

The Cicada Chamber Ensemble

Wendy Stern, *flute* Heidi Upton, *piano* Scott Jackson-Wiley, *conductor*
Shelby Yamin, *violin* Barbara Allen, *harp*
Xin-yi Xu, *viola* William Blossom, *contrabass*

Musicians from soundSCAPE

Tony Arnold, *soprano*
Thomas Rosenkranz, *piano*
Aiyun Huang, *percussion*

The JACK Quartet

Christopher Otto, Ari Streisfeld, *violins*
John Richards, *viola*
Kevin McFarland, *cello*

Rootstock Percussion

Chris Froh, Dan Kennedy, Loren Mach

The Awea Duo

Jennifer Brimson Cooper, *flute*
Masahito Sugihara, *saxophone*

The Callithumpian Consort

Sarah Brady, *flute*
Amanda Hardy, *oboe*
Jay Hutchinson, *clarinet*
Adam Smith, *bassoon*
Neil Godwin, *French horn*
Matthew Yasuji Ebisuzaki, *trumpet*
Christopher Moore, *trombone*
John Andress, Nicholas Tolle, *percussion*
Yukiko Takagi, *piano*
Maria Rindenello Parker, *harp*
Gabriela Díaz, Micah Ringham, *violins*
Ashleigh Gordon, *viola*
Benjamin Schwartz, *cello*
Edward Kass, *contrabass*
Stephen Drury, *conductor*

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Lei Liang

Bamboo Lights



BRIDGE 9425

Lei Liang (b. 1972)
Bamboo Lights

- 1) *Listening for Blossoms* (2011) 10:56
for flute, harp, violin, viola, contrabass, piano
The Cicada Chamber Ensemble
- 2) *Lakescape* (2012) 5:13
for soprano, piano, percussion
Musicians from soundSCAPE
- 3) *Serashi Fragments* (2005) 7:28
The JACK Quartet
- 4) *Lakescape II* (2013) 6:26
for percussion trio
Rootstock Percussion
- 5) *Gobi Gloria* (2006) 11:37
The JACK Quartet

Producer: Lei Liang

Editing: *Lakescape:* Scott Levine; *Lakescape II:* Stephen Bingen, both with additional editing and mastering by Josef Kucera. Editing and mastering of all other tracks: Josef Kucera.

Recordings: *Listening for Blossoms:* Tim Martyn, recording producer; Brian Losch, recording engineer; Greenville Community Church, Scarsdale, NY, December 16, 2013. *Lakescape:* Scott Levine, recording engineer, Pollack Hall, Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, July 18, 2012. *Serashi Fragments* and *Gobi Gloria:* Josef Kucera, recording engineer, Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, University of California, San Diego, February 13, 2013. *Lakescape II:* Stephen Bingen, recording engineer, Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center, University of California, Davis, February 3, 2013. *Lake:* Joseph Patrick, recording engineer, The James and Nancy Gaertner Performing Arts Center Recital Hall, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, March 17, 2014. *Bamboo Lights:* Jeremy Sarna, recording engineer, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA, October 1, 2013.

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Photo of Lei Liang: U-T San Diego/Howard Lipin

Liner Notes: Yayoi Uno Everett

The music of Lei Liang published by:

Schott Music Corporation, New York (ASCAP)

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promising young musicians in concerts to raise funds for important social causes and local charities. The Cicada Chamber Players endeavors to celebrate all the arts at their concerts and with their recordings. Artists were asked to contribute paintings for the CD design. A local artist is usually selected to contribute a piece for the poster promoting the event. Often the commissioned music has a literary connection: Jon Deak's *Yamamba* (a noh play), Alvin Brehm's *Night of the Four Moons* from a Lorca poem, and a piece commissioned from artist/composer Deborah Mason based on another Lorca poem.

www.cicadaarts.org



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| 6) | <i>Lake</i> (1999/2013)
<i>for flute and alto saxophone</i>
The Awea Duo | 5:38 |
| | <i>Bamboo Lights</i> (2013)
<i>for chamber orchestra</i> | 5:13 |
| 7) | Movement I: “howling bamboo” | 2:45 |
| 8) | Movement II: “fragility” | 1:00 |
| 9) | Movement III: “dark echoes” | 2:48 |
| 10) | Movement IV: “meeting our ancestors’ eyes” | 5:08 |

