

Zhou Tian

BIOGRAPHY

(CONDENSED/SHORT VERSION ON PAGE 4)

Critically acclaimed for his lush and distinctive musical voice, Chinese-born American composer **Zhou Tian** (pronounced JOH TEE-en; Zhou is his last name) seeks inspiration from different cultures and strives to mix them seamlessly into a musically satisfying combination for performers and audience alike.

Described as “absolutely beautiful” and “utterly satisfying” (*Fanfare*), his compositions have been performed by leading orchestras and performers in the United States and abroad, such as the Pittsburgh Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Ireland’s RTÉ National Symphony, pianist Yuja Wang, violinists Chloë Hanslip and Caroline Goulding, violist Roberto Díaz, flutists Jeffrey Khaner and Mimi Stillman, guitarist Jason Vieaux, Arditti, Dover, Jasper, and American string quartets, Empire Brass, Eroica Trio, and Tanglewood Festival Chorus.

His recent work, *Concerto for Orchestra*—described as “stunning” and “tonal and engaging” (*The Cincinnati Enquirer*)—was commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony and premiered in its 2015-16 season finale, conducted by Music Director Louis Langrée. The work was recently released in the orchestra’s latest recording *Concertos for Orchestra*.

Other recent commissions include *Trace* (“Lush, neo-impressionistic” — *The Cincinnati Enquirer*) by the Cincinnati Symphony, conducted by Mei-Ann Chen; Violin Concerto (“Magical...this is new music I’d love to hear again and again.” — *Palm Beach Arts Paper*) by the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, conducted by Stewart Robertson and featuring violinist Caroline Goulding; *First Sight* by the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by Sarah Hicks; *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers* (“Exquisite, thoroughly successful”— *The Examiner*) by the Green Bay Symphony, conducted by Christoph Campestrini; and *Red Trees, Wrinkled Cliffs* by the Curtis Institute for its concert tour around the world led by Grammy-winning guitarist Jason Vieaux and Curtis president, violist Roberto Díaz.

His *The Grand Canal*, a kaleidoscopic large-scale work mixing together two traditional Chinese instrumentalists (erhu and ruan), a Chinese opera singer, and a full symphony

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orchestra with chorus, was performed during a nationally televised celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It received its US premiere by Princeton (NJ) and Columbus (OH) symphonies under Rossen Milanov, and its European premiere by RTÉ National Symphony under Jiamin Song at the National Concert Hall in Dublin, Ireland.

Zhou's 2016-17 season features works as diverse as *Broken Ink*, a 30-minute, multi-movement meditation on Song Dynasty poetry premiered by Princeton Symphony under Rossen Milanov; *Petals of Fire*, a fierce rhapsody inspired by American artist Cy Twombly's 1989 painting, premiered by Michigan State University Wind Symphony under Kevin Sedatole at the 2017 CBDNA National Convention; and *Viaje* (voyage) for flute and strings—featured on American Public Media's Performance Today®—of which the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote “[it] fused the composer's Chinese American sensibility with the lore of ancient Spain so convincingly that the exotic flute solos for [Mimi] Stillman sounded like the most natural thing in the world.”

Other noted orchestral performances have come from the Pittsburgh Symphony conducted by Daniel Meyer, the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä, Houston Symphony and Christoph Köenig, the Indianapolis Symphony and Christoph Eberle, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Rossen Milanov, Reno Philharmonic and Laura Jackson, Spokane Symphony and Eckart Preu, Asheville Symphony and Daniel Meyer, Hawaii Symphony and Sarah Hicks, Winston-Salem Symphony and Matthew Troy, Curtis Symphony and Benjamin Shwartz, and American Composers Orchestra conducted by Paul Dunkel.

Zhou's music has been performed repeatedly at prestigious venues around the world such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood Festival, Ecoles d'Art Américaines de Fontainebleau in France, Usedomer Musikfestival in Germany, and Mozarteum Brasileiro in Brazil. He has served as composer-in-residence with the Green Bay Symphony and Chicago's Music In the Loft Concert Series. His works have been broadcast on NPR, PBS, and recorded on Cedille, Innova, Fanfare Cincinnati, Archimusic, and Pacific records.

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Among Zhou's many awards and honors are first prize in the Washington International Competition for Composers, first prize in the ASCAP/Lotte Lehmann Art Song Competition, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Glick Award, the Minnesota Orchestra Composers Institute, Symphony in C Composers Award, American Composers Orchestra Underwood Readings, Presser Music Award, three ASCAP Morton Gould awards, and an Excellence Award of Large Symphonic Work in the 16th Musical Composition Award given (every five years) by the Ministry of Culture of China. In 2013, the recording of his *String Quartet No. 2 "The Great Wall"* was nominated for the Best Classical Album and won Best Instrumental Performance at the "Chinese Grammy"—the Golden Melody Awards. His recording of "The Grand Canal" was included in the 100 Important Audio and Video Publications of 2009 by General Administration of Press and Publication of China, and exhibited at MIDEM, the world's leading international event for the music industry in Cannes, France. Many of his commissions were supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Outside of the Classical arena, Zhou has composed music for film, dance, and crossover. He started playing piano in numerous recording sessions and arranging all kinds of music when he was 12, often working with his father who is a busy commercial composer in China. When he was 17, his interest in Jazz led to the creation of *Duet* for flute and piano, which earned him an Honorable Mention at 1999 Julius Hemphill International Jazz Composition Awards. His score for *Eternal Beloved*, a major Chinese feature film about love and afterlife—described as "a pristine look and delicate tone...that's beautifully matched by Zhou's warm, restrained score" (*Variety*)—has received critical acclaim since the premiere at 2009 Shanghai International Film Festival. His award-winning crossover albums put Chinese folk music on a spin by mixing performance and technology.

