



SYDNEY  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMPOSERS  
CONCERTS  
2023

**CONTEMPORARY  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRAL  
MUSIC 2023**

A video recording concert for contemporary composers

SCOC NO.18

7:30 PM, July 8, 2023

TLC Theatre  
Sydney Australia

Sydney  
Contemporary  
Orchestra



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Sydney International Composers Concerts 2023!

This year we will be presenting four video recording concerts with the newest and freshest modern music by contemporary composers from countries and regions around the world.

These composers will contribute their innovative and original musical ideas to our audiences in Sydney giving us an opportunity to challenge and refresh our ideologies.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those composers - for their creative work, efforts, and contributions.

I would also like to give my sincere thanks to our wonderful musicians - for their dedication and interpretation of the music.

Special thanks to our Management Committee, without their voluntary dedication all of these great events could not be possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Chatpo Koo'.

Brian Chatpo Koo

Artistic Director  
Sydney Contemporary Orchestra



# **SDYNEY INTERNATIONAL COMPOSERS CONCERTS 2023**

The Sydney International Composers Concerts 2023 is a festival of new music. It is an annual event, designed to engage with and foster the local music scene through interactive festival activities led by professional musicians and composers from Australian and around the world.

The festival consists of two parts:

1. 4 video recording concerts
2. 9 open rehearsals

The video recording concerts will be hosted by the musicians of the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra, experts in modern music:

1. Contemporary String Quartets
2. Contemporary Chamber Orchestral Music
3. Contemporary Piano Music
4. Contemporary Orchestral Music (III)

The open rehearsals will provide opportunities for composers, musicians, and audiences to meet each other to share ideas, and observe how the musical ideas originated and developed, in order to stimulate composers' creativity and innovation.



# PROGRAM

## Contemporary Chamber Orchestral Music 2023

July 7, 2023 7:30 pm

TLC Theatre

Sydney Australia

SCOC No. 189



### **Fantastic Creatures of the Mountains and Seas**

by Yangfan Xu (USA)  
(Australian Premiere)

**Staying at Home**  
for chamber orchestra

by Paul Dice (USA)  
(World premiere)

