



**SAN FRANCISCO  
SYMPHONY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / UPDATED JANUARY 31, 2020**

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## **SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY PRESENTS 20TH ANNIVERSARY CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT & EMERALD BANQUET FEBRUARY 1, 2020 AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL**

**Perry So makes his SFS conducting debut leading the Orchestra in traditional folk music and works by Asian composers including Bright Sheng, Huang Ruo, and A-Bing**

**Concert features special guest artists including sheng player Hu Jianbing, pipa player Yang Wei, pianist Sa Chen, and performers from the Loong Mah Sing See Wui dance company**

**Pre-concert Festival Reception with lion dancers, live music, and refreshments begins one hour before concert in the DSH lobby**

### **Elegant Chinese New Year Emerald Banquet held after concert**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—The San Francisco Symphony (SFS) celebrates the Year of the Mouse with a [Chinese New Year Concert & Emerald Banquet](#) on Saturday, **February 1** at Davies Symphony Hall. This year's celebration marks the 20th anniversary of the Symphony's signature heritage event, which bridges East and West traditions with the universal language of music. The annual event is an elegant and colorful celebration of the Lunar New Year, drawing upon vibrant Asian traditions, past and present. Conductor [Perry So](#) makes his SFS debut leading the Orchestra in traditional folk music and works by Asian composers, including the U.S. premiere of Huang Ruo's recently-completed *Folk Songs for Orchestra* and Bright Sheng's

*Red Silk Dance*. The eclectic concert program features sheng player **Hu Jianbing**, pipa player **Yang Wei**, pianist **Sa Chen**, and performers from the **Loong Mah Sing See Wui** dance company. The celebration begins with a pre-concert Festival Reception open to all ticketholders at 4:00pm in the Davies Symphony Hall lobbies featuring an array of entertainment and activities, such as lion dancing, Chinese calligraphy, “lucky” red envelopes, a musical performance by Melody of China, as well as complimentary desserts, wine, and tea bars. Inspired by the vibrant visual pageantry of traditional Chinese New Year celebrations, the glamorous and celebratory Emerald Banquet, which sold out this year in record time, begins at 7:00pm in Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall, located at 300 Franklin Street at the rear of Davies Symphony Hall. Dinner packages include access to the Festival Reception, premium concert seating, and seating at the Banquet. The Banquet is catered by McCalls Catering & Events, with lighting design by Gioi Tran and Jared Kendal of Applegate Tran Interiors.

The 5:00pm concert celebrates the Lunar New Year and San Francisco’s unique cultural fabric, featuring a combination of traditional Asian music alongside orchestral works influenced by both Eastern and Western musical traditions. The program features the U.S. premiere of **Huang Ruo’s** new addition to ***Folk Songs for Orchestra***, originally commissioned and performed by the SFS at the 2012 Chinese New Year concert. Pipa player **Yang Wei** joins the SF Symphony for the second year in a row, this time as a soloist in **Jin Zhang’s** arrangement of ***The Moon Over Spring River***, a virtuosic melody from the Ming Dynasty that is connected to Zhang Ruoxu’s Tang poem of the same name. Sheng player **Hu Jianbing** returns to the SFS as sheng player for the first time since 2012 to perform **Yan Hai-Deng’s** arrangement of ***Jin Diao***, and pianist **Sa Chen** joins the SFS as piano soloist in Chinese-American composer **Bright Sheng’s *Red Silk Dance***, a work inspired and influenced by music of the Silk Road culture. According to Sheng, the Silk Road is directly responsible for the introduction and assimilation of the pipa into Chinese music. Sheng also describes the instrument homonymous with his surname as “the ancestor of all reed instruments, including the Western organ and accordion,” which has been played in Chinese culture for at least 2,500 years. The concert will be accompanied by unique video projections created by video designer **Adam Larsen**, as well as opportunities to learn about the history of the SF Symphony’s Chinese New Year celebration.



