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**ANTHONY PAUL DE RITIS: CHANG'E AND THE  
ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY**

ZHONGGUO POP | PING-PONG | THE LEGEND OF COWHERD  
AND WEAVER GIRL | PLUM BLOSSOMS

# ANTHONY PAUL DE RITIS b.1968

ZHONGGUO POP

PING-PONG

THE LEGEND OF COWHERD AND WEAVER GIRL

PLUM BLOSSOMS

CHANG'E AND THE ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY

**TSUJUI CARRIE CHIN** sheng

**YAZHI GUO** dizi/suona

**GUO ZHAOSHUN** zhongruan/daruan

**HE TAO** erhu

**CHENG JIN KOH** yangqin

**YIMIN MIAO** dizi

**MIN XIAO-FEN** pipa

**WEI SUN** guzheng

**BEIBEI WANG** percussion

**SHIN-YI YANG** guzheng

**ZHOU YI** pipa

## BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor

[1] **ZHONGGUO POP** FOR CHINESE QUARTET  
AND STRING ORCHESTRA (2021) 10:57

Yazhi Guo, dizi

He Tao, erhu

Min Xiao-Fen, pipa

Shin-Yi Yang, guzheng

**PING-PONG** CONCERTO FOR PIPA (2006)

[2] I. Huangshan Mountains 5:46

[3] II. Invitation (6 April 1971) 10:03

[4] III. Diplomacy 5:01

Min Xiao-Fen, pipa

[5] **THE LEGEND OF COWHERD  
AND WEAVER GIRL** CONCERTO FOR  
PERCUSSION AND ORCHESTRA (2018) 18:55

Beibe Wang, percussion

[6] **PLUM BLOSSOMS** (2000) 6:04

Min Xiao-Fen, pipa

[7] **CHANG'E AND THE ELIXIR  
OF IMMORTALITY** (2022) 14:41

Yimin Miao, dizi

Tsujui Carrie Chin, sheng

Yazhi Guo, suona

Cheng Jin Koh, yangqin

Zhou Yi, pipa

Guo Zhaoshun, zhongruan/daruan

Wei Sun, guzheng

**TOTAL** 71:33



*Rendezvous in the Milky Way.*

Late 19th – early 20th century. Xylograph on thin Chinese paper.

### By Anthony Paul De Ritis

This CD, my third with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, is dedicated to my works for traditional Chinese instruments and Western orchestra, resulting from my love of travel, interest in intercultural dialogue, and my pursuit of innovation in new music through placing texts and disciplines side-by-side to see what one can teach the other, what one can learn from the other. The spirit of this intellectual pursuit was ingrained in me by my teacher, Richard Fleming, with whom I earned a minor in philosophy almost entirely while an undergraduate at Bucknell University. His mantra has stuck with me for life. Fleming's approach to new knowledge via interdisciplinary study—which long preceded the explosion of interdisciplinary studies in academia today—is what led me to pursue new ideas in music by placing electronic and acoustic music side-by-side; DJ culture and popular music side-by-side with symphonic music; and herein the music of China and the West side-by-side. As a result, I'm often described as an "eclectic," deriving ideas from a broad range of sources (most recently by *The Wall Street Journal*). In terms of career building, this might not have been the most savvy strategy, but what I can say for sure is it has been an extremely fulfilling endeavor. I hope that listeners of the offerings on this CD, which represent more than 20 years of thinking about intercultural music-making inspired by China—or, to reference a term that I used in a recent article published in *Organised Sound*: music derived from "mixed blood" ("Mixed Blood' and Aesthetic Evolution in China's Electroacoustic Music Today")—can find some beauty as I try to find my own identity via

a sort of “cultural version of DNA mixing” (a phrase I’ve borrowed from Frank J. Oteri, editor of the web magazine *NewMusicBox*).

It was my first contact with *pipa* virtuoso Min Xiao-Fen, who willingly allowed herself to be sampled for my electroacoustic composition *Plum Blossoms*, submitted and accepted to the 1999 International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) at Tsinghua University in Beijing, that introduced me to the amazing world of traditional Chinese instruments and culture. During that conference, I met ethnomusicologist Zhang Boyu of the Central Conservatory of Music, who invited me to lecture at the conservatory about *Plum Blossoms*. At the time, I was a newbie assistant professor trying to earn tenure at Northeastern University—how could I refuse?! As an Italian American growing up on Long Island who didn’t get on an airplane until I was in graduate school, I could never have imagined this would set me on a path towards working with Chinese instruments and culture for the next 25 years.

Professor Zhang Boyu and I have stayed in touch since our first meeting in 1999, and his willingness to support my residency as a Senior Fulbright Research Scholar at the Central Conservatory of Music in 2011 not only intensified the zeal with which I would pursue my work with traditional Chinese instruments, but also exponentially increased my professional opportunities throughout China.

I’ve often referenced how the original electroacoustic version of *Plum Blossoms*, which uses *pipa* samples performed by Min Xiao-Fen as its source material, was my first experience with Chinese instruments back in 1999. Although Min Xiao-Fen liked the work, she told me that she would much prefer to perform live than listen to a work based on her sound files. That led me to the transcription and orchestral version of *Plum Blossoms* on this CD. What I’m also pleased to share is that on November 8, 2008, *Plum Blossoms* (orchestral version) received a performance at New York’s Merkin Hall at the Kaufman Center by the Mimesis Ensemble (masterminded by composer Mohammed Fairouz) under the baton of

conductor Scott Seaton. That program also featured Gunther Schuller’s *Chimeric Images* (1988), for which he was present. In fact, Schuller sat next to me during the dress rehearsal of *Plum Blossoms* and shared with me some praise for the work, which was a real thrill for me.

Composing the original version of *Ping-Pong* was like drinking from a fire hose; in 2004 I had only worked with the *pipa* before embarking on this concerto with an entire orchestra of traditional Chinese instruments. After the premiere of *Plum Blossoms*, Min Xiao-Fen commissioned me to compose a *pipa* concerto with Chinese orchestra; i.e., a full orchestra of Chinese instruments! When she asked me, of course I said, “Yes!”—but I knew nothing about the other instruments in a Chinese orchestra! (I must also take this opportunity to thank Dr. Chi-Sun Chan, music director, conductor, and drumming instructor of the Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association [GBCCA], for giving me a crash course in traditional Chinese instruments in 2004, and for being an incredible resource in so many ways until today—thank you!) However, my approach to working with these instruments, and what now is the basis of my forthcoming book on Chinese instruments for the Central Conservatory of Music Press, is that the science of music—particularly the physics and acoustics of instruments—hastens the learning curve towards understanding their sonic behavior. A string is a string; no matter how or where it is plucked, you can make an educated guess as to how it will function. Of course—and this is important—this is only the beginning of one’s understanding of instruments from a given culture. Composers must learn their nuances and timbral specifics and do their best to honor the history and cultural background of an instrument’s origin. I hope listeners, especially those from China, feel that I have respectfully pursued creating new music using instruments from their culture.

