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## **East and West blend in music by the Shanghai Quartet; Hop debut features new work by Academy Award winner Tan Dun**

HANOVER, NH—Known for sensitively melding East and West, the **Shanghai Quartet** comes to the Hop with a program of Haydn and Beethoven and a new Hop-commissioned work by Grammy and Academy Award winner Tan Dun, on Tuesday, February 5, 7 pm, in Spaulding Auditorium.

Founded in 1983 by four students at the Shanghai Conservatory, the quartet is now one of the world's foremost chamber ensembles, renowned for an elegant, passionate style that encompasses Western masterworks, Asian music and contemporary compositions.

Critics have praised the quartet's "charismatic, sensitive musicianship" (*New York Classical Review*), "ravishing beauty" (ConcertoNet) and "singing tone, a wide range of dynamics, and near perfect balance, all in the service of a well-thought-out conception of the work" (*Maine Classical Review*). Wrote the *Boston Globe*: "The Shanghai's playing was superb throughout. The quartet's sound is plush but always translucent enough to appreciate each player's distinctive qualities." Wrote the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*: "Aside from abundant technique, the rarest quality the Shanghai possess is an uncanny ability not only to produce a variety of sounds but also to evoke a variety of sound worlds, and invariably to find the perfect textural mixture to realize a composer's intentions. ... Watching the players trading solos like rockstars, one imagines Beethoven proud."

The quartet's Hop program demonstrates its artistic breadth: Haydn's String Quartet in D Major, Op. 20, No. 4 and Beethoven's String Quartet in E minor, Op.59, No. 2. ("Razumovsky") are joined by Dun's Hop-supported reworking of his 1982 Quartet No. 1 *Feng Ya Song*. The work won an international prize and brought Dun, then a student at Beijing Central Conservatory, his first international fame--followed by his music being condemned by the Chinese authorities as "spiritual pollution." Emigrating to the US in 1986, Dun has gone on to become one of the most celebrated "world classical" composer, with acclaimed chamber and orchestral works, operas and film scores to his credit, including his Oscar-winning score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000).

The Haydn takes us to the roots of the string quartet genre. It is one of six "Opus 20" quartets that were composed in 1772, when Haydn was influenced by new philosophical and political ideas sweeping Europe. The six quartets are considered a milestone in the history of composition; in them, Haydn develops compositional techniques that were to define the string quartets for the next 200 years. Those innovations include a greater

equality in the voices of the four instruments, rather than letting the first violin dominating the ensemble; greater expressive and dynamic range; and a departure from the dance forms that early quartets adhered to-- these works were for listening to, not for dancing to. No. 4 has been the most popular of the six, over the centuries, especially for its second movement, marked to be played as "Somewhat slow and affectionate, tender."

The Beethoven is also part of a set, being the second of three quartets commissioned by Count Andreas Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador in Vienna. Also like the Haydn Opus 20, the Razumovsky quartets were a milestone in string quartet evolution, increasing the length, virtuosity and emotional range of the genre. In keeping with the Count's wishes, Beethoven used a Russian folk song as the theme of the third movement a Russian folk song. (That same song was also used by Modest Mussorgsky in the coronation scene of his opera *Boris Godunov*, by Sergei Rachmaninoff in the sixth movement of his *6 Morceaux for Piano Duet*, Op.11, and by Igor Stravinsky in his ballet *The Firebird*.)

### **MORE ABOUT...**

The **Shanghai Quartet**—Weigang Li (violin, founding member), Yi-Wen Jiang (violin, Shanghai member since 1994), Honggang Li (viola, founding member), Nicholas Tzavaras (cello, Shanghai member since 2000)—has worked with the world's most distinguished artists and regularly tours the major music centers of Europe, North America and Asia. Recent festival performances range from the International Music Festivals of Seoul and Beijing to the Festival Pablo Casals in France and the Beethoven Festival in Poland, as well as numerous concerts in all regions of North America. Among innumerable collaborations with noted artists, they have performed with the Tokyo, Juilliard and Guarneri Quartets, cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell, pianists Menahem Pressler, Peter Serkin, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Yuja Wang, pipa virtuoso Wu Man and the vocal ensemble Chanticleer. The Shanghai Quartet has been a regular performer at many of North America's leading chamber music festivals, including Maverick Concerts where they recently made their 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual appearance.

The Quartet has a long history of championing new music and juxtaposing traditions of Eastern and Western music. With more than 30 commissioned works, their recent premieres include Du Yun's *Tattooed in Snow* (2015), Zhao Lin's *Red Lantern* (2015) for pipa and string quartet, and String Quartet No. 12, *Fantasia notturna* by William Bolcom (2017). The tradition continues with forthcoming works by Wang Lei and Tan Dun composed for their 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018-19.

