Ancient Voices, Contemporary Sounds

Concert of Traditional and Contemporary Music

Mei Han: zheng
Jingyi Zhan: pipa
Carson Deans: guitar
Xiaoxuan Liang: erhu and morin khuur
Randy Raine-Reusch: dizi, harmonica, wood blocks, dulcimer, zheng, ichigenkin and bawu

Sunday, October 18, 2026
Hinton Music Hall
MTSU School of Music

1439 Faulkinberry Dr, Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Presented by MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture

Program

Jasmine Flower 茉莉花 Traditional

Jasmine Flower (Molihua) is a Chinese folk song dating back to the 18th century. Numerous regional variants share similar lyrics but differ in melody. The best-known version originates from the Nanjing–Yangzhou region of Jiangsu Province. This rendition offers a fresh interpretation of the traditional melody with a jazz twist.

Mei Han, zheng
Carson Deans, guitar
Randy Raine-Reusch, dizi

Kangding Love Song 康定情歌 Traditional

One of China's most beloved folk songs, originating from Kangding in western Sichuan Province. Known for its lyrical melody and expressions of romantic affection, the song gained widespread popularity in the mid-20th century. This rendition reimagines the traditional melody in a blues style, blending Chinese folk traditions with the expressive rhythms and harmonies of American blues.

Mei Han, zheng
Carson Deans, guitar
Randy Raine-Reusch, dizi

Hidden Sword, Bronze Armor, and Golden Halberds 袖剑与铜甲金戈 Chen Danbu (1999)

Inspired by Jing Ke's legendary attempt to assassinate the King of Qin in 227 BCE, during China's Warring States period (475–221 BCE), this work evokes the courage and tragic heroism of ancient Chinese warriors. Before departing on his mission, Jing Ke bid farewell to his companions on the banks of the Yi River, where he recited the famous verse: "The wind sighs; the waters of the Yi run cold. The warrior departs, never to return." These words capture his determination to undertake a perilous mission from which he might never return.
Originally composed for dance in 1999, the work was adapted for solo pipa in 2015 and later arranged for pipa and orchestra. Through the pipa's contrasting textures of strength and delicacy, the music moves from the ominous tension of the *Hidden Sword Dance* to the sweeping martial grandeur of the *Dance of Bronze Armor and Golden Halberds*. The work intertwines heroic resolve with the poignancy of sacrifice, bringing to life one of ancient China's most enduring tales of courage and loyalty.

Jingyi Zhan, pipa

Hongyan (Khongaral) 鸿雁 Urad Mongolian Folk Song (c. 1790)
Hongyan (Khongaral) is a traditional Mongolian folk song with a history spanning more than two centuries. Often sung at gatherings and farewells, it uses migrating birds as a metaphor for longing and homesickness. Its expansive pentatonic melody evokes the vast Mongolian grasslands, expressing a deep connection to homeland and nature.

Xiaoxuan Liang, morin khuur

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Horse Racing is a celebrated erhu composition inspired by traditional Mongolian horse-racing festivities. With its galloping rhythms, lively melodies, and virtuosic techniques, the music vividly portrays the excitement of horses racing across the vast grasslands. Rapid bowing, rhythmic accents, and expressive string techniques evoke pounding hooves, spirited riders, and the festive atmosphere of the Mongolian grassland.

Xiaoxuan Liang, erhu
Mei Han, zheng
Jingyi Zhan, pipa
Randy Raine-Reusch, wood blocks

Locrian Moonlight Mei Han | Randy Raine-Reusch (2020)

Locrian Moon is a structured improvisation combining the western Locrian mode with the Sundanese laras pelog degung pentatonic scale. Conceived for the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, the work symbolizes unity through the blending of distinct musical traditions. The dulcimer's drone strings are tuned to a diminished fifth, emphasizing the Locrian mode's distinctive interval, while the Sundanese pentatonic scale is nested within its diatonic framework.

Mei Han, zheng
Randy Raine-Reusch, mountain dulcimer

Forest Rain Mei Han | Randy Raine-Reusch (1999)

Inspired by the sound of rain falling on forest leaves, Forest Rain explores overlapping rhythmic motifs and shifting textures. Moving fluidly from texture to melody and back, the work evokes a sense of spaciousness and the subtle rhythms of nature. Through the interplay of the two zheng, the music creates an immersive soundscape that captures the ever-changing beauty and vitality of the natural world.

Mei Han, zheng
Randy Raine-Reusch, zheng

Tokyo Crows Mei Han | Randy Raine-Reusch (1999)

Tokyo Crows is a haunting yet powerful work that explores the historical connections between Chinese and Japanese musical traditions. Combining the zheng, the Japanese ichigenkin, the one-string zither, and the Chinese double-reed bili, the composition juxtaposes ancient and modern sound worlds, simplicity and complexity. Through contrasting timbres and expressive textures, the music creates an evocative dialogue between tradition and innovation.

