Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
CONCERT PROGRAM

East Meets West
Chinese New Year
Concert

Saturday 4 February 2017 at 7pm
Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR
欢乐春节
As proud patron of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's East Meets West concert celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year, I am delighted to welcome you to this extraordinary international music experience, one of the major events of the Happy Chinese New Year celebrations across Australia.

The concert, featuring a fusion of traditional Chinese music, great western masterworks and the contemporary geniuses of Guan Xia's 100 Birds Flying towards the Phoenix for suona and orchestra and Tan Dun's concerto for piano and Peking Opera Soprano Farewell My Concubine, will illustrate what our two cultures share: a creative spirit and enduring passion for our musical traditions.

That this annual concert is being held for the fourth continuous year is testament not only to the cooperation between Maestro Tan Dun and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as an international force to be reckoned with, but to their visionary commitment to the cultivation of a strong, long-term, mutually beneficial cultural exchange between China and Australia.

I believe you will enjoy this wonderful concert which conveys joy and hope of Chinese New Year and demonstrates the friendship between the two peoples of China and Australia.

I wish you all the best in the Year of the Rooster.

CHENG Jingye
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Commonwealth of Australia.
ARTISTS
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Tan Dun conductor
Tan Weiwei vocalist
Liu Wenwen suona
Ralph van Raat piano
Xiao Di Peking Opera soprano

REPERTOIRE
Falla
Ritual Fire Dance from El Amor Brujo
Guan Xia
Suona Concerto: 100 Birds Flying towards the Phoenix
WORLD PREMIERE
Tan Dun
Concerto for Piano and Peking Opera Soprano
Farewell My Concubine
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE
— Interval —
Tan Weiwei/Tan Dun
Vocal Concerto: Song Lines of China
WORLD PREMIERE
Stravinsky
Firebird Suite (1919)

This concert has a duration of approximately 2 hours, including a 20-minute interval.
Established in 1906, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is an arts leader and Australia’s oldest professional orchestra. Engaging over 2.5 million people each year, the MSO reaches a variety of audiences through live performances, recordings, TV and radio broadcasts and live streaming.

As a truly global orchestra, the MSO collaborates with guest artists and arts organisations from across the world. Its international audiences include China, where MSO performed in 2016 and Europe where the MSO toured in 2014.

The MSO performs a variety of concerts ranging from core classical performances at its home, Hamer Hall at Arts Centre Melbourne, to its annual free concerts at Melbourne’s largest outdoor venue, the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

The MSO also delivers innovative and engaging programs to audiences of all ages through its Education and Outreach initiatives.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is funded principally by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and is generously supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. The MSO is also funded by the City of Melbourne, its Principal Partner, Emirates, corporate sponsors and individual donors, trusts and foundations.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we perform – The Kulin Nation – and would like to pay our respects to their Elders and Community both past and present.
Conductor/composer and UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador Tan Dun conducted the Disneyland Opening Concert in Shanghai, which globally reached a record-breaking audience of 65 million concert viewers. Tan Dun has made an indelible mark on the world's music scene with a creative repertoire that spans the boundaries of classical music, multimedia performance, and Eastern and Western traditions. He is a winner of today's most prestigious honors including the Grammy Award, Oscar/Academy Award, Grawemeyer Award, The Bach Prize of Germany, and the Shostakovich Award of Russia.

Tan Dun led the China tour of Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Japan's NHK Symphony Orchestra, receiving the highest praises from both the critics and public. His commitments for the 2017-18 season include leading the NDR Symphony Orchestra in a 5-cities tour in Germany, as well as leading the London Symphony Orchestra's tour in London and Paris; as Honorary Artistic Director of the China National Symphony Orchestra, Tan Dun will lead its upcoming United States tour.

As conductor of innovative programs, Tan Dun has led the world's most esteemed orchestras, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestre National de France, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Münchner Philharmoniker, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

Tan Dun has previously served as Chair of Carnegie Hall's China Committee, Creative Chair of the 2014 Philadelphia Orchestra China Tour, Associate Composer/Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony, and Artistic Director of the Festival: Water Crossing Fire held at the Barbican Centre, among others. He has also served as “Cultural Ambassador to the World” for World EXPO Shanghai.

