



Karen Hutchinson/Beth Bhatnagar, Co-Presidents

January 13, 2020

## ARTIST PROGRAM

### A Program of Classical, Folk and Contemporary Music

*Melody of China, Guzheng, Chinese Harp*

performed by: **Yangqin Zhao**, percussion and **Gangqin Zhao**, percussion, vocal

## ARTIST BIOS

**Melody of China**, a nonprofit ensemble based in San Francisco, is the premiere Chinese music ensemble in the United States. The organization was formed in 1993 by a group of enthusiastic professional musicians from some of the most prestigious music conservatories in China. Chinese Hammered Dulcimer virtuoso, Yangqin Zhao is Director of the Melody of China ensemble. Serving an annual audience of more than 10,000, Melody of China performances have broken barriers in combining traditional Chinese music with contemporary works by influential composers such as Kui Dong, Gang Situ and Yuanlin Chen. Over the years, Melody of China has commissioned over 40 new works by 20 contemporary composers and has performed at numerous Bay Area public schools. The ensemble has a two-fold mission: to promote Chinese classical, folk and contemporary music, and to provide quality entertainment through the synergy between an ancient cultural tradition and youthful, multi-colored American culture.

**Yangqin Zhao**, percussion, is the executive and artistic director and one of the founders of Melody of China. Prophetically named after the instrument she plays, Yangqin has established herself as one of the foremost yangqin performers in the world. A member of Chinese Musicians' Association and the Chinese Nationalities Orchestra Society, Ms. Zhao graduated with Honors from the Music Department of the Nanjing Normal University and became the head of the faculty of Instrumental Music of the university. She won the highest award by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the People's Republic of China in 1982. Ms. Zhao also won first prize at the Jiangsu Provincial Arts Festival in 1987 and 1991. Her profile appeared in the "Who's Who in Young Chinese" and "The Chinese Musicians Yearbook" in 1990. Ms. Zhao has been invited to perform internationally in Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mexico and Germany. In 1996, she was invited as one of seven greatest musicians hailed as masters on the yangqin for the Tanz & Folk Fest Rudolstadt (Folk Instruments Festival) in Germany. Ms. Zhao also represented China and the United States playing the Chinese hammered dulcimer at the International Santur Festival in Iran in 2003. She has performed at Lincoln Center, with the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Woman's Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony.

**Gangqin Zhao**, Guzheng, Percussion, Vocal) A member of Chinese Musicians' Association, Gangqin finished her study in the Music Department of Nanjing Normal University in 1987. She was named one of the Ten Best Musicians by the university in 1990. She was an instructor of guzheng in the Nanjing Children Music and Dance School for years before she immigrated to U.S. in late 1990s. She has performed internationally in Singapore, Denmark and Germany. Currently, Gangqin Zhao is the director of The Chinese Arts & Music Center in San Francisco. Gangqin Zhao's students competed in the 2010 International World Cup Chinese Instruments Competition where they won Gold Medals.