

# RED RAIN



Huang Ruo



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Soo Bae, cello

2 **RED RAIN** 10:50  
Emanuele Arciuli, piano

### SHIFTING SHADES

Stephen Buck, piano

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### THREE PIECES FOR PIANO

Stephen Buck, piano

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10 **WIND BLOWS...** 7:05  
(for solo cello with piano drone)  
Arash Amini, cello; Huang Ruo, piano

—72:05—

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## Four Fragments

The Norwegian painter Edvard Munch used to say, “I never paint what I see, but what I saw.” Although the **Four Fragments** have no connection or influence from Munch’s painting and style, it shares the same concept with Munch from a different sense and approach, “I compose what I heard, instead of what I hear.” The **Four Fragments** are four reflections from my memory, from my living and traveling through time and space. They are not about any specific event, stage, or emotion, and are not clearly divided into four separate movements. They should be performed in succession without pause. In this continuous journey, all four fragments are closely related, although each of them has its own form, character, and life.

—H.R.

## Red Rain

The original inspiration of my solo piano piece **Red Rain** came from a painting by the Native American painter Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. In the painting, different sizes of rain drops, in red color and in various shapes of native-American symbols, pour down on a dead Confederate soldier’s body. Are they rain drops, blood, tears, arrowheads, etc.? Once I started writing the piece, the image of the painting became more and more vague. The metaphor of red rain becomes more and more abstract, more and more symbolic, colors become sounds, sounds become shapes...

**Red Rain** was commissioned by Italian pianist Emanuele Arciuli.

—H.R.

## Shifting Shades (version for solo piano)

Originally composed as **Drama Theater No. 2** for percussion, cello, and piano (Naxos 8.559653), **Shifting Shades** is not simply a transcription or arrangement. As a solo piano work, it offers a different perspective on the music, and the listener’s experience is concentrated and focused on different elements. In **Shifting Shades**, Huang Ruo’s endless capacity for invention and reinvention makes each piece different from the others, though common themes run through the whole set.

The first piece uses extended techniques like plucking, stopping, and strumming the strings of the piano, and includes a police whistle borrowed from the percussion. A slow, rhythmically fragmented opening section grows into a more driven second half that includes powerful 5<sup>ths</sup> as points of punctuation in the lower piano registers.

The second piece features one of the more challenging techniques on the piano, the repeated note, to create the sustained tones of a plaintive and melancholy traditional Chinese melody. Colored by occasional notes played in the traditional manner, and by lightly buzzing sheets of paper laid across the bass strings, the piece ends with an altogether new technique for the pianist. The coda is played on six differently-pitched beer bottles that the pianist blows across to create a

haunting, bass flute-like sound that roughly echoes the original melody.

The final piece in the set begins with startling bursts of activity separated by equally startling long pauses. These sonic lacunae become dramatic pauses between explosive piano runs, until the energy of the piano can no longer be contained, and the piece accelerates to full power. Kinetic patterns of rhythm crisscross each other at a dizzying pace, gradually intensifying until the end, when powerful washes of sound from the lowest bass strings of the piano combine with a crushed cluster of notes at the very top of the piano keyboard, ending in a final flourish.

### **Tree Without Wind**

The sixth grand master of Chan Buddhism Hui Neng was giving a lecture to his disciples one day. While a tree in the yard was making a noticeable noise due to the biting wind, some disciples turned their heads to check out where the sound was coming from. Master Hui Neng raised the question: “What is moving?” A monk answered: “The wind is moving?” The master shook his head. “It must be the tree that is moving.” Another monk answered. The master shook again. “Our eyes are moving?” One monk asked. Master Hui Neng finally gave them his answer: “All wrong, it is your internal mind and focus that moves.”

Inspired by this story, **Tree without Wind** was written as an echo of the highest level of deep meditation in Chan Buddhism, where one achieves

ultimate stillness and calmness so that nothing in one’s surroundings would be a distraction.

**Tree Without Wind** was commissioned by Concert Artists Guild for pianist Soyeon Lee with funds provided by the R.G. Niederhoffer Commissioning Prize.  
—H.R.

### **Three Pieces for Piano**

Varying in character and technique, the **Three Pieces for Piano** present the listener with a lively and exciting musical experience. Though not thematically connected, they add to one another through their differences. Though their titles suggest a specified sequence, they can be performed singly or together in any order.

### **Prelude: Diffluent**

The first piece begins with long trills, a feature of Huang Ruo’s music that the listener may recognize in **Tree Without Wind**. The trills descend into a rush of alternating perfect fourths spiked with accents that destroy any sense of meter. While the piece continues in frenetic perpetual 16<sup>th</sup> note motion, hints of a larger meter drift in and out; we hear hints of 4/4 time, but also 3/8, 5/8, 5/16, and others. The sudden hush in the middle of the piece gives way to a delirious ending as the pianist alternates leaps to the farther reaches of the keyboard, before accelerating to a crushing tremolo in the highest register.