*Zhongguo Pop* was originally written as a solo work for *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man. Like several of my compositions, this work derives from a series of recorded improvisations by the soloist, which I then reconstituted and used as the basis for an electroacoustic composition. This, in turn, was transcribed and optimized for solo acoustic performance (published by

the Central Conservatory of Music Press in 2016). Wu Man performed the work several times, including its Boston premiere at the Bank of America Celebrity Series at Harvard's Sanders Theatre on November 18, 2005. Several years later, in a concert organized by Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky) at (Le) Poisson Rouge entitled "DJ Spooky presents China + NY: Contemporary Asian / American Music," (April 10, 2011), I arranged *Zhongguo Pop* for four Chinese instruments (*dizi*, *erhu*, pipa, and *guzheng*) and two violins. However, this chamber music version didn't work particularly well (even though it was conducted with vigor by Demetrius Spaneas) for several reasons, mostly because I forced the relatively free original music into a rigid meter and tempo. When I was invited for an artist residency at MacDowell in May 2018, I was thrilled, because it gave me two uninterrupted weeks to re-imagine *Zhongguo Pop* for a larger ensemble and appropriately highlight its Chinese gestures and rich colors in a much less restricted way than I had in the chamber music version.

*The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl* was inspired by my desire to work with percussionist Beibei Wang, who I first met during a performance of my work *Melody for Peace* at a concert celebrating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO in Paris in an event produced by Mehri Madarshahi and her Melody for Dialogue Among Civilizations Association. *Melody for Peace* is a work for Western orchestra and an orchestra of non-Western instruments. In that performance Beibei Wang represented China. As I hadn't previously worked a great deal with percussion instruments, let alone composed a percussion concerto, in order to stimulate my pre-compositional work for *Cowherd and Weaver Girl*, I spent an afternoon with recording engineer Joel Gordon, BMOP percussionist Robert Schulz, and Chi-Sun Chan, and collected tens of audio and video recordings of Schulz and Chan improvising on all of the Chinese percussion instruments available. I later utilized several types of digital editing and processing (audio files were cut, spliced, reconstituted, stretched, reversed, and submitted to all kinds of pitch manipulation and modulation) resulting in a sound library from which I could compose.

*Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality* was commissioned by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra not long after a meeting I had with its Resident Conductor, Chew Hee Chiat, a connection made by composer Chow JunYi in April 2019; I was visiting Hong Kong to deliver a lecture in a Creative Media Colloquium series curated by composer Ken Ueno at the City University of Hong Kong. In the lecture, titled "Electroacoustic and Sound Design Prototypes for the Percussion Concerto *The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl*," I discussed the pre-compositional materials that led to the work's creation, which included field recordings, sound design, electroacoustic music composition, spectral analysis, experimentation, and transcription of the files referenced above, all serving to build an audio prototype for this purely acoustic composition. *Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality*, much like *The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl*, is inspired by Chinese folklore and legendary love, but its pre-composition is based entirely on keyboard improvisations assembled into a MIDI audio mock-up using Digital Performer and Finale software. That is, I composed *Chang'E* much like I might score music for a film.

The premiere of *Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality* by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Yan Huichang, Director, was scheduled for February 21, 2020, in a concert event titled "Music about China," part of the 48th Hong Kong Arts Festival (2020) at Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall. However, the concert was cancelled due to COVID-19 in 2020, rescheduled for 2021, then cancelled again. As of the printing of this CD, it has yet to be rescheduled; I am very much looking forward to the eventual premiere of the original version of this work, scored for large orchestra of traditional Chinese instruments.

ZHONGGUO POP is scored for dizi, erhu, pipa, and guzheng soloists and string orchestra. The chamber version for soloists and two violins, conducted by Demetrius Spaneas, was premiered on April 10, 2011, at (Le) Poisson Rouge in New York, NY.

PING-PONG, version for solo pipa and Western orchestra, received its premiere by the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Markand Thakar, conductor, on October 4, 2006, at the Kraushaar Auditorium in Baltimore, MD.

THE LEGEND OF COWHERD AND WEAVER GIRL is scored for solo percussion and orchestra and was premiered by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, conducted by Gil Rose, on April 21, 2018, at Jordan Hall in Boston, MA.

PLUM BLOSSOMS, scored for solo pipa, glockenspiel, string orchestra, and electronic sounds, was premiered by the San Diego Symphony, Jung-Ho Pak, conductor, on January 29, 2000, at Copley Symphony Hall, Jacobs Music Center, in San Diego, CA.

CHANG'E AND THE ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY, scored for seven Chinese instruments and Western symphony orchestra, was commissioned for Chinese orchestra and originally scheduled to receive its premiere by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra on February 21, 2020, at the Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall.

### By Zhang Boyu (张伯瑜)

Anthony Paul De Ritis (Chinese name: 芮笛诗), composer and Professor at Northeastern University, first traveled to China in the late 1990s. Since then, he has established close ties with various Chinese music institutions. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, De Ritis visited China frequently, lectured at various universities, conservatories, and collaborated with different cultural institutions. He has studied the Chinese language and has completed extensive research on Chinese instruments—his understanding of the sounds of these

instruments is entirely unique. Chinese musical instruments have a long history, each instrument having its own special historical and cultural background. Chinese composers are often confined by historical and cultural connotations when they use Chinese instruments to compose—De Ritis, an American composer, thinks of these instruments differently. The timbres of these instruments, the qualities of their sounds, are the first thing he thinks about when composing. This kind of cross-cultural music creation can provide useful new perspectives and creative approaches to music composition that can expand the artistic range of Chinese musical instruments and improve their expressive capacity. In this regard, De Ritis's music has made a major contribution towards expanding what is possible for Chinese instruments and orchestration, creating works that fuse Western art music and Chinese traditional music in a wholly original way. The five works on this CD represent the fruits of De Ritis's efforts over the last twenty-year period. They are masterful in their use of compositional techniques, unique in style, extensive in content, and make a strong auditory impact.

I first met De Ritis at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) at Tsinghua University in Beijing in 1999. There he presented the electroacoustic version of his work *Plum Blossoms*, based on samples of the pipa (as played by virtuoso soloist, Min Xiao-Fen). I thought it was very interesting and invited him to give a lecture at the Central Conservatory of Music. Later, in 2011, De Ritis conducted research at the Central Conservatory of Music as a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar. In 2016, the Central Conservatory of Music Press published his *Selected Works for Pipa*. At present, De Ritis is writing a book on the instrumentation and orchestration of Chinese musical instruments, also for the Central Conservatory of Music Press.

