



**Shih-Hui Chen 66 Times** The Voice of Pines and Cedars

**Wu Man** pipa | **Elizabeth Weigle** soprano  
**Boston Modern Orchestra Project**  
**Gil Rose** conductor  
**The Fischer Duo** | **Min-Ho Yeh** clarinet



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Elizabeth Weigle—soprano  
Boston Modern Orchestra Project  
Gil Rose—conductor

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5 **Fu I**, 1999

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I

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## The Music of Shih-Hui Chen



THE ART MUSIC COMPOSER OF TODAY faces many challenges. One of them, which concerns communication and expression, is of particular importance. On the one hand, one is tempted to create music that embraces a diversity of style—the crossing-over of musical boundaries and the fusion of cultural elements in recent decades are some common trends. On the other hand, one hopes to develop a personal language that

would reflect one's artistic orientation and at the same time communicate effectively with the audience. Perhaps the core of the matter here is balance. How much should a composer borrow from the many existing styles (be it atonal, jazz, folk, or pop) without sacrificing his/her identity? Or should one be idiosyncratic, composing in a language that bears a minimal resemblance to what is currently "in vogue," in order to highlight one's uniqueness?

This issue of style and expression is of particular relevance to the group of composers who grew up in non-Western cultures. Whether they had their formal musical training in their homeland, or abroad, or both, their music to some extent manifests their struggle to mediate between Western music and music of their own culture. Shih-Hui Chen is one example. Having grown up in Taiwan and had her basic musical training there, her works have been influenced by traditional Chinese as well as Western concert music. Under the tutelage of Ma Shui Long and Hsu Chang Houei, two leading representatives in the group of Taiwanese

composers who received musical training themselves in the West, Chen became adept in the compositional language of Western music. Continuing her Western music training in the United States, she earned a doctoral degree in composition from Boston University. A prolific composer, Chen has written for a diversity of genres, including solo, chamber, orchestral, and film music. The five works featured on this recording cover a broad span of time (1992–2003), and reflect a developing aesthetic stance. The different approaches and techniques found in these pieces provide valuable information concerning Chen’s compositional orientation from the end of her formal studies to recent years.

Originally scored for soprano and chamber orchestra, the version of *66 Times: the Voice of Pines and Cedars* on this CD was completed in 1992 for a performance in the NuClassix Concert Series in Boston. Scored for soprano and a chamber ensemble consisting of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, harp, and percussion, the text of the song cycle is based on four Japanese poems—the first three from the *Kokinshu* of the tenth century, and the last one composed by a Zen nun in the seventeenth century. The title of the piece, *66 Times*, is borrowed from the final poem. Through the common theme of seasonal changes in nature, beginning and ending with autumn, these poems suggest the disparate yet fleeting nature of human existence. The vivid images depicted in these poems are brought out musically with the technique of “text painting.” The sudden leap of a tritone at the word “fly” (beginning of first movement), the staccato gestures that imitate the nightingale’s chirping (second movement), the crescendo that accompanies “swell” (third movement), etc., draw the listener into a world of poetic soundscape. The changing moods of the poems are reflected through a variety of instrumental combinations. Nevertheless, Chen manages to provide

unity through the recycling of musical materials within a predominantly neotonal texture. The emphasis on the note B at the beginning and end of the piece not only highlights this unity, but also supports the cyclic nature of the seasons and the implication of reincarnation in the poems.

*66 Times* shows the influence of Asian aesthetics, which are realized through the terse texture, the contrasts between sound and silence, and the manipulation of musical space. In *Fu I* (1999, revised 2005), we find an even stronger reference to Chen’s Asian roots. Written for the traditional Chinese instrument pipa, a four-stringed lute, the piece explores the technique of *fu*—the abrupt muffling of the strings after a strong attack. According to the composer, the contrast between the sharp percussive strumming and the ensuing silence provides the generative kernel for the piece. Being her first composition for a Chinese instrument, the choice of the pipa is not incidental. The modern pipa, which evolved through a long period of development, is an amalgam of an original Chinese instrument and a Central Asian counterpart. As a result, it is capable of expressing a variety of musical styles through an arsenal of extended techniques. The “multicultural” quality of the pipa has made it the most popular Chinese-instrument-of-choice among composers who seek to convey the element of East-West fusion in their music. In *Fu I*, Chen matches these techniques with specific thematic ideas, resulting in an organized musical structure. For example, through the repetitive use of *fu*, the composer generates a dissonant texture similar to the martial-style passages in traditional pipa music at the beginning of the piece. This is followed by a slow section, whose expressiveness is enriched by the use of harmonics and pitch bends. Another section marked “playfully,” which is characterized by large skips and short tremolos, serves to diminish the tension formed between the

