

vivianfung | Composer

*"Her music ... summons images of dusk and
reaches for hidden places and states of mind."*

San Jose Mercury News



Vivian Fung

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Vivian Fung has distinguished herself as a composer with a unique and powerful compositional voice. Since earning her doctorate from The Juilliard School in 2002, she has forged her own approach often merging western forms with non-western influences such as Balinese and Javanese gamelan and folk songs from minority regions of China. *The New York Times* has described her work as “evocative,” and *The Strad* hails her Uighur-influenced music to be “as vital as encountering Steve Reich or the Kronos for the first time.” *Chicago Tribune* described Fung’s *Yunnan Folk Songs* as conveying “a winning rawness that went beyond exoticism.”

Highlights of Fung’s **recent world premieres** include: her Violin Concerto for Kristin Lee and Grammy nominated Metropolis Ensemble, *Dust Devils* commissioned by the Eastern Music Festival celebrating their 50th anniversary, *Yunnan Folk Songs* by Fulcrum Point New Music Project in Chicago; new choral works by the acclaimed Suwon Civic Chorale in South Korea; *Chant* by pianist Margaret Leng Tan at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; Piano Concerto *Dreamscapes* by pianist Jenny Lin with Metropolis Ensemble in New York City; and the standing-ovation premiere of String Quartet No. 2 commissioned by the Shanghai Quartet for its 25th anniversary season.

Fung’s **upcoming projects** include and her *Pizzicato* for String Quartet for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s season premiere ***Opening Night: Fireworks!*** The premiere of four new works commissioned by NJMTA, the Canadian premiere of her *String Sinfonietta* by the Montreal Chamber Orchestra and the live rendering of her works for *Billy Collins Suite*.



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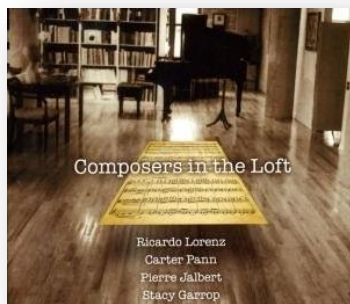
“...as vital as encountering Steve Reich or the Kronos for the first time.”
The Strad

Fung has traveled extensively for her work. In 2004, she traveled to Bali, Indonesia as part of the Asia Pacific Performance Exchange Program, sponsored by the UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance. In summer 2010, as an ensemble member of Gamelan Dharma Swara, she completed a performance tour of Bali including competing in the Bali Arts Festival.

Fung’s works have increasingly become part of **the core repertoire**. Recognized by the *New York Times* as “the most memorable part” of the Ying Quartet’s concert at Weill Recital Hall, Fung’s *Pizzicato* was part of the quartet’s repertory for two seasons. Her *Glimpses* for prepared piano is being embraced by a diverse group of pianists, including Margaret Leng Tan, Conor Hannick, Jenny Chai, Bryan Wagorn, and Vicky Chow. After the world premiere of Fung’s String Quartet No. 2 by the Shanghai Quartet at the Freer Gallery in Washington D.C., the Shanghais have included the work on their roster, including giving the Canadian premiere at the Edmonton Chamber Music Society this past March.



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Fung's music has been **commercially released** on the Telarc, Cedille, and Signpost labels. 2012 will see the release of her piano concerto *Dreamscapes*, violin concerto and *Glimpses* for Prepared Piano on the Naxos Canada label. She has an impressive body of compositions commissioned and performed by such ensembles as the Seattle Symphony, San José Chamber Orchestra, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, American String Quartet, Afiara String Quartet, Escher String Quartet, Music from China, and American Opera Projects to name a few.



Fung has been **composer-in-residence** of the Music in the Loft chamber music series in Chicago, the San José Chamber Orchestra, and the Billings Symphony. She has also completed residencies at the MacDowell, Yaddo, and Banff arts colonies as well as two residencies at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Fung is the 2010 New York Foundation for the Arts' Gregory Millard fellow. She has received numerous awards and grants from ASCAP, BMI, American Music Center, American Composers' Forum, and the Canada Council for the Arts.