The Chinese New Year Concert & Emerald Banquet, chaired by Gorretti and Lawrence Lui, is made possible through the generous support of Presenting Sponsors John & Sherry Chen, Red Lantern Sponsors Tiffany & Jim Chang, Margaret Liu & Edward B. Collins, Jerome L. & Thao N. Dodson, Patricia Lee-Hoffmann & Steve Hoffmann, and Supporting Sponsors Eliza & Dean Cash, Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company, Peter Liu, Chairman, WI Harper Group, and Joseph Cotchett & Nanci Nishimura. John & Sherry Chen and Margaret Liu & Edward B. Collins are Honorary Chairs. The Emerald Banquet is chaired by Tiffany Chang. Haute Living is the Official Media Sponsor. Zenni is the Official Eyewear Sponsor. Proceeds from the Chinese New Year Concert & Banquet benefit the Symphony’s myriad education and community programs, which serve over

75,000 students in Bay Area elementary, middle, and high schools each year. This celebration is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.

Click [here](#) to view a short video about the SFS's 20th Anniversary Chinese New Year celebration.

### **History of San Francisco Symphony's Chinese New Year celebrations**

Over the last twenty years, the SF Symphony's annual Chinese New Year celebrations have featured unique programming and exceptional guest artists, incorporated and showcased traditions of the Chinese culture, and pushed the envelope with multimedia elements and immersive concert experiences. The event began as a way to invite the Chinese and Chinese-American Bay Area communities into Davies Hall, bridging East and West traditions with the universal language of music. Chaired by Ann Getty and the acclaimed Bay Area actor-director Joan Chen, the SFS' first Chinese New Year event took place in 2001 with two performances featuring author Amy Tan reading from her children's book *The Chinese Siamese Cat*—accompanied by projected illustrations of Gretchen Schields' artwork and original music by Nathan Wang—and from *The Joy Luck Club*, to music from the film's soundtrack. The following year's event was chaired by Margaret Liu Collins and featured the world premiere of *Red Seal – Strings Calligraphy II* by local composer Gang Situ. Other works premiered by the SF Symphony at subsequent Chinese New Year concerts include Gang Situ's *Chinese Opera Suite* in 2004, *Echoes* and *Festival Suite* in 2005, and *Drum Overture* in 2006; and Huang Ruo's *Folk Songs for Orchestra* in 2012, commissioned by the SFS. Notable artist debuts made at Chinese New Year concerts over the years include soprano ManHua Gao in 2003; 18-year-old piano prodigy Yuja Wang in 2006; 14-year-old pianist Peng Peng in 2007 and, joining Peng Peng for a duo performance in 2008, 13-year-old pianist Conrad Tao; violinist Lü Siqing in 2009; pianist Haochen Zhang in 2010; violinist Ray Chen in 2011; sheng player Hu Jianbing in 2012; erhu player George Gao in 2013; pianist David Fung in 2014; percussionist Haruka Fujii in 2016; dizi player Tang Jun Quio in 2017; pianist Zhang Zuo in 2018; and violinist Angelo Xiang Yu in 2019. Conductor debuts have included Carolyn Kuan, Mei-Ann Chen, Lan-Shui, and Xian Zhang. The San Francisco Symphony was one of only two California organizations to receive a Wallace Foundation Award in 2006 in recognition of the orchestra's commitment to community and audience-building activities, including Chinese New Year. The SFS's Chinese New Year event has also been recognized with the 2005 American Symphony Orchestra League Gold Ribbon Award for fundraising and the 2004 MetLife Award for Excellence in Community Engagement.



### **About the artists**

Born in Hong Kong, conductor **Perry So** is known for his wide-ranging programming, including numerous world premieres and works from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. He is the recipient of the First and Special Prizes at St. Petersburg's Fifth International Prokofiev Conducting Competition, and the Diapason d'Or Award in 2012 for his recording of Barber and Korngold's Violin Concertos with violinist Alexander Gilman and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. So most recently made his European operatic debut at the Royal Danish Opera House leading Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, his North American operatic debut at Yale Opera with



Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, and returned to the Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias as the orchestra's Artistic Collaborator. He was the inaugural Dudamel Conducting Fellow of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and served as both Assistant and Associate Conductor with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, with which he led an internationally televised celebration with Lang Lang for the 15th anniversary of Hong Kong's reunification with China. Perry So makes his San Francisco Symphony debut at this performance.