first two sections and to provide additional contrast. After a climactic passage marked "Agitated," in which more percussive techniques are featured, materials from the first two sections return in the form of an abridged recapitulation. The virtuosic writing for the pipa, realized through the Western technique of motivic development, generates a *tour de force* of artistic beauty.

Conceived at the same time as *Fu I* but finished later in the same year, *Fu II* (1999) is scored for pipa and a chamber group consisting of flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, and percussion. Although the two pieces are very similar, *Fu II* can hardly be called a transcription of *Fu I*. Like Luciano Berio's *Sequenzas* and *Chemins*, examples of works for solo instruments and their adaptations for soloist and ensemble, the interaction between the pipa and an ensemble of Western instruments in *Fu II* expands the musical dimension of the original *Fu I*. By doing this, Chen faces the challenge of maintaining the organic coherence of *Fu I* while acknowledging and developing the new relationships intimated through dialogue between the pipa and the ensemble. The resulting product draws upon the concepts of opposition and synthesis not unlike that of Hegelian dialectic. At the beginning of the piece, the loud, percussive pulsations of the pipa are challenged by a sustained pitch in the ensemble. The opposition in texture, dynamics, and character begins to diminish, as exchange of materials takes place between the soloist and the ensemble later in the piece. In the final section, the two parties have an even closer relationship, as they share and comment on similar ideas. The conflict is finally resolved when the instruments converge to a harmonious octave, the same material that begins the piece.

*Once Removed* (2000), composed by Chen for a documentary film on the culture and history of modern China, serves as the inspiration for *Twice Removed*

(2002). The piece for solo clarinet (also in a saxophone version) continues the emotional journey expressed in *Once Removed*—tragic moments in China's political history, the suffering of the intellectuals, and homesickness. In addition to the emotional connection, the music of *Twice Removed* is also derived from *Once Removed*. By employing the major second and the minor third, musical intervals that are characteristic of Chinese scales, Chen has created motives that mimic the pentatonic quality of Chinese music. The constant development of these motives reminds one of the character transformations typical of Western music of the romantic period, especially those by Berlioz, Liszt, and Strauss. Changing meters and rhythmic fluidity contribute to the flowing quality of the music, reflecting the never-ending yearning for emotional fulfillment. These motivic and rhythmic components are further integrated with register. In the passage marked "Scherzo e molto rubato," Chen expresses musical humor through staccato skips of large intervals in fast rhythms, starting from the middle range and gradually rising to the higher register. The next section, "Ballo, Pesante," is a dance that explores the highest *altissimo* register of the instrument. A three-octave skip from the last note of this section to the beginning of the next and final section introduces the bottom range of the instrument. The *chalmereau* register, known for its dark and hollow quality, fittingly depicts the loneliness and longing of one who is far away from home.

Beginning in 2001, Chen embarked on a series of works inspired by the Five Elements in Chinese metaphysics. According to the composer, these compositions "focus on integrating Western compositional techniques with Chinese sound qualities." The completed pieces in this collection are *Jin* ("Gold"; pipa and chamber orchestra), *Mu* ("Wood"; solo guitar or solo piano), *Shui*

("Water"; cello and piano), and *Tu* ("Earth"; pipa, flute, viola, and percussion). *Huo* ("Fire") is the last piece in the collection to be completed. Composed in 2003, the incessant arpeggios, the transparent sonorities, and the timbral explorations of *Shui* remind us of the repertoire of "water" pieces composed by Debussy and Ravel. The piece also "serves as a point of departure for a more abstract study in continuity. While all movements have distinct characters, the materials are interconnected." This statement is confirmed by the many distinct yet related motives in the music, which are derived from the six-note figure (E<sub>b</sub>-G-A-B-D-E) in the opening bars of the first movement. In addition to being the source of motivic material, this figure returns in its original form later in the same movement as well as in the final movement. In the opening of the middle movement, however, the figure is recast in a monophonic and fragmented texture. *Shui* also contains some of the most explicit references to Chinese music among Chen's works, such as pentatonic scales and open intervals.