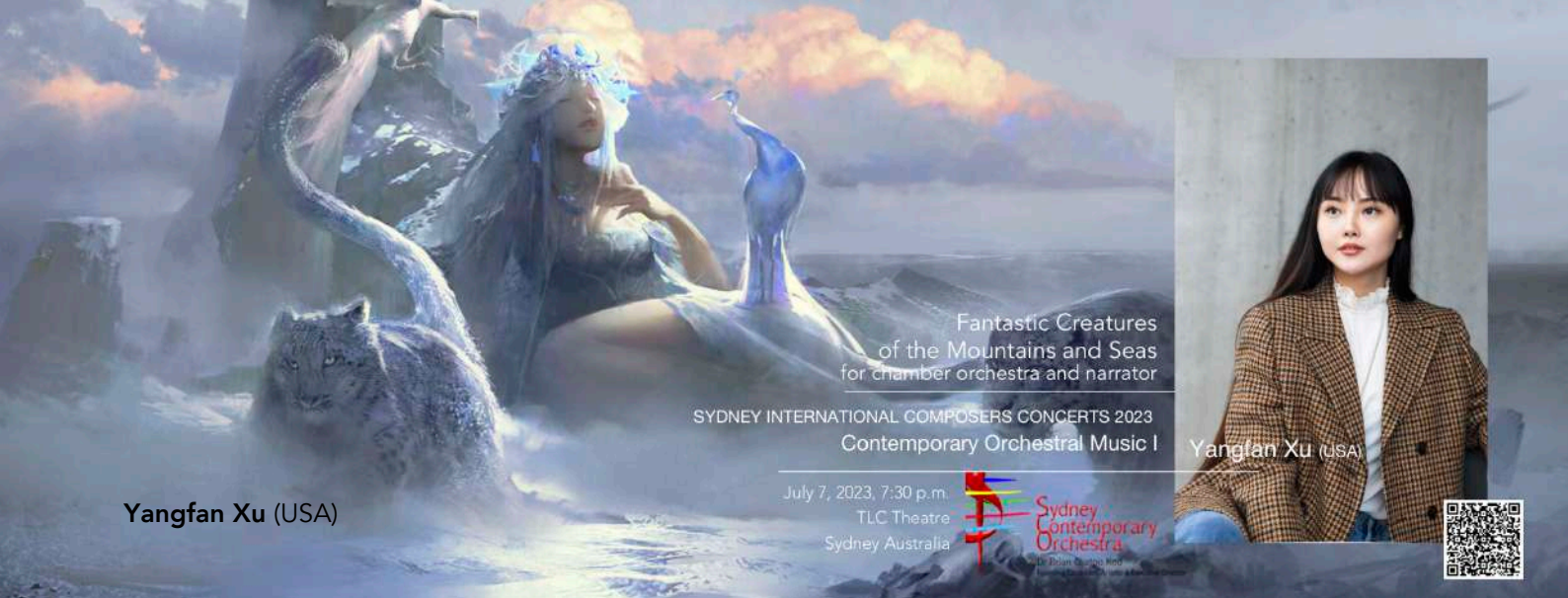
### **Light of Faith**

by Chen Wingwah (Hong Kong)  
(Australian Premiere)

### **Mountain Spirits**

by Brian Chatpo Koo (Australia)





## Yangfan Xu (USA)

Yangfan Xu (b. 1998) holds a deep passion and love for cats. Whenever she hears a string player glissando in the upper registers, she can't help but think of a cat's meow. In addition to her feline obsession, Xu is a Chinese-born US-based composer who comes from a musical family in Lanzhou, Gansu province, with a spoiled cat who eats better than everyone else.

She studied musicology at Middle School affiliated to the Central Conservatory Of Music in China for 3 years. Xu began her compositional study in 2014. For her bachelor's degree in music, she majored in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory Of Music with Mason Bates. Xu earned her master's degree in music at the Juilliard School majoring in composition with Robert Beaser. She is a current DMA student at the New England Conservatory of Music and she studies composition with Kati Agoñcs. She has also worked with composer Phillip Lasser, Changyuan Liu, Xiaofu Zhang, Ping Jin, Michel Merlet and so on.

She has worked with professional groups such as Friction Quartet, Choral Chameleon, Keyed Kontraptions and Ravel Virtual Studios. Xu was awarded the 1st Prize of the 2020 Hausmann Quartet Quarantine Composition Competition. She is the winner of the Society for New Music's 2021 Israel/Pellman Award. She won the 2021 New Juilliard Ensemble (NJE) Composition Competition, and her commissioned work was performed by NJE at Lincoln Center in 2022.

## Fantastic Creatures of the Mountains and Seas

Fantastic Creatures of the Mountains and Seas is a fantasy created by Yangfan Xu. The creatures in this piece are all recorded in Chinese mythology. Yangfan's inspiration came from the Chinese classic Shan Hai Jing (山海经), which is a compilation of mythic geography and beasts. Lu Shu (鹿蜀), Shu Hu (孰湖), Di Jiang (帝江), Ran Yi Yu (冉遗鱼) and Luo Yu (赢鱼) are among the creatures featured in this piece. The storyline is original. Fantastic Creatures of the Mountains and Seas is a dream world, a curious vision, as well as a reflection on the interaction between humans and nature from ancient times to the present. Hope you can enjoy the wonderful journey into the ancient Chinese traditional mythology and Yangfan's imaginary world.

Artworks are by Jinger Zhu.

It looks like a horse but has a white head. The markings on its body look like tigers and its tail is red. When it roars it sounds like a human singing. The name is Lu Shu (鹿蜀). People can bear more children if they wear its fur.



Its shape is the body of a horse but with wings of a bird. It has a human face and a snake tail. It likes to scoop up people and hold people in its arms. The name is Shu Hu (孰湖).



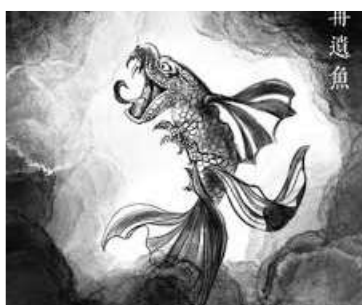
Luo Yu (羸鱼) has the body of a fish and the wings of a bird. When it sings it sounds like a mandarin duck. Wherever Luo Yu goes, there will be floods.