## Postlude: Left...

The word “left” has three meanings in English: something is gone, something remains, and the left hand. This piece seeks to encompass all three meanings: written for the left hand, it explores a dark, contemplative mood in a lyrical style quite different from the other two pieces in the set. The **cantando** nature of the lines foreshadows Huang Ruo’s current success as an opera composer with **Dr. Sun Yat-Sen** and **An American Soldier**.

## Interlude: Points and Lines

Huang Ruo’s only 12-tone work, **Points and Lines** explores the contrast and complementarity inherent in its title. The rigorously contrapuntal language insists on being heard in a linear way, but the thematic material itself is highly pointilistic. In Huang Ruo’s words, the points and the lines “compete against, yet complete each other.” After a short introduction based on repeated notes (points) and spiky chords, the piece gradually rises in rhythmic complexity and drive, leading to a middle section that returns to the repeated note theme. The lines reassert their hegemony, but dissolve in a short coda before a final explosive dissonance.

## Wind Blows

The lyrical cello line of **Wind Blows** is meditative and wandering, while the continuous tremolos in the piano part bring to mind a vast, untouched land-

scape. These two elements, the lyrical and the harmonic, complement each other in a manner characteristic of Huang Ruo’s music: the lyrical line, colored by the harmonic 5<sup>th</sup> below it, is unstructured and free; the piano tremolos oscillate through a recurring ostinato pattern, as though they are the frame holding the image of the lyrical line. The composer himself plays the piano for this piece, which ends in an ever quieter, gradual descent to the absolute lowest register of the piano.

—Notes by Stephen Buck except as indicated

## BIOS

### Huang Ruo

Huang Ruo has been lauded by the *New Yorker* as “one of the world’s leading young composers” and by the *New York Times* for having “a distinctive style.” His vibrant and inventive musical voice draws equal inspiration from Chinese ancient and folk music, Western avant-garde, experimental, noise, natural and processed sound, rock, and jazz to create a seamless, organic integration using a compositional technique he calls “Dimensionalism.” Huang Ruo’s diverse compositional works span from orchestra, chamber music, opera, theater, and dance, to cross-genre, sound installation, multi-media, experimental improvisation, folk rock, and film.

Huang Ruo’s music has been premiered and performed by the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle

Symphony, National Polish Radio Orchestra, Kiel Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Hong Kong, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Asko/Schoenberg Ensemble, Remix Ensemble, Nieuw Ensemble, Quatuor Diotima, and Ethel Quartet, and conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch, Marin Alsop, Michael Tilson Thomas, James Conlon, Dennis Russell Davies, Ed Spanjaard, Peter Rundel, Alexander Liebreich, Xian Zhang, and Ilan Volkov. Huang Ruo's opera **Dr. Sun Yat-Sen**, had its American premiere by the Santa Fe Opera in 2014, and will receive its Canadian premiere in 2017 performed by the Vancouver Opera. His opera **Paradise Interrupted** received its world premiere at the Spoleto Festival USA in 2015. Another performance took place at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2016, before going on tour to Asia and Europe. In addition, Huang Ruo was recently named the composer-in-residence for Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam and National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan.

Huang Ruo was born in Hainan Island, China in 1976 - the year the Chinese Cultural Revolution ended. His father, who is also a composer, began teaching him composition and piano when he was six years old. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, when China was opening its gate to the Western world, he received both traditional and Western education at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. As a result of the dramatic cultural and economic changes in China following the Cultural Revolution, his education expanded from Bach, Mozart,

Stravinsky, and Lutoslawski, to include the Beatles, rock and roll, heavy metal, and jazz. Huang Ruo was able to absorb all of these newly allowed Western influences equally. As a member of the new generation of Chinese composers, his goal and task is not just to mix both Western and Eastern elements, but also to create a seamless integration and a convincing organic unity, drawing influences from various genres and cultures. After winning the Henry Mancini Award at the 1995 International Film and Music Festival in Switzerland, Huang Ruo moved to the United States to further his education. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in composition from the Juilliard School. Huang Ruo is currently a composition faculty at the Mannes College of Music at the New School in NY and at the Purchase College of SUNY. He is the artistic director and conductor of Ensemble FIRE (Future In REverse), and was selected as a Young Leader Fellow by the National Committee on United States—China Relations in 2006. Huang Ruo's music is published by Ricordi.

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### **Soo Bae**

Canadian Korean cellist Soo Bae, was praised by The New Yorker as “superb” and by The Strad, for being “rich and romantic with crisp incisive technique.” Recently honored as the musician of the month in Musical America Magazine, Ms. Bae is also a winner

of the 2005 Concert Artists Guild International Competition. and Grand prize winner of the 2006, Canada Council Instrument Bank Competition. She is also the first Canadian ever to win a prize at the Adam International Cello Festival & Competition in New Zealand.

Ms. Bae has performed in Asia, Europe, Canada and the US, including a debut recital at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing and Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall.

