

大館
TAI KWUN

古蹟及藝術館
CENTRE FOR HERITAGE & ARTS



Cong Romer

String Quartets Recital

CONG ✕ 羅曼：弦樂四重奏s演奏會

Comissioned
Composer
委約作曲家



Joyce Tang
鄧慧中

大館表演藝術季
TAI KWUN PERFORMING ARTS SEASON

SPOT
LIGHT

HOUSE
PROGRAMME

Cong ✕ Romer

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CONG ✕ 羅曼：弦樂四重奏s演奏會

27-28.04.2021 | 8pm

JC Cube, Tai Kwun

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大館表演藝術季
TAI KWUN PERFORMING ARTS SEASON

SPOT
LIGHT

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Since its opening in 2018, Tai Kwun has presented two Theatre Seasons and Dance Seasons, creating a new platform and fertile ground for performing arts in Hong Kong. With an aim to establishing in-depth and long-term collaborative relationships with local artists, they are offered the capacity and freedom to think and explore while developing full-length works with opportunities for re-runs. We are also privileged with Tai Kwun's unique venues and outdoor spaces, which enables us to complement the offerings in Hong Kong's performing arts scene: producing works that are small to medium in scale, non-conventional in nature, and with emphasis on audience engagement. The experiences and feedback over the past two years proved that we are in the right direction: "participation" being a key element in curating the best arts experience possible for the audience.

Entering the third year, the essence of the past Theatre Seasons and Dance Seasons will be merged into a multi-genre Performing Arts Season: SPOTLIGHT. True to the title, we will be putting the spotlight on Hong Kong, on Tai Kwun, and on local artists. While live performances had been halted for months, the artists proactively adapted to the new normal and reimagined their work in "On Stage Online", Tai Kwun's new initiative to encourage innovative use of the digital medium. Through this platform, they stay connected with the audience and collected valuable

feedbacks to enrich the work-in-progress. It is now time to present the fruition to public.

We look forward to you joining us this April and May, as we truly shine the spotlight on Hong Kong, to revel in the here and now of the arts with our exceptional performing arts programmes.

Eddy Zee

Head of Performing Arts



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PROGRAMME

Programme I (27.04.2021)

L. DILLON String Quartet No. 7, *Consensus*[^]
[Asia Premiere]

SHOSTAKOVICH String Quartet No. 3 in F, Op. 73[^]

— Intermission —

JOYCE TANG *Double Exposure*
[World Premiere]

MENDELSSOHN String Octet in E-flat Major,
Op. 20

[^]Performed by Cong Quartet

Approximately 2 hours including a 20-minute
intermission

PROGRAMME

Programme II (28.04.2021)

E. SCHULHOFF String Quartet No. 2*

JOYCE TANG *Double Exposure*
 [World Premiere]

— Intermission —

MENDELSSOHN String Octet in E-flat Major,
 Op. 20

*Performed by Romer String Quartet

Approximately 2 hours including a 20-minute
intermission

PROGRAMME NOTES

Consensus by Dillon & String Quartet No. 3 by Shostakovich

After several years of writing pieces that decried social injustice and environmental abuse, Dillon felt the need to try to recapture the joy and exuberance music can convey. As the online world becomes increasingly combative, lots of arguing going on, *Consensus* is a piece that imagines how it would feel if everyone agreed on something for once. It aspires to nothing more than good spirits, lightness of heart, and a sense of connection to all humanity.

The second piece we will perform tonight, the 3rd String Quartet of Shostakovich, is rather heavy. Presented as a “war quartet”, Shostakovich initially supported the idea of a programme by giving subtitles to each of the movements:

“Calm unawareness of the future cataclysm”;

“Rumblings of unrest and anticipation”;

“The forces of war are unleashed”;

“Homage to the dead”;

and “The eternal question:
why and to what purpose?”

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These descriptions, barely adequate to describe the moods of each movement, were withdrawn by Shostakovich soon after with no explanation.