His appearance is like a yellow pocket, his glow is red like fire and he has six enormous feet. In place of his face are four wings and chaos. There is a god living in the mountains, and all primitive singing and dancing originated with him. His name is Di Jiang (帝江).



Ran Yi Yu (冉遗鱼) has the body of a fish, the head of a snake, and six feet. Its eyes are long like horse ears. Eating it can make people sleep without nightmares.





### Paul Dice (USA)

Paul Dice studied composition at the Boston Conservatory of Music with Joel Kabakov, privately in Boston with John Adams and with Lou Harrison at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Florida and at Harrison's home in California. His commissions include those from the American Composers Forum, Central Conservatory of Music Beijing), Carleton Chinese Music Ensemble, Gao Hong (pipa), the experimental vocal ensemble Listen, Chinese guzheng (zither) artist Zhongbei (Daisy) Wu, the Edina Concert Orchestra, the Chinese Heritage Foundation, and Fedogan and Bremer Publishing among others. Dice has received numerous grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and McKnight Established Artist Awards from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council. Finding enjoyment in composing for instruments throughout the world, Dice has composed for Western symphonies, chamber ensembles and soloists; traditional Chinese instruments; Indonesian gamelan; Philippine kulintang; Japanese hichiriki (Japanese wind instrument); accordion; metal sculpture and harmonic singers. His music is primarily inspired by movement and sounds found in nature, and techniques and practices used in other art forms or cultural traditions that he adapts for use in his own special brand of music.

Dice's music has been performed throughout China, Russia and the US at the Beijing Modern Music Festival, Carolina Chamber Music Festival, Novosibirsk Philharmonic Society, Central Conservatory (Beijing), a guqin (ancient zither) conference at East China Jiaotong University in Nanchang,

China; Brown University; UNLV; University of Pittsburgh; World Music Institute (NYC), Macalester College; Carleton College; Coe College; Cincinnati Art Museum; Walker Art Center; Denver Art Museum; Orchestra Hall; Ted Mann Hall; Landmark Center (St. Paul); and numerous other locations. Performers of his music include the Filarmonica Quartet of Novosibirsk (Russia), Kenwood Chamber Orchestra, Edina Concert Orchestra, Sybarite5, LEVEN String Quartet (China), Julius Quartet (Dallas), a string quartet comprised of Minnesota Orchestra members; Catherine French (violin), Rachel Harmatuk Pino (violin), Amadi Azikiwe (viola) and Jennifer Lucht (cello) at the Carolina Chamber Music Festival; cellist Craig Hultgren; pianist Shirley Weston; violinists Marion Kroska and Gary Schulte; Heartland Marimba; Thomas Piercy (Japanese hichiriki); Spirit of Nature (professional Chinese ensemble); Carleton College Chinese Music Ensemble; top Chinese musicians Cao Dewei (erhu), Chen Xiangyang (yangqin), Gao Hong (pipa), Chen Tao (dizi), and others. In 2021 he participated in the East Meets West program put on by the Confucius Center at Alfred University in New York, and at the Queens Library Mid Autumn Celebration in NYC where a virtual world premiere of a piece he composed for Chinese instruments was featured.

In 2009 Dice became the only foreigner to be commissioned by a new program at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing

Paul Dice cont...

designed to encourage composers to combine Western and traditional Chinese instruments in their works. In 2016 he was awarded a Dunhuang Cup in China. Dice was Music Advisor for the six-part TPT-PBS series *Made in China*, English editor for the Hal Leonard Pipa Method Book written by Gao Hong, and producer of several world music albums published by ARC Music (UK); Indigenous Treasures (US), and IFTPA (US). Dice was also an Artist-in Residence at the Xian Conservatory, a member of the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program Music of the Minorities Delegation to China and Kazakhstan, and presented papers at Chinese and ethnomusicology conferences in Chicago and Rock Island, Illinois; Heidelberg, Germany; and Wuxi, China. His music is published by the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the UCLA Music Library.

Dice is the founder and president of International Friendship Through the Performing Arts, a nonprofit organization that promotes intercultural friendship, understanding and interaction through activities in the performing arts. Dice was a judge for the 2021 Dunhuang Cup Composition Competition and has been a panelist for the Minnesota State Arts Board.

