



LIU Sola

music composer

vocalist

music producer

writer

Liu Sola is a world-renowned music composer, a highly individualistic vocalist and a major award winning contemporary writer.

After graduating from the Central Conservatory of Music, in the 80ths with a degree in composition, she achieved early success with her best-selling and award-winning novella ***“You Have no Choice”***. Since then her literary work not only received critical praise but also became cult reading for the young generation.

Sola has composed music for orchestra, ensemble, opera, modern theater, modern dance, art exhibitions, etc... and she composed the first ever Chinese rock opera.

She has also scored many Chinese and international film sound tracks, as well as TV and drama productions.

Her musical styles are wide ranging including classical music, jazz, early music, rock, traditional and contemporary music. Sola is a composer with a special affinity for free jazz and blues that she sets to the tune of her traditional Chinese roots.

In 1995 the "**New York Press**" stated that she is "*the only Chinese artist who'd qualify to play the New Orleans Jazz Festival*". As a singer her voice is unforgettable. It can "*wander from emotive, free-form vocalizing, with echoes of Chinese opera, to simple folk-like melodies*" (**New York Times, 7/1996**).

Frequently invited to perform at international music festivals, all over the world, she has recorded and collaborated with many international artists. In 1988 in one of her early performances she represented China at the Seoul Song Festival for the Olympics. In 1989 she collaborating with Memphis-based blues musicians to

record what is perhaps the first-ever mainland Chinese Blues song "**Reborn**" and in 1991 she appeared on the Womad album "*A Week In The Real World*", and so much more.

Her first US album "**Blues In The East**" (Axiom Records /Polygram, 1995) was produced by Bill Laswell and received excellent reviews, including a "*Spotlight*" position on Billboard magazine. It remained for many weeks in the top 10 of the New World Music chart (USA & UK). In her following album "**China Collage**" (Avant Record, 1996) she established a new musical style by giving highly contemporary interpretations to the sound of ancient Chinese traditional music.

In the late 1990's, she produced and released a serie of albums in this new style like *“Haunts”*, *“June Snow”*, *“Sola & Friends Live”*, *“Point Zero”*, *“Apparitions”*, and *“Spring Snow”*. More recently, she co-produced an album *“BGM16”* for MUJI/Japan, which included her new composition Da Hu Jia (2011), a suite for piano.



In 1997, with the help of celebrated New York artist, director, and playwright Sister Joanna Chen, she founded "*The Sola & Friends Band*", collaborating with top jazz musicians such as Amina C. Myers, Fernando Saunders, and Phooroan aKlaff.



In 1999, she went back to China with her musicians for a series of Jazz & Rock concerts in Beijing and Shanghai, her first performance there since she left China 10 years ago.

A live recording of this groundbreaking concert, "***Sola & Friends***" was released in 2000. In September 2000, she returned to China again and founded "***The New Folk Big Band***", the first ever Chinese folk/jazz fusion big band. The debut concert was a revelation to the Chinese and international audience, as it represented the first successful attempt to create a new Chinese improvisatory music.

In 2003, with support from HKW Germany, she founded ***"The Liu Sola & Friends Ensemble"*** to perform her compositions with top Chinese instrumental soloists. Over the last few years, the Liu Sola & Friends Ensemble has become a highlight group for many major festivals around the world.

The ensemble has performed Liu Sola's compositions for modern dance and film soundtracks such as the award-winning dance and music drama ***"Jue-Awaken"***, choreographed by Jinzi & Luo Lili, and the award-winning film ***"Thirteen Princess Trees"*** directed by Lv Yue.

In 2012, the ensemble appeared in Beijing for a major outdoor public event. The virtuoso performances and the unique music style attracted many young Chinese people.

Over the last 10 years, Liu Sola taught her classically trained ensemble musicians to do improvisation. In early 2013, she started a pioneering program, the Liu Sola & Friends Ensemble Film Soundtrack Workshop. Working together with independent Chinese film directors, the innovative program aims to help musicians develop the ability to improvise more creatively on film soundtracks.

Besides her compositions for concerts, her most important music works include operas such as the chamber opera *Fantasy of the Red Queen* (2006), performed by the *“Ensemble Modern”* of Germany and the Liu Sola & Friends ensemble. Liu Sola is the libretto and music composer, as well as the artistic director, costume designer and leading vocalist. Another chamber opera *The Afterlife of Li Jiantong* (2009) is a work dedicated to her mother, a Chinese political-historical writer. Liu Sola wrote both the libretto and the music. This piece was commissioned by the Barbican Centre London, the Danish Royal Opera and the Paul

Hillier/Theatre of Voices, and performed by the Theatre of Voices. As an award-winning writer, Liu Sola's fictions have been translated into Japanese, English, French, Italian, Swedish, Danish, and German.



A collection of stories, *Blue Sky Green Sea*, was translated into English and was published by Renditions in Hong Kong in 1993. The novel *Chaos and All That* was written in 1989 when she was living in London. It has been acclaimed as the first great work of Chinese fiction written in exile. This "quick-witted novel" (*Kirkus Reviews*, 9/1994) "has created a brilliant kaleidoscope drawn from colorful fragments of widely divergent worlds." (*Publishers Weekly*, 12/1994). The English translation, by Richard King, was awarded First Prize for translation by the British Comparative Literature Association. Hawaii University Press published the

English translation in October 1994 and the Italian publisher Ediziono Theoria published the Italian translation in 1995. A collection of her stories was translated into Japanese and published by Xin Chao Publishers in Japan in 1997. Her most important novel is *Small Tales of the Great Ji Family* (2000) written in New York. This political-mythological novel was published in Chinese as *Da Ji Jia de Xiao Gu Shi* or *Nv Zhen Tang*, and has been translated into Italian and French, and published by Einaudi and Seuil. Besides fiction, she has written many essays on music, art, and women's issues in China, such as the best selling essay

collection Liu Sola on the Move, and the award winning essay collection Lipstick Talk. Her newest novel Lost in Fascination was published by Chinese Writers' Publishers in 2011.

Besides her music and literary works, Sola also acted in and co-wrote Ning Ying's film Wu Qiong Dong (Perpetual Motion), as well as composed the music sound track. She was invited by Japan's Muji to design a shopping bag.

Her music scores have been exhibited in China and Germany as graphic art. She also designed the Liu Sola (Beijing) Music Studio

House, which is where the Liu Sola & Friends ensemble rehearses and records. In 1988, under the auspices of the Washington News Agency, Liu Sola went to the USA as an international visitor; on the same trip, she was invited by the mayor of Columbus to visit the city as a guest writer. She was a participant of the Iowa International Writers program in 1992; an member of BMG music publisher (1991-2002); an international board member of the House of World Cultures (HKW. Germany) from 2002-2006; co-curator for UCHRI / SECT: Designing China in 2009; and curator for the Cross Boundary Music/Inter-Media Forum at the annual Beijing

Modern Music Festival (2011-12). She has lectured internationally, at Harvard, Cornell, Iowa, Berkeley, Portland, Minneapolis, Bryn Mawr, UC Irvine, Beijing University, Qinghua University, the Central Conservatory of Music Beijing, the Chinese Conservatory of Music, and many other major universities in China and abroad.