The five works on this album have been played on various occasions both in the U.S. and in other countries, representing an important part of De Ritis's creative output, in addition to his innovative work in educational, cultural, and entrepreneurial pursuits. De Ritis's approach

to purely instrumental music composition is influenced by his work with electronics. He employs instruments to expand and “hold” harmonies like a resonance filter; builds chords spectrally following timbral analyses; distributes sound and resonance in space, and even “edits” form as if splicing tape, but using sequencing software. Another influence is his use of patterns and processes found in classic minimalism. Ideas are melded and transformed under the influence of these techniques and processes, sparked by De Ritis’s ample sonic imagination.

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*Zhongguo Pop* [1] was originally written for and dedicated to the pipa virtuoso Wu Man as a solo work for pipa in 2004–2005. After its premiere performance at Harvard’s Sanders Theatre on November 18, 2006, Richard Dyer of the *Boston Globe* described De Ritis’s *Zhongguo Pop* (“China Pop”) as a work whose “initial phrase deliberately recalls a Led Zeppelin guitar riff... the piece ingeniously builds into something that sounds like a big rock guitar solo, with a quieter contrasting central section.” In subsequent incarnations, however, additional Chinese timbres and greater rhythmic flexibility and nuance elevated this work beyond mere power and rhythmic drive to a work of grace and beauty that belies its original title.

In 2011, De Ritis arranged *Zhongguo Pop* for a quartet of Chinese instruments (dizi, erhu, pipa, and guzheng) and two violins, which received a performance at (Le) Poisson Rouge in New York City (April 10, 2011). Although he began this chamber version with great excitement, De Ritis found that the middle of the work lacked the fluent recitative style that he loved about the solo work. In 2018, De Ritis was given the opportunity to completely re-think the organization of *Zhongguo Pop* upon receiving a two-week fellowship at the MacDowell artist’s residency program. In this orchestral version, De Ritis retained the same quartet of Chinese instruments, but enlarged the accompaniment to string orchestra, and

completely revised the metrical organization of the work, such that strong and weak beats feel more natural and intuitive (resulting in several meter changes), and introduced several “mini cadenzas,” which give the soloists much greater freedom to control the pacing of their solo passages. It was not until mid-2021 that De Ritis put the finishing touches on the orchestral version that appears on this CD.

*Zhongguo Pop* uses the pipa to express fantastical and exciting impressions of China. The music is mobile, the dynamic range, wide, and the rhythms, complex; Min Xiao-Fen’s pipa performance is particularly passionate and strong. One can hear brief motives of *Qinglian Yuefu* (青莲乐府), one of the classic pieces in traditional pipa music, side-by-side with newly composed music in a modern style. De Ritis has an uncanny ability to blend modern compositional elements with Chinese traditional music.

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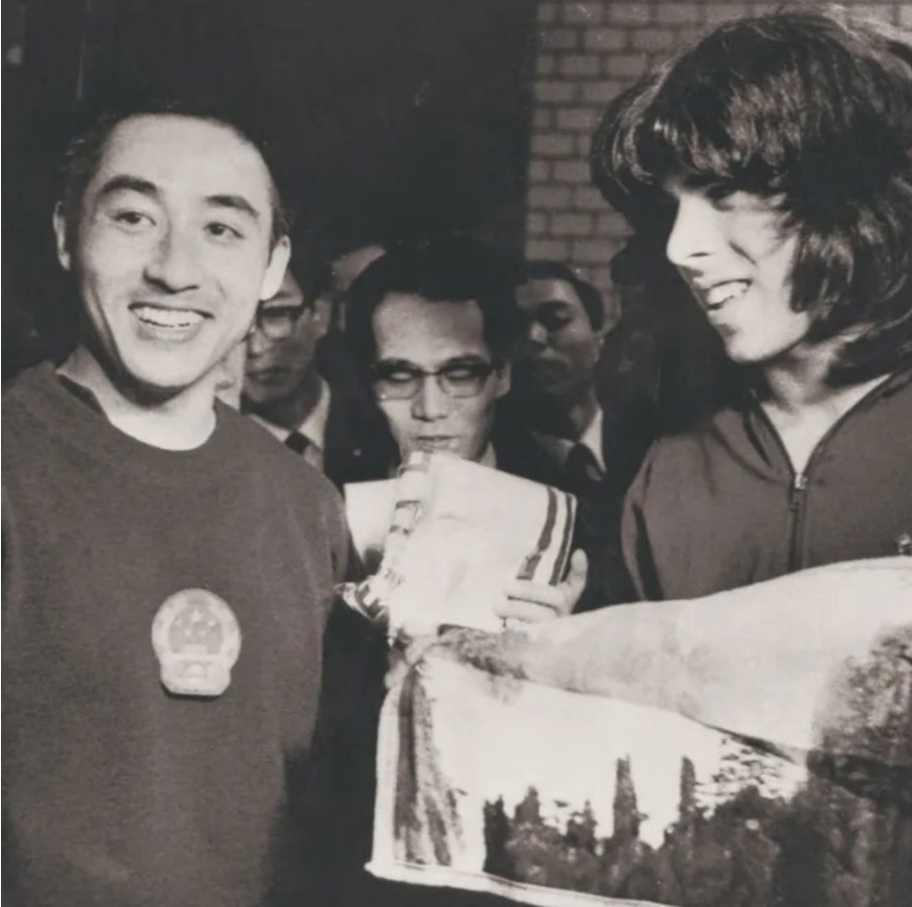
The pipa concerto *Ping-Pong* exists in two versions: the original, written in 2004, is consistent with the instrumentation of the Chinese National Orchestra, commissioned by and dedicated to Min Xiao-Fen; the second version was re-orchestrated in 2006 for Western symphony orchestra (and is the version found on this CD), in order to encourage more performances in the U.S. and Europe. The “Chinese version” was premiered by the Taipei Chinese Traditional Orchestra on December 11, 2004; and the “Western version” was first performed by the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, each featuring Min Xiao-Fen as pipa soloist.

In 1979, the United States established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Before these relations were officially established, two exchange activities in particular had significant impact towards making this happen. One was the visit of the Boston Symphony Orchestra to Beijing and Shanghai, led by its music director, Seiji Ozawa, from March 12 to 20, 1979. The other was the visit of the American table tennis delegation to China—the latter came to be known as “ping-pong diplomacy.”

