

**MEDIA RELEASE
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RING IN LUNAR NEW YEAR WITH LONDON SYMPHONIA AND FRIENDS



A NEW MOON CELEBRATION Saturday, February 1, 2025 at 7:30 p.m

LONDON, January 23, 2025 – London Symphonia is pulling out all the stops for its special Lunar New Year celebration concert, **A New Moon Celebration**, on February 1. The concert program has been carefully crafted to transcend cultures and appeal to families and people of all ages. The East meets West themed program is rich in imagination, storytelling, and packed full of virtuosic and evocative music, including a World Premiere and a North American Premiere. (Saturday, February 1, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Metropolitan United in London, ON.)

“**A New Moon Celebration** is one of our most dynamic and colourful concerts of the season,” said **Andrew Chung, Artistic Producer, London Symphonia**. “Much of the music is rooted in folk song, but in an East meets West way, the orchestra is the mode of telling these fables and stories. This music celebrates the stories of our communities. We can hardly wait to welcome new London Symphonia fans and our returning friends.”

Conducted by **Rei Hotoda**, the concert features outstanding guest artists, such as London's own **Scott St. John**, violin, and **Lina Cao**, a world-renowned guzheng (traditional Chinese instrument) virtuoso. Members of the **London Youth Symphony** string section will also be joining the orchestra in selected works throughout the evening. Actor **Derek Kwan** will keep the stories flowing in his role as emcee and narrator.

Concert highlights include:

The World Premiere of ***Across The Jade Sea*** by Canadian composer **Kevin Lau**. Commissioned by London Symphonia and supported by the Ontario Arts Council, this new composition combines Kevin's love for music and storytelling through a violin soloist and a narrator. London's own, **Scott St. John** is the soloist. **Derek Kwan** will step into the role of narrator for this unique composition about a boy on a daring quest to find the legendary Phoenix.

The debut of **Lina Cao** on *guzheng* with London Symphonia in ***Waves of the Sea*** by **Rui Wang**. This performance of the solo piece written for guzheng and orchestra will be the North American Premiere of this arrangement for full orchestra.

Huang Ruo's beautiful orchestral treatment of folk songs from different regions across China tells a story of young love.

Alice Ping Yee Ho's *Silk Road Fantasy*. Inspired by the exchange of culture through ancient trade routes such as the Silk Road that connected the East and West, this piece celebrates the human spirit through the history of exploration. It is a musical journey of stories about migration and amity.

Concertgoers can choose to attend in person at Metropolitan United, home of London Symphonia, or virtually through high quality 4K HDR Video On Demand productions that include 21 days of unlimited access.

London Symphonia is deeply grateful to Presenting Partner Serenata Music and for the support of our government partners, London Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council.

LISTING INFORMATION:

LONDON SYMPHONIA CONCERT

A New Moon Celebration

Rei Hotoda, conductor

Lina Cao, *guzheng*

Scott St. John, violin

Derek Kwan, narrator

London Youth Symphony

Sat. February 1, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Doors open at 6:30 pm

Metropolitan United, 468 Wellington St, London, ON N6A 3P8

In-person tickets are \$55 General Admission, \$75 Reserved Seating, and \$55 for unlimited Video On Demand 21-day access, plus fees and HST.

Ticket packages start at \$155 for 3-concert General Admission subscription and \$212 for Reserved Seating, plus fees and HST. 5-concert packages are also available. In person and Video On Demand tickets are available online at londonsymphonia.ca.

Free tickets are available for post secondary, high school and children aged 6 to 12. Family-Flex Packs and tickets to individual concerts can be purchased online at londonsymphonia.ca.

ABOUT REI HOTODA

Conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an “inexhaustible dynamo” with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists and advocacy for arts education. She recently made her Carnegie Hall debut conducting the American Composer’s Orchestra in a compelling program that featured two world premieres by John Glover and Tonia Ko as well as the New York premiere of “Clans” from Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate’s *Lowak Shoppala*.

