

Tan Dun

Opera and Theater Works

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The conceptual and multifaceted composer/conductor Tan Dun has made an indelible mark on the world's music scene with a creative repertoire that spans the boundaries of classical, multimedia, Eastern and Western musical systems. Central to his body of work, Tan Dun has composed distinct series of works which reflect his individual compositional concepts and personal ideas — among them a series which brings his childhood memories of shamanistic ritual into symphonic performances; works which incorporate elements from the natural world; and multimedia concerti. Opera has a significant role in Tan Dun's creative output of the past decade, mostly recently with the premiere of *The First Emperor* by the Metropolitan Opera in December 2006 with a title role created for Plácido Domingo.

ALSO BY TAN DUN

The First Emperor
Libretto in English
by Ha Jin and Tan Dun

Tea: A Mirror of Soul
Libretto in English
by Tan Dun and Xu Ying

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover and *Marco Polo*, Netherlands Opera; *Peony Pavilion*, Festival d'Automne a Paris; *Nine Songs*, City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong

ORDERING INFORMATION

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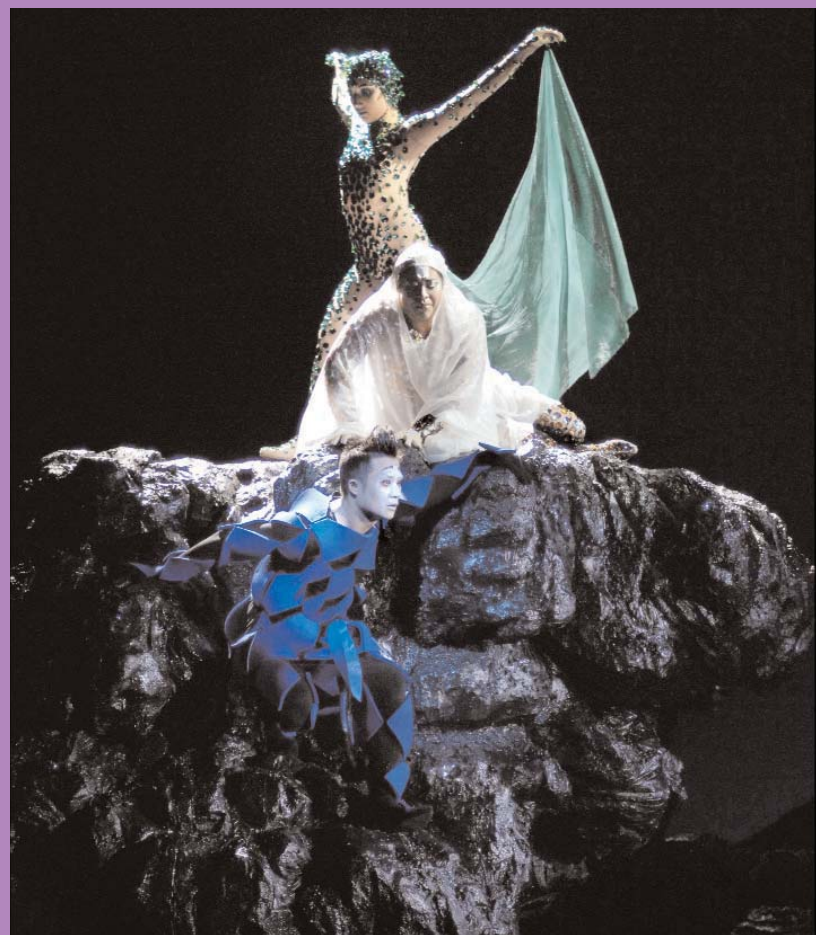


Tan Dun

Marco Polo

Peony Pavilion

Nine Songs



Marco Polo

Opera in One Act, 1995

Duration: 2 hours

Text in English by Paul Griffiths

WORLD PREMIERE

May 7, 1996

Munich Biennale

Munchener Kammerorchester



SYNOPSIS

Marco and Polo, led by the shadows of Dante and Scheherazade, journey from Venetian darkness across seas, desert and the high Himalayas to arrive at The Wall, where Kublai Khan awaits them. Medieval chant, ancient timbres, violence, longing and the sensuality of nature open a world of light. In four dreams and three interviews, Marco and Polo are led by the Shadows of Shakespeare, Freud and John Cage to examine inner space. Chuang Zi dreams as a butterfly; Mahler and Li Po drink to the song of the earth. In China or elsewhere, is contact possible? Can love be achieved? Kublai still waits; Marco and Polo give way to Marco Polo; the unending begins.