The Callithumpian Consort
Stephen Drury, *conductor*

Not excluding the dramatic flair and virtuosity that characterize Lei Liang's music from previous albums, this CD album entitled *Bamboo Lights* features delicately nuanced miniature works, whose quiet intensity and beauty call to mind the finest Chinese landscape paintings (*shanshui*) and Japanese haiku poetry. Just as Matsuo Basho's haiku poetry lead us to search for a symbolic meaning arising from the juxtaposed images that strike the heart (*kokoro*) and mind, Liang transports the listener to experience inner solitude—what he calls “the silence of the mind”—through interweaving moments of silence within sounds. Liang's approach to silence draws on Vimalakirti branch of Mahayana Buddhism, whose sutra emphasizes the practice of non-duality through silent meditation, but as evidenced in Zen Buddhism, not by excluding sounds and images from the phenomenal world. Non-duality also extends to the manner by which Liang juxtaposes inward reflection with outward expression, tranquility with violence, and complexity with an austere simplicity in capturing a wide range of human experience.

The music in this album provides opportunities for the listener to perceive sounds synaesthetically—seeing images through hearing. In particular, the aural image of ethereal light is made vivid through an

American Saxophone Alliance Conferences, as well as Santa Catarina State University and Goiás Federal University in Brazil. Sugihara is assistant professor of saxophone at Sam Houston State University and Cooper is assistant professor of flute at Morehead State University.

www.awea-duo.com



Founded by William Blossom (Artistic Director, contrabass) with regular members Wendy Stern (flute) and Barbara Allen (harp), the **Cicada Chamber Players** is a group of New York-based professional musicians dedicated to generating interest in chamber music by performing with

the Cologne Radio Symphony, gave the first performance of John Zorn's *Aporias*, a concerto for piano and orchestra. Drury's recordings include music by Beethoven, Liszt, Stockhausen, Ravel, Stravinsky, Ives, Carter, Rzewski, Cage, McPhee, and Zorn. He created and directs New England Conservatory's Summer Institute for Contemporary Piano Performance, and assumed directorship of its Enchanted Circle concert series in 1997.

www.stephendrury.com



Jennifer Brimson Cooper (flute) and Masahito Sugihara (saxophone) formed the **Awea Duo** in the summer of 2012 for the purpose of artistic development and as a means for educational outreach. The Awea Duo is committed to promoting music for the flute and saxophone duo through performing

existing works, writing transcriptions and commissioning new repertoire. In their first two seasons, they presented over 35 performances including recitals at the National Flute Association Convention, North

array of timbral effects, be it the violin's arpeggiated harmonics in *Gobi Gloria*, the shimmering sounds of bowed vibraphone key and cymbals in *Lakescape II*, or the chromatic glissandi in the concluding *Bamboo Lights*. In highlighting the infinite ways in which our perception of natural phenomena changes, Liang alludes to the eleventh-century painter Kuo Hsi's remark on landscape painting: "one must realize that one mountain contains in itself the manner of several dozen or a hundred mountains." Liang's music similarly solicits images and associations to be formed freely in this emergent state of being. Foremost, Liang's creative impetus continues to arise from his sincere desire to connect to important cultural legacies, artistic traditions, and encounters with people. By embracing a variety of stylistic expressions, he breaks down the aforementioned dualistic positions while making a profound statement about his metaphysical connection with the world.

Listening for Blossoms (for flute, harp, violin, viola, contrabass and piano, 2011) speaks to the idea of interiority; it contains gestures and articulations drawn from the performance practice of *guqin* (Chinese zither). The harp and viola exchange gestures that unfold in a slow, processional pace as other instruments join in. Liang also extends his notion of "one-note-polyphony" from the *Brush-Stroke* album by layering

different sonic elements into a composite timbral stroke. The sonic effects do not speak of an aural translation of the literal process by which flowers bloom, but of the transmission of energy and movement that occurs at the microscopic level—perhaps felt, but invisible to the naked eye. To this effect, Liang created special effects by rolling Styrofoam peanuts onto the strings inside the piano. This work was jointly commissioned by the Southwest Chamber Music and the Cicada Chamber Players; the former gave its world premiere at the Los Angeles International New Music Festival in Zipper Concert Hall, Los Angeles on January 26, 2013.

