



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

# University of North Texas College of Music

Doctoral Lecture Recital | Friday, March 31, 2023 | 8:00 pm | Voertman Hall

**Yuxin Mei, pipa**  
**Han Zhao, piano**

**FROM WEeping CONCUBINES TO NATIONAL HEROES:  
THE CHANGING IMAGES OF WOMEN IN TWENTIETH CENTURY PIPA MUSIC**

Feminine imagery is a unique topic in the Chinese pipa repertoire. From peacemaking concubines to revolutionary sisters, national heroes, and nature goddesses, the changing portrayal of women in pipa music mirrors the political changes and the consequent transformation of gender perceptions in Chinese society. These women—whether from the feudal era, the revolutionary period, or from folk beliefs—reflect Chinese cultural perceptions of the feminine. In contrast to Western feminism, Chinese feminism places greater emphasis on “Difference.” This difference can be seen in the construction of the “Chinese Woman” in musical works. Furthermore, these changing images of women represent the ideological and political changes that occurred in China during the long twentieth century. In this lecture recital, I select four pieces representing Chinese women from the traditional canon, folk traditions, and contemporary compositions. I will examine representations of the Chinese Woman in these musical works from three angles: first, I analyze changes in performance techniques used to represent women from different periods; second, I construe the intentions of these works from cultural-historical perspectives; last, from a Chinese feminist perspective, I interpret the “Difference” represented by the changed feminine persona in pipa music.

Chen Sui ..... Traditional  
Liu Dehai performance version

Lady Zhaojun Goes Beyond the Frontier ..... Traditional Cantonese  
arr. 1980s Liu Dehai

The Sun Goddess (1998).....Wan Xian/Yang Jing  
(b. 1954)/(b. 1965)

Pipa Concerto: The Little Sisters  
of the Grassland (1973) .....Wu Zuqiang/Wang Yanqiao/Liu Dehai  
(1927–2022)/(b. 1937)/(1937–2020)

**Yuxin Mei** is a renowned pipa performer, educator, and the UNT Chinese Ensemble founding director. She is also a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at UNT and winner of the Presser Graduate Music Award in 2018. Her paper, "Negotiating with Sound: The Living Sound Niche Created by the Chinese Immigrants in Dallas Area" received the 2016 Vida Chenoweth Student Paper Prize award from the Society for Ethnomusicology Southern Plains Chapter in 2016. She was a Texas Folklife Apprenticeship Program Artist Mentor in 2020 among other grants. Yuxin holds BA and MA degrees in pipa performance and education from the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the Xingai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou, China. From 2006–2012, she was on faculty at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and prior to this she was artistic director and soloist for the Zhuhai Chinese Music Chamber Orchestra. She has performed in China, Portugal, Norway, Singapore, France, Germany, and other countries. She has taught masterclasses at the Macau Art School and the Chong Hong Chinese Music Association in Macau. From 2012 to 2016, she was invited to Norway as part of the cultural exchange project "Spoor" hosted by The Cultural Rucksack in Akershus. In 1998, Mei released the album *Spring of Zhu Hai*.

**Dr. Han Zhao** was awarded first prize at the 5th Asian Youth Piano open competition in 2011; first prize at the Asia Pacific Youth Piano Competition in 2013; third prize at the 18th Hong Kong Asian Piano open competition in 2014; first place at the Pi Kappa Lambda Piano Competition in 2017; third place at the London International Piano Competition in 2021; and first place at the Medici International Piano Competition in 2022. In addition, she was invited to perform at Jilin University, Northeast Normal University, Harbin Normal University, and the University of Pennsylvania from 2011–2015. She was also invited by pianist Mr. Lancing Weitzman to perform a charity concert at the Lulu Shrine Association in 2015. In 2016 she was invited by Dr. Joyce Lindorff to perform a harpsichord concert at Temple University. Zhao's current research includes performance and pedagogy, including an analysis of the performance method of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* and an exploration of its ethnomusicology aspects, as well as the publication of a pedagogical and performance analysis of the intermediate piano works of Chinese composer Henglu Yao. Zhao earned a doctor of musical arts degree in piano performance with cognates in piano pedagogy and harpsichord performance from the University of North Texas. In addition, she holds a master of music in piano performance from Temple University and a bachelor of music in piano performance from Shenyang Conservatory of Music.

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**Six hundred forty-second program of the 2022–2023 season**  
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