The music in this recording summarizes Chen's development over the past decade and represents a diversity of style and expression, yet this diversity comes out of a desire to create music that assimilates the composer's cultural influences, namely, her Chinese heritage and her training in Western art music. Like the interaction between yin and yang, these two opposing yet complementary forces continue to shape Chen's aesthetic and her music, resulting in works that explore the representation of "Chineseness" within predominantly Western compositional frameworks.

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## 陳士惠的音樂世界

當今作曲家常面臨挑戰，尤其是音樂的傳遞與表達。他們一方面得試圖創造多樣的音樂風格；近數十年來的風潮是跨越不同領域和融合多元的文化。另一方面，作曲家則希望能發展獨特的表達方式映照個人方位，並深動地傳達給聽眾。上述癡結或許在於兩者的均衡。試問一位作曲家能引用多少現行的音樂風格--無調、爵士、民俗、通俗等--而不犧牲自我的認同？還是曲高和寡獨顯個人特質？

成長於非西方文化的作曲家往往有風格與表現手法上的爭議。無論他們的正規訓練來自於家鄉、國外，甚至兩者皆有，作品方面在某程度上均顯露個人於西方與自我文化之間的掙扎；陳士惠是其中的好例子。她成長於台灣並在那接受正規的音樂訓練，作品同時受到傳統中國音樂與西方古典音樂的影響。在台期間陳的兩位老師馬水龍與許常惠都在西方接受過傳統的音樂訓練，因而她擅長於西式的作曲方法。陳到美國後獲得波士頓大學作曲博士學位，是一位富創造力並勤奮的作曲家，曲目多樣包括獨奏曲、室內樂、管弦樂、以及電影配樂等。本專輯所收錄的作品橫跨1992至2003，涵蓋了個人雋永綿長的音樂美學與技藝。

《松杉瑟瑟六六迴》(66 Times: The Voice of Pines and Cedars) 原為女高音與室內管弦樂團所作，專輯中的版本是1992年特別為波士頓「新古典音樂會系列」(NuClassix Concert Series) 而譜成女高音與室內樂。樂器則有長笛、單簧管、小提琴、大提琴、豎琴以及打擊樂器。本曲以四首日本的詩篇為內容，前三首引自十世紀的「古今書」，末篇則是一位十七世紀禪修的尼姑所寫的〈松杉瑟瑟六六迴〉。這四篇以季節替換為題材的詩，雖然曲首與結尾都在詠歎秋日的景緻，但暗示人生的起浮和稍縱即逝的現象寓意深遠。對此，陳以音樂「文本描繪」(text painting) 的技法，逐步地將聽眾引領至詩意中的音樂山水裡。《松杉瑟瑟六六迴》第一樂章之初的「飛」字，採「增四度」音程突然地凌空跳躍；第二樂章以「跳音」來模仿夜鶯婉轉、啾啾之聲；第三樂章則靠樂器的逐漸增強塑造出如同花朵般的含苞待放。針對整曲音樂中的詩意轉換，陳除了藉不同樂器的組合和它們所共釀出的氣氛之外，更運用反覆的手法達到整體的和諧與連貫。其中，樂曲開