Chinese-born pianist **Sa Chen** has been described as "one of the brightest performers of her generation" (*Classic FM*). She began her professional performing career in her early teens, earning critical acclaim at the Leeds, Chopin, and Van Cliburn competitions and is the only woman in history to win prizes at all three of these prestigious piano competitions. Chen has recorded ten albums for the JVC, IMC, Harmonia Mundi, and Pentatone labels. Her album *Memories Lost*, released by BIS Records in 2015, features modern Chinese compositions and was described as "the most interesting and successful recording of new Chinese music..." by *BBC Music Magazine*. Her latest album featuring Debussy's complete Preludes was released in 2017. Highlights of Chen's 2019–20 season include her debut at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, in addition to appearances at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games First Anniversary Festival, and the Singapore International Piano Festival. Chen made her San Francisco Symphony debut in 2015, performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2.

**Hu Jianbing** has earned wide recognition for his artistry as a sheng soloist and composer. He graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in China and was a member of the Central Chinese National Orchestra before moving to New York. Hu is the founder and current president of the Chinese Performing Arts Association of North America. A member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, Hu joined the New York Philharmonic for the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Silkroad Project in 2015. As a soloist, Hu collaborated with the San Francisco and Seattle Symphonies on the *Sheng and Orchestra* project, making his SF Symphony debut in 2012 with a performance of Huang Ruo's *Yellow Earth* for Sheng and Orchestra. With a belief that improvisation is the soul of Chinese folk music, Hu has dedicated his recent years to solo improvisation, as demonstrated in his impromptu solo album *Hu Jianbing's Sky*.

Founded in April 1994, **Loong Mah Sing See Wui**, Dragon Horse Lion Dance Association, is a not-for-profit San Francisco-based organization that specializes in the sharing, teaching, and performing of the dynamic and ancient art of Chinese lion and dragon dancing. Loong Mah is comprised of third, fourth, and fifth generation Asian-American children and adults who feel that it is imperative to maintain and share their rich cultural and ethnic heritage. The core group is made up of instructors with several decades of combined experience in traditional Chinese performing arts, including lion and dragon dance, music, several styles of Kung Fu and other martial arts, traditional Chinese opera, and folk dance. The group has performed in conjunction with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Symphony, Bay Area Discovery Museum, Bay Area Dragon Boat Festival, and at the Southwest Airlines Chinese New Year Parade held every Lunar New Year in San Francisco.

Please note that Guilian Liu has withdrawn from the program due to unforeseen circumstances. The San Francisco Symphony's 20th Anniversary Chinese New Year concert will now feature pipa player **Yang Wei** as the soloist in Jin Zhang's arrangement of *The Moon Over Spring River*. Click [here](#) for Yang Wei's biography

**Calendar editors, please note:**

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## **CHINESE NEW YEAR 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY**

[Saturday, February 1, 2020 at 5 pm \(festivities at 4 pm\)](#)

**Perry So** conductor  
**Yang Wei** pipa  
**Jianbing Hu** sheng  
**Sa Chen** piano  
**Loong Mah Sing See Wui** dance company  
**San Francisco Symphony**  
**Adam Larsen** video designer  
**Yee Eun Nam** video designer

**Phoon Yew TIEN**  
*Martial Artists Welcome Spring*

**TRADITIONAL (arr. Jin Zhang)**  
*The Moon Over Spring River*  
**Yang Wei** pipa

**TRADITIONAL (arr. Yan Haideng)**  
*Jin Diao*  
**Jianbing Hu** sheng

**Bright SHENG**  
*Red Silk Dance*  
**Sa Chen** piano

**Wang XILIN**  
Torch Festival from Symphonic Suite “Yunnan Tone Poem No.1”, Opus 3

**A-BING (trans. Wu Zuqiang)**  
Er-Quan-Ying-Yue (*Moon Reflects on Er-Quan Spring*) [San Francisco Symphony Premiere]

**Huang RUO**  
*Folk Songs for Orchestra*

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