

# The Heaven & Earth Totem

— Concert by Liu Sola and her friends

If you love rock music, you will enjoy the show. If you happen to love Chinese folk music, the performance is a must-see attraction, and if you are also interested in vocal improvisation, you simply can't miss this show! The 18<sup>th</sup> Beijing Music Festival 2015 proudly invites you to spend a marvelously exciting and artistically satisfying evening with Liu Sola and her friends! The New York Press referred to Sola as "the only Chinese artist who would qualify to play the New Orleans Jazz-Festival," and the New York Times cited her ability to "wander from echoes of Chinese opera to simple folk-like melodies." Please join us for a unique blend of the musical traditions of China with multicultural treatments of the blues!

After Liu Sola graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music with a degree in composition, she published her award-winning novella *You Have no Choice*. Enthusiastically received by China's disenfranchised urban youth, her first full-length novel *Chaos and All* appeared in 1989. In addition, her novella, *Blue Sky Green Sea* was translated into English and performed as a rock opera with the Chinese Central Symphony Orchestra and a rock band! Since the 1980's, Liu Sola has scored many Chinese and international film sound tracks, as well as TV and drama productions. She has composed music for orchestra, ensemble, opera, modern theater, modern dance, and art exhibitions. Her range of musical styles includes classical music, jazz, early music, rock, traditional and contemporary music. She is frequently invited to perform at international music festivals and has recorded and collaborated with many international artists. In 2003, she founded Liu Sola & Friends Ensemble, teaming up with Chinese instrumental virtuosos such as Li Zhengui, Yang Jing, together with other young award-winning soloists. Their world debut in Berlin in 2003 became a smash hit!

Sola describes her musical and cultural path in the following way. "I do not see our style of play as Western avant-garde nor is it a new style of music. What we try to do is tune our instruments to our souls. People's ears and minds have no national boundaries; what we offer is a new sound-brew." Although Sola is well-known and respected worldwide for her unique and avant-garde style, her musical expressions are more aptly described as Chinese contemporary classical music. The band is known for its wide use of traditional Chinese instruments, as Sola does not want her musical style defined as Western vanguard or new music. Sola and her friends are proof that Chinese traditional music is a living tradition!

Please join the 18<sup>th</sup> Beijing Music Festival 2015 and welcome Liu Sola & Friends, one of the most eclectic and pioneering Chinese bands in the world!

## Concert Program

1. The Heaven & Earth Totem .
  - A. Walk with Drums (Composition, arrangement by Liu Sola. Worldpremiere. )
  - B. The Bridge ( Composition by Liu Sola, Liu Yijun – improvisation performance. World premiere.)
  - C. Celebration of Darkness and Light. ( Composition, arrangement and words by Liu Sola )
2. Tiger & Rabbit Swing (Composition and arrangement by Liu Sola. World premiere. )
3. Golden Pheasant Out of the Mountains ( Traditional piece, scored & re-arranged by Li Zhengui' )
4. Chicken & Dog Dancing (Composition & arrangement by Liu Sola. World premiere. )
5. Chickens at the Country Fair ( Composition, arrangement and words by Liu Sola)
6. Goose & Crane Calling (Composition, arrangement, and words by Liu Sola. World premiere. )
7. Gert Mortensen, Zhang Yangsheng and Liu Yijun: improvisations (World premiere)
8. Crossings (Composition, arrangement, and direction by Liu Sola. All musicians involved with improvisation in this piece. World premiere.)

## **China Beat Concert Program: Concept by Liu Sola**

### **1. The Heaven & Earth Totem**

- A. Walk with Drums (Composition, arrangement by Liu Sola. World premiere)
- B. The Bridge (Composition by Liu Sola, Liu Yijun. Improvisation performance. World premiere)
- C. Celebration of Darkness and Light. (Composition, arrangement and words by Liu Sola )

“Walk with Drums” was created by using traditional folk percussion and Western dance rhythms, to move it closer to contemporary dance music. “The Bridge” is a duet between keyboard and guitar, juxtaposing the sounds and rhythms of rock’n roll and traditional Chinese plucked string music. “Celebration of Darkness and Light” continues Chinese percussion and plucked music traditions, but adds a heavy “bottom” sound. The vocal part integrates all kinds of traditional vocal styles, such as “howling song”, “ghost theatre”, “chanting” and so on. These three pieces together constitute a tribal ceremony to show respect for nature: hence its name “The Heaven & Earth Totem”.

### **2. Tiger & Rabbit Swing.** (Composition and arrangement by Liu Sola. World premiere)

There is a saying, “When tigers and rabbits meet, there will be tragedy”. But in this piece, the tiger and rabbit swing together.

### **3. Golden Pheasant Out of the Mountains.** (Traditional piece, scored & re-arranged by Li Zhengui)

### **4. Chicken & Dog Dancing.** (Composition & arrangement by Liu Sola. World premiere)

The folk idiom “chickens fly, dogs jump” describes a noisy event. This piece is about chickens and dogs dancing together, and is linked to the next piece “A Chicken at the Country Fair”.

### **5. A Chicken at the Country Fair.** (Composition, arrangement and words by Liu Sola)

A chicken ran into a country fair. It saw the musicians, heard the yelling of humans and animals. It watched an erhu and suona performance. At the end, the chicken fights with the pig and the dog.

### **6. Goose & Crane Calling.** (Composition, arrangement, and words by Liu Sola. World premiere)

The whole piece is divided into eight parts. The music movements are structured as eight yin and yang divinations, and express the sound of birds and magnetic natural energy.

### **7. Gert Mortensen, Zhang Yangsheng and Liu Yijun: improvisations.** World premiere.

### **8. Crossings.** (Composition, arrangement, and direction by Liu Sola. All musicians involved with improvisation in this piece. World premiere)

This piece is designed for musicians to show their improvisation skills. Each musician will give a wonderful individual improvisation performance. It is our ensemble's signature performance.

### **9. The An-sai Drum Team walk out from Orange Hall into the square.** They will perform the traditional rhythms and then Gert Mortensen, Li Zhengui, and Zhang Yangsheng will join them with improvisation.