The Shanghai Quartet has an extensive discography of more than 30 recordings, ranging from the Schumann and Dvorak piano quintets with Rudolf Buchbinder to Zhou Long's *Poems from Tang* for string quartet and orchestra with the Singapore Symphony (BIS). Delos released the Quartet's most popular disc, *Chinasong*, a collection of Chinese folk songs arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang reflecting on his childhood memories of the Cultural Revolution in China. The complete Beethoven String Quartets, a highly praised, seven-disc project, can be heard on an acclaimed Camerata set, released in 2009.

A diverse and interesting array of media projects include a cameo appearance playing Bartok's String Quartet No. 4 in Woody Allen's film *Melinda and Melinda* and PBS television's *Great Performances* series. Violinist Weigang Li appeared in the documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, and the family of cellist Nicholas Tzavaras was the subject of the film *Music of the Heart*, starring Meryl Streep. The Shanghai Quartet is the subject of a documentary film, *Behind the Strings*, currently in production, to be released this year.

Composer **Tan Dun's** works often incorporate audiovisual elements; use instruments constructed from organic materials, such as paper, water, and stone; and are often inspired by traditional Chinese theatrical and ritual performance. In 2013, he was named a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. He has won numerous awards for his

works, including an Academy Award, a Grammy Award and a BAFTA award. He has been called on to score music not only for prominent films but also for some the major events of his time, including the reunification of Hong Kong with China and the world's celebration of the new millennium.

Born in 1957 in in China's rural Hunan province, Tan was a largely self-taught musician who planted rice as a child as "re-education" during China's Cultural Revolution. Growing up among peasants in a shamanistic culture, he kept his ears open to the music of village folk songs, and then to occupy his mind, arranged fantastic compositions of the music with any instrument he could find, from traditional folk instruments like the erhu, or one-string Chinese fiddle, to woks and farm tools. At 17, he was the village musician, playing at parties, weddings, and funerals.

At 19, Dun heard his first piece of Western classical music, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, while playing violin in a Beijing opera company. In 1978, he was selected over thousands of applicants for a spot at Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in composition. In 1983, he won second place in the international Weber prize competition for his "String Quartet: Fen Ya Song," the first Chinese musician to win that honor since 1949. The Chinese authorities were less enthusiastic, that same year deeming Dun's music to be "spiritual pollution." In 1986, Dun moved to New York City to complete his studies at Columbia University and was soon rubbing shoulders with the composers of New York's avant-garde. By the time he completed his doctorate in 1993, he had won numerous international awards and commissions and completed his first opera, a setting of nature poems by Qu Yuan called *Nine Songs* (1989). He has gone on to complete numerous other operatic works, orchestral works, chamber pieces and works of "organic music," prominently featuring paper, stone, or water as instruments.

Dun earned more widespread attention after composing the score for Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), for which he won an Academy Award, a Grammy Award, and a BAFTA Award. He has scored numerous other films and also created multimedia works in which on-stage musicians interact with musicians performing on screen.

### **The Hopkins Center for the Arts**

Founded in 1962, "the Hop" is a multi-disciplinary academic, visual and performing arts center dedicated to uncovering insights, igniting passions, and nurturing talents to help Dartmouth and the surrounding Upper Valley community engage imaginatively and contribute creatively to our world. Each year the Hop presents more than 300 live events and films by visiting artists as well as Dartmouth students and the Dartmouth community, and reaches more than 22,000 Upper Valley residents and students with outreach and arts education programs. After a celebratory 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary season in 2012-13, the Hop enters its second half-century with renewed passion for mentoring young artists, supporting the development of new work, and providing a laboratory for participation and experimentation in the arts.

### **CALENDAR LISTINGS**

#### **The Shanghai Quartet**

The Shanghai Quartet elegantly melds East and West, from traditional Chinese folk music to masterpieces of Western music to cutting-edge contemporary works. The group's more than 30 recordings range from quartets by Schumann, Dvořák and Beethoven to such contemporary Asian works as the chart-topping *Chinasong*, a folksong-infused musical memoir of China's Cultural Revolution. This performance—the quartet's first Hop show since it formed 35 years ago—features Academy Award-winning Chinese composer Tan Dun's Hop-supported reworking of his landmark 1982 quartet.

Tuesday, February 5, 7 pm

Spaulding Auditorium

\$20/30, Dartmouth students \$10, 18 & under \$17/19

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