

窃窃私语

Chinese Whispers

and other contemporary dance music

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Gabriella Smart | piano

# Chinese Whispers



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Ludovico Einaudi (b. 1955)

**1 Canzone popolare** (Francia, 1500 ca) (from Le Onde) Italy 1'16"

Zhu Jian'er (b. 1922)

**2 An Offering of Intimacy** (1955) China 3'21"

Erik Griswold (b. 1969)

3 Latin Rhythms (for prepared piano) USA/Australia

**3 Guaguanco** 3'38"

Qin Yi (b. 1981)

**4 Suo** (2000) China 2'18"

Tan Dun (b. 1957)

**5 Traces** (1992) China/USA 8'54"

Alvin Curran (b. 1938)

**6 'for Cornelius'** (1982) USA 13'26"

Constantine Koukias (b. 1965)

**7 Within a 'Prayer at Lamplighting'** (piano, digital delay & glass rods) (2000)\* Australia 11'58"

Erik Griswold (b. 1969)

3 Latin Rhythms (for prepared piano) USA/Australia

**8 Maracatu** 2'19"

**9 Batucada** 3'00"

Jia Daqun (b. 1955)

**10 Scherzo** (1983) China 2'23"

Michael Nyman (b. 1944)

**11 Tango for Tim** (1994) England 5'44"

Carl Vine (b. 1954)

**Five Bagatelles** (1994) Australia

**12 Darkly** 2'33"

**13 Leggiero e legato** 1'28"

**14** (untitled) 1'50"

**15** (untitled) 1'17"

**16 Threnody** (for all of the innocent victims) Gently 2'53"

\* Commissioned by Gabriella Smart with assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts

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Dance tells an eloquent story: it is the physical, visceral celebration of life, from the frenzy of physical abandonment to the caress of a gentle embrace. Music is the pulse that keeps it alive. Composers over the centuries have taken dance forms and metamorphosed them into absolute music, as the supreme abstract expression of art. Tracks 2, 4, 5, 7 and 10 comprise the program from **Chinese Whispers**, a performance of contemporary piano solos from Australia and China, and dance duets which will tour Australia and China in 2005. Remaining works are taken from a solo concert Smart gave for the 2003 Melbourne International Festival, the theme of which was the celebration of music and movement. The works of Ludovico Einaudi, Zhu Jian'er, Tan Dun and Michael Nyman are extensions of their ground breaking music for film.

**Ludovico Einaudi** was awarded a Diploma of Composition at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Milan with Azio Corghi and continued studies with Luciano Berio. His chamber and orchestral compositions have been performed by such international institutions as the Teatro alla Scala, Tanglewood festival, the Lincoln Centre and the Queen Elisabeth Hall. During the mid-eighties he developed a more personal musical language, exploring this in a successful series of dance and multi-media works and then with his own ensemble. Einaudi's **Canzone popolare** (Francia, ca.1500) captures the spirit of the Italian lyric poem from which it derives. It is one of a set of pieces entitled *Le onde* (the world), a set of ballades.

**Zhu Jian'er** was born in Tianjin in 1922 and grew up in Shanghai. In 1945, he joined a theatre troupe as a composer and conductor, later turning his hand to writing film scores. In 1955, he went to the Soviet Union to undertake further studies at the Moscow Conservatory of Music, graduating in 1960. Zhu has been permanent composer at the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and an adjunct professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music since 1975. For the SSO, he has composed 10 symphonies, 12 overtures

and numerous symphonic poems and concertos. In 1999, Zhu Jian'er helped to found the Shanghai New Ensemble and remains artistic consultant to the ensemble, for whom he has written numerous works. Zhu has received many international prizes and national awards for his many compositions and is today regarded as one of China's most important composers. **An Offering of Intimacy** was composed in Moscow in 1955 and was dedicated by Zhu to his wife, who remained in Beijing while he was studying overseas.

**Erik Griswold** embraces experimental, jazz and pop traditions, multi-media and cross-cultural collaborations. Often employing prepared and toy pianos, he performs as a soloist with his ensembles Clocked Out Duo and bluepoles quartet, and with En Rusk quintet and the Intergalactic Contemporary Ensemble. He has composed a substantial body of chamber music for a variety of instruments, but especially for percussion and piano. Erik's percussion compositions have been performed widely in Europe, the USA and Australia. He holds a Ph.D. in Music from the University of California, San Diego, where he studied composition with Roger Reynolds and improvisation with George Lewis. The **3 Latin Rhythms** for prepared

piano are personal interpretations of three great percussion styles – the Cuban Guaguango, and Brazilian Batucada and Maracatu.

