is a mixture of traditional Chinese music and complex western techniques. These are combined with his own creative inspiration. Wen is deeply influenced by Chinese culture, particularly philosophy, painting and calligraphy. He adapts a new system to express his message in each piece. He also tries to use everyday objects such as cans, bottles, glasses, wind machines, tap water and paper. His music has been performed around the world. He has been honored with concerts dedicated to his compositions in China, France, Denmark, Switzerland and the United States. Wen Deqing's CDs are published by Stradivarius (Italy) and Musiques Grammont's Portrait of Switzerland. He has been awarded numerous prizes (among others, the Prix Cultura 1999 of the Foundation Kiwanis and the 2001 Composer Prize of the Foundation Leenaards of Switzerland). His commissions include Pro Helvetia, the Festival Archipel, the Association des Amis de la Musique, the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik for Arditti String Quartet, Radio-Espace 2 for the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the Taipei Chinese traditional orchestra of Taiwan. His opera *Le Pari* (The Wager) has been performed in the international Festival of Geneva (Switzerland), Shanghai, Beijing and Savonlinna (Finland). He is a member of the Société Suisse pour les Droits des Auteurs d'Oeuvres Musicales. [www.deqingwen.com](http://www.deqingwen.com)

**Wen Deqing** (China/Switzerland 1958) – *Divination* (1997)

The ideal of ancient Chinese culture was the unity of nature and humanity. The divinations based on the 64 hexagrams of the Book of Mutations [*I Ching*] are based on the combinations of eight elements, namely the Earth, the Mountain, the Water, the Wind, the Thunder, the Fire, the Marsh and the Sky. Although this piece depicts the divination ceremony based on these eight elements, it also reflects human feelings. The fusion of these two aspects engenders the development of the music. Moreover, the structure of musical material is inspired by the philosophic theory of Yin and Yang. Here, I use lot of uncommon instruments, borrowed from daily life, in which music is omnipresent. The work was commissioned by the Art Council of Switzerland Pro Helvetia.

– *Wen Deqing*

## SOLOIST

**Zheng Yang** was born in 1992 in Jilin Province, China. At the age of 4 she started to play the electronic organ and began piano studies at the age of 6. She began to play the Sheng at the age of 8, which she studied with Professor Zhang Xiaodong of Dalian National University and Professor Yuan Yongchang of Jilin College of the Arts. She entered the Central Conservatory of Music in 2010 under the guidance of Professor Yang Shoucheng and is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree there. Zheng Yang has performed in Japan, Canada and America. She has worked with ensembles including Germany's E-mex ensemble, Zafraan Ensemble and Windkraft Ensemble and the Singapore Ding Yi Music Company. As the founder of the Young Ensemble, supported by the Beijing International Composition Workshop, Zheng Yang organized the inaugural concert of the Ensemble in Apr. 2014. In 2013, she took part in the "On and Off" concert for young composers at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art. She frequently performs at the Beijing International Composition Master Class Concerts, premieres prize-winning works of the Contempo Composition Competition and collaborates in instrumental and dance performances.

*Our next concert:*

**generation 2016**

Sunday October 30, 2016 | Ensemble contemporain de Montréal

Véronique Lacroix direction | Gabriel Dharmoo, host

Concert 8:00 | The Music Gallery, 197 John Street



Composition finalists at the BICW opening ceremony. Zhao Ye introduces himself at the lectern.

Founded in 2011 at the Central Conservatory of Music, the Beijing International Composition Workshop features a jury of internationally renowned composers and the top students selected by competition from applications across China. In 2016 New Music Concerts was invited to provide the ensemble in residence for the sixth annual iteration of the BICW running from July 9th through 17th. As well as participating in extensive masterclasses, workshops and rehearsals with the students, our ensemble performed three concerts during the festival. The first featured works by Canadian composers Brian Current (our first performance of a new work), Omar Daniel (commissioned especially for the tour), Philippe Leroux, Keith Hamel and Anthony Tan. The second presented works by the professors adjudicating the competition, Liza Lim (Australia), Akio Yasuraoka (Japan), Wen Deqing (China/Switzerland), Laing Lei (China/USA), Yao Chen (China) and Chen Yonggang (China). There were eight finalists performed in the student concert, each of which had to include at least one traditional Chinese instrument along with Western instruments selected from flute, oboe, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola and cello. The grand winner was Zhao Ye whose *A Gaze at the Evening Sky on August 3rd* for sheng, piano, violin, viola, cello and percussion is featured on this evening's program.

New Music Concerts thanks the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing for the opportunity to take part in this exciting endeavour and the Canada Council for the Arts for its support through Supplemental and Touring Grants. We also thank our support staff, Daniel Foley (archivist), Sandor Aizenstat (tour manager) and Angel Wang (facilitator) for their invaluable help in making the tour a success, and Erika Raum who agreed to step into the breach when our touring violinist Corey Gemmell became unavailable for this concert.