



THE SHANGHAI QUARTET

Biography

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

“The whole performance was superb.” - *The New York Times*

The Shanghai Quartet is renowned for its passionate musicality, impressive technique, and multicultural innovations. Its elegant style of melding the delicacy of Eastern music with the emotional breadth of Western repertoire allows it to traverse musical genres, from traditional Chinese folk music and masterpieces of Western music, to cutting edge contemporary works. The Quartet celebrates its 25th anniversary in the 2008-09 season with world premieres from the three continents that comprise its artistic and cultural worlds: Krzysztof Penderecki's *String Quartet No. 3*, Chen Yi's *From the Path of Beauty*, and jazz pianist Dick Hyman's *String Quartet*.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the Shanghai Quartet has worked with the world's most distinguished artists and regularly tours the major music centers of Europe, North America and Asia. Recent seasons have included concert tours of Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, and several countries in Europe. The Quartet has made regular appearances at Carnegie Hall in chamber performances and with orchestra, and in 2006 gave the world premiere of Takuma Itoh's *Concerto for Quartet and Orchestra* in Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium.

Performances at many of the most distinguished festivals and concert halls highlight the Shanghai Quartet's 25th anniversary season, including appearances at the Ravinia, Tanglewood, and Ottawa International Festivals and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as residencies at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the Oregon Bach Festival. November 2009 brought the world premiere of Penderecki's *String Quartet No. 3* at a special concert in Poland honoring the composer's 75th birthday with the US Premieres at Montclair State University and the University of Richmond. Continuing its anniversary collaboration with Chanticleer, the Quartet will present the Asian premiere of Chen Yi's *From the Path of Beauty* in China in May 2009.

The Quartet has a long history of championing new music and juxtaposing Eastern and Western sounds. Among its major commissions and premieres are works by Lowell Lieberman, Bright Sheng, and Zhou Long.

The Quartet has built an extensive discography that now totals over 25 recordings on multiple labels. Recent releases include the Mendelssohn Octet (Camerata) and Zhou Long's "Poems from Tang" for Quartet and Orchestra with the Singapore Symphony (BIS). In 2003, the Quartet released its most popular disc: a 24-track collection of Chinese folk songs titled *Chinasong* (Delos) featuring music arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang reflecting his childhood memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Current recording projects include the complete Beethoven string quartets (Camerata), a seven-disc project that will be completed in 2009.

The Shanghai Quartet has appeared in a diverse and interesting array of media projects, ranging from a cameo appearance in the Woody Allen film "Melinda and Melinda" playing Bartok's String Quartet No. 4 (and the film's soundtrack recording) to PBS's *Great Performances* series for television. Other film credits include an appearance by violinist Weigang Li in the documentary "From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China," and the family of cellist Nicholas Tzavaras' as the subject of the 1999 film "Music of the Heart" starring Meryl Streep.

The Shanghai Quartet has a distinguished teaching record, and currently serves as Ensemble-in-Residence at Montclair State University in New Jersey. The Quartet holds the esteemed title of visiting guest professors of the Shanghai Conservatory and the Central Conservatory in China.

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