How does one recognize the influence of table tennis matches or diplomatic negotiations in musical form? *Ping-Pong*, the title of this pipa concerto, was inspired by the cross-cultural communication found in the so-called ping-pong diplomacy between China and the United States. The three movements of this work reference three important events linked to this diplomatic narrative. The first movement, "Huangshan Mountains," refers to the Huangshan Mountains and its famous "Welcome Pine," a tree growing in the hard granite rocks at 1,680 meters above sea level. The Welcome Pine is a traditional backdrop for Chinese leaders to have pictures taken with visiting foreign guests, including one of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and U.S. President Richard Nixon. In fact, it was a T-shirt with a silk-screen portrait of the Huangshan Mountains that the great Chinese table tennis champion Zhuang Zedong gifted to Glenn Cowan, a member of the U.S. team, after a practice session at the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan. The second movement, titled "Invitation," references the U.S. table tennis delegation formally being invited to China at the end of those championships (on April 6, 1971); and the third movement, "Diplomacy," references the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, formally establishing official diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China on January 1, 1979.

The first movement [2] opens at a slow tempo, the pipa solo accompanied sparsely with sustained pianissimo low strings doubling harp tremolos. One can imagine the open space and awe-inspiring magnificence of the Huangshan Mountain range in eastern China's Anhui Province. The main body of the movement follows, offering a theme that is both striking and syncopated, in contrast to the opening—a theme that harkens back to China's Silk Road of ancient times, capturing not only the beauty of the region, but also its history, remoteness, and the spirit of the long journey required to get there.

Zhuang Zedong presents Glenn Cowan a Yellow Mountains silk print, April 4, 1971.  
Photo courtesy Xinhua News Agency.





Like the first movement, the second movement [3] begins with solo pipa, this time unaccompanied. The music creates twisted feelings of anxiety and yet provides a receptive warmth. "Invitation" is hopeful, but one senses the uncertainty of a favorable outcome. An extended interlude is performed by the harp—in the original version, scored for guzheng, the Chinese plucked zither. This is followed by an intense fortissimo moment of uncertainty for full orchestra—there are difficulties in the negotiations that precede the brilliant pipa cadenza realized by Min Xiao-Fen, featuring several extended techniques including crossing the strings and striking the soundboard of the instrument. The movement concludes with a final and subdued statement from the harp, ending the dialogue of this negotiation.

The third movement, "Diplomacy," [4] is frolicking and cheerful. Elegant phrases from the solo pipa converse with brass and woodwind interjections; shorter, almost minimal phrases are omnipresent in the orchestral accompaniment. Motives from the danceable melody are reminiscent of music from the ethnic minorities of southwest China and inspire a celebratory atmosphere—the new era of collaboration between the East and West is about to begin as happiness has overcome great difficulties. At the close of the movement, the theme from the first movement reappears; the ping-pong ball has bounced up and down on both sides of the table—through diplomacy and common ground, we are all winners.

\* \* \*

*The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl* (牛郎织女之神话) [5] was composed in 2018, a percussion concerto expressly written for the Chinese and Western percussion virtuoso Beibei Wang. The work derives its inspiration from an ancient Chinese myth which first appeared in the *Shijing* (诗经, "Book of Songs") of the Zhou Dynasty. It is said that the granddaughter of the Empress of Heaven, the Weaver Girl, was good at weaving cloth, and every day wove rosy clouds in the sky. She hated this boring life, so she secretly went down to Earth and married the Cowherd in Hexi, without permission, to live a life of farming and

weaving. This angered the Empress of Heaven, who descended to Earth in order to take the Weaver Girl back to Heaven, and then, with a swipe of her hairpin, created the Milky Way, separating the Cowherd and Weaver Girl on both sides of the galaxy (some say in the forms of the stars Altair [Cowherd] and Vega [Weaver Girl]). However, their steadfast love for one another so moved all the magpies on Earth that they flew to the heavens to build a "magpie bridge" upon which the Cowherd and Weaver Girl could meet. Finally recognizing that their love for one another could not be denied, the Empress of Heaven agreed to allow the Cowherd and Weaver Girl to meet on the magpie bridge once per year. This day is celebrated in China as the Qixi (七夕) Festival, or Chinese Valentine's Day, and falls annually on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar.

Two contrasting emotions, love and sadness, can be heard in this music; anxiety and beauty are melded within its sound. Among the various percussion instruments, *paigu* (a set of five Chinese drums reminiscent of Western tom-toms) play an important role. The beginning of the piece is essentially a sound design, depicting the lonely confines of the Cowherd plowing the fields with his loyal ox. One can hear buzzing insects, the muttering of the Cowherd in the solo contrabass, and a lion's roar (a drum head with a cord passing through it) made to sound like the groaning of the ox (when the cord is moved back and forth). The entrance of the harp adds a fresh spirit of melancholy to the Cowherd's loneliness, but also a theme of hope. The entrance of the vibraphone and glockenspiel marks the arrival of the Weaver Girl on Earth, and the courtship between the Cowherd and Weaver Girl follows until a reference to Chinese wedding music seals their bond—in fact, De Ritis uses actual transcriptions of Chinese wedding music as performed on *suona* and *sheng* that were recorded in the field.

This marital bliss is harshly interrupted by Chinese *paigu*, creating a tense and uncertain premonition. The large amount of Chinese percussion gives this section of the work characteristics of Chinese traditional music called *Chuida yue* (wind-and-percussion music),

and is used to represent the Empress of Heaven descending to Earth to retrieve the Weaver Girl and bring her back to Heaven. Once again, the Cowherd is alone plowing his fields, that is, until he discovers that his ox has special powers and is able to fly the Cowherd on his back, up to the heavens, in order to reunite him with the Weaver Girl. When she learns of this reunion, the Empress is even more furious than before (depicted by appropriately furious percussion performed with virtuosity by Beibei Wang), leading the Empress to create the Milky Way, forever separating the Cowherd and Weaver Girl. When the reality of this situation is fully understood, the sadness of the ensuing musical phrases is unmistakable and leads us to the first of two cadenzas in the work. (It should be noted that the cadenzas were conceived by soloist Beibei Wang, with some input by De Ritis). The first cadenza concludes with music representing all the magpies from Earth rising to the heavens in creation of the magpie bridge over the Milky Way, derived from magpie bird call transcriptions by De Ritis heard in the upper winds, layered one upon another. This is followed by a mélange of all the musical ideas present within the work—a cacophonous bacchanale—that leads us to the second cadenza, a more traditional statement of Chinese percussion virtuosity, featuring Beibei Wang on paigu. The work's conclusion follows soon after the completion of the second cadenza.

The sections of music that feature the orchestral percussion often adopt rhythmic characteristics similar to Beijing opera gongs and drums, as well as gestures found in percussion ensembles of the Tujia people (in which two cymbals play, one on the downbeat and another on an offbeat). Beibei Wang's cadenzas create a special atmosphere. Overall, the musical gestures in this music are complex; rhythm and timbre predominate. The underlying narrative of *The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl*—the contrasting ideas of a couple in love, sadness, joy, and the intensity of the furious Empress of Heaven—is clearly illustrated.

