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Coming soon!

## TEA: A MIRROR OF SOUL

Canadian premiere of extraordinary opera by the  
Academy Award-winning composer of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

**Vancouver, BC** ~ In just two weeks, one of the most intriguing musical and theatrical events of the season opens at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre: the Canadian premiere of Tan Dun's extraordinary opera, **Tea: A Mirror of Soul**. Fusing Eastern myth, Western opera and the sounds of the natural world, *Tea* is a visual and auditory experience unlike anything produced by Vancouver Opera.

This haunting and beautiful creation by one of the world's most innovative – and universally accessible – composers will be on stage for four performances only, May 4 - 11, 2013. Opening night is **Saturday, May 4, 2013**, with subsequent performances **Tuesday, May 7, Thursday, May 9** and **Saturday May 11, 2013**.

All performances take place at 7:30 pm at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. Tickets are available exclusively through the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca) or by telephone (604-683-0222). See complete ticket information below.

Sung in English with English SURTITLES™, this stunning production utilizes a style of instrumentation never before seen on the Queen Elizabeth Stage. In addition to the 40-plus piece orchestra, three graceful percussionists will be stationed onstage amidst the action, playing large bowls of water, paper panels, ceramic pots, stone and other natural materials. The result is trance-like, lyrical, beautiful and extraordinary.

"*Tea: A Mirror of Soul* beautifully combines traditional Chinese vocal lines and Tan Dun's unique 'organic music' with western opera in the Italian style," comments **James Wright**, General Director of Vancouver Opera. "Tan Dun is a composer of great renown all over the world, especially in Asia, where he is famous for films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Banquet* and for his music written for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. We believe that this visually splendid production, which was designed by an all-Asian team, will be very appealing to people from all cultures and backgrounds. We hope to make many new friends throughout our city when they come to experience this wonderfully accessible and moving opera."

## THE CAST

Baritone **ChenYe Yuan** sings Seikyo, the Japanese monk whose search for The Book of Tea is the subject of the opera. Mr. Yuan last sung with Vancouver Opera in the 2010 Canadian premiere of *Nixon in China*. "ChenYe Yuan's Chou En-lai was remarkable for both the gravity of his portrayal and the voluptuous beauty of his singing," raved *the Globe and Mail*.

Described as "enthraling" by *Opera News*, soprano **Nancy Allen Lundy** sings Lan, the Chinese princess betrothed to Seikyo. Composer Tan Dun has written other works especially for Ms. Lundy; he scored the role of Juliet for her in his *Orchestral Theatre IV: The Gate*. Ms. Lundy created the role of Lan for the 2002 world premiere of *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* in Tokyo.

**Roger Honeywell** reprises his role of Prince, which he sang in Opera Philadelphia's 2010 production and in the North American premiere, at Santa Fe Opera, in 2007. The Toronto-based tenor was last seen on the VO stage in December 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*, in the role of Frederic. "In a role that can so easily go so wrong, Honeywell offers charm - boyish, of course - a hint of knowing irony, and stylish singing from opening scene to the obligatory happy ending. He's perfect," raved the *Vancouver Sun*.

Bass **Kirk Eichelberger** sings the Emperor. Mr Eichelberger was last seen on the VO stage in 2008's *Rigoletto*. "Deliciously sinister" declared the *Georgia Straight* of his performance.

Mezzo-soprano **Ning Liang** sings the roles of Lu and The Ritualist. Ms. Liang has appeared in three different productions of *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* and co-created the role of the Shaman in Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera. This will be her Vancouver Opera debut.

**Paul Peers** will direct the production. Mr. Peers was Assistant Director to Amon Miyamoto for the 2007 American premiere of *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* at Santa Fe Opera. This will be Mr. Peers's first appearance with Vancouver Opera.

VO's Music Director **Jonathan Darlington** will conduct the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and the Vancouver Opera Chorus (**Leslie Dala**, Associate Conductor and Chorus Director).

## THE STORY IN BRIEF

Ancient Japan. Seikyo, a prince by birth, tells his fellow monks the story of how he came to the temple: years earlier, in China, seeking to marry Princess Lan, Seikyo confronts her jealous brother, the Prince, and must answer his challenge: find The Book of Tea and reveal its secret wisdom.

In the distant south, Lu, daughter of the Tea Sage, relinquishes the book on condition that Seikyo and Lan vow to spread its truth throughout the world. Before they can read it, the Prince attacks Seikyo, and Lan is killed when she intervenes. The grief-stricken Prince offers himself in sacrifice, but Seikyo declines, choosing instead to cut off his own hair and take a monk's vow.

## ABOUT TAN DUN

Tan Dun was born in 1957 in a small communal village in Hunan province, in China. As a boy, he was fascinated by the rituals and ceremonies of the local shaman, which involved music that employed 'organic' sounds of water and stone. His early affinity for ritual and these earthy sounds would stay with him throughout his life and would later be incorporated into several of his compositions, including *Tea: A Mirror of Soul*.

Mr. Tan spent his early years learning to play traditional Chinese stringed instruments while working in the rice paddies. By age 17 he was the leading musician in his community. When a regional Beijing Opera troupe arrived in his village, he was hired as a string player and arranger to replace one of several members of the troupe who had been killed when their ferry capsized on a nearby river.

He later studied viola at Beijing Conservatory and in the mid-1980s was awarded a fellowship to study at Columbia University, where he earned his doctorate in composition and discovered the experimental music of Philip Glass, John Cage and Steve Reich.

Tan Dun has since had a stellar international career. His compositions include solo works, chamber music, symphonic pieces and several operas. In 1997 he wrote the *Heaven, Earth, Mankind* Symphony in celebration of the handover of Hong Kong to China that year. He won both an Academy Award and a Grammy Award for his soundtrack to the 2000 film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and composed the official medal ceremony music for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

His operas include *Marco Polo*, *Peony Pavillion*, and *The First Emperor*, commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera, which premiered in 2006 and starred Plácido Domingo. *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* was composed under a commission from Suntory Hall in Tokyo. It premiered there in 2002 in a co-production with The Netherlands Opera. It has since been produced in Amsterdam, Shanghai, New Zealand, Lyon, Stockholm, Oldenburg Germany, Santa Fe and Philadelphia. Vancouver Opera's production is the Canadian premiere.

## FULL TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets are available from the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca), or by phone at 604-683-0222. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted.

Groups: For special pricing for groups of ten or more, call 604-683-0222.

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