Soo Bae received her Bachelor of Music from The Curtis Institute of Music under Orlando Cole and Master of Music Degree and Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School where she also served as assistant faculty under Joel Krosnick for four years. She has given master classes around the globe and has been asked to judge for various competitions including the recent Juilliard Pre-College Concerto Competition. As a director and founder of Angelos Mission Ensemble Chamber Music Program in New Jersey, Ms. Bae also teaches at the Curtis Summerfest in Philadelphia as a faculty to Young Artist Summer Program. Ms. Bae uses The Ivashkin Joseph Guarneri filius Andreae of Cremona cello dated 1710 on loan from a generous private donor.

### **Emanuele Arciuli**

Emanuele Arciuli regularly performs at major concert halls and festivals, such as the Berliner Festwochen, Wien Modern, La Scala Milano,

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Biennale di Venezia, Miami Piano Festival, Miller Theater New York, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, performing with such orchestras as St. Paul Chamber, Indianapolis, Rotterdam Phil, Brussel Phil, Rai di Torino, St. Petersburg Philharmonic. Emanuele Arciuli continuously develops new projects and is in constant pursuit of new ideas and innovative programmes. **Round Midnight Variations**, a group of 16 compositions that were written expressively for Arciuli by composers such as Crumb, Babbitt, Kernis, Rzewski, Torke, Daugherty, Bolcom and Harbison, has recently sparked the interest of international critics. In May 2011, Emanuele Arciuli was awarded the most important Italian critic's prize, the Premio Franco Abbiati. In winning this prize, Emanuele Arciuli follows in the footsteps of Maurizio Pollini, Radu Lupu, and Zubin Mehta.

### **Stephen Buck**

Stephen Buck made his Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall debut through Artists International in New York, and is currently serving as Coordinator of Academic Studies and Professor of Music Theory at the SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music. Active in Asia, North and South America, and Europe, Mr. Buck received his doctoral degree from Yale University School of Music. Recent performances have included appearances at the Honest Brook Music Festival in Delhi, New York, and the Grand County Concert Series in Colorado. A major recent accomplishment was with the Orquesta Juvenil de Caracas in



Venezuela and pianist Vanessa Perez, playing the Mozart and Poulenc concerti for two pianos and Ravel's **Concerto for the Left Hand** in one evening. At SUNY Purchase Dr. Buck has performed Stravinsky's **Concerto for Piano and Winds**, Beethoven's **Choral Fantasy**, and Laura Kaminsky's **Piano Concerto** with the student wind ensemble and orchestra, working with conductor Ransom Wilson. An avid chamber musician and collaborative pianist, Dr. Buck taught and performed for several summers at the Adriatic Chamber Music Festival in southern Italy, and co-founded the AlpenKammerMusik Festival in Austria. His interest in new music led him to perform with F.I.R.E, a New-York based contemporary music ensemble, while his work with the piano quartet Ensemble Argos offers a chance to explore traditional repertoire. Mr. Buck moved back to New York City after teaching piano and music history at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. Prior to moving to South Carolina, he completed a Teaching Fellowship at Yale University, where he earned his Master of Musical Arts in 2001 studying with Peter Frankl, and won the Woolsey Hall Concerto Competition. Mr. Buck received a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan, studying with Anton Nel, where he won Second Prize at the 1998 Isabel Scionti Competition, the university's Concerto Competition with the Barber Piano Concerto, and received the Stockwell Memorial Scholarship. Mr. Buck graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Johns Hopkins University in 1995, where he studied with Ann Schein at Peabody Conservatory.

## Arash Amini

Cellist Arash Amini has performed as soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician throughout North America, Switzerland, France, Germany, Japan, and Botswana. His many performances include his New York debut recital in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center and Beethoven's "Triple Concerto" with the Oakland East Bay Symphony; at two Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshops in Carnegie Hall, the Ravinia Festival, Bargemusic, Smithsonian Institution, Verbier Festival and Academy in Switzerland, Bard Music Festival, and the Rencontres Musicales d'Evian; on Great Performers at Lincoln Center and the Curtis Alumni Recital series; and for The Creative Coalition and Americans for the Arts. He has also performed chamber music with André Watts, Barbara Hendricks, Nigel Kennedy, Cho-Liang Lin, Mischa Maisky, Julian Lloyd Webber, and Sharon Isbin. A graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with David Soyer, and The Juilliard School, where he studied with Aldo Parisot, Arash Amini is a co-founder, the Artistic Director, and an Artist Member of America's Dream Chamber Artists, with whom he performs throughout the U.S.

Arash Amini has performed as solo cellist with Christina Perri, as the cellist of Mark O'Connor's piano trio - including with Rosanne Cash, as Principal Cellist of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra. He has performed countless world and U.S. premieres of solo and chamber music works; his performances have been

heard on NPR, WQXR, and WNYC; he has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Houston Chronicle, and Tages Anzeiger (Switzerland); Musical America, Chamber Music, The Strad, Symphony, and Muso magazines; on Voice of America broadcasts; and has recorded for the EMI, Naxos, New World, Albany, and Bridge Records labels. Arash Amini is a Daniel Pearl World Music Days Artist; the Artistic Director and Concert Coordinator and an Artist of Musicians Emergency Fund; and he has served on the faculty of the Mark O'Connor Strings Conference in San Diego.

## CREDITS

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