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Composed in 2000 for pipa, string orchestra, glockenspiel, and electronic sounds (triggered in real-time via a laptop running Max/MSP), *Plum Blossoms* was commissioned by Jung-Ho Pak and the San Diego Symphony and premiered on January 29, 2000, featuring pipa virtuoso Min Xiao-Fen (who is also the featured artist on this recording).

This version of *Plum Blossoms* [6] is an orchestral transcription of De Ritis's first ever composition with Chinese traditional instruments, an electroacoustic work written in 1999, also called *Plum Blossoms*. The electroacoustic version uses as its source material audio samples performed by Min Xiao-Fen, recorded with the assistance of David Wessel at U.C. Berkeley's CNMAT (Center for New Music and Audio Technologies) in 1996, written with the goal of gaining acceptance to the 1999 International Computer Music Conference (ICMC), held that year at Beijing's Tsinghua University. The orchestral version of *Plum Blossoms* would later be referenced in several written publications, most notably in an article written by John Winzenburg titled "Spanning the Timbral Divide: Insiders, Outsiders, and Novelty in Chinese-Western Fusion Concertos," in the edited volume *China and the West: Music, Representation, and Reception* (2017) published by the University of Michigan Press.

The plum blossom has a special meaning in the minds of Chinese people, not only because of its beauty, but also because its flowering season is relatively early and short. Therefore, Chinese people regard the plum blossom as noble, fearless of the cold, and unphased by blooming alone under hostile conditions. As the piece begins, two motifs appear briefly: one is taken from a work for solo pipa called *Yizu Wuqu* (彝族舞曲, "Dance Music of the Yi Ethnic Group"); another is from *Feihua Diancui* (飞花点翠, "Falling Flowers Color the Green"), which uses the push-pull technique by the left hand of the pipa performer. As the music flows, we can hear several techniques taken from traditional Chinese pipa music, such as sweeping the strings and twisting two strings into one to create a kind of noisy sound. Since all these elements interact with the orchestra and are enhanced by electronic

sounds, the music is very novel and fresh. The pipa performance is most incisive. It can be discerned from the musical elements used that the composer has gained a profound understanding of and familiarity with the pipa and that the introduced motifs are transformed in both structure and style, especially with respect to the electronic manipulations, rendering this music full, vivid, and wholly original.

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*Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality* (嫦娥·后羿·不老药), commissioned by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, exists in two different orchestrations. The original version was written in 2019 and is scored for Chinese orchestra; the second version (the version found on this CD) is for mixed orchestra of Chinese and Western instruments and was completed in 2022. The Chinese instruments in the mixed orchestra version include: dizi, sheng, suona, *yangqin*, pipa, *zhongruan* (doubling *daruan*), guzheng, and several Chinese percussion.

De Ritis's work illustrates the story of Chang'E and Hou Yi, two ancient myths. The former myth first appeared in the ancient book *Guizang* (归藏—the book has been lost, but some fragments on bamboo slips have been preserved, including the story of Chang'E). It is said that the beautiful Chang'E ate the anti-aging medicine of the Queen Mother (a Goddess in Chinese Taoism) under the evil influence of Peng Meng, and thus she rose to the moon, and lived in the "Palace of Boundless Cold." The later myth first appeared in the *Shanhai Jing* (山海经, "The Classic of Mountains and Seas"). It says that when the universe was created, there were ten suns in the sky, and life on Earth was oppressively hot. Hou Yi shot down nine suns, creating a beautiful world for mankind. In a book of the Western Han Dynasty, *Huainan Zi* (淮南子—believed to be written by Liu An), the two stories were combined into one. Hou Yi and Chang'E became married. After Chang'E ascended to the moon, Hou Yi was left to survive on Earth. These stories have shaped the imagination of the Chinese people; for example, Emperor Li Shimin of the Tang Dynasty was said to have

had a dream. In it, he went to the Moon Palace and met Chang'E. Chang'E played him a piece of music. After waking up, he wrote down the tune in his dream. This piece, known as *The Moon is High* (月儿高), has been passed down for generations to the present day.

*Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality* [7] begins with the earth barren and oppressed under the heat of ten suns, depicted by soft and slow-moving sound clusters in the highest registers of the bowed strings. The human suffering continues until we hear a beautiful theme of hope in the solo guzheng (zither) with the sheng (mouth organ) adding to the harmony; this is soon followed by rhythmic and masculine gestures by the plucked lower strings, pipa, and *daruan* representing Hou Yi. (The pipa resembles a Western lute, and the *daruan* is a large plucked instrument with characteristics similar to a kind of bass banjo.) Soon, our hero begins shooting down nine of the ten suns with his mighty bow and arrows, a series of nine massive glissandi in the bowed and plucked strings (Western and Chinese) followed by percussion crashes featuring several Chinese instruments: *paigu* (similar to tom-toms), flowerpot drum, large cymbals, wind gong, and *paiban* (clapper made from flat pieces of hardwood). The citizens pay tribute to Hou Yi as their hero, and celebration breaks out using a theme featuring the sheng inflected with the characteristics of dance music from ethnic minorities in southwest China, followed by a fanfare led by the suona (a double-reed woodwind) and brass. Soon after, Hou Yi meets and falls in love with Chang'E, depicted by a slow dance of courtship featuring dizi (bamboo flute), two harps, and *daruan*. Yunluo (pitched cloud gongs) signify the arrival of the Goddess who offers Hou Yi the Elixir of Immortality for his heroism. Romantic and regal music soon yields to the double-crossing Peng Meng, Hou Yi's jealous apprentice, who learns of and seeks the Elixir of Immortality for himself. The music now conveys hesitant uncertainty as Peng Meng confronts Chang'E and demands the elixir from her (depicted by a contrapuntal passage between the low clarinets and dizi)—and in a fleeting moment, Chang'E drinks the elixir herself rather than hand it over to Peng Meng. The powerful elixir soon takes its effect as the music magically

transforms from reflections of hope and love to a long, fragmented, ascending passage that reaches higher and higher pitches—Chang'E rises to the moon, where she will live forever. When Hou Yi returns from the hunt, he learns of Chang'E's fate, and is overcome with grief and sadness, his anguish depicted by suona and strings; Hou Yi sees Chang'E's shadow in the moon, Chang'E calls out to him (dizi), but Hou Yi cannot hear her cry. The composition concludes with a brief postlude harkening back to the musical gestures of hope embodied by Hou Yi and his heroism and Chang'E rising to the moon—and one can envision Hou Yi setting out fruits as offerings to Chang'E as an expression of his eternal love.