Born in 1981 in Hangzhou, China, Zhou holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music (B.M.), the Juilliard School (M.M.) and USC Thornton School of Music (D.M.A.). He studied composition with Jennifer Higdon, Christopher Rouse, Stephen Hartke, Richard Danielpour, and Donald Crockett, and has held Composition Fellowships from Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen Music Festival, Henri Mancini Institute, and American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. He taught at Colgate University since 2011, and joined Michigan State University College of Music as associate professor of composition in 2016. Visit ZhouTianMusic.com for more.

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CONDENSED BIO (300)

Critically acclaimed for his lush and distinctive musical voice, Chinese-born American composer **Zhou Tian** (pronounced JOH TEE-en; Zhou is his last name) seeks inspiration from different cultures and strives to mix them seamlessly into a musically satisfying combination for performers and audience alike. Described as “absolutely beautiful” and “utterly satisfying” (*Fanfare*), his compositions have been performed by leading orchestras and performers in the United States and abroad, such as the Pittsburgh Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Ireland’s RTÉ National Symphony, pianist Yuja Wang, violinist Chloë Hanslip, violist Roberto Díaz, flutist Jeffrey Khaner, guitarist Jason Vieaux, Arditti, Dover, and American string quartets, Empire Brass, Eroica Trio, and Tanglewood Festival Chorus. His recent work, *Concerto for Orchestra*—described as “stunning” and “tonal and engaging” (*The Cincinnati Enquirer*)—was commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony and premiered in its 2015-16 season finale, conducted by Music Director Louis Langrée. The work was recently released in the orchestra’s latest recording *Concertos for Orchestra*. His large-scale suite for soloists, orchestra, and chorus, *The Grand Canal*, was performed during a nationally televised celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. His music has been performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and broadcast on NPR and PBS. He holds degrees from the Curtis Institute (B.M.), the Juilliard School (M.M.), and USC Thornton School of Music (D.M.A.). His principle teachers included Jennifer Higdon, Christopher Rouse, and Stephen Hartke. He is a first-prize winner of Washington International Composers Competition, ASCAP/Lotte Lehmann Art Song Competition, and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Glick Award, and has held Composition Fellowships from Tanglewood and Aspen. He is associate professor of composition at Michigan State University College of Music. (ZhouTianMusic.com)

SHORT BIO (150)

Critically acclaimed for his lush and distinctive musical voice, Chinese-American composer Zhou Tian (JOH TEE-en; Zhou is his last name) seeks inspiration from different cultures and strives to mix them seamlessly into a musically satisfying combination for performers and audience alike. Described as “absolutely beautiful” and “utterly satisfying” (*Fanfare*), his compositions have been performed by leading orchestras and performers in the United States and abroad. His recent work, *Concerto for Orchestra*—described as “stunning” and “tonal and engaging” (*The Cincinnati Enquirer*)—was commissioned, premiered and recorded by the Cincinnati Symphony and Music Director Louis Langrée. His large-scale suite for soloists, orchestra, and chorus, *The Grand Canal*, was performed during a nationally televised concert of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. He holds degrees from Curtis (B.M.), Juilliard (M.M.), and USC (D.M.A.), is associate professor of composition at Michigan State University College of Music. (ZhouTianMusic.com)

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REVIEW QUOTATIONS

- “Absolutely beautiful,” “Utterly satisfying” — *Fanfare*
- “He is unafraid of monumental gestures, but at the same time he wastes nothing, whether notes or our time itself. There are always touches of fine craftsmanship...The strings' luster made me wish I could stop writing and just listen.”
— *American Record Guide*
- “Stunning,” “tonal and engaging” — *The Cincinnati Enquirer*
- “Lush, neo-impressionistic...it made for one of the most creative – and most enjoyable – concerts heard at Music Hall this season. — *The Cincinnati Enquirer*
- “Masterful new [violin] concerto.” “The solo violin plays with soaring melodic loveliness...the effect was magical.” “This is new music I’d love to hear again and again. It is a minor masterpiece.” — *Palm Beach Arts Paper*
- “The first half of the evening [at the Houston Symphony] was an unqualified success. Zhou Tian's attractive A Thousand Years of Good Prayers effectively communicated the goals of the composer, which he eloquently and succinctly described from stage. Zhou's harmonic language and orchestration mix Ravel and Barber with a hint of his native China, albeit without the edgy grit of Chen Yi or flamboyant theatricality of Tan Dun. Still, the piece feels first and foremost like an honest musical utterance, which is important in today's day and age. Unabashedly tonal, with a true sense of tension and resolution, the arc of the piece convinces through and through. This is an impressive essay from a 30-year old composer, and Zhou Tian is certainly a compositional voice to watch.” — *ConcertoNet*
- “Not only masterfully crafted but a true masterpiece” — *Classical Voice of New England*
- “An exquisite piece,” “Zhou says he 'wanted to write a piece to convey a sense of spiritual bliss.' In this effort he was thoroughly successful.” — *The Examiner*
- “Evocative” — *Houston Chronicle*
- “Mesmerizing” — *New York Concert Review*
- “Delicate, lyrical, and beautiful” — *Classical Candor*

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