

Qigang Chen: Composer
Born in Shanghai, China in 1951
Lives in France since 1984
Naturalized French citizen in 1992

I. Education

Qigang Chen started learning music from childhood. At the time when Cultural Revolution broke out in China, he was studying at the Music Middle School of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. His father, administrator of the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, famous calligrapher and painter, was immediately judged "bourgeois", "antirevolutionary", and sent to a labor camp. As for him young Qigang Chen was kept in confinement during three years and underwent "ideological re-education".

Yet his passion for music remained unwavering: he went on learning composition and scoring in spite of social and political anti-cultural pressure.

In 1977, Chinese government re-established the system of contest for entering upper schools. This year, Qigang Chen is one of the twenty-six candidates among two thousands passing successfully the entry examination of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. During five years he followed a training on composition with Luo Zhonghong (1978-1983). In 1983, he was the first nominee at the National postgraduate contest and thus got the opportunity to go abroad and carry on a Master's degree.

And that was how he discovered France. During four years he received a State grant and studied with Olivier Messiaen (1984-1988). He simultaneously worked with Ivo Malec, Betsy Jolas, Claude Ballif and Claude Castérède. In 1987, he followed a training session for composer at the IRCAM as well as a musical composition training at the Academia chigiana in Siena with Donatoni. In 1988, he obtained the Diplome supérieur de Composition at the Ecole Normale de Musique, unanimously and with the congratulations of the jury. In 1989, he obtained the Diplome de Musicologie at the University of Paris-IV Sorbonne with grade very good.



II. Prizes and awards

*1986: First prize (awarded by the French Ministry of Culture) in the International Composition Contest (Buffet Crampon) for clarinet and string quartet in Paris

*1988: Awarded the Prize "Stipendienpreis" at the 34th Summer Festival
in Darmstadt
winner of the 27th International Contest of Symphony Composition of Citta
di Trieste

*1989: Awarded the Nadia and Lili Boulanger grant

*1990: Selected "Musician of the Year" by the Chinese press

*1991: Winner of the Hervé Dugardin prize of the SACEM (Society of
Composers and Publishers)

*1992: Awarded the Nadia and Lili Boulanger grant

winner of the International Contest of Composition for organ of Saint-Rémy
de Provence

*1993: Awarded the Prize Villa Medicis Hors les Murs

*2000: Awarded Grand Prize of the City of Paris, year 2000



III. Professional experience, commissions and creations

*1975–1978: Conductor and composer for the Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra

*1983–1984: Assistant professor of musical writing at the Central
Conservatory of Music in Beijing

*1987: Sextet "Voyage d'un rêve" commissioned by Radio France

*1988: Symphonic work "Yuan" commissioned by Radio France

*1990: State commissioned work for saxophone and 14 instruments: "Feu d'ombres"
"Poème lyrique II" for 12 musicians commissioned by the Nieuw Ensemble (Holland)

*1991: State commissioned concerto for flute and orchestra

*1992: Monographic CD by "Musique française aujourd'hui" (REM)

*1993: "Rêve d'un solitaire" for 29 musicians and electronics

*1994: Jury of the Irino International Composition Contest (Japan) Jury of the Taiwan International Composition Contest

*1995: "Portrait Qigang Chen" organised by China International Culture Exchange Center at Beijing and Shanghai with the AFAA, the SACEM and the French embassy

Artistic consultant at Radio France for the Festival Présence 1996
Creation of "Extase" for oboe and orchestra commissioned by the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie

*1996: Creation of Sanxiao for Chinese traditional instruments commissioned by Radio France

Creation of "Un instrument de silence" for guqin and instrumental Ensemble commissioned by the Nieuw Ensemble (Holland)

*1997: Resident composer and professor at the Centre Acanthes of Avignon

*1998: President of the jury of the 9th International Composition Contest of Besançon

Creation of "Reflet d'un temps disparu" for violoncello and orchestra by Yoyo Ma, the Orchestre National de France and Charles Dutoit

Choreography on "Poème lyrique II" by Michael Mao Dance in New-York

*1999: Creation of "Wu Xing" for grand orchestra performed by the
Orchestre National de France

Creation of "Instants d'un opéra de Pékin" commissioned by the Olivier
Messiaen International Piano Competition 2000
Jury of the International Composition Contest at Hong Kong.

Artistic consultant at the Cité de la Musique in Paris for the project
"La voix du dragon"

2000–2001.

Creation of the four acts ballet «Raise the Red Lantern» from Zhang Yimou:
based on Zhang Yimou's film of the same title, première by the China
National Ballet in May 2001, Beijing.

First projection of art film based on Poème Lyrique II in Netherlands.

2001: Wu Xing (The Five Elements) for orchestra owned the finalists award
of "Masterprize" in UK

Creation of " Iris Dévoilée (Iris Unveiled) concerted suite for three
female voices, three traditional Chinese instruments and grand orchestra,
commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, première by the
Orchestre National de France, Muhai Tang in February

2002

Creation Un temps disparu (Reflections of Vanished Time) for erhu and
orchestra, commissioned by the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Canada
April 2002.

2002: Chen's monographic concert was organized by The Beijing Musical
Festival in which Iris Dévoilée (Iris Unveiled), Un Temps Disparu
(Reflections of Vanished Time) for erhu and orchestra, and Wu Xing (The
Five Elements) were China premiered by the China Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Muhai Tang.

2003: Virgin Classics made Chen's symphony works album.



IV. Publication

1986-2000 : Gérard Billaudot Editeur Paris
from 2001 on : Editions Musicales DURAND (BMG Group)