

## CELEBRATE ASIA COMPOSITION COMPETITION SELECTION

World premiere: February 24, 2012

KAY HE

*Legends of Old Peking*

Mei-Ann Chen, conductor

The annual *Celebrate Asia* Composition Competition invites submissions from young composers who find inspiration and influences in Asian culture, music and traditions. This year, the reviewing committee selected **Kay He's *Legends of Old Peking*** as the winner. *Legends of Old Peking* receives its World Premiere tonight at *Celebrate Asia*.

Kay He began learning piano at age 5, and at age 15, she began studying composition at the affiliated middle school of Shenyang Conservatory of China. As an undergraduate with two majors, Kay He studied with Tang Jianping at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and with Zhang Xiaofu at the Conservatory's Center for Electroacoustic Music of China (CEMC). The winner of a Snow Scholarship, Kay He is currently pursuing a master's degree in composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She is studying under Dr. Chen Yi, Dr. Paul Rudy and Dr. James Mobberly. She has won several composition awards in the U.S. and abroad.

She writes of *Legends of Old Peking*, "I spent seven years in Beijing studying music. When I had spare time, I often walked in those ancient *hutongs* ("alleys") of old Beijing, listening to residents chat in strong Beijing accents, and strolling the streets with their age-old shops. The civilization of the *Huangcheng Gener* ("Around the Imperial Palace") is like a mysterious legend. It's hidden between the skyscrapers, gently yet impressively telling its story: old Beijing is a legend that will never be overcome by the storm of modernization.

"Do you remember the sounds of the street vendors deep in the *hutongs*, the noisy Peking Opera Theatre, and firecrackers on New Year's Eve? Do you remember the leisurely teahouses, the graybeard who is talking to his birds, children chasing each other and legends flowing in the shadow of the ancient city walls? The theme of this piece is from a Beijing children's song, 'Shui Niuer.' The melody is broken into small pieces that are scattered throughout the whole composition. It's like telling an ancient legend from through the glass reflection of the skyscrapers above."

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