**Qin Yi** was born in 1981, Shanghai. She is pursuing a masters degree at the Shanghai Conservatory in composition under Prof. Qu Xiaosong and Prof. Chen Qiangbin. She majored in composition and pipa as an undergraduate. As both soloist and composer Qin Yi has taken part in many events, including the Hong Kong Arts Festival 2002, ISCM World Music Days 2002 Hong Kong, 2003 International Gaudeamus Music Week, 2003 Chinese Composers' Festival, Aspekte Salzburg 2004, Munchener biennale 2004 and Les Musicades invitent la Chine 2004. Her works include *Suo* for Piano solo, *Zhenru II* for pipa solo, *Stream* for Zhonghu and Sanxian, *Gossamer* for strings clarinet and piano, *Story Drum* for pipa and two percussionists and *Anapana* for Bass clarinet and Pipa. Qin Yi explores the concepts of rest, space and simplicity in **Suo**. She encapsulates the spirit of Chinese music, giving life and inner vibration to every note. **Suo** is the first work in a series for pipa and piano, and her first piece for piano.

**Tan Dun**'s repertoire spans the boundaries of classical, multimedia, Eastern and Western music traditions. He has been awarded many of the most prestigious international honors, and his music has been played throughout the world by leading orchestras, opera houses, international festivals, and on radio and television. His latest work, *Secret Land for Orchestra and Twelve Violoncelli* for the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle was premiered on 17 June 2004 in Berlin. Tan Dun's current commissions include a new opera for the Metropolitan Opera and James Levine to premiere in December 2006. As a conductor he has led many of the world's leading orchestras. Based in New York, Tan Dun was born in Simao, China. Having served as a rice-planter and performer of Peking opera during the Cultural Revolution, he later studied at Beijing's Central Conservatory. He holds a doctoral degree in musical arts from Columbia University of New York. **Traces** was commissioned by the Concert Artists' Guild in 1989. It evokes the symbiotic relationship between silence and sound, stillness and movement. The genius of the work lies in the clarity of its architectural landscape.

**Alvin Curran** makes music, with all means, anywhere and for any occasion.

From rarefied string quartets to blaring ship horn concerts to Holocaust memorial installations; from Midi-Grands to computerized ram's horns – these are his natural laboratories. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1938, he studied the piano, trombone and all forms of popular music. He began composing at Brown University under Ron Nelson and completed his studies (M.Music) at Yale with Elliott Carter in 1963. Following a year with Carter in Berlin he moved to Rome – his adopted home. With Frederic Rzewski and Richard Teitelbaum in 1966 Curran co-founded the radical collective *Musica Elettronica Viva* – a group renowned for inciting free music as well as musical uprisings. Curran has received numerous international commissions and awards. He taught briefly at the *Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica* in Rome and is presently the *Milhaud Professor of Music Composition* at Mills College in Oakland, California. In his threnody **for Cornelius**, Curran moulds his despair into a Satie-esque waltz. Unsettling in its repetition, the waltz evolves into a cascading lament of repeated vibrating chords. **for Cornelius** is dedicated to his good friend and colleague Cornelius Cardew, who died as a result of a hit and run car accident in the early eighties.

**Constantine Koukias**, cofounder and artistic director of IHOS, has composed and directed the following operas and music theatre works: *Days and Nights with Christ*, *To Traverse Water*, *Mikrovion*, *Rapture*, *The Divine Kiss*, *Spirits of the Hoist*, *Prayer Bells*, *Schwa* and *Tesla*. His design credits include the internationally acclaimed *Odyssey* and *Medea*. His *Incantation II for Soprano* won the International Valentino Bucchi Vocal Prize in Rome. He recently adapted, designed and directed *The Master Builder* in Sydney. **Within a Prayer at Lamplighting** features one of the most celebrated Easter Mass Chants from the Byzantine period, 'Christ has risen from the Dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life'. This chant is sung during the ceremony of the lighting of the Paschal Candle, which is conducted either on Easter Eve or immediately preceding the Easter Eucharist. The piece is centred on this intensely symbolic period where the spreading of the light from the Paschal candle throughout the congregation represents the resurrection of Christ and the Easter message of death conquered.