Born in Edmonton, Canada, Vivian Fung began composition studies with composer Violet Archer. Other early influences include her mentors David Diamond, Narcis Bonet, and Robert Beaser. Fung is affiliated with The Juilliard School and is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre.



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"I was particularly struck...by the rhythmically buoyant creations of composer Vivian Fung."
San Francisco Chronicle for the Ying Quartet's 'Dim Sum'

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Highlights

2010-2011

Commissions and Performances



September 15, 2011 – Premiere of **Violin Concerto** with Metropolis Ensemble and Kristin Lee, soloist.

September 26, 2011 – *Pizzicato* featured as part of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Opening Night Concert at Alice Tully Hall in New York. Performed by the Escher Quartet.

July 30, 2011 – New Orchestral Commission to be premiered at the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, NC with Gerard Schwarz conducting. In celebration of the festival's 50th Anniversary.

June 2011 - Composer-in-residence with Delaware Chamber Music Festival.

April 26, 2011 – Concert at Americas Society in New York featuring chamber music by Fung, including *Glimpses*, *Six Haiku* for baritone and piano, and String Quartet No.2. Canadian all-star cast including Afiara Quartet, pianist Bryan Wagon, and baritone Jonathan Estabrooks.

April 22, 2011 – *Glimpses* for prepared piano performed by Jenny Q Chai at Thalia at Symphony Space.

March 22, 2011 – Premiere of ***Yunnan Folk Songs*** commissioned by Fulcrum Point New Music Project in Chicago through a grant from the MAP Fund – for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and large chamber ensemble for Western instruments and sheng (Chinese mouth organ).

March 8, 2011 – Preview of the **cadenza** portion of Fung's ***Violin Concerto*** at Metropolis Ensemble's Inaugural Benefit.

March 5, 2011 – Edmonton, Canada. Canadian premiere of **String Quartet No. 2** with the Shanghai Quartet at the Edmonton Chamber Music Society.

Summer 2010 – Bali, Indonesia. Fung performing and touring with Gamelan Dharmaswara; tour culminates in Bali Arts Festival main stage performance July 8, 2010. <http://www.dharmaswara.org/>.

May 28, and June 4, 2010 – Suwon and Seoul, South Korea. Premiere of three new **choral works** by the Suwon Civic Chorale, In-Gi Min, conductor.

Career Highlights

First commission at age 19 (1995) by New York Chamber Symphony and Gerard Schwarz.

First major orchestral work by Seattle Symphony in 1998 entitled ***Blaze***.

Music Alive! residency (sponsored by Meet the Composer and the American Symphony Orchestra League) with the San José Chamber Orchestra in 2004-2005, culminating in a work for string orchestra entitled ***Butterfly Variations*** (2005).

String Quartet No. 2 commissioned and premiered by the **Shanghai Quartet** in April 2009 at the Freer Gallery in Washington DC; the Shanghai Quartet will give the Canadian premiere on March 5, 2011.

Pizzicato for string quartet (2001), recorded by Ying Quartet, Telarc Label, has been performed numerous times as part of the Ying Quartet's core repertoire for three years. *NY Times* declared it “an evocative work ... the most memorable part of the ensemble's concert” from the Ying Quartet's April 22, 2009 concert at Weill Hall.

Works recorded by Cedille (2009 and 2005), Telarc (2008), and Signpost (2009) labels.