## Staying at Home

I think I find it easier than others to follow rules. In my composing, I set my own rules, so I'm free to do whatever I please in at least one aspect of my life. So when COVID-19 forced shutdowns and stay-at-home orders, I complied. I spent most of the spring and summer of 2020 on my deck overlooking my backyard. I discovered that all the inspiration I needed for this piece was right in front of me and always had been. I counted the steps of robins as they searched for worms, and observed the acceleration of bunny hops and scampering critters as the winds picked up. I listened to the songs of common backyard birds - cardinals, robins, chickadees, Canadian geese and others - and jotted down the melodic twists and turns I imagined as willow tree branches danced in the breeze. And all I observed kept me calm and inspired and made its way into this piece in meaningful ways. Though this piece has several distinct sections, it should be played without pauses.





## Light of Faith

LIGHT OF FAITH for chamber orchestra was written for the 60th anniversary of the Chung Chi College, one of the colleges of The Chinese University of Hong Kong which was founded in 1963. It has a Music Department from 1965 of which the composer is an alumnus. The music begins with a slow introduction very soon bringing in a rhythmic section with a development. That may represent the inspiring university life of a freshman who was eventually led into a vast ocean of knowledge. Moving towards a climatic point, the College anthem was quoted. The melody of the College Anthem

comes from "Annie Lisle", a popular 1857 ballad by H. S. Thompson, a Boston songwriter in the U.S.A. It was adopted by Cornell University as the University Anthem in 1870. Thompson's tune was then adopted as their alma maters by countless high schools, colleges, and universities worldwide, including quite a few Christian universities in mainland China.

Chung Chi College has a Christian background thus adopted this anthem right from the beginning of its establishment.



Brian Chatpo Koo (Australia)  
Mountain Spirits

Brian Chatpo Koo (Australia)  
SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL COMPOSERS CONCERTS 2023  
Contemporary Orchestral Music I



July 7, 2023, 7:30 p.m.  
TLC Theatre  
Sydney Australia



## Brian Chatpo Koo (Australia)

Dr Brian Chatpo Koo is a Sydney-based musician. He worked as a violinist, cellist, and conductor in several professional symphony orchestras before settling down in Sydney in 1993.

He studied music at the University of Hong Kong and the University of Sydney. He was the first person in Australia to receive a Ph.D. degree in music composition. He also studied music at International Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany, and obtained his Licentiate, and Fellowship Diplomas from Trinity College of Music London.

As a composer, his compositions have been performed and broadcasted over Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia. He won the Hong Kong Young Musicians' Award in 1985 and the Himalaya Cup Award in the First International Competition for Piano Composition in Beijing in 1995.

As an academic member, he has worked as a tutor/teaching assistant for the Music Department at the University of Hong Kong, and a senior faculty member of the Australian Institute of Music, (where he established curricula for the Bachelor's degree in Music Composition), and an external examiner for the University of Wollongong.

As a conductor, he has conducted many symphony orchestras to premiere his works, including both of his operas.

He is the Founding Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra. The SCO Youth Symphony - the Sydney Hills Youth Orchestra and the Sydney Hills Junior Orchestra, and the Western Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

## Mountain Spirits

I have always been fascinated by the mountains, their spirits, and the divinity of mountains. They always have a mysterious quality in their sheer size, still silence, and the cloudy mist that surrounds them.

The music consists of three movements depicting the mystery of the mountains the inner feeling of silence and the imaginary dance of their inner life.

Three movements:

1. Preludio Senza tempo
2. Portamento, Adagio
3. Capriccio, Allegro

Commissioned by the Hong Kong Composers Guild in 1997, this piece was premiered by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in the same year at the Hong Kong Arts and Cultural Centre.



# SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY ORCHESTRA



Founded in 2013 and led by its Founding Conductor, Artistic, and Executive Director Dr. Brian Chatpo Koo, the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra (SCO) is dedicated to exploring and promoting new music by contemporary composers.

Based in Sydney Australia and comprised of about 100 of Sydney's finest professional musicians, the SCO offers a high standard professional video recording service for contemporary orchestral music providing significant incentives for composers to pursue creative endeavors in new music and to enrich the music culture of our times.

