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**SYDNEY** **CONFUCIUS**  
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**sydney symphony**  
**orchestra**

**David Robertson**  
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Tan Dun joins the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for final night of Sydney Chinese New Year Festival

11 February, 8pm

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House



Grammy- and Oscar-winning composer Tan Dun (*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, *Hero*) will join the Sydney Symphony Orchestra next month to conduct a one-night only special event – **Music under the Moon** – to mark the final night of the Sydney Chinese New Year Festival celebrations.

The concert will feature the Chinese-born composer's symphonic masterpiece, *The Secret Songs of Women*; an homage to Nu Shu, an ancient private language that is passed down from mothers to daughters in the Hunan province through song. In danger of extinction, Nu Shu is the only known language to be gender-specific and is one of the few languages that is sung instead of spoken.

Tan Dun's cinematic style will be complemented by the suite from Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* ballet: vivid and seductive in its portrayal of earthly lust and the weirdly supernatural. The suona, a traditional Chinese wind instrument, is featured soloist in Guan Xia's new folk-inspired piece, *A Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*, and the concert ends in a spirit of celebration with Li Huanzhi's *Spring Festival Overture*.

It's been a long journey for Tan Dun. Now living amidst the densely-populated urban sprawl of New York City, Tan Dun was born and raised in a rural Hunan village in the People's Republic of China where millennia-old shamanistic cultural traditions still survived. However, Tan Dun's life and the life of millions of Chinese people would be irrevocably changed by the time he was a teenager as Mao



Principal Partner



Zedong's astringent plan for social transformation, the Cultural Revolution, attempted to completely reinvent China.

Tan Dun was sent to plant rice alongside the local farmers in the Huangjin commune, but soon became involved in their local music scene and eventually became acknowledged as a preserver of their musical traditions.

After two years Tan was recalled from his farming duties to serve as a fiddler and arranger for a Peking opera troupe, after the group lost many of its musicians in a tragic boat accident. Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, China re-opened its Central Conservatory and Tan was one of only thirty selected to attend among thousands of applicants. Visiting lecturers—such as Alexander Goehr, George Crumb, Hans Werner Henze, Toru Takemitsu, Isang Yun, and Chou Wen-Chung—introduced Tan to a wide range of international contemporary music.

Within a few years Tan Dun became the first Chinese composer to win an international composition prize since the founding of the People's Republic. By the time he arrived in the United States in 1986, where he soon immersed himself in the music of John Cage and the New York downtown avant-garde scene, Tan Dun was already famous in China. In these past two decades, Tan Dun has transcended stylistic and cultural boundaries to become one of the world's most famous and sought-after composers.

**#ENDS#**

**Concert Details:**

**Music under the Moon**  
***Lantern Festival Celebration***

Sat 11 Feb  
Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

GUAN XIA A Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix  
BARTÓK The Miraculous Mandarin: Suite  
TAN DUN Nu Shu - The Secret Songs of Women  
LI HUANZHI Spring Festival Overture

**Tan Dun** conductor  
**Liu Wenwen** suona  
**Louise Johnson** harp

Tickets available from [sydneySymphony.com](http://sydneySymphony.com) or (02) 8215 4600

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Principal Partner