Vivian Fung - Press Quotes

"Fung's *Yunnan Folk Songs* stood out ... for how its complexity was put at the service of high level entertainment. The seven short pieces, each an interpretation of recordings sung by members of ethnic minorities in southwest China, conveyed a winning rawness that went beyond exoticism." *Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 2011

"*Yunnan Folk Songs* is an engaging and delightful work crafted with great flair, with Fung's skillful writing and scoring for voices and orchestra avoiding both pastiche and the stolid, overly respectful treatment of so many world-music inspired works." *Chicago Classical Review*, March 24, 2011

"[Summerfest] ... served up another winner.... Fung's 'Miniatures' was a fascinating work, based on a folksong from the Uighur people of Western China. Scored for clarinet and string quartet, the work fused elements of modernism — harmonic dissonance and quarter-tones — with traditional elements of ornamented folksong." *Kansas City Star*, July 25, 2010

"[E]nchanting.... [Her] music ... summons images of dusk and reaches for hidden places and states of mind." *San Jose Mercury News*, June 4, 2005

"The most memorable part of the ensemble's concert on Friday evening was an encore from that disc: Vivian Fung's 'Pizzicato for String Quartet.' Ms. Fung's evocative work, inspired by Chinese and Asian instruments like the pipa and gamelan, features percussive gestures and a medley of plucked sounds, including strumming. At one point the musicians rapped their knuckles against the wood of their instruments." *New York Times*, April 22, 2009 - Review of Ying Quartet's Performance at Weill Recital Hall.

"The most individual work was Vivian Fung's *Chanted Rituals*, heard in its Midwestern premiere. East really does meet West in the Canadian composer's chant-based work for trumpeter and two percussionists, and Burns displayed impressive chops as soloist in the jazz-inflected opening Dance, switching to flugelhorn for the atmospheric central Prayer." *Chicago Classical Review*, May 20, 2009 – Review of Fulcrum Point New Music Project's concert in Chicago, IL

"The Yings also offered a taste of 'Dim Sum' as an encore: the spiky, syncopated *Pizzicato* for String Quartet by Vivian Fung." *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2008



"Vivian Fung's *Miniatures* for Clarinet and String Quartet take advantage of her Chinese heritage to produce some non-traditional (in the Western sense) harmony and melody that's quite compelling." *David Hurwitz of Classicstoday.com*

"Vivian Fung's 'Miniatures,' rooted in Uighur music from Chinese Xinjiang and superbly played, are as vital as encountering Steve Reich or the Kronos for the first time." *The Strad*, March 2008

"I was particularly struck...by the rhythmically buoyant creations of composer - Vivian Fung." *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 20, 2008 – Review of the Ying Quartet's CD 2008 release on the Telarc Label.

"Although I found the Jalbert and Fung works the most musically rewarding — the ones I want most to hear repeatedly — the entire CD, a generous 78-and-a-half minutes, is a fitting tribute to an important organization for new chamber music." *Joe Milica of Enjoythemusic.com*

"Pizzicato for String Quartet (2001) by Vivian Fung featured fetching passages of pizzicato, brilliantly played by the Yings. At moments when the plucked strings were gentle and unified, Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings came to mind." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 25, 2007

List of Works

Orchestral Works

***Violin Concerto (2010-2011)* 18'**

violin solo; 1-1-1-1; hrn, tpt; 2 perc, hrp; strings

Premiere: September 2011, New York, NY; Kristin Lee, solo violin, Metropolis Ensemble, Andrew Cyr, conductor

***Dust Devils (2011)* 8'**

For full orchestra

Premiere: July 30, 2011, Greensboro, NC, Eastern Festival Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor

Commissioned by the Eastern Music Festival for their 50th anniversary.