This quartet was Shostakovich's only composition during the year 1946, also the last quartet he wrote before the attack on composers by Andrei Zhdanov who was responsible under Stalin for "proactive culture". Shostakovich considered this quartet one of his finest works. It certainly held some deep associations for him. Years later he attended a rehearsal by the Beethoven String Quartet and their violist Druzhinin recalled, when their group finished playing through the work, Shostakovich sat quite still in silence like a wounded bird, tears streaming down his face. This was the only time that he saw Shostakovich so defenceless and visibly moved by his own music.

Prepared by Cong Quartet

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String Quartet No. 2 by Schulhoff

Erwin Schulhoff was born in Prague on 8 June 1894 and showed musical ability from an early age. A musical career was decided upon on the recommendation of no less than Antonín Dvořák, and Schulhoff studied at the Prague Conservatory from 1904, followed by piano tuition in Vienna from 1906 then composition in Leipzig with Max Reger from 1908 and subsequently in Cologne with Fritz Steinbach from 1911. In the meantime he had laid the basis of a career as a pianist, while his efforts at composing were rewarded with the Mendelssohn Prize in 1918 for a piano sonata. His music up to the First World War had shown the expected influences from Brahms and Dvořák and, by way of Strauss, to Debussy and Scriabin, but four years in the Austrian army saw him adopt a more radical stance artistically and politically. In the next few years he absorbed the values of the Expressionism represented by Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School as well as the Dadaism espoused by Georg Grosz, whose advocacy of jazz was to find its way into much of Schulhoff's music from that period.

The Second String Quartet appeared in 1925 but seems not to have met with a success comparable to that of the earlier pieces, nor has it enjoyed the same degree of revival over more recent years. Yet it is stylistically no less assured a work, continuing the drive towards greater rhythmic and harmonic directness as makes

one regret that Schulhoff completed no further works for the medium (a third quartet was begun later that decade but left in fragmentary form).

The first movement is a compact overall design whose coursing main theme is heatedly discussed in the central section before reasserting itself as the music heads to its animated close. The second movement is a sequence of variations on the eloquent theme announced on unaccompanied viola at the outset. The first variation brings the remaining three instruments musingly into play, while the second gradually intensifies the sombre discourse. The third variation breaks out into an excited dance over a loping pizzicato accompaniment, before the fourth restores a measure of calm with its sustained exploration of the theme's harmonic subtleties. The viola returns to round off proceedings with a tranquil recollection of the initial theme. The third movement is another of the composer's spirited takes on folk music, its rhythmic components exchanged in no uncertain terms between instruments as the music pursues its vigorous course before suddenly tapering off in an unexpectedly quiet ending. The finale commences with an introduction whose elegiac manner promptly gives way to a lively theme, given emphasis by its bracing rhythmic profile. This reaches a forceful climax, after which the elegiac music re-emerges—only for its lively successor to take hold again in the brusque closing bars.

Programme notes by Richard Whitehouse

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Double Exposure (2020) for double string quartet

The title of *Double Exposure* makes reference to the overlaying of two exposures in one frame in photography or cinematography. The two quartets in this piece are treated as two independent and self-contained layers with different tone colours and pitch and rhythmic materials, as if they co-exist side by side in parallel dimensions.

This work was commissioned by and written for Cong Quartet and Romer String Quartet in 2020.

Programme notes by Joyce Tang



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String Octet by Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn gives Mozart a run for his money in terms of being music's most extraordinary child prodigy, producing his Octet at just 16. The sense of ease which runs through this work may give the sense that composition came effortlessly to Mendelssohn. The first movement's enormous energy derives from its upward-sweeping motif introduced by the lead violin (who at times seems like a concerto soloist) and the range and power possible when two string quartets are combined. The mood couldn't be more different in the Andante, in which the scene is set by lower strings, the main theme only gradually emerging. It combines pathos with moments of fragility to profoundly moving effect. The elfin scherzo was apparently inspired by lines from Goethe's *Faust*; it casts a magical spell and prefigures other great airborne scherzos that Mendelssohn was to write, not least that in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* incidental music. He launches the finale with great drama, the theme treated in fugal fashion, beginning in the cellos and moving upwards. There's a further sleight of compositional hand when he recalls the Scherzo theme near the end of the movement.