Tan Weiwei's music crosses over freely between rock and folk, and she is known as the queen of folk-rock in China. Most recently, she combined Huayin Laoqiang opera, an operatic tradition from Shaanxi province and an intangible cultural heritage of China, with rock music, premiering the piece Huayin Laoqiang Opera: Boastful Cry at the nationally broadcast CCTV New Year's Gala.

Tan Weiwei studied at the Sichuan Music Conservatory with Lanka Zhuoma and graduated top of her class. She has since toured both in China and internationally. Career highlights have included a performance at the Chinese New Year gala at the Musikverein, Vienna, and premiering a specially composed work by Tan Dun at the Grand Opening Gala of Shanghai Disneyland in 2016.

Her TV appearances include Super Girls and 2015's I am a Singer, where her pieces The Lighthouse and Ulanbator's Night were selected as best live music performance of the year. Her recordings include the albums Heart of Grassland, Ear World, Tan XX and 3.

In 2009, Tan Weiwei became the first person from Mainland China to be awarded Taiwan's Golden Horse Prize for Best Music with her work Encounter. In 2011, she was named Best Chinese Female Singer at the 11th China Music Media Awards.
LIU WENWEN
SUNOA

Liu Wenwen is one of the most outstanding up-and-coming suona players in China and a 13th generation inheritor of the suona tradition. She has performed with the major orchestras of Shanghai, and toured extensively in the US, UK, France, Norway, Hong Kong and Japan.

Originally from Shandong, Liu Wenwen started learning suona at the age of six with her parents, both suona performers in the Jining City Song and Dance Troupe. Her father, Liu Baobin, studied suona with his father and became the 7th successor of suona. Her mother, Liu Hongmei, comes from a suona performance family that dates back to the end of the Ming dynasty, a family history of suona performance of more than 300 years. Liu Wenwen currently studies with Chinese suona master Liu Ying, and furthered her studies at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. In 2013, she was selected into the master's program and became the first and only master degree holder of Suona Education.

In 2011, she won the Gold Prize in the 2nd International Chinese Instrument Competition organised by the Hong Kong International Arts Platform; and in 2015, she won the Gold Prize in the National Tertiary Institution's Folk Music Competition organised by the Chinese Music Foundation.

RALPH VAN RAAT
PIANO

Pianist and musicologist Ralph van Raat appears as a recitalist throughout Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the United States. He takes special interest in contemporary classical music. Many of his concerts have been broadcasted by Dutch as well as international radio and television networks. He also performs regularly as a soloist with leading orchestras, and has performed at important festivals worldwide.

Ralph van Raat has an exclusive contract with the international label Naxos. Many releases have received top ratings and have ranked at the top of bestselling Naxos albums worldwide. In 2009, this resulted in an Artist Portrait CD-box.

Many composers have dedicated their solo compositions and piano concertos to him and he has collaborated closely with many composers on the interpretation of their work.

Ralph van Raat teaches contemporary piano music interpretation at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. He is a Steinway Artist.
World-renowned Peking Opera soprano Xiao Di, originally from Shenyang, Liaoning Province, is the director of the prestigious Mei Lanfang Art Institute and the head of the Peking Opera Experimental Theatre of Liaoning Province. As a third generation successor of the Mei School Peking Opera, Xiao Di holds a professorship in Peking Opera at the Shenyang Normal University.

Xiao Di has won an impressive amount of awards throughout her career such as the Arts Talent Award from the Ministry of Culture of the People’s Republic of China, Liaoning Province “Rose Award,” the Gold Award at the Peking Opera Festival, and the Outstanding Performance Award for her superb performance at the CCTV Opera TV Contest. Her two albums Xiao Di’s Mei School Vocal Album and Mu Guiying Command were released in 2005 and 2010, respectively to great acclaim.

Her performance repertoire includes a wide range of Peking Opera classics, such as Phoenix Nest, Silang Visits his Mother, Farewell My Concubine, Yuzhoufeng, and Hongzongliema. She has also extended her repertoire to contemporary arts and has collaborated with composer/conductor Tan Dun on his orchestral theatre work, The Gate. She has also collaborated with director Jianping Duan, Yansong Wang in their theatrical works.

