

Chamber Voyage

# Bohemian Affection

23-02-2019 ♦Saturday♦8:00pm♦ Dom Pedro V Theatre

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Welcome to the Macao Orchestra's Chamber Voyage – “Bohemian Affection”. To avoid undue disturbance to the performers and members of the audience, please silence all mobile phones and beeping devices before the concert begins, and keep silent and remain seated throughout the performance. No smoking, eating or drinking is permitted inside the venue. Photography and video recording are forbidden except by official permission. Children under 6 will not be admitted to the performance.

The audience is kindly reminded that no applause is necessary in between movements. Your applause is most appreciated after each complete piece of music. The concert will last about 1 hour and 15 minutes (without interval).

Thank you for your co-operation.

Macao Orchestra

# Macao Orchestra

Where East Meets West, Past Connects with Present



Formed in 1983, the Macao Orchestra is a professional ensemble under the auspices of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government. The Macao Orchestra is now a distinguished orchestra of Asia, performing Chinese and Western classics throughout the times. It has also played a key role in the music and cultural life of Macao residents and overseas audiences.

In 2001, the Orchestra was extended into an orchestra with double winds; today, it has developed into a small-to-medium-sized orchestra of around 60 outstanding musicians from more than ten countries and regions. In 2008, Maestro Lu Jia commenced his tenure as Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Orchestra, initiating the convention of “Concert Seasons” and in each season 90 different concerts and outreach programme would be held, presenting to the public, comprehensively and systematically, classics from both Western and Chinese.

The Orchestra collaborates regularly with numerous internationally renowned musicians, conductors and ensembles including Plácido Domingo, Krystian Zimerman, Yulianna Avdeeva, Henning Kraggerud, Mario Brunello, Fou Ts'ong, Lang Lang, Sarah Chang, Jian Wang, Tan Dun, the Teatro Regio Torino, the English National Ballet, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Latvian National Opera, and the Korean Chamber Orchestra, etc. In addition, the Macao Orchestra has regularly been invited to perform in Mainland China and overseas, participating in the 2015 Austria Bruckner Festival as China's representative and attending the music festival “La Folle Journee au Japon” in Japan 2016. In 2017, the Orchestra also participated in the “Belt and Road” International Music Season in Shenzhen, leaving its footprints in at least 30 cities across China as well as Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, the U.S.A., Japan and Korea, etc. In March 2018, the Orchestra performed in Myanmar for the first time for cultural exchange. The refined quality of the Orchestra is unanimously acclaimed, testifying to Macao Orchestra's significance as a symbol of Macao's prosperity as an international cultural city.

# Programme

Smetana(1824-1884)

*String Quartet No. 2 in D minor*

Allegro

Allegro moderato

Allegro non piú moderato, ma agitato e con fuoco

Presto

**Cao Hui**, First Violin

**Denis Kriger**, Second Violin

**Li Jun**, Viola

**Radim Navrátil**, Cello

Dvořák (1841-1904)

*String Quintet in G Major, Op. 77*

Allegro con fuoco

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Poco andante

Finale: Allegro assai

**Li Na**, First Violin

**Vit Polasek**, Second Violin

**Kiyeol Kim**, Viola

**Lu Yan**, Cello

**Tibor Tóth**, Double Bass

Martinů (1890-1959)

*Sextet for Piano and Winds, H. 174*

Praeludium: Poco andante

Adagio

Scherzo (Divertimento I, for flute and piano)

Blues (Divertimento II)

Finale

**Weng Sabei**, Flute

**Jennifer Shark**, Oboe

**Michael Geoffrey Kirby**, Clarinet

**Yung Tsangshien, Zhu Wukun**, Bassoons

**Cecilia Long**, Piano (Guest Musician)

**Macao Orchestra**

The organiser reserves the right to alter the programme and/or the cast of performers

# Programme Notes

## **Bedřich Smetana: String Quartet No. 2 in D minor**

Smetana is best loved for the cycle of symphonic poems titled *Ma Vlast*, a heartfelt eulogy to his native land, but he achieved the status of the founding father of the Czech nationalist school of music through his many operas in the Czech language. Public struggles and hard-earned glories aside, his personal life was full of misfortunes, and he recorded them in his chamber music. He grieved in his First Piano Trio the death of his eldest daughter. One year earlier and one year later, he respectively lost two other daughters to fatal illnesses. Within three years, his wife also passed away. When he was finally beginning to win recognition in what was to be his last decade of life, he was going deaf. A long harmonic E in the final movement of his First String Quartet graphically records the pain of losing his hearing, and when he composed his Second String Quartet in 1882-83, he was defying his doctor's order of completely quitting any musical activity. In the end, he died in a mental asylum.

The Second String Quartet is the work of a miserable man confronting difficulties and fears. According to the composer, it represents how music sounds in a person who had lost hearing. Elegy and resignation alternate with bouts of agitation in the harmonically adventurous first movement. The second movement comprises of a dance and a charming melody alternating with each other, both appearing light-hearted, but dark undertones surface where phrases break off abruptly and where the harmony goes weird. The third movement begins wildly, and a melody appears reminding one of the sublime slow movement in Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 132, but in Smetana, the music turns sinister when trembling notes disrupt the melody, and the lyricism in this movement is almost forced into a cry. The composer tries to restore musical and mental balance in the final movement, but soon gives in. The music wavers between brightness and darkness and keeps falling down, and the affirmative ending seems very forced.

