

GAO HONG

Chinese Pipa Player/Composer

Gao Hong, Chinese musical prodigy and master of the pear-shaped lute, the pipa, began her career as a professional musician at age 12. She graduated from China's premier music school, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she studied with the great pipa master Lin Shicheng.

Gao has received numerous top awards and honors in both China and the U.S., including First Prize in the Hebei Professional Young Music Performers Competition and an International Art Cup in Beijing. In 2005, Gao Hong became the first traditional musician to be awarded the prestigious Bush Artist Fellowship, and in 2012, became the only musician in any genre to win four McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians. The Minnesota State Arts Board has awarded her with a Folk Arts Grant, Arts Touring Grant, Artist Assistance Fellowship, two Artist Initiative Grants, and a Cultural Community Partnership Grant. She has also received funding from New York's Sorel Organization and the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation.

Gao has performed throughout Europe, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, China, and the U.S. in recital and with symphony orchestras, jazz musicians, and musicians from other cultures. She has performed at many major festivals including the San Francisco Jazz Festival; the Next Wave Festival; Festival d'Automne à Paris (Paris and Caen, France); the International Festival of Perth (Australia); the Festival de Teatro d'Europa (Milan, Italy); and in festivals at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Smithsonian Institution. She has been the featured soloist in several world, American, and regional premieres of Pipa concerti, including with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Louisville Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, Heidelberg (Germany) Philharmonic, the Women's Philharmonic (San Francisco), the Portland (Maine) Symphony, and the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, among others. In addition, she performed in the Lincoln Center production of "The Peony Pavilion."

The San Francisco Chronicle described Gao as "a dazzlingly virtuosic soloist." And, according to China's foremost People's Music Magazine, "like the famous Luoyang peony, she has gradually emerged as the best of all beautiful flowers...her performance has extremely strong artistic appeal and belongs under the category of 'fine wine'...the more you listen, the more beautiful it gets..."

Commissions for new compositions have come from a wide variety of organizations and individuals such as the American Composers Forum; Walker Art Center; Jerome Foundation; Zeitgeist; Cedar Cultural Center; Ragamala Music and Dance Theater; Theater Mu; Minneapolis Guitar Quartet; International Friendship Through the Performing Arts; Danish guitarist Lars Hannibal; and Twin Cities Public Television for its six-part series, "Made in China." Gao also received two Creative Connections grants, two MetLife Creative Connections grants, and a Global Connections grant through Meet the Composer, Inc. in New York.

Currently, Gao is a Lecturer in Chinese Musical Instruments and Director of the Chinese Music Ensemble at Carleton College. For more information, visit www.chinesepipa.com.