



## THE SHANGHAI QUARTET

### *Biography*

Weigang Li, *violin*  
Yi-Wen Jiang, *violin*  
Honggang Li, *viola*  
Nicholas Tzavaras, *cello*

“The whole performance was superb,” says *The New York Times*. Originally formed in Shanghai 25 years ago, this versatile ensemble is known for their passionate musicality, impressive technique, and multicultural innovations. The Shanghai Quartet's elegant style of melding the delicacy of Eastern music with the emotional breadth of Western repertoire allows them to traverse the genres, from traditional Chinese folk music to cutting edge contemporary classical works. To celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2008-09), the Quartet will premiere commissions from the three continents that comprise their artistic and cultural worlds: Chen Yi, Krzysztof Penderecki, and jazz pianist Dick Hyman.

The Quartet has performed on the world's most prominent concert stages, and regularly tours the great music centers of Europe, North and South America, and Asia. Recent seasons have included tours of Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. The Quartet has made regular appearances at Carnegie Hall both in chamber performance and with orchestra, and in 2006 performed the world premiere of a Concerto for Quartet and Orchestra by Takuma Itoh in Carnegie's Isaac Stern Auditorium.

The Quartet has a long history of championing new music and juxtaposing Eastern and Western sounds. In addition to their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commissions, the Quartet's range of commissions and premieres includes Works by Lowell Lieberman, Bright Sheng, and Zhou Long, among others.

The Quartet has built an extensive discography that now totals over 20 recordings, on multiple labels. Some of the most recent include Mendelssohn Octet (Camerata), and Zhou Long's "Poems for Tang" Quartet and Orchestra (BIS). In 2003, the Quartet released its most popular disc to date: a 24-track collection of Chinese folk songs, titled *ChinaSong*, featuring music arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang that reflect on his childhood memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Their current projects include recording the complete Beethoven string quartets (Camerata), beginning with the Opus 18 Quartets. The complete cycle is scheduled for release over the next five years.

The Quartet has appeared in a diverse and interesting array of media projects. They performed on the soundtrack recording (Bartok Quartet No. 4), as well as making a cameo appearance on screen, for the Woody Allen film, "Melinda and Melinda." They have appeared on PBS's *Great Performances* television series. Other on-screen film accomplishments include an appearance by violinist Weigang Li in the documentary "From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China," and cellist Nick Tzavaras' family was the subject of the 1999 film "Music of the Heart," which starred Meryl Streep.

The Quartet has a distinguished teaching record. They serve as the Ensemble-in-Residence at Montclair State University. They also serve as visiting professors at the Shanghai Conservatory and the Central Conservatory in China.