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**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY PRESENTS LUNAR NEW YEAR: YEAR OF THE DRAGON,
FEBRUARY 17, 2024, AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL**

Mei-Ann Chen leads the Orchestra in a program highlighting works by Asian composers including Che Chang, Chen Ge Xin, Vivian Fung, Huang Ruo, Li Huan-Zhi, and Phoon Yew Tien

Violinist Paul Huang joins Chen and the Orchestra to perform music from Tan Dun's Violin Concerto: *Fire Ritual*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony celebrates the Year of the Dragon with the [Lunar New Year: Year of the Dragon](#) concert and banquet on Saturday, February 17 at Davies Symphony Hall. Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, is the most important holiday for many cultures in East, South, and Southeast Asia, and is celebrated by people of Asian descent worldwide. This year's celebration marks the 24th anniversary of the Symphony's signature event, which is an elegant celebration of the Lunar New Year, drawing upon vibrant Asian traditions, past and present. Conductor **Mei-Ann Chen** and the Orchestra perform works by Asian composers including Che Chang, Chen Ge Xin, Vivian Fung, Huang Ruo, Li Huan-Zhi, and Phoon Yew Tien. Violinist **Paul Huang** joins Chen and the Symphony to perform music from Tan Dun's Violin Concerto: *Fire Ritual*.

The celebration begins at **4:00pm** with **preconcert lobby festivities** open to all ticketholders, featuring an array of entertainment and activities, such as dragon dancers, fortune readers, calligraphy artists, and cultural performances.

Conductor Mei-Ann Chen and the Orchestra open the **5:00pm Lunar New Year concert** with **Li Huan-Zhi's** energetic *Spring Festival Overture* and **Phoon Yew Tien's** joyful *New Year Greetings*. The Orchestra then performs “Jasmine Flower,” a folk song from China’s Jiangsu province, which was arranged for orchestra by **Li Wenping** in 1999. The program continues with *Flower Drum Song from Feng Yang* and *Girl from Da Ban City* from **Huang Ruo's Folk Songs for Orchestra**, originally commissioned and performed by the San Francisco Symphony at the 2012 Chinese New Year concert. Also on the program is **Vivian Fung's Pizzicato**, which features sounds inspired by two Chinese instruments—the *pipa* and *qin*—as well as Indonesian *gamelan* music. Violinist Paul Huang joins the Symphony to play music from **Tan Dun's** Violin Concerto: *Fire Ritual*, originally written for and premiered by violinist Eldbjørg Hemsing. Concluding the program are **Che Chang's Ali Mountain Evergreen**, a piece that evokes the sheer scale of Ali Mountain in Taiwan, and **Chen Ge Xin's Gong Xi Gong Xi**, a popular Chinese Lunar New Year song that translates to “Congratulations” or “Wishing You Happiness and Prosperity.”

The **postconcert Lunar New Year Banquet** begins at **6:30pm** in Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall, located at 300 Franklin Street at the rear of Davies Symphony Hall, and features a lucky draw and live music, including a special performance. [VIP dinner packages](#) include access to the preconcert Ruby Reception premium concert seating, and seating at the Banquet. The Banquet is catered by McCalls Catering & Events, with lighting design by Got Light. The décor for the event features hanging screens that highlight the many ways that Lunar New Year is celebrated across different cultures.

The 2024 Lunar New Year Concert and Banquet Chair is **Ella Qing Hou** and the Honorary Chair is **Fred Levin**.

In-kind support for Lunar New Year is generously provided by Eden Rift Vineyards and The Caviar Co.

Proceeds from the event support the Symphony’s artistic, education, and community programs. This concert is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.

About the artists

Mei-Ann Chen is music director of the MacArthur Award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta, chief conductor of the Recreation Orchestra at the Styriarte festival, artistic partner of Houston’s River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, artistic partner of the Northwest Sinfonietta, and conductor laureate of the Memphis Symphony, where she previously served as music director.

This season, Ms. Chen appears with the Tucson Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Odense Symphony, Stavanger Symphony, Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, and One Song Orchestra in Taiwan. She also tours to Atlanta with the Chicago Sinfonietta and to Taiwan with the National Symphony Youth Orchestra. In past seasons, she has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Detroit Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Toronto Symphony, BBC Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Tonkünstler Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Taiwan Philharmonic, and American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut in February 2013.