SUBSEQUENT PRODUCTIONS

February 15-18, 1997
Hong Kong Arts Festival; Wanchai, Hong Kong

November 8-22, 1997
New York City Opera; New York, NY

September 5, 1998
Settembre Musica; Turin, Italy

November 22, 1998
Huddersfield Festival; London, England

April 25, 1999
Neue Oper Wien; Vienna, Austria

April 22, 2001
Zagreb Biennale; Zagreb, Croatia

November 7-28, 2008
The Netherlands Opera; Amsterdam, Netherlands

ITEMS FOR SALE

Libretto: available from Hal Leonard 50483499

CD: Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra; Cappella Amsterdam; Tan Dun, conductor; Sony 62912

DVD: Netherlands Chamber Orchestra; Capella Amsterdam; Tan Dun, conductor; *Opus Arte 1010*

CAST LIST

MEMORY

POLO: *Dramatic Tenor*

BEINGS

MARCO: *Mezzo-Soprano*

KUBLAI KHAN: *Bass*

NATURE

WATER, lover of Marco Polo: *Soprano*

SHADOWS

RUSTICHELLO / LI PO: *Tenor*

SHEHERAZADA / MAHLER / QUEEN:

Mezzo-Soprano

DANTE / SHAKESPEARE: *Baritone*

CHORUS OF AT LEAST 20; DANCERS

ORCHESTRATION

1(pic)1(ca)1(bcl)1(cbn)/2220/3perc/prpf.hp/str
(min 10.8.6.6.4)

world instruments*: rec.medieval hp.rebec.
sitar.tabla.2 Tibetan hn.Tibetan bowls and bells
(chorus).pipa.sheng

*Musicians may double on world and western instruments.

For information on Chinese instruments and performers, please contact Parnassus Productions, Inc.

Peony Pavilion

Opera in One Act, 1998

Duration: 1 hour, 50 minutes

Text in English; trans. by Cyril Birch, based on the original Chinese text by Tang Xianzu (1598)

WORLD PREMIERE

May 12, 1998

Vienna Festival; Peter Sellars, director

CAST AND ORCHESTRATION

BRIDAL DU: *Soprano*

LIU MENGMEI: *Tenor*

SISTER STONE: (*Chinese Kun-Opera or Peking-Opera actress*)

CHORUS: Baritones, plus all musicians

MUSICIANS

THE JUDGE: Elec. MIDI Hn, Xun and Dizi

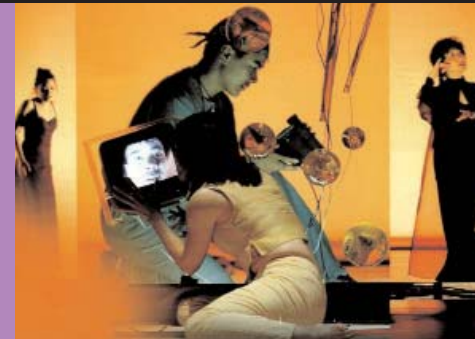
THE CLERK: Elect. MIDI Hn, and Sona
(or Kiri, or Taeponso)

THE FLOWER SPIRIT: Pipa

ZHAO: Sampler (or Computer)

SUN: Percussion - Chinese Opera Drum, Chinese cymb. (6'), small gong (8'), large bass drum, water gong (12'-14'), ratchet

LI: Percussion: drum set, udo drum, maraca, guiro, Chinese cymb. (6'), brush, bow, flexitone, 4 small Chinese bells, 2 cowbells (large and small)



SYNOPSIS

Bridal Du, daughter of Du Baoyan, the provincial governor of Nan-an, falls asleep in the garden, intoxicated by the springtime. She dreams of meeting a handsome young man. Upon waking, she pines for this dream lover, and languishes with lovesickness. Eventually she dies of her longings, and is buried in the garden. Three years later, the young scholar Liu Mengmei finds a portrait of Bridal Du while in the garden, and falls in love with her picture. Faithful to her dream even in death, Bridal Du steps out of the painting; as a wandering ghost she pursues her dream lover. Liu Mengmei helps bring her back to life, and she becomes his wife.

"Opera has not in years sounded so vital or original."

—Allan Ulrich, *San Francisco Examiner*

Nine Songs

Ritual Opera, 1989

Duration: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Text in English by the composer, after the poems of Qu Yan (340-277 B.C.)

WORLD PREMIERE

May 12, 1989

Pace Downtown Theatre, New York, NY
Yoshiko Chuma, stage director/choreographer;

ORCHESTRATION

20 singer-performers;

3perc.2cbn.3 Chinese instrumentalists



SYNOPSIS

Nine Songs is non-narrative, based on ancient poems of the same name by the great poet Qu Yuan. Written for performance with dance, music and drama, they are filled with the beauty of nature and the mysteries of shamanistic ritual. The text, a multi-language construction of abstract sound and form, makes an independent but integral contribution to the musical scoring.