端與結尾所加強的B主音，除了強化整體性之外，同時還應和了四季循環的大自然本質，蘊含詩篇在樂曲中的深厚情境。

《松杉瑟瑟六六迴》的東方思維除來自精煉結構、音與靜的對照，還加上音樂空間的運用，而聽眾在《伏一》也可以得知陳在這方面的淵源。原創於1999，2005再修訂的《伏一》是為傳統的中國琵琶所寫，主要表現該樂器在強勁、急促演奏後，突如其來嘎然而止「伏」的技巧與意境，也是陳所認定的此曲精華。陳首次為中國樂器的譜曲便選擇琵琶並非偶然。琵琶在和中亞的弦樂器結合之後，經過長期的研展才有當今現代琵琶的多樣技巧和風格。琵琶本身多元的文化特質不但促使它成為最受歡迎的中國樂器，也是作曲家表達東、西融合的上上之選。陳在《伏一》結合琵琶的技巧與「伏」的主題，因而製作出嚴謹的音樂結構。例如，透過重複運用「伏」的技巧，琵琶在樂曲開端所傳達的衝擊與不和諧音樂質感，類似於橫掃千軍的「武套」風格。緊接在雷霆萬鈞氣勢之後的和緩樂章，是藉由豐富變化的泛音與滑音的彰顯。下一段對比的「嬉戲」則運用了大量的跳躍技法與短顫音，縮減前兩段樂章的緊繃感覺。「激動」的高潮則採用了較多的打擊技巧。《伏一》的結尾是將開頭的兩段音樂加以簡約和重述。陳利用琵琶的特殊技巧，在西方音樂的「動機」技法上得以推展，塑造出一首唯美藝術的精心傑作。

《伏二》這首室內樂作品與《伏一》幾乎同時構思，但於同年稍晚完成，除了以琵琶為主之外，還包括長笛、中音長笛、單簧管、低音單簧管、小提琴、大提琴與打擊樂器。它儘管和《伏一》近似但不能視為其副本，其情形如同路西安諾·貝利歐（Luciano Berio）的Sequenzas與Chemins；相似中各有其特色。相較於《伏一》，琵琶在《伏二》中與西方樂團的互動、融合過程，延闡了整體的音樂領域。在此，陳的挑戰反而是如何在《伏一》的有機與連貫性中，保持及闡發琵琶與樂團的親密對話。《伏二》全曲的進行，開始於嘹亮琵琶聲受到樂團中延長音的挑戰；中段雙方則在層次、力度和特質方面有了相互的對換；後段則有親密的關係，甚至進一步的相互分享。曲終時再回到原來的主题，以圓滿的和諧八度音化解曲初的對比。

2000年陳士惠為《有朋自遠方來》這部以中國近代文化史為內容的紀錄片配樂，同時也是她單簧管獨奏曲《懷鄉》的靈感來源（該曲也有薩克斯風的獨奏版）。如同《有朋自

遠方來》描述文革時期知識份子的苦難和他們羈旅懷鄉的煎熬，《懷鄉》延伸了那悲哀的情懷。音樂方面，陳以五聲音階的大二度與小三度為主旋律，展現中國音樂的五音特色。其中持續發展的「動機」使人想起西方浪漫時期個性轉換（character transformation）的作曲法，特別是白遼士、李斯特、史特勞斯的作品。多變的韻律與節奏促成了《懷鄉》的流暢，情感的展露之外還有永無止境的由衷企盼。除此之外，還有動機、韻律並和音域整合為一，例如：「戲謔、自由的」樂章中，陳透過快節奏的大音程、跳躍的斷奏表達幽默，並逐漸提升中階段音域。在「似農村舞蹈」樂曲中，陳則進一步探索樂器最高音域的可行性，曲中藉由三個八度音的急下至最低音域，讓低沉與空虛的音色刻畫出離鄉背井的孤寂與渴望。

受中國玄學五行元素啟發，陳自2001年起從事一系列作品。根據作曲家的詮釋，這些作品著重於整合西方技巧與中國聲音的特質。該系列分為：金（琵琶與室內管弦樂團）、木（吉他獨奏版本與鋼琴獨奏版本）、水（大提琴與鋼琴）、土（琵琶、長笛、中提琴和打擊樂）；火的部分則尚未開始。《水》創作於2003年，連續的琶音不但音質透澈、響亮，陳在音色方面的探究令人聯想到名家如德布希、拉威爾等人描述水的作品。陳借助水的流動，有系統地表達樂曲整體的連貫性；各個樂章雖各有特色，但其中的元素都緊密相關。整曲中許多動機都來自曲首中的(E<sub>1</sub>-G-A-B-D-E)音型，此音型也再出現於第一和第三樂章中。相反地，第二樂章只有單音旋律及片斷動機的呈現。在陳所有的作品當中，《水》是引用中國五聲音階和純音程最顯著的例子。