WANG AGBO

**ANTHONY PAUL DE RITIS** (芮笛诗), described as a “genuinely American composer” (*Gramophone*) and an “eclectic whose works draw on popular and electronic music [and] Chinese folklore and instrumentation” (*The Wall Street Journal*), has received performances around the world including at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, (Le) Poisson Rouge, Lincoln Center, the Smithsonian’s National Portrait

Gallery in Washington, D.C., Beijing’s Yugong Yishan, Seoul’s KT Art Hall, the Italian Pavilion at the World Expo in Milan, and UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

De Ritis’s 2012 release *Devolution* with the GRAMMY® Award-winning Boston Modern Orchestra Project and BMOP/sound was described as a “tour de force” (*Gramophone*) and features three of De Ritis’s symphonic works—*Chords of Dust*, *Legerdemain*, and *Devolution: Concerto for DJ and Symphony Orchestra*, featuring Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky as soloist. His *Pop Concerto* (BMOP/sound, 2017) featuring Eliot Fisk was lauded by *Classical CD Review* as “a major issue of American music,” and his *Electroacoustic Music – In Memoriam: David Wessel* (Albany Records, 2018) was cited by *Sequenza 21* among the “Best of 2018” in the electronic music category.

In 2015, De Ritis’s *Melody for Peace* was performed as part of UNESCO’s 70th Anniversary celebrations by the Prague Concert Philharmonic in Paris, and his work *Amsterdam*, which featured maestro Jung-Ho Pak controlling a Buchla Lightning wand controller manipulating the orchestra’s sound in real-time, was presented by the Hong Kong Philharmonic as part of its “Music, Science, and Technology” showcase at the Grand Hall, University of Hong Kong.

De Ritis works frequently with traditional Chinese instruments, including works for pipa virtuosos Min Xiao-Fen and Wu Man. De Ritis was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China (2011), who later published his *Selected*

*Works for Pipa* (2016), and is appointed as a Special Professor in the China Conservatory of Music's Beijing Advanced Innovation Center for Chinese National School of Music (2016). De Ritis is also a master of New Media and Arts Management with the DeTao Masters Academy and is on the International Editorial Board of the journal *Global Media and China*, published by SAGE in collaboration with the Communications University of China, for whom he was co-editor of the special issue "The Media and Entertainment Industry: The World and China" (Volume 1, Issue 4: December 2016). His paper, "'Mixed Blood' and Aesthetic Evolution in China's Electroacoustic Music Today" was published by Cambridge University Press in the journal *Organised Sound* (December 2022), and he is currently under contract with the Central Conservatory of Music Press to write a book on the instrumentation and orchestration of traditional Chinese instruments.

In 2018 De Ritis expanded his research and practice on the musical instruments of East Asia with a residency at the International Gugak Center in Seoul, Korea, and a performance of his work *Kamelle-on* for Saenghwang and 4-speaker audio featuring virtuoso Gamin Kang at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) in Daegu, Korea. This builds upon his original music for *KYOPO: Multiplicity* (2012), conceived by Korean visual artist CYJO and displayed at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., a project that explores the different facets of cross-cultural identity.

De Ritis is also continuing his large-scale work setting the eclectic and dramatic texts of Lillian-Yvonne Bertram's book of poetry *Travesty Generator*, winner of the Poetry Society of America's 2020 Anna Rabinowitz Prize for Interdisciplinary Work, funded by a Boston Foundation "Live Arts Boston" (LAB 2021) grant. *Travesty Generator* uses algorithmic approaches to generating poetry and deals with several subjects related to race and social justice.

De Ritis completed his Ph.D. in Music Composition at the University of California, Berkeley (1997), where he studied composition with Richard Felciano, Edwin Dugger, and Jorge Liderman, and where he served as a teaching assistant to David Wessel at Berkeley's Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT). He received his M.M. in Electronic Music

Composition from Ohio University (1992) under Mark Phillips and his B.A. in Music with a concentration in Business Administration from Bucknell University (1990), where his primary teachers were Jackson Hill, Kyle Gann, and William Duckworth. De Ritis engaged in summer study at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, under Philippe Manoury, Tristan Murail, and Gilbert Amy (1991, 1992), and holds a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in high-tech from Northeastern University (2002).

De Ritis is co-founder of the music technology program at Northeastern University in Boston (1998), where he is Professor and former Chair of the Music Department (2003–2015) and is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Electronic Music Foundation Institute.

[www.deritis.com](http://www.deritis.com)



TSUJUI CARRIE CHIN

**Tsujui Carrie Chin** (金祖瑞) is a graduate of the National Taiwan Academy of Arts (now known as the National Taiwan University of Arts) with a major in sheng performance. From 1989 to 1993 she was a first-generation member of the Kaohsiung City Chinese Orchestra (KCCO), the first professional Chinese orchestra in southern Taiwan, with whom she performed more than 100 concerts and recorded three CDs. KCCO participated in the Asian Games Arts Festival in Beijing in 1990, the first Taiwanese Chinese Orchestra to officially visit mainland China. After living in the United States for several years, Carrie is honored to have performed with the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York (CMENY) since 2003, whose objective is to introduce the music of China to Western audiences, enriching the public and strengthening cross-cultural ties. With CMENY, Ms. Chin has performed at several prestigious venues including Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.



**Yazhi Guo (郭雅志)** is a well-known inventor and virtuoso of wind instruments. He is a highly sought-after performer of various Chinese and Western wind instruments on the international stage. Guo is considered the world's great suona virtuoso. Guo graduated from the Folk Music Department of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1990 and stayed on to teach at the Conservatory. In 2000, Guo was appointed principal suona player by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra.

Since 2012, Guo has continued his pursuit of music in the United States. While in the U.S., he has given lectures and concerts at colleges such as Harvard University, The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and Berklee College of Music. During his illustrious career, Guo has won numerous awards. In December 2021, along with several friends, he co-founded the American Academy of World Music and became its first president. Guo set the goal of nurturing future generations of talented multi-ethnic, multi-cultural musicians. Guo is endeavoring towards his dream of promoting a peaceful world through the people and power of music.



**Guo Zhaoshun (果兆顺)**, performer on pipa, zhongruan, and daruan, graduated with a concentration in pipa performance from the Tianjin Conservatory of Music in 1979 and was soon after appointed to the Tianjin Hebei Bangzi Theater. In 1991, he earned second prize in the National Musical Instrument Competition for Artists with a performance of Five Heroes of Langya Mountain; later that year, Mr. Guo transferred to the Tianjin Song and Dance Theater. In 2000, he was invited to the United States by the Bao'An Cultural and Art Center to participate in an exhibition at Carnegie Hall celebrating Chinese music and culture. During his more than 20 years in



**He Tao (何涛)**, a native of Shanghai, studied erhu with her father since childhood. Tao graduated in 1992 from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. In the same year, she was admitted to the China National Radio Orchestra. In 1999, she relocated to Singapore, signing with the Expect Music company, and played popular music with erhu. Tao later joined the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in 2002. She moved to Boston with her family ten years later, and in 2014 she collaborated with the prominent Chinese composer Huang Qiong on the work *San Mao Wandering* for erhu and percussion. In 2015 Tao performed *The Great Wall Capriccio*

with the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music Symphony Orchestra. In 2017, she played solo erhu in the opera *The Legend of the White Snake* by the esteemed Chinese composer Zhou Long.