As music director of the Chicago Sinfonietta, Ms. Chen has made two recordings for Cedille Records: *Delights and Dances* and *Project W: Works by Diverse Women Composers*. In 2018, Innova Records released River Oaks Chamber Orchestra’s debut album, *ROCO: Visions Take Flight*, featuring commissioned contemporary works led by Ms. Chen.

Ms. Chen's honors include being named a Top 30 Influencer by *Musical America*, the Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras, the Taki Concordia Fellowship founded by Marin Alsop, and the 2005 first prize at the Malko Competition for conductors, where she has since served as a juror. Born in Taiwan, she earned degrees in violin and conducting from New England Conservatory and earned a doctorate in conducting from the University of Michigan.

Violinist **Paul Huang** is the recipient of the 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and the 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists. Mr. Huang's recent highlights have included an acclaimed debut at Bravo! Vail Music Festival stepping in for violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter in Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 with Chamber Orchestra Vienna-Berlin, and appearances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic with Lahav Shani, Detroit Symphony with Leonard Slatkin, Houston Symphony with Andres Orozco-Estrada, Baltimore Symphony and Seoul Philharmonic with Markus Stenz, and recital debuts at the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland and Aspen Music Festival. In fall 2021, Mr. Huang also became the first classical violinist to perform his own arrangement of the national anthem prior to a Carolina Panthers game at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina to an audience of 75,000. An exclusive recording artist with France's Naïve Records, his debut album *Kaleidoscope* is slated for worldwide release in fall of 2023. His recording of Toshio Hosokawa's Violin Concerto: *Genesis* with Residentie Orkest Den Haag will also be released on Naxos Records in winter 2024.

During the 2023-24 season, Mr. Huang returns to National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan with Jun Märkl, Pacific Symphony and BBC Symphony with Kahchun Wong, and makes debuts with Dallas Symphony Orchestra and NHK Symphony with Fabio Luisi, and Vancouver Symphony with Otto Tausk. Other highlights will include engagements with Colorado Springs Philharmonic and the Brevard and Augusta symphonies. The Lunar New Year Concert marks his San Francisco Symphony debut.

Born in Taiwan, Mr. Huang began violin lessons at the age of seven. He is a recipient of the inaugural Kovner Fellowship at the Juilliard School, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees under Hyo Kang and I-Hao Lee. He plays on the 1742 "ex-Wieniawski" Guarneri del Gesù violin on extended loan through the Stradivari Society of Chicago and is on the faculty of Taipei National University of the Arts. He resides in New York.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets:

Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony Hall can be purchased via sfsymphony.org or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415.864.6000. VIP packages for Lunar New Year on February 17 are available for purchase [here](#).

Location:

Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Health & Safety Information

Davies Symphony Hall is currently operating at full audience capacity. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination and masking are no longer required for entry to Davies Symphony Hall. However, patrons are encouraged to wear masks and maintain up-to-date COVID vaccinations to protect themselves. These policies are subject to change. Visit sfsymphony.org/safety for the San Francisco Symphony's complete up-to-date health and safety protocols.

SPECIAL EVENT

Lunar New Year: Year of the Dragon

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

[Saturday, February 17, 2024, at 5pm](#)

Mei-Ann Chen conductor
Paul Huang violinist
San Francisco Symphony

LI HUAN-ZHI *Spring Festival Overture*

PHOON YEW TIEN *New Year Greetings*

TRADITIONAL (arr. **LI WENPING**) “Jasmine Flower”

HUANG RUO Selections from *Folk Songs for Orchestra*

VIVIAN FUNG *Pizzicato*

TAN DUN Music from Violin Concerto: *Fire Ritual*

CHE CHANG (arr. **BAO YUAN-KAI**) *Ali Mountain Evergreen*

CHEN GE XIN (arr. **LEE CHE-YI**) *Gong Xi Gong Xi*

Tickets: \$39–109

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2023-24/LUNAR-NEW-YEAR>

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