本專輯概括了陳士惠過去一個紀元來的主要作品，其多元的音樂風格來自於個人渴望融合自身文化素養與西方音樂的訓練。而中、西精神如同陰、陽般的相對又相輔，持續地塑造她的美學觀，使其創作於西方作曲的架構中蘊涵著東方的維。

黎昭綱撰稿，賴小秋譯

## 66 Times: the Voice of Pines and Cedars

I.  
flying wing in wing  
across the white clouds of the  
night sky the wild geese  
go their very number  
vivid beneath the autumn moon

II. (combination of three poems)  
oh sweet nightingale  
your first songs of the season  
unleashed unbidden  
a love without an object a  
love without the hope of joy

oh sweet nightingale  
of the mountains you who wait  
for midsummer's month  
flutter your wings raise your voice  
sing us your unforgotten song

oh sweet nightingale  
do not return to your home  
in faraway hills  
as long as you can sing please  
remain here in my garden

III.  
when the warm mists veil  
all and buds swell while yet the  
spring snows drift downward  
even in the hibernal  
village crystal blossoms fall

IV.  
sixty-six times have these eyes beheld the  
changing scenes of autumn  
I have said enough about moonlight; ask me  
no more  
Only listen to the voice of pines and cedars  
when no wind stirs

Poems I-III have been used with permission  
given by Laurel Rasplica Rodd with Mary  
Catherine Henkenius. *Kokinshu: A Collection of  
Poems Ancient and Modern*. Boston, MA, Cheng  
& Tsui, 1996. (Reprint of clothbound edition  
published by Princeton University Press, 1984.)  
Poem IV, "Sixty-Six Times" from *Zen Flesh Zen  
Bones*, has been used with permission of Charles  
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Japan



**Shih-Hui Chen** was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and came to the United States in 1982 where she has been a citizen since 1989. Her compositions have been performed widely throughout the United States and abroad including China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, England, Germany, and Italy. Chen's work has brought her into contact with many orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, and the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra. In addition to the acclaimed musicians represented on this CD, her chamber music has been presented by the Arditti String Quartet, members of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the Empyrean Ensemble, Da Camera of Houston, Chiara String Quartet, Voices of Change, Boston Musica Viva, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Network for New Music, Seattle Chamber Players, and the Freon Ensemble in Rome. She has also had the opportunity to work with many virtuosic soloists including saxophonist Kenneth Radnofsky, vocalists Christine Schadeburg and Timothy Jones, violinists Nai-Yuan Hu and Lynn Chang, clarinetist Jean Kopperud, and violist Hsing-Yun Huang.

Chen also enjoys collaborating with artists from other disciplines. She composed a film score for the documentary *Once Removed* by filmmaker Julie Mallozzi (premiered at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston), and wrote *There*, a song cycle composed with poet Robert Creeley, using paintings by Francesco Clemente. Her most recent work, *Sweet Rice Pie, Six Songs on Four Taiwanese Nursery Rhymes*, is a theatrical work for solo voice and ensemble.

Chen currently serves on the faculty at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University where she teaches music composition. She has also been the Composer in Residence at Boston University's Tanglewood Institute. She has received commissions and fellowships from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, American Academy in Rome, National Endowment for the Arts, Fromm Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, Barlow Endowment, Meet the Composer Foundation, Tanglewood Music Center, Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, and the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study Center.

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Kurt Stallmann and Shih-Hui Chen, co-producers  
[www.trigonmusic.com](http://www.trigonmusic.com)

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*66 Times: the Voice of Pines and Cedars, Fu I, and Fu II* were recorded on October 26–27, 1999 at Sonic Temple Studio, Roslindale, MA.  
*Shui* was recorded May 2, 2005 at Stude Concert Hall, Shepherd School of Music, Rice University, Houston, TX.

Joel Gordon, engineering, editing, and mastering

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*Twice Removed* was recorded February 8, 2003 at Stude Concert Hall, Shepherd School of Music, Rice University, Houston, TX.

Todd Hulslander, engineering  
Kurt Stallmann, editing  
Joel Gordon, mastering

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Calligraphy "66 Times" by Mike Mei

John Kramer Design