Since 2013, the SCO has hosted 12 concerts - Music Contemporary 2013, 2014, 2015, Contemporary Piano Music 2014, Chamber Music 2014, and the Sydney New Music Festival 2016 which consists of six open rehearsals and 3 public concerts (Contemporary Piano

Music 2016, Contemporary String Quartets 2016 and Contemporary Chamber Music 2016), Sydney International Composers Concerts 2017, Sydney International Composers Concerts 2018, and has performed and promoted 56 new works of the composers from 40 countries and regions around the world. The SCO also hosted and video recorded a Chinese New Year Concert for the celebration of the Chinese Spring Festival in 2015 which was highly acclaimed.

The vision of the SCO is to enrich the cultural life of Sydney and to establish Sydney's reputation as a leading center for the performance of contemporary music. The SCO promotes the music of today's composers from Australia and around the world. It is the only Australian orchestra dedicated to the performance of new music by today's contemporary composers.



**Dr Brian Chatpo Koo**  
Artistic Director

Founding Conductor and Artistic & Executive Director Dr Brian Chatpo Koo is a Sydney based musician. Having studied music at the University of Hong Kong and the University of Sydney, Brian was the first person in Australia to receive a PhD degree in music composition.

Supported by the Hong Kong University Grant, Brian also studied music at the International Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany, and obtained his Licentiate and Fellowship Diplomas from the Trinity College of Music in London.

As a composer, his compositions have been performed all around the world.

As a conductor, Dr Koo has conducted many symphony orchestras around the world for his compositions' premieres.

He founded the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra in 2013. Together with about 100 Sydney finest professional musicians and a strongly admired volunteer management team, Brian is dedicated to

creating a platform where more new orchestral works can be performed, heard, recorded, published and become a part of our music culture, as he believes music development history is written by composers' creativities. To encourage and to reach the pinnacle of this creativity and art, we must through devotion, perseverance, determination, but most importantly through constant performances.

Brian also founded the SCO Youth Symphony, a training arm of the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra, in order to provide professional orchestral training to young musicians, as he believes with classical music training and carefully selected programs covering a variety of cultural perspectives, young musicians can be equipped to broaden their vision and to enhance their understanding of culture, civilisation and human society.



## MUSICIANS

### ENSEMBLE MODERN 2023

Sydney Contemporary Orchestra

**Conductor** - Dr Brian Chatpo Koo

**Concertmaster** - Alstair Duff Forbes

#### First Violin

Alstair Duff Forbes

Elizabeth Sonogo

Tania Ma

Stevie Maston

Mi Mi Pau

#### Second Violin

Andrew Wang

Chaylah Chivas

Paul Pokorny

Cindy Jia

#### Viola

Parvin Afandiyeva

Vicky Vukovich

Julia Pokorny

#### Cello

Karen Cortez

Michal Wieczorek

#### Double Bass

Vitalily Palitsyn

**Flute** - Samatha

**Oboe** - Rachel Tolmie

**Clarinet** - Trish Santoso

**Bassoon** - Maurice Leung

**Horn** - Doug Ross

**Trumpet** - Lachlan McKenzie

**Trombone** - Tomislav Cuk

**Tuba** - Andrew James Smith

**Percussion** - James Heynes

**Harp** - Kaela Phillips

**Piano** - Amy Kang

**Narrator** - Xia Lian Wilson

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Artistic Director - Dr Brian Chatpo Koo

Secretary - Rajishwar Datt

Treasurer - David Gock

Rawah Dorranean

Rosanna North

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Director - Dr Brian Chatpo Koo

Office Manager - Rajishwar Datt

Finance Manager - David Gock

Publicity Manager - Rawah Dorranean

Concert Manager - Rita Lee

Membership Manager - Cameo Song

## THE SCO FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Chair - Dr Brian Chatpo Koo (PhD)

Deputy Chair - Marilyn Koo (Lawyer)

Treasurer - David Gock (Account)

Secretary - Rajishwar Datt (Account)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank

The SCO Foundation  
Baulkham Hills High School

for their generous supports.

Special thanks to our volunteer Managers and  
the board members of  
the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra  
Management Committee  
without them nothing could be done



THE SCO FOUNDATION



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[www.sydneycontemporaryorchestra.org](http://www.sydneycontemporaryorchestra.org)