Mei Baojiu, the leader of the Mei Lanfang Peking Opera troupe and ninth son of the legendary Peking Opera maestro Mei Lanfang, praised Xiao Di for her “remarkable and beautiful appearance, sweet voice, and dignified temperament. [She] can be regarded as an inheritor of Mei school.”

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Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)

*El Amor Brujo: Ritual Fire Dance*

Guan Xia (born 1957)

*Suona Concerto: 100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix*  
(World premiere)  
Liu Wenwen, suona

Tan Dun (born 1957)

*Concerto for Piano, Peking Opera Soprano and Orchestra*  
*Farewell My Concubine*  
(Australian premiere)  
Ralph van Raat, piano  
Xiao Di, Peking Opera soprano

**INTERVAL**

Tan Weiwei (born 1982) / Tan Dun (born 1957)

Arranged and orchestrated by Tan Dun, Liu Ye, Bi Jiambo  
Vocal Concerto: *Song Lines of China*  
(World premiere, commissioned by TYXL Ltd., with additional support from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra)  
Laoqiang – Old Song  
Kuqiang – Crying Song  
Shuiqiang – Water Song  
Qinqiang – Qin Song  
Tan Weiwei, vocalist

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

*The Firebird: Suite (1919)*

Introduction  
The Firebird and his Dance  
Round of the Princesses  
Infernal Dance of King Kastchei  
Berceuse  
Finale
A striking and diverse array of Chinese and Western music merges tonight in our celebration of the 2017 Spring Festival, a two-week jubilee enjoyed by billions of people throughout the world. This evening’s performance flickers into being with the violas, whose bewitching trills spark up the wild, chimerical Ritual Fire Dance, a movement from one of Manuel de Falla’s most famous pieces of music, the ballet El amor brujo (Love, the Magician). Written in 1914-15 in collaboration with the flamenco gypsy dancer Pastora Imperio, El amor brujo is based on an old Andalusian folk tale that relates to the plight of Candela, a beautiful gypsy girl haunted by the revenant of her unfaithful, murdered husband, who prevents her from reciprocating the love of her new boyfriend and moving on with her life. The Fire Dance evokes Candela’s frenzied incantations around a blazing cauldron as she attempts to banish the spirit through ecstatic dance.

Anyone unfamiliar with Chinese music will immediately notice the instrument for which Guan Xia has written his new concerto: the suona. Introduced to China nearly 2000 years ago from Central Asia, the suona is a double-reed woodwind instrument essentially comparable to the oboe, though its metal bell gives it a shriller sound similar to a muted trumpet. This quality has made it a mainstay of marching bands, ceremonial and outdoor music for generations. As for the composer, Guan Xia (born 1957) has become something of a household name in China through his impressive body of more ‘serious’ compositions.

100 Birds Flying Towards the Phoenix (2016) is a reimagining of a folk tune well-known throughout China’s central provinces that is itself based on a legend about the genesis of the phoenix. Unlike the immortal, flaming beast of Greek mythology, the Chinese fenghuang started life as an unremarkable, yet diligent and frugal bird which would carefully store the fruits and nuts discarded by its avian peers. In a time of severe drought, the other birds began to starve and die, so the phoenix opened its cave, sharing its hoard with the beleaguered flocks. After the famine, each bird picked the most stunning feather from its plumage and gave it in adoration to the phoenix, making it the most beautiful creature on earth. Every year thereafter the birds congregated on the phoenix’s birthday, paying homage to its generosity and magnanimity.

Tan Dun’s new concerto Farewell My Concubine (2016), commissioned by Yuja Wang, is an enchanting synthesis of Western and Chinese musical styles. The title refers to a renowned Beijing Opera set in the aftermath of the fall of the Qin dynasty in 206 BC. The drama tells of the tragic fate of the heroic warlord Xiang Yu and his consort Yu Miaoyi as they share their last night together, while under siege from enemy forces. According to the composer, the piano is meant to represent Xiang Yu, and the soprano his lover. In his own words: “I believe the piano is the most well-known instrument in the world, and certainly the ‘king’ of classical instruments, while Beijing Opera is the most beloved opera genre in China. The mélange between the two art forms ... offered me fascinating options in exploring their artistic and philosophical significance. My choice in this pairing is laden with cultural significations on many layers, including my personal journey as a Beijing Opera fiddle player and conductor in my early years.”