***Piano Concerto "Dreamscapes" (2009)* 25'**

piano solo; 1-1-1-1; 1-1-1; 2 perc; strings

Premiere: November 19th and 20th, 2009, Le Poisson Rouge, New York, NY; Jenny Lin, piano, Metropolis Ensemble with Andrew Cyr, conductor

***String Sinfonietta (2008)* 18'**

For string orchestra

Premiere: May 18, 2008, San José, CA, San José Chamber Orchestra, Barbara Day Turner, conductor

***Butterfly Variations (2005)* 18'**

For string orchestra

Premiere: June 5, 2005, San José, CA

Part of *Music Alive!* composer-in-residence program with the San José Chamber Orchestra, co-sponsored by Meet the Composer and the American Symphony Orchestra League

***Pizzicato for String Orchestra (2001)* 4'**

Third Movement of String Quartet; Arrangement for String Orchestra

Premiere: Dec. 9, 2001, San José, CA, San José Chamber Orchestra, Barbara Day Turner, conductor

***Three Love Songs in Chinese for Soprano and Orchestra (2001)* 12'**

Text: Chinese Love Poetry in Mandarin

Soprano solo; 2-2-2-2; 2-2-1; 2 perc., hrp., pno.; strings



***Concertino Notturmo for flute, harpsichord, and strings (1999)* 15'**

Premiere: June 10, 2001, San José, CA, San José Chamber Orchestra, Barbara Day Turner, conductor

***Blaze for full orchestra (1998)* 13'**

3-3-3-3; 4-3-3-1; timp, 3 perc, hrp, pno; strings

Premiere: May 4, 1998, Seattle Symphony, George Cleve, conductor

Chamber Works

***String Quartet No. 2 (2009)* 18'**

In Six Movements

Premiere: April 23, 2009 by the Shanghai Quartet at the Freer Gallery, Washington DC. Commissioned by the Shanghai Quartet

***Billy Collins Suite (2008)* 12'**

For clarinet, cello, piano, and narrator

Premiere: May 4, 2008, by Music in the Loft, Chicago, IL; John Bruce Yeh, cl., and members of the Lincoln Trio; Released on the Cedille Records label in 2009

***Glimpses for prepared piano (2006)* 8'**

Premiere by Jenny Lin at the Miami ISCM Festival, April 2006

***Miniatures for Clarinet Quintet (Clarinet and String Quartet) (2005)* 13'**

Premiere: November 19, 2005, Music in the Loft, Chicago, IL; John Bruce Yeh, cl., and The Maia Quartet; Recorded on the Cedille Records label in 2007

Chamber Works contd.

***Night Impressions for Traditional Chinese Instruments (2005)* 18'**

In Four Movements

Instrumentation: erhu, dizi, pipa, 2 perc.

Premiere by Music From China, Nov. 5, 2005, Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY

***String Quartet No. 1 (2001-03)* 18'**

Premiere: January 2004, Columbus Chamber Music Society, OH by Avalon String Quartet

***Pizzicato for String Quartet (2001)* 4'**

Third Movement of *String Quartet* – may be performed separately.

Recording on Telarc Label with Ying Quartet released Jan. 2008

***Chanted Rituals for trumpet/flugelhorn and percussion (2002)* 14'**

Premiere: April 28, 2002, Lausanne, Switzerland, The Modern Trio (Members of the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra)

***Toccata for solo piano (2001)* 6'**

Premiere: Jan. 25, 2002, Ottawa, Canada, Association of Canadian Women Composers' Festival in conjunction with the Ottawa Chamber Music Society, Elaine Keillor, Piano

***Silhouettes for erhu solo (1997)* 5'**

Premiere: March 12, 1997, Clark Studio Theater, New York, NY, Wang Guo-Wei, erhu

***Rhapsody for trumpet and piano (1995)* 8'**

Premiere: July 7, 1995, Banff Arts Festival, Banff Centre for the Arts, Jens Lindemann, trumpet, David Moroz, piano

Vocal/Choral

***Yunnan Folk Songs (2010-2011)* 18'**

Instrumentation: Mezzo-soprano, baritone; fl-ob-cl; sheng (Chinese reed) hrn; 2 perc; string quartet
Premiere: March 22, 2011, Katie Calcamuggio, mezzo-soprano; Brad Jungwirth, baritone, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, Stephen Burns, conductor