Lakescape (for soprano, piano, and percussion, 2012) was commissioned by the soundSCAPE Festival and written for Tony Arnold, Aiyun Huang and Thomas Rosenkranz who gave its world premiere on July 11, 2012 at Auditorium Città di Maccagno, in Maccagno, Italy. The two *Lakescape* pieces featured in this album draw on *Lake* (1999) for two flutes, in which the instruments intermingle to recreate the ephemeral experience of gliding on water on a moonlit lake in a Buddhist monastery. Reflecting on this image, Liang remarks, “Underneath the music, there is a profoundly deep silence upon which I seek to inscribe my signature through sound.” As in the art of Chinese landscape (*shanshui*), in which the artist conveys the internal essence of the image with ink and brush, the instrumental

Diesendruck. The Consort has worked closely with composers John Cage, Frederic Rzewski, Helmut Lachenmann, Michael Finnissy, Jonathan Harvey, Lee Hyla, John Zorn, John Luther Adams, Franco Donatoni, Lukas Foss, Christian Wolff, Jo Kondo and many others. Recordings are available on Tzadik, Mode, and New World Records.

www.callithumpian.org



Stephen Drury has given performances throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Latin America, soloing with orchestras from San Diego to Bucharest. A prizewinner in several competitions, including the Concert Artists Guild, Affiliate Artists, and Carnegie Hall/Rockefeller competitions, he was selected by the United States Information Agency for its Artistic Ambassador Program. A champion of 20th century music, Drury’s critically acclaimed performances range from the piano sonatas of Charles Ives to works by John Cage and György Ligeti. He premiered the solo part of John Cage’s *101* with the BSO and, along with Dennis Russell Davies and

its energized performances and refined interpretative voice, the group's robust performance calendar includes engagements at the Other Minds Festival, DeYoung Museum, SF MOMA, and Central Pacific Railroad Tunnel #6 located at Donner Pass in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

www.rootstockpercussion.com



Founded by pianist and conductor Stephen Drury in the 1980's, the **Callithumpian Consort** is a professional ensemble producing concerts of contemporary music and is in residence at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Its repertoire

focuses on new and unusual compositions, encompassing a wide stylistic spectrum from the classics of the last hundred years to works of the avant-garde and experimental jazz and rock. It is grounded in the musical discoveries of John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Zorn, Giacinto Scelsi, Morton Feldman, and Iannis Xenakis. Active commissioning and recording of new works is crucial to its mission. The Consort is currently commissioning new works from Christian Wolff and Tamar

lines meander like a stream and lead to a threshold. The vocal texture intermingles with the plucked sounds on the piano, vibraphone, and other percussion effects to express Liang's view of tranquility as an inner space of solitude.

Serashi Fragments (for string quartet, 2005) is a tribute to the Mongolian fiddle player Serashi (1887-1968). Liang describes Serashi's distinctive approach as "discovering the 'truth' of each note, bringing out the vitality, the vastness of space and the profound loneliness it contains." And vitality and vastness are qualities that Liang works into this movement for string quartet: it begins with a dissonant chord, punctuated by silence, and unfolds through a tapestry of textures and articulations that encapsulates Serashi's gritty musical universe. One hears a sliver of melodic fragment that alludes to Serashi's playing of *choor* (a 2-string fiddle), yet refracted through the prism of Liang's modernist idioms and extended techniques for strings. The Arditti Quartet gave its premiere on April 2, 2006 in Paine Hall, Cambridge, MA.

In *Lakescape II* (for percussion trio, 2013), the pulsating tremolo of marimba and vibraphone intersects with shimmering multiphonics created through bowing cymbals of different sizes. These entries slowly converge

on the same pitch or diverge and in a manner whereby sound and silence become practically indistinguishable. The rhythmic momentum builds to a threshold at a point where a crotale is rolled on top of a timpani to create a startling effect, followed by marimba's arrival at its highest note. Even after the instruments converge on the final note, the listener is immersed in the afterglow of sounds that continues to ring. This version was written for the Rootstock Percussion who gave its world premiere at the University of California, Davis on January 31, 2013.