**Cheng Jin Koh (高程锦)**, New York-based composer and yangqin performer, strives to transcend boundaries through the reinvention of musical meanings. As a yangqin musician, she was one of the youngest grand winners of the Singapore Chinese Music Competition and performed as a soloist with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra. She regularly premieres her own music, which mostly involves multicultural and interdisciplinary explorations. As a composer, she has worked with Ensemble InterContemporain, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Ding Yi Music

Company, and Metropolis Ensemble, among others. Some of her accolades include the BMI William Schuman Prize, ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, Brian Israel Prize, and the Palmer Dixon and Gena Raps Chamber Music Prizes (The Juilliard School). Recent engagements include a commission-performance by the Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Arts for their centennial celebrations and the 2022 Singapore International Violin Competition as its commissioned composer. She is currently a second-year PhD Fellow at the NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science.

YIMIN MIAO



**Yimin Miao** (繆宜民), Chinese woodwind virtuoso and educator, was born in Shanghai, China. When Miao was nine years old, he started studying dizi (bamboo flutes) with Xunfa Yu, the most celebrated bamboo flutist in China. Miao is a former member of the internationally acclaimed Shanghai Traditional Orchestra, with whom he has performed across Asia, North America, and Europe. As a seasonal artist of the Santa Fe Opera in 2014, Miao played various bamboo flutes in the premiere production of *Dr. Sun Yat-sen*. In 2017, he was invited to play in the China National Orchestra's debut concert at Carnegie Hall. After moving to New York, Miao

established the Ba Ban Chinese Music Society of New York in 1999. Leading the group, he has produced three sold-out productions: "Silk and Bamboo Music from the Yangtze River" (2016); "Golden Age of the 1930s & 40s Shanghai Jazz Music" (2017); and "Changes—the Union of Men and Nature" (2019), which were presented by the Queens Council on the Arts and received a commendation from the New York City Council for exemplary cultural service to the community.

JING YU



**Min Xiao-Fen** (闵小芬) is a highly acclaimed artist known for her exceptional talent as a soloist, vocalist, and composer. She has reinvented the 2000-year history of the pipa, an instrument native to China. Trained in classical music in her home country, Ms. Min became a sought-after performer of traditional music. After relocating to the United States, she began collaborating with prominent figures in modern jazz, free improvisation, experimental, and contemporary classical music. Praised by NPR's *Weekend Edition* as "one of the world's greatest virtuosos," *The New York Times* raved that her singular work "has traversed a sweeping musical odyssey."

Min's virtuosity has earned her widespread acclaim. Notable works include the 2021 album *White Lotus*; the deeply personal 2017 release *Mao, Monk and Me*, which explores the music of Thelonious Monk; and 2012's *Dim Sum* spotlights the stunning scope of her compositions. In 2023, Min received a prestigious commission from the Smithsonian Institution to compose soundtracks for two Chinese silent films from the 1920s. [www.minbluepipa.com](http://www.minbluepipa.com)

ALEX SELIMAI



**Wei Sun** (孙薇) is a young guzheng artist from China and principal guzheng player with the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York (CMENY). She was born into a musical family, starting her guzheng journey at the age of six, and is now a certified senior teacher of guzheng and member of the China National Instrumental Association and the International Guzheng Association. In 2016, Wei Sun came to the United States as a guzheng performer and teacher at the CBA Culture and Arts Center, an organization in New York City dedicated to the development of traditional Chinese arts in the spirit of exchange and dialogue with other cultures in the

world. Since March 2022, Wei has performed guzheng in the musical *Noble Family* at the Cutting Room on Broadway. In October 2017, Wei Sun performed at Carnegie Hall featuring her trio band StringsW (erhu, guzheng, pipa) that she co-founded. The successful performance, titled “ECHO,” combined Chinese and Western instruments in arrangements of Chinese folk music and interpretations of classics from the Chinese traditional musical literature.



MIKE SKELTON

**Beibei Wang** (王貝貝) is an internationally acclaimed multi-percussionist. With her background in both classical and traditional Chinese percussion, she brings characteristic flair and dynamism to her performances and presents a diverse repertoire with equal elegance. Beibei has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, China Philharmonic, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and New Japan Philharmonic, and led the BBC Concert Orchestra as soloist on their 2018 China tour. She has appeared as soloist on some of the world’s most prestigious stages, including the Barbican Centre, Elbphilharmonie, Grafenegg Festival, and London’s Southbank Centre, as well as at UN Headquarters and UNESCO. Beibei has been invited to collaborate with conductors such as Tan Dun, Gil Rose, Kent Nagano, and Kristjan Järvi. In 2020 Beibei was named an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and in 2022 was a judge for BBC Young Musician.



CHI-SUNCHAN

**Shin-Yi Yang** (楊信宜), a native of Taiwan, is a talented guqin and guzheng musician and the founder of the Boston Guzheng Ensemble and Boston Qin Society. She has been recognized for her artistry with awards such as the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Folk Arts and Heritage Program and the Chinese Culture Connection Award. Shin-Yi has performed at notable venues, including Paine Hall and Sanders Theatre at Harvard University, Kresge Auditorium at MIT, and Cary Hall in Lexington. She has also been invited to give a Gallery Talk/Demonstration for the Museum of Fine Arts and has contributed to John Manning’s CD *Four Corners*. Her talent has taken her internationally to France, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, where she has shared her music with audiences around the world.



JIANFENG WANG

**Zhou Yi** (周懿), hailed by the *Washington Post* for her “breathtaking” meticulous technique and expressiveness, is a Shanghai-born pipa and qin soloist. She was discovered by a Chinese instrumentalist talent scout at the age of five and went on to graduate from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music before relocating to New York. As a concert soloist, some of her career highlights include Tan Dun’s Concerto for Pipa and String Orchestra at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Germany; a Young People’s Concert with the New York Philharmonic; Bun-Ching Lam’s *Sudden Thunder* with the Sinfonieorchester Münster; and Zuqiang Wu’s *Sisters of the Grassland* with the Ohio Youngstown Symphony Orchestra. She has also made guest appearances in notable operatic and festival productions, including Bright Sheng’s *Dream of the Red Chamber* at San Francisco Opera, Huang Ruo’s *Paradise Interrupted* at Lincoln Center Festival, and *Dr. Sun Yat-sen* at Santa Fe Opera.