***Sanci Kuni (2010)* 4'**

For mixed a cappella choir

Premiere: May 28, 2010 Suwon, South Korea, Suwon Civic Chorale, In-Gi Min, conductor

***Kecak Attack! (2008)* 4'**

For mixed a cappella choir

Premiere: May 28, 2010 Suwon, South Korea, Suwon Civic Chorale, In-Gi Min, conductor

***Recommendation (2008)* 7'**

For mixed a cappella choir and 2 percussion

Premiere: May 28, 2010 Suwon, South Korea, Suwon Civic Chorale, In-Gi Min, conductor

***Six Haiku for baritone and piano (2004)* 10'**

Premiere: May 25, 2004, Symphony Space, NY, as part of the Vox Series sponsored by New York City Opera and American Opera Projects

***Songs of Childhood for voice and piano (2002)* 8'**

Premiere: May 2002, Tuscany, Italy as part of a residency sponsored by the Atlantic Center for the Arts; Karen Holvik, soprano; Laurent Philippe, piano

***Night Songs (1999)* 18'**

Instrumentation: Mezzo-soprano; fl-ob-cl-bn; hn-tpt-tb; perc-pno-hrp; 2 vlms, vla, vlc, db

Premiere: April 19, 1999, Pittsburgh, PA, Viveca Genaux, mezzo-sop., Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, David Stock conducting



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Vivian Fung: Piano Concerto “Dreamscapes”
Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Commissioned and premiered by the Metropolis Ensemble through funding from the DeRosa Family Fund, with Jenny Lin as piano soloist – November 19th and 20th, 2009 in NYC

- I. Prologue: Mesmerizing Birdsongs
- II. First Vignette: Savage and Brutal
- III. Second Vignette: Jazzy but Steady
- IV. Third Vignette: Sweetly Dreamful, with Ghostly Undertones
- V. Fourth Vignette: Rude Awakenings; Schizophrenic Dreamscapes
- VI. Postlude: Calm and Tranquil

(Performed without pause)

The sounds of Bali haunt my dreams. The mist covering lush rice paddies at dawn, a symphony of birds chirping, and one fateful dewy morning in Bali, Indonesia when I visited Goa Gajah – the Elephant Cave Temple. That early summer morning, I descended a few flights of steep steps carved out of stone and found myself in the middle of a jungle with a natural waterfall and lotus ponds. Barefoot, in silence, I absorbed the force of my surroundings finding myself in the state of a powerful spiritual awakening. I felt I had become one with nature. The myriad encounters of Bali and the unknowable recesses of my own mind resolved into a tranquil state of balance.

This piano concerto is inspired by Bali. Its themes pay homage to portions of the gamelan gong kebyar-style work *Ujan Mas*, and a composition for legong dance. To anyone familiar with the music of the Ubud region of Bali, the spiky, syncopated rhythms, sudden tempo changes, and exotic scales in the concerto may seem familiar. Although I have quoted from traditional Balinese sources, I am not recreating traditional works. I have internalized the shimmering harmonies and interlocking rhythms of Balinese traditions to unleash an original process; traditional sources act as catalysts for my voice emerging from the shifting kaleidoscope of my own multicultural identity.

The work is a series of “Vignettes” that are all to be played without pause. The concerto is meant as a single movement work that has many different scenes. It begins with selected musicians in the audience blowing bird whistles that were purchased for the premiere from a street vendor in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The prologue gradually builds into the First Vignette, fast and relentless with gamelan-like interlocking rhythms. The Second Vignette takes my earlier solo prepared piano work “Kotekan,” written for pianist Jenny Lin, and greatly expands on it. The Third Vignette brings a temporary relief from the fast tempi of the first two, and presents a beautiful singing part for the piano. Around the solo, the orchestra weaves in and out with dreamlike chords and whispers. The Fourth Vignette sounds suddenly and recaps previously heard themes and musical material. The postlude brings a calm ending, but includes some surprise sonorities at the very end of the score.



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