## **Antonín Dvořák: String Quintet in G Major, Op. 77**

Dvořák, at the beginning of his career, was a violist under the baton of Smetana at the Provisional Theater in Prague. Smetana's fervent nationalism inspired Dvořák to follow suit, and in the end it is his symphonies and instrumental music after Smetana's cycle of symphonic poems *Ma Vlast*, rather than their many operas, that take root in the mind of the international audience as representatives of Czech music.

Dvořák was and is still loved for his melodic gift and straightforward expression. In terms of form, his works do not often break traditional rules, and this ensured his popularity during his lifetime. This, however, often overshadows his inventiveness. The String Quintet in G Major, an early work composed in 1875, one of the first that marked the emergence of his voice, catches one's ears right at the beginning: with the cello, doubled by a double bass, murmuring in their low register, this is not the sound one expects from a "string quintet". Here Dvořák avoids the usual addition to string quartet of a viola or a cello; the double bass both produces a wider sonority and frees the cello from the role of the only bass instrument and enables it to join in the melodic texture. As to the heavier, earthier sound, one is reminded of his Serenade for wind instruments, cello and double bass.

Otherwise, this piece unfolds quite traditionally and is typical Dvořák in its jocular mood. The first movement is a standard sonata form. The second movement seems like a country dance that stops and goes, with a unique harmonic color in both the scherzo and the trio parts. The slow

movement is as sweet as anything by Dvořák, and with the double bass plucking a gentle, rocking lullaby rhythm one feels particularly secure. The violin melody that ensues proves what Brahms claimed Dvořák could do: pulling melodies as if out of his sleeves. The middle section is marked by an emotional urgency that in the end turns placid. The last movement reminds one of the Classical masters. It retains a high spirit throughout till the end.

The Quintet was originally in five movements, and Dvořák deleted a slow movement adapted from what would become his String Quartet No. 4. It was published in 1878, 13 years after its composition, thus the deceptively late opus number assigned by the publisher.

## **Bohuslav Martinů: Sextet for Piano and Winds, H. 174**

Bohuslav Martinů was one of the most prolific composers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently gifted in music, he was, however, a troubled student when young, and, as an adult, a shy, slow, stolid but smart and nice person often lost in his music, perhaps symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome. Martinů left his native Bohemia for Paris in 1923, absorbing the latest trends in music serious and popular. He stayed there until 1941, when he was forced to move to the United States, where he stayed until 1953. His final years were spent in France.

While in Paris, he formed a neo-classical music language as exemplified by Stravinsky, propulsive in rhythm, angular in harmony, sharp in expression, and often quite light-hearted in tone. The Sextet for Piano and Winds was composed in 1929 for a composition competition sponsored by Elisabeth Coolidge, one of the most important patrons in new music. He considered it satisfactory, but it didn't win. Three years later, he won with a sextet for strings.

The instrumentation for the Sextet is basically piano plus woodwind quintet, except that Martinů replaced the French horn with a second bassoon, considering that "this combination produces completely unexpected colors". In five short movements, the piece is exceptionally rich in variety. The first movement begins with a prelude: a peaceful pastoral marked by wavering chromatic scales in the background and vivid counterpoint in the foreground. Then a child-like dance starts, followed by a passage of irregular meters where the piano dialogues with the winds. Then all the elements are fused together. The Adagio is largely diatonic in the beginning, as simple as a nostalgic folk song. Here unusual timbres do catch the ear. The third and fourth movements are two divertimentos showing a Parisian influence in their jazzy elements, the former showcasing the flute as a virtuoso, the latter vivid in imagery. The last movement is an accelerating and thus exhilarating sequence of preludes and fughetas.

# Highlight Concerts

Chamber Voyage

## 《Chamber Gala》

◆30-03-2019◆Saturday◆20:00◆Dom Pedro V Theatre◆

Programa:

Haydn: Divertimento No. 15 in D Major, Hob. V: 15

Beethoven: String Quartet No. 9 in C Major, Op. 59 “Razumovsky” , No. 3

Reicha: Wind Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 88, No. 2

Tickets: MOP 120 / 100

Approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, no interval

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Maestros with Charisma

## 《Piano Prodigies》

◆15-06-2019◆Saturday◆20:00◆Macao Cultural Centre Grand Auditorium◆



© Marco Bergrove

**Piano**

Lucas & Arthur Jussen Brothers



© Harald Hoffmann

**Conductor**

Tung-Chieh Chuang

Programa:

Stravinsky: Scherzo à la Russe

Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in D minor

Prokofiev: Romeo and Juliet Suites (excerpts)

Tickets: MOP 250 / 200 / 150

Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, including one interval

**Tickets available through the Macao Ticketing Network**

**Ticket Reservation: [www.macauticket.com](http://www.macauticket.com) , (853) 2855 5555**

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## Acknowledgement

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