

Zhou Tian

TRANSCEND

for orchestra

Commissioned by

Reno Philharmonic, Laura Jackson, Music Director
Utah Symphony, Thierry Fischer, Music Director
Omaha Symphony, Thomas Wilkins, Music Director
Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera
Boise Philharmonic, Eric Garcia, Music Director
Arapahoe Philharmonic, Devin Patrick Hughes, Music Director
Central Wisconsin Symphony, Patrick Miles, Music Director
Cheyenne Symphony, William Intriligator, Music Director
Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras, Allen Tinkham, Music Director
Evanston Symphony, Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director
Idaho State-Civic Symphony, Julie Sorensen, Music Director
Michigan State University College of Music, Jim Forger, Dean
Stanford Symphony Orchestra, Paul Phillips, Music Director

In commemoration of

The 150th Anniversary of The Transcontinental Railroad's Completion

| FIRST EDITION PRESS |

Zhou Tian

[b.1981]

TRANSCEND

for orchestra

(2019)

- I. Pulse
- II. Promise
- III. D-O-N-E

Duration: ca. 22 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
English Horn
2 Clarinets in B-flat
Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani

Percussion (3 players):

- 1: Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Vibraphone, Crotales (bowed), Tam-tam
- 2: Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbal
- 3: Bass Drum

Harp
Piano

Strings

Performance materials & licensing

FirstEdition.us

Sound/video samples & complete list of works

ZhouTianMusic.com

Note: the composer's family name is Zhou and his given name is Tian. When only the composer's last name is listed in the program, it should be listed as "Zhou."
The full name should be listed as "Zhou Tian." Thank you.

Programme note

A few years ago, I was delighted to have been invited to compose a new work commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad's completion in May 2019. When I learned that 13 American orchestras — many of which located along the route of the Railroad — would join forces together to commission and premiere this new work across the country, I was truly honored, as I knew the significant cultural impact this project would entail.

Begun in 1862 and completed in 1869, the Transcontinental Railroad effectively linked the US from east to west for the first time. Its cultural heritage includes the contribution of a thousands-strong Chinese and Irish workforce who toiled in severe weather and cruel working conditions. Numerous “hell on wheels” towns, as described by the Linda Hall Library, “proliferated along the construction route and became famous for rapid growth and infamous for lawlessness.” As the settlements pushed westward, there was a mixing of ethnic groups and cultures. Unfortunately, as the daunting task of laying tracks over difficult terrain increased, many workers perished, and many of the rest were denied the American dream by the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. But those who stayed brought traditional art and music into the fabric of American culture.

As a Chinese-born composer who immigrated to this country, educated at the nation's top music schools, and now serving at one of its finest institutions, I was moved to create this work, to tell a musical story, to celebrate human perseverance, and to pay tribute to my own cultural heritage.

“Transcend” is composed of 3 movements. It begins with “Pulse,” in which rich and expansive strings develop into an exciting pulse of 152 BPM. The violent, percussive poundings that occur from time to time are like blasts of dynamite, evoking the tension and suspense of man versus nature. “Promise,” a meditative second movement, is a vocalise for those who sought a better future. Lyrical woodwind solos, dashing flute and harp, and plush strings are met with traditional Chinese folk music-inspired melodies. The finale, “D-O-N-E,” is based on the rhythm of the word “done” in Morse code. This single word was sent across the US via one of the first nationwide telegraphs when the Railroad was completed in on May 10, 1869. Throughout the movement, the “done” motif is passed back and forth to numerous instruments in the orchestra. An accumulation of materials sends the piece to a climax at the end.

“D-O-N-E” rhythmic motif, based on the Morse code



“Transcend” was jointly commissioned by Reno Philharmonic (Laura Jackson, Music Director), Utah Symphony (Thierry Fischer), Omaha Symphony (Thomas Wilkins), Sacramento Philharmonic, Boise Philharmonic (Eric Garcia), Arapahoe Philharmonic (Devin Patrick Hughes), Cheyenne Symphony (William Intriligator), Chicago Youth Symphony (Allen Tinkham), Central Wisconsin Symphony (Patrick Miles), Evanston Symphony (Lawrence Eckerling), Idaho State-Civic Symphony (Julie Sorensen), Michigan State University Symphony (Jim Forger), and Stanford Symphony (Paul Phillips). My deep gratitude goes to Laura Jackson, without whose passion, courage, and artistry the project would not have been possible. I want to sincerely thank all commissioning partners and the many kind and enthusiastic men and women who offered insights and personal stories during a year-long research and travel on this piece. As a composer, this has been truly an inspiring journey.

—Zhou Tian

More

“The Work of Art,” a PBS documentary chronicling the making of “Transcend” at the Reno Philharmonic, received national distribution and is available to stream at [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org).

The hour-long documentary received a Silver Telly Award for *Best Documentary – Individual* in 2020.

Reviews

“Works like...Mr. Zhou’s orchestral piece accomplish two important things: They remind us of how we got from there to here, and they refine that history by paying belated tribute to contributors who might otherwise be forgotten.”