Gobi Gloria (for string quartet, 2006) forms a companion piece to *Serashi Fragments* in its tribute to Mongolian culture. It was inspired by Liang's trip to Inner Mongolia in 1996 and his rare experience of hearing polyphony created by an *urtiin duu* (long chant) singer and a throat singer. Organized roughly into three sections, it begins with the long melody played by the violin, superimposed by its own inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion in other instruments. The violin's phrases are punctuated by arpeggiated harmonics that draws on the art of throat singing. The lively middle section features music of dance and shaman rituals with syncopated rhythms in the cello and viola music. Its concluding section begins with a somber folk song played by the violin, reiterated by the cello and viola, and counterpointed by the violin's running

master classes and workshops. The essence of the festival is process and collaboration. soundSCAPE has been the starting point for new music initiatives that have flourished far beyond the festival, and all around the globe.

www.soundscapefestival.org



Formed in 2008 by San Francisco Bay area musicians Christopher Froh, Daniel Kennedy and Loren Mach, **Rootstock Percussion** specializes in the rich 20th and 21st century percussion repertoire and is dedicated to expanding this repertoire through new

commissions and premieres. The trio values the collaborative exchange and the resulting high-level experience gained by establishing direct personal relationships with forward-leaning composers. The three members' collective experience includes the founding of such ensembles as the California E.A.R. Unit, the Talujon Percussion Quartet, Brave New Works and ADORNO, as well as holding teaching positions at Sacramento State University, UC Davis and UC Berkeley. Quickly earning renown for



Musicians from soundSCAPE is a flexible ensemble comprised of performers from the soundSCAPE festival faculty. Soprano Tony Arnold is a first-prize laureate of both the Gaudeamus International Competition (NL) and the Louise D. Mc-

Mahon Competition (USA), with more than two dozen recordings to her credit. Since winning the Classical Fellowship Award from the American Pianists Association, Thomas Rosenkranz has pursued an active performance career on four continents. Percussionist Aiyun Huang was the First Prize and Audience Award winner at the 2002 Geneva International Competition, and has commissioned over 100 works in the last two decades. Together, this trio has commissioned a number of established American composers for new works, which they have championed through performances and residencies in North America and Europe.

soundSCAPE facilitates the flowering of new music and the exchange of ideas and culture between musicians of tomorrow's generation. Each summer in the idyllic Maccagno, Italy, the festival attracts composers and performers from around the world for two weeks of concerts, lectures,

figurations. Liang, in his rendering of the folksong he heard, opens our mind and heart to the beauty and the indomitable spirit of the people who inhabit Inner Mongolia with its vast landscape and mountains. This work was commissioned by and dedicated to the Ying Quartet who gave its world premiere at the University Hall at Harvard University on March 15, 2007.

In *Lake* (for flute and alto saxophone, 1999/2013), the timbres of alto saxophone and flute meld into one another in alternating between sustained pitch entries and glissandi or bent inflections. Their heterophonic entries parallel calligraphic strokes that are imitative, but not identical. Conversely, their movements trigger images of movements made by figures that gently glide across the lake. The original version was commissioned by flautists Orlando Cela and Masumi Yoneyama, who gave its premiere at the New England Conservatory of Music on January 18, 2000.

Liang intended *Bamboo Lights* (for chamber orchestra, 2013) as a memorial for his extended family members who perished in World War II. To this end, he comments: "Dense bamboo forests surround and shelter the villages in southern China. Those groves bore witness to the horrors and atrocities of war: howling winds, flickering lights, eyes, shining, gazing,

peering through the leaves....” Liang translates these images associated with the bamboo grove into sonic phenomena and distills their essence in a manner comparable to the sonic images Matsuo Basho creates in his haiku poetry.

1st Movement: “howling bamboo.” Woodwinds and brass deliver sustained chords that capture the howling sounds, as if the ghosts of Liang’s ancestors are wailing and murmuring in the shadows of the bamboo grove. Mobile, organic elements like wind and light interact with the seemingly immobile elements, like the bamboo trunk that sways, while holding its own weight. The steady beat of the timpani seems to convey the latter.

