

CELEBRATE ASIA COMPOSITION COMPETITION SELECTION

World premiere: January 31, 2016

SHAO ZHENG

Bai Chuan Fu Hai

Jindong Cai, conductor

ALIREZA MOTEVASELI

Fantasia for Santoor and Accordion

Anjali Joshi, santoor

Murl Allen Sanders, accordion

Jindong Cai, conductor

Composer **Shao Zheng** (b. 1985) is this year's winner of the *Celebrate Asia* Composition Competition. After graduating from the Conservatory of Music in his home city of Tianjin, in northeastern China, he came to the United States for post-graduate studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where the composition faculty includes Chen Yi and Zhou Long, two of the leading Chinese-American composers. Working in a wide range of genres, Shao endeavors to write music that merges "intense Chinese culture influences and [his] own unique personality."

The title of Shao's winning entry, *Bai Chuan Fu Hai*, translates as *The Rivers and Streams All Rushed to the Ocean*. He explained that the work "is inspired by the ancient philosopher Zhu Xi, who said, 'Rivers go to the ocean, but the ocean does not overflow.'" Shao's music begins with "multiple themes and instruments to refer to the streams and tributaries," and it continues with "free micro-counterpoint to depict the process of the streams flowing." Rapid crescendos mark the point where "little streams finally converge into rivers with monstrous waves and loud noises." A final diminuendo "symbolizes the peaceful and vast sight of the ocean surface."

The panel of the *Celebrate Asia* Composition Competition has also commended **Alireza Motevaseli** (b. 1992) for his **Fantasia for Santoor and Accordion**. A native of Tehran, Iran, Motevaseli is a composer, conductor and bassoonist who performs with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. His work features the santoor, a type of hammered dulcimer with a long history in Persian and Indian music. A secondary solo part, written for accordion, provides a sound akin to the garmon, a related instrument commonly used in Russian music. Other melodies voiced for the four woodwinds in octaves echo the region's ancient tradition of reed instruments.

© 2016 Aaron Grad