**Gil Rose** is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WXQR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone* Magazine Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established

itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 90 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured eight GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series.

In recent seasons, Gil Rose led Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brought John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP traveled to Carnegie Hall in April 2023 for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season. Future seasons include a BMOP and Odyssey co-production of *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in *AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage*, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.



TINA TALLOW

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as “one of the most artistically valuable” orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today’s musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music “new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be” via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. 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, with programming that is “a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers’ imaginations have wrought” (*Wall Street Journal*). 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*, Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang’s *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

*Streams*. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

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 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 90 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP’s discography to over 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

**FLUTE**

Ashley Addington\* [5]  
 Sarah Brady\* (piccolo) [2-3]  
 Rachel Braude [2]  
 Diane DiSpoto [5]  
 Jessica Lizak [3, 5]  
 Jesse Rosinski [5]

**OBOE**

Nancy Dimock [2, 5]  
 Jennifer Slowik\* [2-3, 5]  
 Catherine Weinfield [3]

**CLARINET**

Amy Advocat [3]  
 Gary Gorzcyca [2, 5]  
 Jan Halloran\* [2-3, 5]

**BASSOON**

Ronald Haroutunian\* [2]  
 Jensen Ling\* [3, 5]  
 Hazel Malcolmson [5]  
 Gregory Newton [3]  
 Margaret Phillips [2]

**HORN**

Alyssa Daly [3]  
 Neil Godwin\* [3, 5]  
 Whitacre Hill [2]  
 Kevin Owen\* [2, 5]

**TRUMPET**

Eric Berlin [2, 5]  
 Terry Everson\* [2, 5]  
 Richard Kelley [5]

Dana Oakes\* [3]

**TROMBONE**

Alexei Doohovskoy\* [5]  
 Victoria Garcia-Daskalova [3]  
 Robert Hoveland [5]

**TUBA**

Kenneth Amis [3]

**PERCUSSION**

Jonathan Hess [2, 5]  
 Craig McNutt (timpani) [2, 5]  
 Robert Schulz\* [2-5]  
 Matthew Sharrock [3, 5]  
 Nicholas Tolle [3, 5]

**PIANO**

Linda Osborn [3]

**HARP**

Franziska Huhn [1]  
 Krysten Keches [2]  
 Amanda Romano [5]  
 Ina Zdorovetchi [5]

**VIOLIN I**

MaeLynn Arnold [3]  
 Colleen Brannen\* [4]  
 Piotr Buczek [1-2, 4-5]  
 Benjamin Carson [2, 5]  
 Colin Davis [2]  
 Sonia Deng [2-3]  
 Gabriela Diaz\* [1, 3, 5]  
 Tudor Dornescu [5]  
 Omar Guey [1]

Betsy Hinkle [5]  
 Susan Jensen\* [1-3, 5]  
 Sean Larkin [3]  
 Jae Young Cosmos Lee [5]  
 Yumi Okada [2, 4]  
 Nicole Parks [2-3, 5]  
 Nivedita Sarnath [4]  
 Amy Sims [1-3]  
 Klaudia Szlachta [3]  
 Zoya Tsvetkova [1]  
 Katherine Winterstein [5]  
 Yonah Zur [5]

**VIOLIN II**

MaeLynn Arnold [4]  
 Colleen Brannen\* [1-2, 5]  
 Piotr Buczek [3]  
 Paola Caballero [1-2, 5]  
 Julia Cash [2-3]  
 Colin Davis [5]  
 Tudor Dornescu [1]  
 Rose Drucker [5]  
 Lilit Hartunian [1-3, 5]  
 EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks [5]  
 Zenas Hsu [1]  
 Annegret Klaua [4]  
 Aleksandra Labinska [5]  
 Sean Larkin [5]  
 Mina Lavcheva [5]  
 Judith Lee [3, 5]  
 Aijja Reke [2-3]  
 Micah Ringham [3]

Kay Rooney Matthews [2-3]  
 Nivedita Sarnath [2-3]  
 Megumi Stohs\* [3]  
 Zoya Tsvetkova\* [4]  
 Katherine Winterstein\* [1]  
 Edward Wu [5]

**VIOLA**

Mark Berger [1]  
 Sharon Bielik [2]  
 Abigail Cross [1, 3, 5]  
 Joan Ellersick\* [3, 5]  
 Nathaniel Farny [4]  
 Noriko Futagami [1-4]  
 Amelia Hollander Ames [5]  
 Samuel Kelder [5]  
 Lauren Nelson [2-3]

Dimitar Petkov [3, 5]  
 Emily Rideout [1, 3, 5]  
 Emily Rome [2, 5]  
 Peter Sulski\* [1-2, 4-5]  
 Willine Thoe [2]

**CELLO**

Miriam Bolkosky [3, 5]  
 Nicole Cariglia\* [1]  
 Darry Dolezal [1, 3]  
 Katherine Kayaian\* [3-4]  
 Jing Li [2, 5]  
 Stephen Marotto [1-2]  
 Velleda Miragias [3, 5]  
 David Russell\* [2, 4-5]  
 Ben Swartz [5]  
 Aron Zelkowicz [1-2, 5]

**BASS**

Anthony D'Amico\* [1-2, 5]  
 Scot Fitzsimmons [3-4]  
 Katherine Foss [5]  
 Michael Hartery [5]  
 Bebo Shiu\* [1-5]

**KEY**

[1] Zhongguo Pop  
 [2] Ping-Pong  
 [3] Cowherd and Weaver Girl  
 [4] Plum Blossoms  
 [5] The Elixir of Immortality  
 \*principals

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—Anthony Paul De Ritis

### Anthony Paul De Ritis

Zhongguo Pop  
Ping-Pong  
The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl  
Plum Blossoms  
Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality

All works on this disc are published by the composer.

Producer Gil Rose  
Recording and postproduction Joel Gordon  
Assistant engineer Peter Atkinson  
SACD authoring Brad Michel



*Zhongguo Pop* was recorded on September 8, 2021, at Mechanics Hall in Worcester, MA. *Ping-Pong* was recorded on September 11, 2019, at NEC's Jordan Hall in Boston, MA. *The Legend of Cowherd and Weaver Girl* was recorded on April 22, 2018, at Mechanics Hall. *Plum Blossoms* was recorded on February 11, 2017, at NEC's Jordan Hall. *Chang'E and the Elixir of Immortality* was recorded on March 16, 2022, at Mechanics Hall.

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Cover image: *Chang'E Flying to the Moon*. Ink painting by Ren Shuai Ying, 1955, National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Full credit: Pictures from History / Bridgeman Images.

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