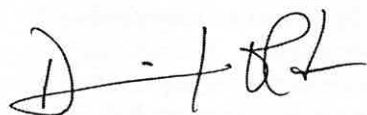


Dear Friends,

Well our final concert of the season is fast upon us and it's also the time of year when we ask for your financial support. Rather than hold gala fundraisers which seem to have little to do with who we are and what we do, Bob Aitken and I feel that the best approach is to simply ask you, the people who know New Music Concerts and think it important, to pitch in and make a charitable donation. It seems to work, so here I am trying it again. This year we have the added incentive of being able to **match your donations dollar for dollar** through the munificence of one of our long standing patrons. Please help us take advantage of this generous offer. We do need your help. Enough said.

Our **Malaysian Voices** concert takes place at the **Music Gallery** on **Sunday May 8** and promises to be a treat. **Chong Kee Yong**, who really is becoming a star composer, has curated a concert of distinctive music by his younger colleagues and is providing two world premieres of his own work for us. *Threnody for the mother of the Earth*, a flute concerto composed for Bob, also serves as a memorial to the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March. This is a dramatic work which at one point requires the audience to participate in two minutes of mayhem with bird whistles, Malaysian frog blocks and rattles and we encourage you to bring similar noisemakers of your own. The other is a solo work, *Bell Stone*, written for percussionist **Aiyun Huang** who will travel from Montreal for the premiere. The youngest composer on the program, **Chow Jun Yi** (b.1987), who is currently studying in Beijing, will be with us for the first North American performance of his evocative *A Night Without Voices*. Subtitled "Have you ever talked to yourself," it is a work that depicts the angst of modern day city life and the loss of "sweet memory." **Neo Nai Wen's** *The Forgotten Sound* also finds its inspiration in the city. "If a city had a voice, it would be the voice of expectation or of hope... modeled like a Buddhist chant, this is the voice of the city that is in my imagination." The sensitivity **Yii Kah Hoe** mastered with space as a Chinese ink painter in his younger days is now evident in his music. *Wild Cursive* was inspired by Huai Su, whose forceful and flowing "wild cursive" calligraphy style is said to be inspired by the dagger dancing of Lady Gongsun. All in all it promises to be an exotic adventure and I hope you will join us.

Sincerely yours,



David Olds General Manager



Robert Aitken, artistic director

SUNDAY MAY 8 2011
MALAYSIAN VOICES
CURATED BY KEE-YONG CHONG
THE MUSIC GALLERY

197 John Street

Aiyun Huang, solo percussion
Adam Sherkin, solo piano
Robert Aitken, solo flute and direction
New Music Concerts Ensemble

Programme:

Chow Jun-Yi (Malaysia 1987)
A Night without Voices (2009) *

Yii Kah-Hoe (Malaysia 1970)
Wild Cursive (2010) *

Tazul Izan Tajuddin (Malaysia 1970)
Torrent of Images (2011) for solo piano *

Chong Kee-Yong (Malaysia 1971)
Bell Stone (2011) for solo percussion *

Chong Kee-Yong
Mourning the murder of an old Banyan tree (2002) *

Neo Nai-Wen (Malaysia 1984)
The Forgotten Sound (2009) *

Chong Kee-Yong
Threnody to the mother of the Earth (2011) *
for solo flute and 11 instruments

Intro 7:15^{pm} | Concert 8^{pm} | Info 416.961.9594
\$35 regular | \$25 seniors / arts workers | \$10 students

* Canadian premiere | * World premiere

Programme subject to change without notice

CHONG Kee Yong is one of the Malaysia's leading contemporary music composers. Few composers can manage to fashion a truly individual voice from the experimental techniques of today. Chong belongs to this special class who can turn a melange of exquisite timbres into a compelling piece of music, music that composer Peter Eötvös describes as "imaginative and poetic" and Jonathan Harvey calls "very inventive and artistically pure". His style is highly experimental and innovative, yet deeply spiritual and lyrical in its own way. Chong's musical language is enriched by his own Chinese, as well as the multicultural Malaysian, heritage.

