

Bright Sheng's musical studies began in China at the age of four when his mother taught him piano. After the Cultural Revolution, he moved to New York in 1982 where his teachers included Leonard Bernstein, George Perle, Hugo Weisgall and Jack Beeson. A strong Eastern influence is evident in his music, which often uses traditional tales, folk songs, and instruments from China, as well as gestures borrowed from Chinese opera; however, it is incorporated into a highly original and assured framework based on a Western tradition. He is much in demand as a composer, pianist, conductor and artistic director for major organizations throughout America and Europe.



Photo by Alex Cao

Learn more about the opera at www.musicsalesclassical.com.
Photos from *Dream of the Red Chamber* courtesy of SF Opera.

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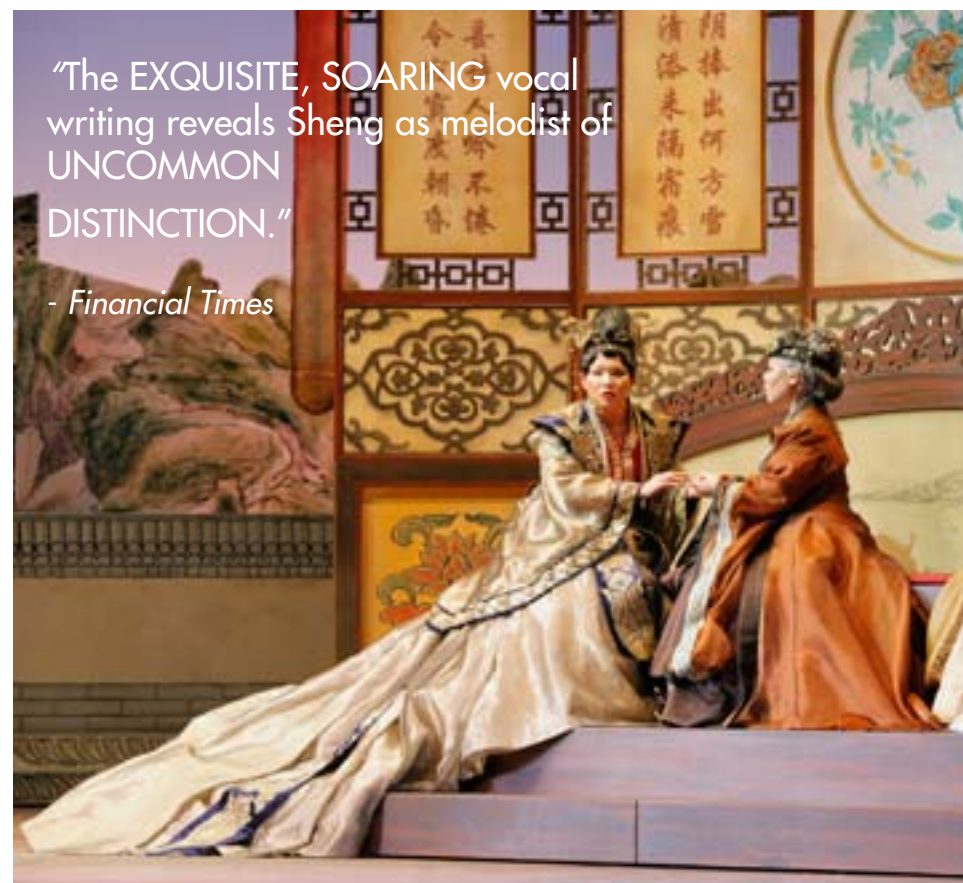
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Bright Sheng

Dream of the Red Chamber

An opera in two acts (2016)

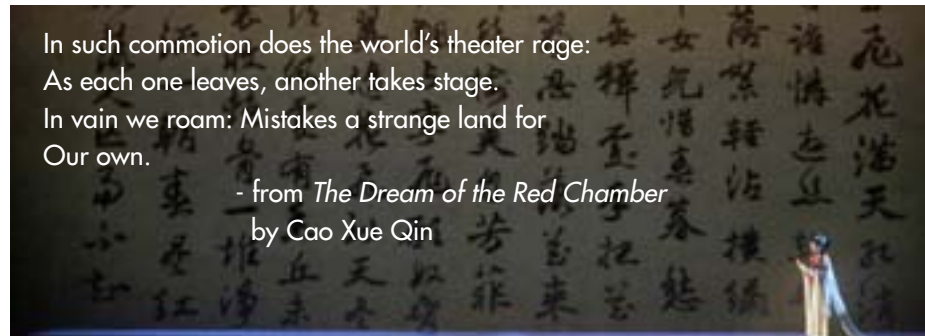


"The EXQUISITE, SOARING vocal writing reveals Sheng as melodist of UNCOMMON DISTINCTION."

- *Financial Times*

Dream of the Red Chamber

An opera in two acts (2016)



In such commotion does the world's theater rage:
As each one leaves, another takes stage.
In vain we roam: Mistakes a strange land for
Our own.

- from *The Dream of the Red Chamber*
by Cao Xue Qin

Score by Bright Sheng

Libretto in English by Bright Sheng and David Henry Wang

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

Premiere: September 2016, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco, CA

cast list

BAO YU/Divine Stone: *Lyric tenor*

DAI YU/Crimson Pearl Flower: *Lyric Coloratura Soprano*

BAO CHAI: *Light Mezzo-soprano*

MADAME WANG: *Full-Lyric Mezzo-soprano*

GRANNY JIA: *Alto*

PRINCESS JIA: *Full-Lyric Soprano*

AUNT XUE: *Mezzo-soprano*

THE MONK: *Male actor*

MAIDS, PRINCESS JIA'S ENTOURAGE: *Female chorus, dancers, extras*

IMPERIAL SOLDIERS, EUNUCHS: *Male chorus, dancers, extras*

orchestra

2(2pic).2(ca).2(bcl).2(cbn)/4331/timp.3perc/hp/Qin/str

synopsis

The Dream of the Red Chamber, a masterpiece of Chinese fiction, is a detailed, episodic record of the lives of the members of the Jia Clan, whose good fortune is assured when one of its daughters becomes an imperial concubine, and then declines after her death. The story centers on a love triangle consisting of the main character, Bao Yu, his beautiful cousin Dai Yu, and his future wife, another beautiful cousin named Bao Chai. Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang have adapted Cao Xue Qin's epic 18th-century Qing Dynasty novel with a focus on eight central characters to tell the tale of the illustrious Jia Clan and traces the Jias' fall from the height of their prestige. Often considered as a semi-autobiographical novel, Sheng and Hwang frame the tale with a Prologue and Epilogue led by The Monk, who may be the author himself.

press

"*Red Chamber* is rooted firmly in classical European romance, though enhanced with well-considered ventures into Asian musical motifs." - *Opera News*

"... the score snaps into focus in a series of tauntly constructed scenes that reveal the canniness of Sheng's compositional strategy — in particular, his skill in crafting an operatic language that is a hybrid of Chinese and Western tradition." - *SF Gate*

"A young woman, standing alone in a small boat, floats down a gently undulating river made of azure silk. That image — poised, serene, accompanied by enchanting music — is just one of the many stunning stage pictures created in Bright Sheng's opera..." - *Mercury News*