Programme notes by Harriet Smith

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MUSICIAN | CONG QUARTET



Francis Yiu-Ting Chik

Violin

Chow Yip-Wai

Violin

Caleb Wong

Viola

Yan-Ho Cheng

Cello

Founded at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in the United States, Cong Quartet has performed around the globe and established themselves as an energetic and enthusiastic group. Currently the Ensemble-in-Residence of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Cong Quartet was the first prize and Grand Prize winner of the 2019 Salzburg Mozart International Chamber Competition in Tokyo.

Supported by the Emerging Artists Scheme of the Hong Kong Art Development Council (ADC), Cong Quartet is currently a quartet of the Nederlandse Strijkkwartet Academie (NSKA) in Amsterdam, they are also on the young artist roster of the Musedica in Europe and are invited to participate in the upcoming Juilliard String Quartet Seminar. In the past few years, The Quartet has performed concert series in New York, Tokyo, recitals at the Bard College and Texas Christian University as

visiting artists, a residency for the composition department at University of North Texas, served as the performing quartet and judges of the New Generation 2019 call-for-score competition of Hong Kong Composers' Guild, as well as collaborations with local venues & organisations in Hong Kong such as the Hong Kong Museum of Arts, Radio Television Hong Kong, Tai Kwun, West Kowloon Cultural District, World Culture Festival and St. John's Cathedral.

Cong Quartet shares the philosophy of promoting Asian and Hong Kong's chamber repertoire, as well as integrating chamber music into daily lives of the audience. The name of the quartet, "CONG" is a combination of the quartet founding members' last names that alludes to Hong "Kong", where the members grew up and played together since their teenage before the Quartet was officially formed.

Cong Quartet is currently under the support of the Stichting Utopa (The Utopa Foundation).

congquartet.com

info@congquartet.com



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MUSICIAN |
ROMER STRING QUARTET →

MUSICIAN | ROMER STRING QUARTET



Kitty Cheung

Violin

Kiann Chow

Violin

Ringo Chan

Viola

Eric Yip

Cello

Named after the Romer's Tree Frog endemic to Hong Kong, the Romer String Quartet is a genuinely local ensemble formed in 2013 by four homegrown musicians.

Romer String Quartet has performed at New York's Carnegie Hall, Tokyo's Toppan Hall and Shanghai Concert Hall, and has been presented by the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong World Cultures Festival, Taiwan Hong Kong Week, Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Radio Television Hong Kong, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Hong Kong Composers' Guild and Premiere Performances of Hong Kong. It was featured in the CD "Eurydice: Ballet de la Nuit" and album "Freospace Mixedtape Vol. 3". Its cross-genre performance "Muted Situation" was featured in the Asia Triennial Manchester in the UK, Hong Kong Art Basel, and Hong Kong New Vision Arts Festival.

In 2021, Romer collaborated with the Kamishibai Studio HK and launched a series of online music-animation supported by the “Arts Go Digital Platform Scheme” of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

As teaching artists, Romer String Quartet was the Ensemble-in-Residence of The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2014-15. It is the Quartet-in-Residence of Premiere Performances of Hong Kong.