**Jia Daqun** is Professor of Composition & Theory at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Executive Director of the Shanghai New Ensemble. He also

lectures on contemporary Chinese music in the USA. A prolific composer, his music is widely performed in China and internationally. Jia has won many composition awards in China. In 1991 he won the twelfth IRINO Indoor Music International Composer Competition held in Tokyo, among the most prestigious of composing awards. Jia Daqun moves freely between the western and Chinese traditional styles in his works. The Shanghai New Ensemble, Shanghai Percussion Ensemble and the Shanghai Chinese Ensemble regularly perform his works. **Scherzo** was Jia Daqun's first work for piano, using western free composition techniques within the Chinese traditional 'Five Sound Style' main theme.

**Michael Nyman** has written for a wide variety of ensembles, including symphony orchestra, a cappella chorus and string quartet. He has written several stage works, notably *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* (1986), derived from a case study by Oliver Sacks; and has provided music for many distinguished choreographers. In 1976 Nyman assembled what he would describe as 'the loudest unamplified street band' he could imagine: rebecs, sackbuts, shawms alongside banjo, bass drum and saxophone. This is

the laboratory in which Nyman has formulated his compositional style around strong melodies, flexible yet assertive rhythms, and precisely articulated ensemble playing. His music has reached its largest audience by way of his film scores, most famously for Peter Greenaway, with whom he collaborated on eleven movies between 1976 and 1991. In its colours and in its movement, Michael Nyman's **Tango** becomes an obsessive lament for a lost friend. Originally written for harpsichord, this is the premiere recording of the piano version.

**Carl Vine** occupies a unique place in Australia's musical life. The catalogue of his music includes some twenty works for dance, music for film and theatre, electronic music and numerous solo instrumental and orchestral works including six symphonies. Born in 1954 in Perth, Carl moved to Sydney in 1975, where he worked as a freelance pianist and composer with a wide variety of ensembles, theatre and dance companies. He has been resident composer with the Sydney Dance Company (1978), the London Contemporary Dance Theatre (1979), the New South Wales State Conservatorium (1985), the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1987) and the Western Australian University (1989).

Amongst his most acclaimed scores are *Poppy* (1978) for the Sydney Dance Company, *Elegy* (1985) for Flederman, *Café Concertino* (1984) for the Australia Ensemble, and *Legend* (1988) for the West Australian Ballet Company. His first three symphonies have been released on compact disc by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Stuart Challender and a CD of his chamber music featuring the Piano Sonata performed by Michael Harvey was released in 1992. Recently his Piano Concerto, Symphony 4 and Choral Symphony (Symphony no. 6) have been released with ABC Classics performed by the Sydney Symphony as well as a second volume of his chamber music, including his second Piano Sonata on the Tall Poppies label. In his **Five Bagatelles**, Carl distills the intensity of colour and emotional palette with supreme mastery. He originally wrote the fifth Bagatelle, entitled *Threnody* (for all of the innocent victims), for the Australian National AIDS Trust. It became the last in this series.

**Gabriella Smart** is a passionate exponent of contemporary music, and has given award-winning premieres of Australian compositions. In 2003 she performed solo recitals in the Melbourne International Festival and La Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. She was invited to perform in the 2004 Ten Days on the Island Festival in Tasmania, after her critically acclaimed performances during the 2002 festival.

Gabriella studied with Eleonora Sivan at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide, and is grateful for Eleonora's continued inspiration and guidance. Gabriella is the recipient of various awards and fellowships. Her 1998 solo debut at the International Barossa Music Festival won a Sounds Australia award for best performance of an Australian work, and she has since enjoyed repeat appearances at the festival. In 2002 she was awarded a Fellowship from the South Australian Government. Gabriella has performed widely throughout Australia, and in France, promoting the works of Australian composers. She has given international premieres of works by eminent composers Michael Nyman and Tan



Dun. Gabriella continues to collaborate with many Australian composers, commissioning and premiering their works. She has given numerous live and recorded broadcasts for ABC Classic fm.

Her specialisation in contemporary music has seen her perform with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Dance Theatre, Leigh Warren and Dancers, State Theatre of South Australia and Ihos Experimental Theatre Troupe.

Gabriella founded Soundstream

Contemporary Music Ensemble in 1996. Soundstream has toured nationally, premiering works by international and Australian composers. Gabriella teaches at the Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide.



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The **Chinese Whispers** dance recital was produced by Reckless Moments and premiered at the Golden Grove Arts Centre in Adelaide on 11 March 2005 with dancers Hou Honglan and Anastasia Humeniuk and pianist Gabriella Smart. Choreographed by Amanda Phillips, the production also included Amanda's dance film, When There's Only. Dramaturgy by Barry Plews.

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