For Vocal Concerto: Song Lines of China, completed this year, Tan Dun drew inspiration from the history of a different culture – that of indigenous Australia. In Aboriginal lore, songlines, also known as dreaming tracks, are mystical, spiritual paths traced into the landscape and sky by the ancient creator gods of the Dreamtime (such as the Rainbow Serpent), who sang out the features of the continent as they passed, thereby intoning the world into existence. Sages versed in these songs can navigate great distances, as the songs describe the location of waterholes and other natural landmarks. Through his months of research, Tan Dun discovered artistically similar counterparts in the folklore of rural China, and in collaboration with Tan Weiwei, sought to explore, preserve and exalt some of these ancient music traditions. The work’s four movements are derived from the folk music of different regions of China, yet they are united within Tan Dun’s contemporary symphonic architecture.

This evening’s celebration concludes with the 1919 suite from one of Stravinsky’s most widely loved pieces of music, The Firebird. At the time of writing the ballet in 1910, Stravinsky was an unknown Russian composer; with its premiere, he became an overnight sensation. Of course, this is no surprise to anyone familiar with the music, which is some of the composer’s most lush, romantic and powerful writing, running the gauntlet from incredible tenderness and wistfulness, to overwhelmingly triumphant and glorious apotheosis.

Douglas Rutherford © 2017
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  - Concertmaster
- Eoin Andersen
  - Concertmaster
- Sophie Rowell
  - Associate Concertmaster
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- Peter Edwards
  - Assistant Principal
- Kirsty Bremner
- Sarah Curro
- Peter Fellin
- Deborah Goodall
- Lorraine Hook
- Kirstin Kenny
- Ji Won Kim
- Eleanor Mancini
  - (David & Helen Moses)
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- Michelle Ruffolo
- Kathryn Taylor
  - (Michael Aquilina)
- Jacqueline Edwards
- Robert John

### Second Violins
- Matthew Tomkins
  - Principal
  - (The Gross Foundation)
- Robert Macindoe
  - Associate Principal
- Monika Curro
  - Assistant Principal
  - (Danny Gorog & Lindy Susskind)
- Mary Allison
- Isin Cakmakcioglu
- Freya Franzen
  - (Anonymous)
- Cong Gu
- Andrew Hall
- Francesca Hiew
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- Rachel Hemburg
- Isy Wasserman
- Philippa West
- Patrick Wong
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- Amy Brookman
- Zoe Freisberg

### Violas
- Christopher Moore
  - Principal
  - (Di Jameson)
- Fiona Sargeant
  - Associate Principal
- Lauren Brigid
- Katharine Brockman
- Christopher Cartilidge
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- Andrew Moon
  - Associate Principal
- Sylvia Hosking
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### Flutes
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- Michael Pisani
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- David Thomas
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- Philip Arkinson
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- Jack Schiller
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- Natasha Thomas

### Contrabassoon
- Brock Imison
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- Chloe Turner

### Horns
- Deborah Hart
  - Guest Principal
- Saul Lewis
  - Principal Third
- Jenna Breen
- Abbey Edlin
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### Trumpets
- Geoffrey Payne
  - Principal
- Shane Hooton
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- William Evans
- Rainer Saville

### Trombones
- Brett Kelly
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- Iain Faragher

### Bass Trombone
- Mike Szabo
  - Principal

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- Timothy Buzbee
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### Harp
- Yinuo Mu
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The MSO relies on your ongoing philanthropic support to sustain access, artists, education, community engagement and more. We invite our supporters to get close to the MSO through a range of special events.

The MSO welcomes your support at any level. Donations of $2 and over are tax deductible, and supporters are recognised as follows:

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$5,000 (Principal)
$10,000 (Maestro)
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The MSO Conductor’s Circle is our bequest program for members who have notified of a planned gift in their Will.

Enquiries:
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Email: philanthropy@mso.com.au

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Month of Giving

Yes! I want to make a difference to the community by supporting the MSO's Month of Giving.

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☐ Cheque enclosed  
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☐ I have made a gift to the MSO in my Will  
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