PROGRAM NOTES

Tsang Lok-yan received her Master's Degree (MMus, Composition) with Distinction at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary, Music and Chinese) and Bachelor of Music in Education (Contemporary Music and Performance Pedagogy) from The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). Lok-yan is also the certificate holder of distinction in LRSM and a member of the Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong Limited (CASH). Recently, she completed her master's degree in Chinese at City University of Hong Kong (CityUHK).

Being enthusiastic in composing, Lok-yan's works have been performed, given awards, and received commissions in Hong Kong, the United States and Costa Rica. She was honored to be selected in The ADORE Project, a platform to share her orchestral works with the whole world. Her orchestral work, Waterscape, was presented by Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in April 2022. Her favourite work, Symphony in Purple, was performed by Symphony Orchestra from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Music in February 2022.

Dorian Dance was her first attempt at composing in mode. It was originally written for clarinet in Bb, violin and cello, and performed by Concorde Contemporary Music Ensemble during the reading session held in The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) in October 2017. The orchestral version focuses on the timbres and the rhythmic pattern. It is more energetic and livelier.

Deanna Wehrspann is a professional pianist, choral singer, and composer of choral, vocal, string, and piano music. She has shared the stage as orchestral pianist/accompanist with Grammy-winning Phoenix Chorale, Dawn Upshaw, Samuel Ramey, and Branford Marsalis, as well as for South Dakota All-State Chorus and High School Honor Choir with conductors Christopher Aspaas, Jerry Blackstone, Matthew Culloton, Michael Culloton, Mary Kay Geston, Lynda Hasseler, Judith Herrington, Dwight Jilek, Jeff Johnson, Andrew Last, Henry Leck, Joe Miller, James Rodde, Timothy Sawyer, Tim Seelig, Vijay Singh, André Thomas, Gary Walth, and Claude Zetty. She collaborated regularly with Sounds of South Dakota regional opera.

She is currently a member of the University of Sioux Falls music faculty as piano accompanist and recently retired as staff piano accompanist/collaborator at University of South Dakota. She has played both keyboard and violin with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra and the Christmas at the Cathedral Orchestra in Sioux Falls and has accompanied the Minnehaha Mandskor in Sioux Falls for almost 30 years.

Quirk was composed for the University of South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Luis Viquez, for four-part flex orchestra. The piece is based on a simple, syncopated theme that acts as a main melody throughout the entire composition. There are numerous sections of the piece that alternate between jazzy styles and more robust and lush harmonies.

Sinfonía Sabática is an original programmatic work that is inspired by my sabbatical journey to Peru and back. It mixes my jazz background with latin rhythms and traditional Peruvian melodies. The form of Sinfonía Sabática is in 6 movements. The movements are:

I. Departure: This first movement depicts the awe that I felt embarking on the journey. It mixes latin and jazz influences.

II. Arrival: Lima: In this movement you can hear my trepidation upon arriving in Peru, not speaking the language well and my navigating through the exciting city of Lima.

III. The Andes: Antiplano: From Lima, I traveled up into the Andes Mountains and this movement makes use of a traditional Peruvian melody; the Antiplano.

IV. The Dancers: The Virgen de Carmen Festival is an annual celebration that honors the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This religious and cultural event that occurs in Pisac, Peru blends deep faith with vibrant local traditions. During the festival, communities come together to give thanks, ask for blessings, and continue customs that have been cherished for generations.

I endeavor to capture the dichotomy of devotion and playfulness of the many dance groups that participate in the week long festival.

V. Festival de Carmen: This movement is a juxtaposition of two traditional melodies heard at the Festival de Carmen. One is a traditional farewell song to both the fellow dancers and the Virgen de Carmen. The other is a playful tune that is heard throughout the festival. On an excursion I was able to experience with one of the dance groups, the tune was whistled from the top of the Andes all the way back down to Pisac.

VI. Return: The final movement journals my return home through my descent from the Andes, the big city sounds of Lima and back to Pennsylvania. It once again mixes jazz sensibilities with pentatonic thematic material that blends well with Peruvian melodic ideas.