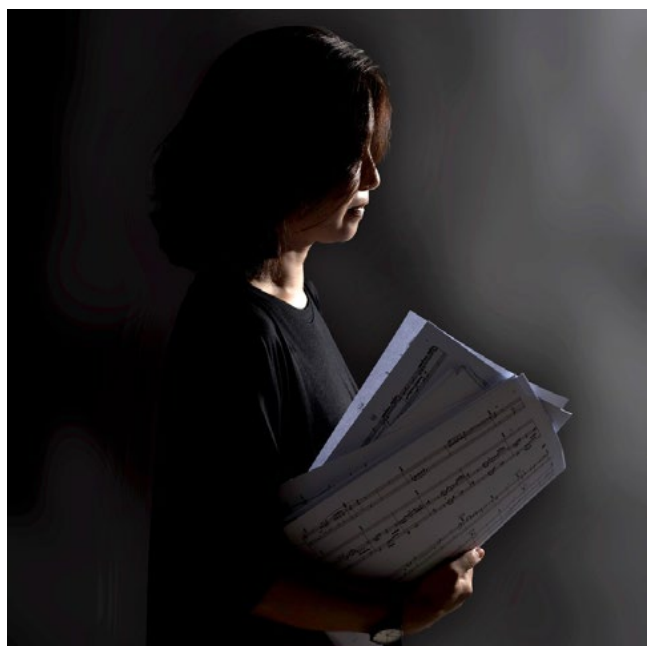
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COMPOSER | JOYCE TANG



Joyce Tang
Composer

Joyce Tang's works have been described by Ablaze Records as "incisive and brilliant ... a fresh compositional voice," and have been premiered and performed worldwide. Her works span orchestral, chamber, solo, vocal, choral, electro-acoustic, and theatrical genres, many of which have been jury-selected and featured in major festivals and conferences.

She has attracted numerous commissions from musicians and performing groups. Her recent commissioned works include *Blaze* (for Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, 2019), *Moon Shadow* (for *pipa* and piano, 2019), *Silver Lining* (for symphonic wind orchestra, 2019), *Kinetic Metallics* (for prepared vibraphone, 2018), *(Im)pulses* (for dancer and percussion quartet, 2017), *Remembrance of the Stonewall Trees* (for *sheng*, 2017), *in time of daffodils* (for choir and orchestra, 2016), site specific works

Flow Like Water (2019) and *Sounds of Disappearance* (2018), and various theatrical music for AFTEC productions. Her works were published on Navona Records and Ablaze Records.

Joyce Tang was awarded an Asian Cultural Council fellowship in 2017. She also received a PhD in musicology at The University of Hong Kong. She is currently teaching at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and The University of Hong Kong.



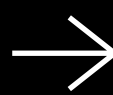
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**TAI KWUN PERFORMING ARTS:
SPOTLIGHT TEAM AND SURVEY**



TAI KWUN PERFORMING ARTS: SPOTLIGHT TEAM

Artistic Director | Timothy Calnin

Head of Performing Arts | Eddy Zee

Producers | Frieda Ng, Mimi Lam, Grace Kwok,
Phoebe Cheng

Technical and Production | Juk Cheung, Mike Ho, Joel Ma,
Shandy Leung, Juno Tam,
Dang Hung, Irene Cheung,
Bobby Lai, Myra Cheung,
Terrence Choi

Marketing and
Communications | Kitty Wong, Gillian Leung,
Michael Chiang, Chris Wong,
Stephanie Mak, Esther Lui,
Kit Cheung, Jessica Wong,
Kevin Cheung, Matthew Lai,
Kaitlyn Ip, Rachel Kung, Ching Lam

SURVEY

We value your feedback. Please fill in this survey and share your thoughts about this performance with us.

SURVEY

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HOUSE RULES

- 1** To avoid undue disturbance to the performers and other members of the audience, please switch off your mobile phones and any other sound and light emitting devices
- 2** Eating and drinking are strictly prohibited in the auditorium
- 3** Unauthorised photography, video and sound recording are prohibited
- 4** Please keep noise to a minimum during the performance
- 5** Please reserve your applause until the end of the entire work
- 6** Mask must be worn throughout the entire performance
- 7** Always keep social distancing
- 8** Your seat may be reallocated to align with pandemic preventive measures

Thank you for your cooperation.

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