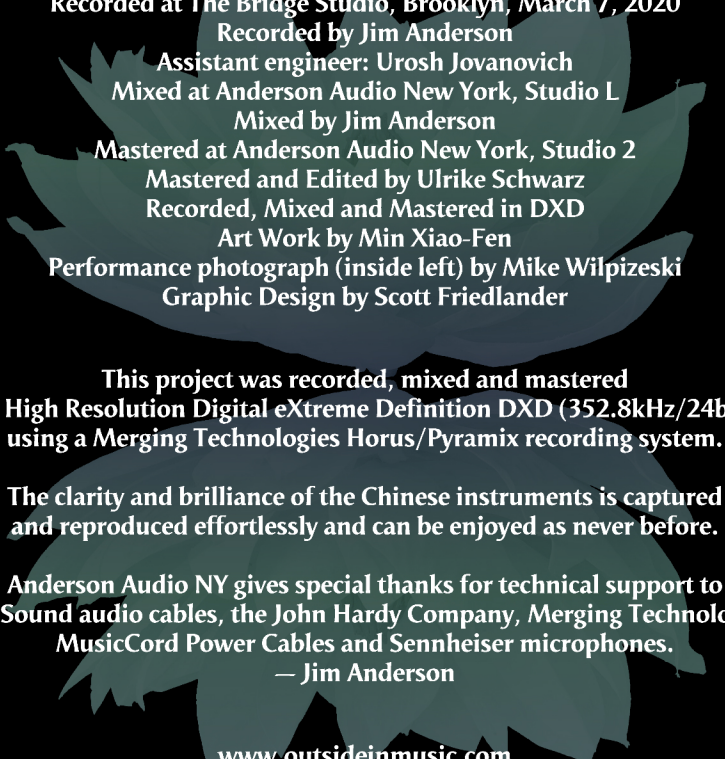


Min Xiao-Fen



White Lotus

Featuring Rez Abbasi



Produced by Jim Anderson and Min Xiao-Fen
Recorded at The Bridge Studio, Brooklyn, March 7, 2020
Recorded by Jim Anderson
Assistant engineer: Urosh Jovanovich
Mixed at Anderson Audio New York, Studio L
Mixed by Jim Anderson
Mastered at Anderson Audio New York, Studio 2
Mastered and Edited by Ulrike Schwarz
Recorded, Mixed and Mastered in DXD
Art Work by Min Xiao-Fen
Performance photograph (inside left) by Mike Wilpizeski
Graphic Design by Scott Friedlander

**This project was recorded, mixed and mastered
in High Resolution Digital eXtreme Definition DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)
using a Merging Technologies Horus/Pyramix recording system.**

**The clarity and brilliance of the Chinese instruments is captured
and reproduced effortlessly and can be enjoyed as never before.**

**Anderson Audio NY gives special thanks for technical support to
AccuSound audio cables, the John Hardy Company, Merging Technologies,
MusicCord Power Cables and Sennheiser microphones.**
— Jim Anderson

www.outsideinmusic.com
www.minxiaofenbluepipa.org

Min Xiao-Fen *White Lotus*

Min Xiao-Fen arrived in the United States in 1992 feeling a “need for something new.” She had grown up in Nanjing, where her father was a pipa master. He taught her his instrument, and also to sing Beijing Opera. The family also knew Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart. Her sister became a prominent erhu virtuoso, her brother a symphonic conductor. When she graduated from high school in 1977, the Cultural Revolution had not quite subsided – music conservatories remained closed. She successfully auditioned for Nanjing’s leading traditional music ensemble and wound up playing eighty concerts a year, including European tours. Meanwhile, she began singing in Chinese clubs, backed by saxophone, electric guitar, and drums. Her voice proved adaptable to cooler Western styles. Some of her father’s colleagues were not pleased.

A turning point came in New York City when John Zorn invited her to improvise – which she had never attempted. That led to performing Thelonious Monk tunes for Jazz at Lincoln Center. She thought Monk “was actually a monk. My contact with his music felt physical,” she recalls. Her transformational Monk renditions remain a Min Xiao-Fen signature.

This Chinese-American fusion is one of the highest achievements in present-day world music. It is wondrously explicable. China’s seismic political and cultural upheavals produced an earthquake of creativity. Conservatory-bound composers wound up in the countryside, absorbing folk music styles exploring timbre in ways they had never imagined. And – following Chinese speech, in which tonal infections impart meaning – Chinese folk tunes subtly manipulate pitch, sliding between notes that are

separately voiced by keyed Western instruments. A generation of important Chinese composers, paradoxical beneficiaries of enforced rural relocation, wound up studying in the West. For many, Bela Bartok became a lodestar for his way of retaining the spontaneity and savage beauty of folk elements. And so they discovered a middle ground between Chinese and Western instrumental performance – a musical kaleidoscope sounding “Asian” to American ears for its sighing speech-song and taut percussion patterns, yet equally foreign, in harmonic idiom, to Chinese audiences.

This new music spawned a virtuosity of which Min is a peak exemplar. Her musical adventures have led in many directions. The present collaboration with Rez Abbasi, whose virtuosity is as protean as hers, is special. Born in Karachi, raised in Southern California, he is a keen student of jazz, ethnic, and classical music. The resulting combination of pipa, guqin, ruan, and sanxian – all plucked instruments – with acoustic and electric guitars produces a limitless range of juxtaposition: of similarity and imitation; of dialogue and contradiction. The strumming physicality, the skittish passagework, the delicacy of inflection accessible to both players yields a veritable lexicon of East/West fusion. To this are added the complex melismas, shifting vibratos, and rapid-fire ornamentation of Min’s vocalism, as rooted in scat as in timeless Chinese tradition.

The ethnomusicologist Marc Perlman once remarked that “musical borders can be crossed, but the value of crossing them depends on the degree to which you respect them.” Some hybrids are slapdash. The intermingling of styles in *White Lotus* is complete and comprehensive.

—Joseph Horowitz, Author/Concert Producer



Min Xiao-Fen with Rez Abbasi

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1. "Anicca" (Impermanence) - guqin, voice and guitar 2:50
 2. "Bija" (Seed) - pipa and guitar 4:10
 3. "Champak" (The flower king) - ruan and guitar 4:09
 4. "Dukkha" (Suffering) - voice and electric guitar 5:58
 5. "Emaho" (Expression) - pipa and electric guitar 2:46
 6. "Faith" - sanxian, voice and electric guitar 3:55
 7. "Gassho" (Palms together) - pipa and guitar 5:47
 8. "Hatha" (Sun and moon) - pipa and guitar 2:35
 9. "Ichie" (Chance) - voice and electric guitar. 2:56
 10. "Joriki" (Power of the mind) - ruan and guitar 4:51
 11. "Karuna" (Compassion) - pipa and guitar 3:37
 12. "Lotus" (A symbol of purity) - voice 2:37

Total time: 45:30

"White Lotus" - Min Xiao-Fen's original score
for the classic 1934 Chinese silent film "The Goddess"

Min Xiao-Fen - pipa, sanxian, guqin, ruan and voice
Rez Abbasi - acoustic guitar and electric guitar

