



年度最佳藝術家獎 Award for Best Artist

「年度最佳藝術家獎」表揚在 2012/13 年度有傑出表現及積極投身藝術工作的藝術工作者。得獎者憑其創新性和創造力，表現獨特的個人風格。獎項以藝術界別分類，包括藝術評論、舞蹈、戲劇、電影、文學藝術、媒體藝術、音樂、視覺藝術及戲曲。

The Award for Best Artist aims to accord recognition to arts practitioners with distinguished achievements in their respective art forms in 2012/13. The awardees have demonstrated their unique individuality through innovation and creativity. The Award is categorised according to different art forms: arts criticism, dance, drama, film, literary arts, media arts, music, visual arts and *xiqu*.

今屆文學藝術及戲曲界別的獎項從缺。

No award is presented to literary arts and *xiqu* categories this year.

評審計算期：2012 年 9 月 1 日至 2013 年 8 月 31 日

Assessment Period: 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013



年度最佳藝術家 Award for Best Artist

音樂
Music

陳慶恩 Chan Hing-yan



美國伊利諾大學音樂藝術博士，主修作曲、副修民族音樂學，現為香港大學音樂系主任。其創作以擅於糅合中西特色見稱，屢獲本地及海外樂團、音樂家及音樂節委約。多次以作曲家身份代表香港，作品曾在世界各地演出。與城市當代舞蹈團合作的三個舞劇深受好評，其中《蘭陵王》(2007)更獲得2008年香港舞蹈年獎「最佳原創音樂獎」。同年獲民政事務局長嘉許，表揚他在推動文化藝術發展的貢獻。

2012/13年度有多個作品面世，包括香港藝術節原創室內歌劇《蕭紅》；香港小交響樂團委約、在香港首演及巡迴北美五個城市的《一霎好風》；以及為香港電台弦樂四重奏創作，並於意大利及法國演出的《好風過處》。

Chan Hing-yan holds a Doctorate of Musical Art degree from the University of Illinois in the US, majoring in composition and minoring in ethnomusicology. He currently chairs the Department of Music at the University of Hong Kong. Renowned for his subtle mediation between Chinese and Western idioms, Chan has received commissions from local and overseas musicians, orchestras and music festivals. As a composer, Chan has represented Hong Kong on many international occasions and his works have been performed extensively around the world. Chan's three collaborations with the City Contemporary Dance Company have won him much acclaim, with *Warrior Lanling* (2007) winning the Best Original Music Award at the Hong Kong Dance Awards in 2008. In the same year, he received a commendation for his contributions to the development of arts and culture from the Secretary for Home Affairs.

Chan's 2012/13 calendar was dotted with a string of new releases, among them the chamber opera *Heart of Coral*, composed for the Hong Kong Arts Festival; *'Twas the Thawing Wind*, a work commissioned by the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and premiered in Hong Kong before touring five cities in North America; and *As the Wind Goes By*, a quintet written for the RTHK Quartet, who performed the work in Italy and repeated it in France.

在二十多年的作曲生涯中，2012/13年度是陳慶恩面對最多考驗和最具挑戰性的一年。原本打算只集中火力創作籌備逾兩年、由香港藝術節委約，亦為他首個創作之室內歌劇《蕭紅》，但期間卻接到香港小交響樂團及香港電台第四台的邀請，分別為笙及樂團創作長達二十分鐘的《一霎好風》，以及為笙及弦樂四重奏創作長達十分鐘的《好風過處》。

同一時間分身為多個重要演出作曲，差點令他應接不暇。他說：「由於三個創作集中一起，實在很考驗我的韌力與專注度。我從沒試過要在如此緊逼的時間內，完成那麼多有份量又重要的作品和演出。期間有四個多月，我除了上班及睡覺，就是在電腦前作曲、寫歌劇，非常難忘。」

學貫中西 譜出樂曲

在學習音樂的過程中，陳慶恩接觸過多種中西樂器。中國傳統樂器二胡是他首件學習的樂器，中學時代已贏盡香港所有二胡比賽，甚至想過當一名專業的二胡演奏家。早期的經驗助他打下了深厚的中樂基礎，後期在不同的學習階段，他亦慢慢開始接觸西洋樂器，如鋼琴和單簧管等。

在修讀作曲期間，為了解更多不同的樂器，他藉著當學校及業餘樂團的指揮，為自己製造更多涉獵不同樂器的機會，以幫助創作。1997年從美國伊利諾大學完成音樂藝術博士課程後，他開始獲委約創作與中國有關或中西樂融合的作品，慢慢建立起現在的風格。

「我的作品大部份都是為混合中西樂器的樂隊而寫的，但其實自己並沒刻意創作這類音樂。對我來說，音樂沒有中西之分，只有好和壞的作品。與香港藝術節協會商談《蕭紅》時，我曾提出以全西洋樂器組合來演奏。我其實有點想擺脫別人對我的既定印象，使是有關中國的題材，我也能以西洋樂器演繹。不過協會表明希望作品可用上混合中西樂器的組合。」

傳統經典啟發新創作

陳慶恩形容每次創作也像生孩子，過程痛苦，有時甚至感到無助。他回想：「尤其是創作《蕭紅》的時候，我曾多次想『過去二十多年辛辛苦苦建立的名聲，會否因這作品遭滑鐵盧而盡毀？』每次創作就是找出解決問題的方法，亦要作出很多決定，是一個抉擇過程。當你不想因循，不想重複自己，想另闢蹊徑，擺脫自己或前人曾經用過的方法，又想作品有說服力，就得勇於面對重重抉擇，是一個很艱苦的過程。」

