

DUO DIORAMA

Short, Individual Bios:

MINGHUAN XU has an admirable reputation gained from her many performances both in recital and with orchestras in China and North America. She is also a highly sought-after chamber musician, having collaborated with the St. Petersburg Quartet, Colin Carr, Eugene Drucker, Ilya Kaler, and Ani Kavafian. Noted for her radiant and passionate performances, her captivating musical and stage presence has endeared her to audiences everywhere.

Xu was a winner of the Beijing Young Artists Competition, and gave her New York debut at age 18 as soloist with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra. Her studies were at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, the Interlochen Arts Academy, Northwestern University, and Stony Brook University. Her principal teachers were Julia Bushkova, Victor Danchenko, Almita Vamos, Pamela Frank, and Ani Kavafian. Currently, MingHuan Xu is a member of the music faculty at Loyola University of Chicago. She plays a 1758 Nicolas Gagliano violin.

WINSTON CHOI is a regular performer in recital and with orchestra throughout North America and Europe. He was Laureate of the 2003 Honens International Piano Competition (Canada) and winner of France's Concours International de Piano 20e siècle d'Orleans. A prolific recording artist, Dr. Choi can be heard on the Arktos, Crystal, l'Empreinte Digitale, Intrada, and QuadroFrame labels.

Formerly on the faculties of the Oberlin Conservatory and Bowling Green University, Winston Choi is currently Associate Professor and Head of Piano at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. His initial studies were in Toronto with James Tweedie and Vivienne Bailey, his BM and MM studies were completed at Indiana University with Menahem Pressler, and his DMA at Northwestern University as a student of Ursula Oppens.

DUO DIORAMA combines the most appealing aspects of music making – a true partnership of intellectual and emotional depth, and a wide-ranging interest in and devotion to musical styles - well-known standard works as well as approachable, captivating music of the avant-garde.

Chinese violinist MingHuan Xu and Canadian pianist Winston Choi have gathered a loyal following during their extensive musical travels to South America and Western Europe, and tours throughout Canada (from coast to coast) as the inaugural recipients of the Banff Centre's Rolston Fellowship in Music. The name, Duo Diorama, embodies its artistic ideals. In visual arts, a diorama is a scene or story reproduced on cloth transparencies with various lights shining through to produce changes in effect. The musical equivalent is exemplified by the Duo's performances, which create an illusion of color and three-dimensionality, transporting the listener to other times and spheres.

Recent summer appearances by the Duo include The Colours of Music Festival, and the Mammoth Lakes Musical Festival. Their South American tour included performances at the Festival Musica Nova in Brazil and Festival Encuentros. In 2006, their successful New York debut at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall was sponsored by Artists International Presentations. A feature broadcast of the debut was made by Voice of America, a weekly television program viewed by millions of people in Asia.

Having commissioned and premiered over 20 new works in the past few years, Duo Diorama has demonstrated a devotion to the works of living composers. Their lively and insightful interpretations are a reflection of this personal commitment to the presentation of these works, which emphasize the relevance and vivacity of music of our time. Composers whose works they have commissioned include Marcos Balter, George Flynn, Derek Hurst, Gregory Hutter, Felipe Lara, Jacques Lenot, Andrew List, M. William Karlins, John Melby, Michael Pisaro, Stephen Syverud, Kurt Westerberg, Daniel Weymouth, Amy Williams, Ammon Wolman, Jay Alan Yim, and Mischa Zupko. The Duo's many projects also include performances of multi-disciplinary works incorporating electronic media.

QUOTE:

“Both players were terrific. Xu’s fiddling featured spotless finger and bow technique, a keen feel for dramatic flair, and a big, sturdy tone free of forcing. Choi was a more than equal partner at the keyboard. His sound was lively and lucid, his digital work was immaculate, and his shaping of material showed insightful articulation of phrase and voicing.

- New Music Connoisseur