Chong was born in Kluang, Johor, where his parents were farmers. He graduated from the Malaysian Institute of Arts in Kuala Lumpur, completed his Bachelor of Arts at the Xian Conservatory and pursued his final studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels. There he acquired the tools for his compositional style, a delightful balance between cutting edge modern techniques and a deep sense of poetic beauty. In 2001 Chong graduated as Master of Composition with Highest Honours. His post-graduation studies include numerous master classes with composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Daan Manneke, Zoltan Janey, Peter Eötvös, Salvatore Sciarrino, Henri Pousseur, and Hanspeter Kyburz.

Chong's distinctive style has won him an unending series of awards and commissions. His list of prizes at various competitions is remarkable, for example the Prix Marcel Hastir by Belgian Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters & Fine Arts (1999, 2003), the 4th International Andrzej Panufnik Competition for Young Composers in Poland (2002), the Grand Prix at the 2nd Seoul International Competition for Composers (2003), the Max-Reger-Tage International Composition Competition in Germany (2004), the winner of 1st Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra Composer Forum (2003) & 1st Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra International Composers' Award (2004), 2nd Lepo Sumera International young composer prize (2006), Lutoslawski award (2006), BMW award in the International Isang Yun Music Prize in Korea (2007), Second prize in the Preisträgerkonzert des Internationalen Kompositionswettbewerb "global music – contemporary expression" in Germany and 3rd prize in the Luxembourg International Composition Award 2008. Most recently, in 2009 Chong received a prestigious commission from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation (USA), the special prize in the Giga Herzt Awards from ZKM | Institute for Music and Acoustics Karlsruhe (Germany) and the prestigious "The Outstanding Young Malaysian Awards" in the Cultural Achievement category (Malaysia). He was the artistic director of Kuala Lumpur Contemporary Music Festival 2009.

Chong Kee-Yong

Mourning the murder of an old Banyan tree (2002)

A long time ago, I read a poem, "Balade Terbunuhnya Beringin Tua Di Sebuah Bandaraya" by the Malaysian poet Dato Dr. Usman Awang. This poem led me to ponder what civilization has brought to us, and how it has also destroyed so much that we hold dear. I'm very afraid of losing our tradition, our culture, our language, our environment, our planet and more due to the constant pressure to develop and improve our lives.

In the Buddhist idiom the Banyan tree represents a consciousness of intelligence and awareness of The Way.

Balade Terbunuhnya Beringin Tua Di Sebuah Bandaraya
(A ballad mourning the murder of an old Banyan tree in a city)
by Dato Dr. Usman Awang

Fragment from the poem:

~Sampai sekarang, tiap senjakala lembayung petang
Dengarlah suara Beringin mengucapkan pesan:
Selamat tinggal, selamat tinggal wahai awan
Selamat tinggal matahari selamat tinggal bulan
Selamat tinggal, kupu-kupu sayang
Selamat tinggal, wahai burung-burung bersarang
Selamat tinggal anak-anak bermain riang
Namaku Beringin pohon tua yang terbuang
Dimusuhi oleh rancangan bernama Pembangunan

Translation:

To this day, when twilight graces the sky
You can hear the old banyan tree's farewell:
Goodbye, goodbye cloud
Goodbye sun, goodbye moon
Goodbye dear butterflies
Goodbye nesting birds
Goodbye frolicking children
I was an old Banyan tree, cast aside
By an enemy called Development.

This work was commissioned by the "Het Collectief" ensemble and is dedicated to them. The first performance was given by the "Het Collectief" ensemble and conductor Mr. Wibert Aerts at the "De Rode Pomp" festival in Gent, Belgium on June 8th, 2002, and at the "NADINE", Brussels, Belgium on June 9th, 2002. I completed a revised version especially for the concert "OOST WEST in het MIM". It was performed by Kamermuziekensemble van Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel and conducted by Mr. Bart Bouckaert at the concert hall of Muziekinstrumentenmuseum concert hall in Brussels, Belgium on December 5th, 2002.

— CHONG Kee Yong