

## CELEBRATE ASIA COMPOSITION COMPETITION SELECTION

World premiere: March 1, 2015

YE YANCHEN

*Xizi*

Carolyn Kuan, conductor

**Ye Yanchen** (b. 1992) is the winner of the *Celebrate Asia* Composition Competition. This young composer's reputation is spreading quickly beyond his native China, with his music reaching Russia (where he attended conservatory), the United Kingdom and now the United States.

Ye's vibrant overture, *Xizi*, takes its title from the tradition of actors in the Chinese opera during the Ming and Qing dynasties, dating back to 1368. "Unlike modern society's respect for the performing artists," Ye explains, "people always had a hypocritical, fickle, mercenary impression of the actors in the Chinese opera. Most of the actors maintained an inner indifference while performing with rich and profound emotions." Ye compares this history to the inevitable hardships of life, and how "gradually and unconsciously we develop hearts like those actors under our seemingly sincere and sunny faces." The music uses a small Chinese gong and lively *scherzando* phrases to imply the "colorful" and "theatrical" side of the actors, while "unceasing rhythm" and an "unchanged bass" imply the "emptiness under the expressive force."

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