2nd Movement: “fragility.” This movement is about the materiality of bamboo, which is an indispensable plant in Asia for all kinds of purposes. Liang captures its fragility and tenacity through a variety of percussive effects as instruments engage in an antiphonal dialogue of short, sparse gestures. Its whimsical character makes one also think of chirping birds and insects that hover above and within the bamboo grove.

3rd Movement: “dark echoes.” The movement begins with an alternation between woodwind and brass’s chordal outburst and the low, bass drum,

Matthias Pintscher, Steve Reich, Wolfgang Rihm, Salvatore Sciarrino, and John Zorn. Upcoming and recent premieres include works by Wolfgang von Schweinitz, Toby Twining, Georg Friedrich Haas, Simon Holt, Kevin Ernste, and Simon Bainbridge.

JACK has led workshops with young performers and composers at Princeton University, Yale University, Harvard University, New York University, Columbia University, the Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, June in Buffalo, New Music on the Point, and at the Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik. In addition to working with composers and performers, JACK seeks to broaden and diversify the potential audience for new music through educational presentations designed for a variety of ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical experience. The members of the quartet met while attending the Eastman School of Music and studied closely with the Arditti Quartet, Kronos Quartet, Muir String Quartet, and members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

www.jackquartet.com

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 the Harvard University Society of Fellows and the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships. He currently serves as associate professor of music and chair of the composition area at the University of California, San Diego. Lei Liang's music is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).

www.lei-liang.com



Comprising of violinists Christopher Otto and Ari Streisfeld, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Kevin McFarland, **JACK** focuses on the commissioning and performance of new works, leading them to work closely with composers Derek Berme

quicken in pace as the pattern repeats and punctuated by the piccolo's piercing timbre in the high register. The silence that follows is chillingly suspenseful. By juxtaposing opposite musical expressions, Liang conveys the idea that "the wide emotional spectrum and opposing psychological experience"—that of brutality vs. tranquility—may come from the same source.

4th Movement: "meeting our ancestors' eyes." In this concluding movement, an upward string glissando and cello's pizzicato form an ostinato against which woodwinds, brass, and piano project whimsical and evocative textures. After the instruments engage in spiraling downward glissandi, the music falls into a deep silence undercut by soft rustle of the bamboo chimes. Harp and piano enter in a dialogue across the orchestra, highlighted by the falling chromatic scale in the xylophone's rolled pitches. This texture ushers in the return of the beginning material—upward sweeping glissandi and chordal outbursts. The timpani's low, pounding beat grows louder, accompanied by woodwind's sustained entries and short outbursts from muted brass over a low string ostinato. The piece ends with the shimmering afterglow of string tremolo in the high register. A double sense of severity and lightness is captured through the contrasting use of register. For Liang, the effects of sunlight flickering

through the thick bamboo grove are emblematic of his ancestor's searching eyes that gaze at him from the heaven above.

Bamboo Lights was commissioned by the Callithumpian Consort and its artistic director, Stephen Drury, who gave its premiere at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on February 21, 2013.

Yayoi Uno Everett is Professor of Music Theory at the University of Illinois at Chicago and specializes in writing about postwar music based on hybridity of cultural influences. She authored a monograph on Louis Andriessen's music (Cambridge University Press, 2006), co-edited the volume Locating East Asia in Western Music, and published analytical articles on György Ligeti, Elliott Carter, Kaija Saariaho, Toru Takemitsu, Chou Wen Chung, Lei Liang, Toshi Ichianagi, and Kyong Mee Choi.



Chinese-born American composer **Lei Liang** (b.1972) is the winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Aaron Copland Award. He 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 the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Taipei Chinese Orchestra, the Thailand Philharmonic, the Heidelberger Philharmonisches Orchester, the Fromm Music Foundation, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, the National Endowment for the Arts, MAP Fund, Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, pipa virtuoso Wu Man, Arditti Quartet, Shanghai Quartet, the Scharoun Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Manhattan Sinfonietta, New York New Music Ensemble, Boston Musica Viva, and San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

Lei Liang's monographic discs have been released on Naxos, Mode, and New World Records. As a scholar, he is active in the research and preservation of traditional Asian music, and has served as co-editor of *Contemporary Music Review*, and editor of *Confluence: Collected Essays of Chou Wen-chung* (Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 2013).