—**The Wall Street Journal**

“The third movement, ‘D-O-N-E,’ in a stroke of genius, used the Morse code for the word “done” to compose a rhythmic motive that would unify the rest of the composition...The audience approved of the premiere with a standing ovation. It’s a treat when classical music has a subject matter with only a few degrees of separation from the Holland Center itself.”

—**Omaha World-Herald**

“The most compelling part of this concert is the Utah premiere of Transcend by Zhou Tian. This work, commissioned in partnership with thirteen orchestras, celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike that completed the Transcontinental Railroad. Zhou approaches the accomplishment from a poignant angle, relating that thousands of Chinese immigrants lived and died as laborers on the project and for a variety of reasons, their contributions have been overlooked or even denied.”

—**Front Row Review (Utah)**

Consortium premieres

- World Premiere: 27 & 28 April 2019. Reno Philharmonic conducted by Laura Jackson
- 17 & 18 May 2019. Utah Symphony conducted by Thierry Fischer
- 20 September 2019. Idaho State-Civic Symphony conducted by Julie Sorensen
- 20 & 21 September 2019. Omaha Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Wilkins
- 12 October 2019. Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Intriligator
- 18 & 19 October. Boise Philharmonic conducted by Eric Garcia
- 1 November 2019. Arapahoe Philharmonic conducted by Devin Patrick Hughes
- 15 & 17 November 2019. Stanford Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Phillips
- 17 November 2019. Chicago Youth Symphony conducted by Allen Tinkham
- 1 February 2020. Sacramento Philharmonic conducted by Christopher Rountree
- 22 & 23 February 2020. Central Wisconsin Symphony conducted by Andres Moran
- 13 February 2022. Michigan State University Symphony conducted by Octavio Más-Arocas
- 22 May 2022. Evanston Symphony conducted by Larry Eckerling



SAMPLE PAGE

Transposed Score

Commissioned by the Reno Philharmonic in partnership with Utah Symphony, Omaha Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera,
Boise Philharmonic, Arapahoe Philharmonic, Central Wisconsin Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, Chicago Youth Symphony
Orchestras, Evanston Symphony, Idaho State-Civic Symphony, Michigan State University and Stanford Symphony
in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the First Transcontinental Railroad's completion

TRANSCEND

I. Pulse

Zhou Tian

Andante sostenuto ♩ = 66

The score is for the first movement, 'I. Pulse', in 3/4 time, marked 'Andante sostenuto' with a tempo of 66 beats per minute. The instrumentation includes Piccolo, Flute (I and II), Oboe (I and II), English Horn, Clarinet (Bb) (I and II), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (I and II), Contrabassoon, Horn (F) (I, II, III, IV), Trumpet (C) (I, II, III), Trombone (I, II, III), Tuba, Timpani, Percussion (I-III), Harp, Piano, Violin (I and II), Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The woodwinds and strings play sustained notes, while the Horn (F) has a specific melodic line starting in the fifth measure. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *mf espress.* (mezzo-forte, expressive).

allargando **E** Allegro energico ♩ = 152

50

Picc. *cresc.* *sfz*

Fl. *cresc.* *sfz*

Ob. *cresc.* *sfz*

E. Hn. *cresc.* *sfz*

Cl. (B.) *cresc.* *sfz*

B. Cl. *cresc.* *sfz*

Bsn. *cresc.* *sfz*

C. Bn. *cresc.* *sfz*

Hn. (F) *cresc.* *ff con fuoco*

Tpt. (C) *cresc.* *sfz* *f con fuoco*

Tbn. e Tba. *cresc.* *sfz* *ff con fuoco*

Timp. *mf* *sfz* *ff con fuoco*

Perc. II *fp* *f*

Perc. III *mf* *f secco* *p*

Hp.

Pf. *ff con fuoco*

allargando **E** Allegro energico ♩ = 152

Vn. I *ff con fuoco* unis. 3

Vn. II *ff con fuoco* 3

Va. *ff con fuoco* 3

Vc. *ff con fuoco*

Cb. *ff con fuoco*

II. Promise

Dramatico ♩ = 72

Piccolo

Flute I

Flute II

Oboe I

Oboe II

English Horn

Clarinet (B \flat) I

Clarinet (B \flat) II

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon I

Bassoon II

Contrabassoon

Horn (F) I

Horn (F) II

Horn (F) III

Horn (F) IV

Trumpet (C) I

Trumpet (C) II

Trumpet (C) III

Trombone I

Trombone II

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion I

Percussion II

Percussion III

Harp

Piano

Dramatico ♩ = 72

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

III. D-O-N-E

Allegro con brio ♩ = 152

Piccolo

Flute I

Flute II

Oboe I

Oboe II

English Horn

Clarinet (B \flat) I

Clarinet (B \flat) II

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon I

Bassoon II

Contrabassoon

Horn (F) I

Horn (F) II

Horn (F) III

Horn (F) IV

Trumpet (C) I

Trumpet (C) II

Trumpet (C) III

Trombone I

Trombone II

Tuba III

Timpani

Percussion I

Percussion II

Percussion III

Harp

Piano

Allegro con brio ♩ = 152

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

8

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

E. Hn.

Cl. (B \flat)

B. Cl.

Bsn.

C. Bn.

Hn. (F)

Tpt. (C)

Tbn.
e

Tba.

Timp.

I

Perc. II

III

Pf.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