雖有豐富作曲經驗，陳慶恩每次創作仍抱著一顆謙卑的心，對偉大作曲家如巴哈、貝多芬、馬勒、史達拉汶斯基等，更是心存敬畏。「有時揭開樂譜，不其然會反問自己『還繼續作下去嗎？』史達拉汶斯基在不到三十歲便寫出《春之祭》，我像他那個年紀時一首大型作品還未曾寫過呢！每次研究他們的作品，也有一種震撼，見到天地這麼大，人會更加謙卑，更想繼續追尋。現在不時在他們的作品中還找到新的靈感，每次揭開樂譜總有很多東西可以學。」

除了西方經典作曲家的作品，他亦希望能更深入研究中國傳統音樂。「中國傳統音樂如古琴音樂、戲曲等，其實有很多值得我們作為創作人慢慢學習。現在最常見的都是經過洋為中用或現代化洗禮的東西。研究真正的傳統音樂，其實要花一番功夫，很不簡單。」

評審評語

本年度有多個重要的作品發表，《一霎好風》於本地及北美巡演，具國際視野；歌劇《蕭紅》於香港藝術節首演，成績突出。陳慶恩的作品豐富多元，演出帶到香港以外多個地方，成就超卓。





Chan Hing-yan has never been confronted with more tests and challenges in his 20 years as a composer than he was in 2012/13. It was the most taxing 12 months of his professional life. Just as he had set his mind to focus solely on *Heart of Coral*, his first chamber opera and a commissioned work for the Hong Kong Arts Festival that had already taken him more than two years to prepare and compose, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and RTHK Radio 4 offered him commissions that he could not decline. So the composer took time out – time he could ill afford – from his packed schedule to create a 20-minute *'Twas the Thawing Wind* – for *sheng* and orchestra, and a 10-minute *As the Wind Goes By* – for *sheng* and string quartet.

During the time it took to complete these compositions, Chan found himself shuffling between different projects and spreading himself far too thinly. He recalls, "Working on three projects within such a short period of time really brought my reserves of resilience and concentration under pressure. I've never been so hard pressed to manage several productions and performances of such substance and importance in such a tight schedule. For more than four months, when I was not teaching, I spent virtually every waking moment in front of the computer composing the opera. It was indeed an unforgettable experience."



Mediating between Chinese and Western idioms

Chan spent his formative years in music dabbling with a variety of Chinese and Western instruments. The first was the *erhu*, also known as the Chinese two-stringed fiddle. Chan mastered this instrument so well that he swept the board in all the local *erhu* competitions in his high school years, and even contemplated pursuing the career of a professional *erhu* performer. Such experiences gave him a solid foundation in Chinese music. Then he began taking up various Western instruments – such as the piano and clarinet – which enriched various stages of his musical education.

Whilst still a student of composition, he took up the baton for various school and amateur orchestras in order to gain exposure to a wider range of the instruments he needed for his musical creations. Having completed his Doctorate of Musical Art programme at the University of Illinois in 1997, he began receiving commissions to compose musical works with Chinese themes or involving a mixed ensemble of Chinese and Western instruments. Gradually, he has developed a distinctive voice that he is now known for.

"Most of my compositions are written for a mixed ensemble consisting of Chinese and Western instruments. But it's hardly a style born of intention. To me, there is no such thing as Chinese or Western sounds, just good or bad compositions. When discussing *Heart of Coral* with the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, I proposed an all-Western instrumentation for the chamber opera. I simply wanted to break away from the style that was expected of me. I was thinking that I could express its Chinese theme well with an ensemble of Western instruments. Nevertheless, the festival preferred a mixed ensemble."

Traditional classics inspire new creations

Chan compares the emotional pains and an occasional sense of helplessness experienced during his composition process to those of childbirth. "Throughout the creative process, especially when I was working on *Heart of Coral*, my mind was haunted by the thought that this work would be the Waterloo of my career, tarnishing a reputation that took me more than 20 arduous years to build. Each and every creative process is about finding solutions to problems and making decisions, lots of them. It's all about making choices. If you want to avoid repeating yourself and clinging to the habitual; if you wish to blaze new paths and break away from the old methods used by yourself or others; and if you are conscious of the need to be convincing in your work, then you'll have to find the courage to be confronted by an avalanche of choices. It's a traumatic process," Chan recalls.



Chan combines his extensive knowledge and vast experience in composition with great modesty. He composes each piece with a humble heart – a heart that is also filled with a deep sense of awe and respect for the great composers of the past: Bach, Beethoven, Mahler, Stravinsky and others. "Sometimes, as I flip through the scores of these composers, I can't help but wonder, 'Shall I carry on?' Stravinsky composed *The Rite of Spring* when he was barely 30, whereas I had yet to have a large-scale composition to my name when I was of the same age. Studying their works makes me tremble and sends a chill down my spine every time. Such vastness keeps me grounded and propels my quest. I still find new inspiration from their works from time to time, and every page of their scores is a lesson in itself."

As well as reading classical Western compositions, Chan also wishes to further his studies in traditional Chinese music. "Traditional Chinese music, such as works for the *guqin* (the zither) and *xiqu*, demands to be studied more in depth and in detail by composers. Most of the so-called Chinese music nowadays have undergone the baptism of either westernisation or modernisation. The study of traditional music in fact requires a great deal of work, and there's just no easy way to go about it," Chan concludes.

Panellists' Opinion

For Chan, the past year was marked by the release of several important works: *'Twas the Thawing Wind*, a local production with an international vision, toured North America after its Hong Kong premiere; and the chamber opera *Heart of Coral* debuted at the Hong Kong Arts Festival to critical acclaim. As varied as they are colourful, his compositions have been performed around the world, demonstrating the most outstanding accomplishment.