Mei Han, zheng
Randy Raine-Reusch, ichigenkin and bili

Dance of the Yao People 瑶族舞曲 Liu Tieshan and Mao Yuan (1952)

Inspired by the traditional dance music of the Yao ethnic group in southwestern China, Dance of the Yao People is a classic of 20th-century Chinese music. Originally composed for orchestra, its memorable melodies have inspired numerous arrangements. This rendition reinterprets the themes through improvisation, transforming the composition into a dynamic dialogue between tradition and spontaneity, bringing new energy and individuality to this celebrated

Mei Han, zheng
Jingyi Zhan, pipa
Carson Deans, guitar
Xiaoxuan Liang, erhu
Randy Raine-Reusch, bawu

Artist Biographies

Jingyi Zhan is an Associate Professor at Shaanxi Normal University and a visiting scholar at the MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture. She serves as a graduate supervisor in pipa performance at the Xi'an Conservatory of Music and has performed with the Conservatory's Chinese Orchestra since 1993. Her performance highlights include European tours, recordings for China Central Television (CCTV), and performances with the Shaanxi National Radio Symphony Orchestra. She has also appeared as a concerto soloist. In addition to the pipa, Zhan performs on several other Chinese musical instruments. She previously served as a visiting scholar at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on ethnomusicology and folk music, with an emphasis on promoting cross-cultural understanding through performance and scholarship.

Carson Deans is a sophomore at MTSU majoring in audio production. He plays acoustic and electric guitar across many genres, from blues, jazz, and bluegrass. He plays in several bands, including his own, which plays his original music.

Xiaoxuan Liang is a faculty member at Hangzhou Normal University and a visiting scholar at the MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture. She holds a master's degree in erhu and morin khuur (matou qin) performance from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. An award-winning musician, Liang has presented recitals featuring traditional and contemporary erhu music, as well as Mongolian-style compositions for the morin khuur. She previously served as a performer and assistant researcher at the Oriental Musical Instrument Museum of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where she conducted workshops on the erhu and morin khuur. Her research has also focused on the silk-string erhu, exploring timbral variations among string instruments and comparative performance techniques of the erhu and morin khuur.

Randy Raine-Reusch is a composer/concert artist specializing in New and Experimental Music for world instruments. An innovator interested in extending the boundaries of music, Raine-Reusch has spent over fifty years exploring the relationship of music to psychology, philosophy, and spiritual or religious practices. Exploring sound and cultures around the world, he studied in fourteen countries, including with two National Treasures. As a composer, Randy Raine-Reusch has written for large-scale site-specific extravaganzas, real-time interactive computer festivals, and chamber pieces for Asian instruments. He has created a series of Taoist-inspired graphic scores for improvisation. One of these scores was included in "Notations 21," a contemporary collection of graphic scores. As a performer, he has worked with a wide range of artists including, Barry Guy, Sainkho Namtchylak, Robert Dick, Pauline Oliveros, Mats Gustafson, Issui Minegishi, Aerosmith, Yes, Jon Gibson, Mei Han, and Jin Hi Kim.

He was involved in the inception of The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, founded the Rainforest World Music Festival in Malaysia, and served as the inaugural Director of Acquisitions for the Musical Instrument Museum in Arizona. He was an associate professor at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. He was also just awarded a WOMAD Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in World Music.

Mei Han (Ph.D.) is Professor of Music at the School of Music and Director of the Center for Chinese Music and Culture at Middle Tennessee State University. Han is one of the premier zheng (a Chinese long zither) artists, whose visionary approach has propelled this stately instrument into bold new realms of contemporary expression. She is a consummate performer appearing across a wide range of genres, from symphonic, chamber, and New Music to traditional and World music, and from Creative Improvisation to electronic music. Her performance highlights include appearances as a soloist with the China Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra as well as performances at the Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Freer Gallery (USA), the National Art Center (Canada), the Concertgebouw (Netherlands), WOMAD (South Africa, Singapore, and Australia), Rainforest World Music Festival (Malaysia), the National Ethnology Museum (Japan), and China Central Television (CCTV). She has released eight music albums and received award nominations for the Canadian Juno Awards and England's Songlines magazine. She is a faculty member of the Silk Road Ensemble's Global Musicians Workshop.

Han's innovative approach to the zheng has attracted scholarly attention, most recently as a case study in Michael Heffley's "Improvising Mythoi and Difference in the Asian/Woman More-Than-Tinge," a chapter in *Sound Changes: Improvisation and Transcultural Difference* (2021). Her unique position as both artist and scholar was recognized by Bruno Nettl (1930-2020), one of the founding figures of Ethnomusicology, in his *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions* (2015), a primary textbook for the discipline.

MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture

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Chinese Music Ensemble Spring 2027
MUEN 3760, 5760
CRN 13878, 14884
MW 4:10 - 5:05 p.m.

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