ABOUT LINA CAO

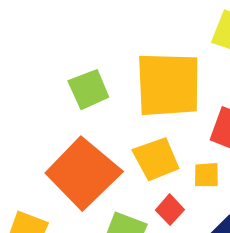
Lina Cao is a world-renowned *guzheng* virtuoso celebrated for her profound contributions to Chinese traditional music and her visionary approach to blending Eastern and Western musical traditions. Spanning continents, Lina has redefined *guzheng* artistry, breaking cultural boundaries and establishing herself as one of the most influential figures in contemporary Chinese music.

ABOUT SCOTT ST. JOHN

Scott St. John, violin soloist, lives in London, Ontario with his wife Sharon Wei and daughter Julia. Scott was a member of the St. Lawrence String Quartet and faculty member at Stanford University for seven years, from 2006 to 2013. From 1999 to 2006, he was Associate Professor of Violin at University of Toronto, and founded the Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award for U of T students. Currently Scott coaches chamber music at Western University, plays chamber music at the Marlboro Music Festival (Vermont), and is concertmaster of the ROCO Chamber Orchestra in Houston. Scott is a partner in the Rebelheart Collective at London’s Aeolian Hall, an innovative chamber orchestra and youth mentorship program connected with the El Sistema movement.

ABOUT DEREK KWAN

Derek Kwan is an actor, singer, and theatre creator working at the intersection of theatre, music and movement in a number of forms including opera, clown, and puppetry. His performing career has taken him across Canada and to London, England, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, and China. Derek was nominated for four Dora Mavor Moore Awards for his work in theatre and received the Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for his role in *Mr. Shi and His Lover*. He is the Artistic Director of Common Boots Theatre. He also works as a director of theatre, dramaturg, and teacher/lecturer on theatre, diversity and representation, and clown.



ABOUT KEVIN LAU

One of Canada's most versatile and sought-after young composers, Kevin Lau has been commissioned by some of Canada's most prominent artists and ensembles, and his work has been performed internationally in the USA, Denmark, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hong Kong. A prolific composer of orchestral, chamber, ballet, opera, and film music, he served as Affiliate Composer of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra from 2012 - 2015; to date, he has produced seven works for the TSO. Shortly after, he was commissioned to write two ballets with choreographer Guillaume Cote: a full-length ballet (*Le Petit Prince*) for the National Ballet of Canada and a half hour ballet (*Dark Angels*) for the National Arts Centre Orchestra. His new interdisciplinary ballet *Kimiko's Pearl*, commissioned by Bravo Niagara! and featuring choreography by Yosuke Mino and dancers from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Boston Ballet, premiered in 2024.

ABOUT LONDON YOUTH SYMPHONY

For more than 60 years, London Youth Symphony has provided students in London and area with educational opportunities that enhance university, public school, conservatory, and private music learning. Young musicians collaborate and create in a learning environment where fundamental skills like leadership, self-confidence, teamwork, and resilience are developed. With professional musician faculty and conductors, LYS encourages and empowers young musicians so they may pursue personal excellence both on and off the stage. LYS is affiliated with London Symphonia whose musicians provide significant mentoring and coaching, and partners with many local learning institutions. Learn more at londonyouthsymphony.net.

ABOUT LONDON SYMPHONIA

London Symphonia is a professional symphony orchestra committed to performing vibrant and bold musical experiences for London and the region. With a core of 30 players, our versatile group meets the community's needs for quality programming by presenting well-known symphonies, Canadian premieres, and collaborations with some of Canada's finest singer-songwriters. We deliver a rich, artistic experience by seeking out the most accomplished performers and conductors representing a blend of locally, nationally and internationally recognized talent. A registered charitable organization, we perform a number of outreach and music education engagements each season for students and seniors in our community.

Website: londonsymphonia.ca

Social media: Join the conversation on Facebook | Instagram | Twitter | YouTube

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