

Biography



Montreal resident Liu Fang has achieved an international reputation for her masterful and deeply spirited pipa playing. Born in 1974 in Kunming in the Chinese province of Yunnan, Liu Fang began studying the pipa at the age of six and gave her first public performance as a pipa soloist when she was nine. In 1985, she played for Queen Elizabeth during Her Majesty's visit to China. Honoured with several provincial and national prizes, Liu Fang graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where she also studied the guzheng, a Chinese zither. Since moving to Canada in 1996, Liu Fang has built a remarkable artistic profile by captivating audiences and critics with the richness and grace of her playing as well as her wide ranging repertoire.

Among the numerous solo recitals, concerto performances and concerts at festivals throughout Canada, the U.S., Europe and South America, Liu Fang has premiered new compositions by the celebrated Canadian composers R. Murray Schafer and Melissa Hui. In fact, she has appeared in the spectacular world premier of R. Murray Schafer's opera *The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix*, playing outstanding solos on both the pipa and the guzheng. She has also collaborated with traditional master musicians from India, Japan, Syria and Vietnam. She performed two concerti for pipa and orchestra (the "Ghost opera" by celebrated Tan Dun and the "King Chu Doffs his Armour" by Zhou Long) with the Moravia Symphony Orchestra in Prague (1999), and last November she performed with the orchestre des pays de Savoie in France improvised music in Gustav Mahler's "Liede der Erde" (Song of the Earth) and was highly praised (see press reviews). Recently Liu Fang performed with the renowned Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne and SMCQ in Montreal, the Alcan string quartet in Quebec, and the Quartetto Paul Klee Venezia in Italy. Since last year she has been collaborating with Malcolm Goldstein, an internationally renowned violin maestro, on new and improvised music.

Liu Fang is most well-known for her virtuosic and expressive interpretation of traditional pipa and guzheng music from the classical and folkloric traditions. Celebrated in the press as being "one of the greatest virtuosos", "the empress of pipa" (*L'actualité*, 2001) is able to transmit in an erudite and significant way the beauty and the richness of this ancient music as well as the subtle sonorities of the instruments by the power and sensibility of her play. Liu Fang has given successful solo tour for Jeunesses Musicales de France (November 2003) and Debut Atlantic (February 2004), and will tour with Jeunesses Musicales du Canada in November this year.

Liu Fang has also made numerous national and international radio recordings and television appearances, given performances recorded for films, and released five CDs. Recently Liu Fang has been invited as one of the featured artists (including also the world renowned Russian violinist - Vadim Repin) by BBC World Service for a concert on November 7, 2003 dedicated to World AIDS Day. The recording of this concert has been broadcasted in all of the 43 World Service Language Services with the current World Service audience across all platforms in the region of 150 millions. Liu Fang has also been honored of being one of the featured artist for the "Rough Guide to Chinese music" released by the World Music Network and the Farside Music production and management company in UK. She is also a featured artist of the world's top magazine about traditional and folk music in the world, the *fROOTS Magazine*, for March 2004, issue No. 249.

Liu Fang has been awarded several grants by the Canada Council for the Arts. On June 5th, 2001, she received the prestigious Future Generations Millennium Prize from the council. In the jury's words: "Liu Fang's mastery of the pipa and the guzheng has established her international reputation as a highly talented young interpreter of traditional Chinese music. She aspires to combine her knowledge and practice of eastern traditions with western classical music, contemporary music and improvisation, thereby creating new musical forms, uniting different cultures and discovering new audiences." On August 4, 2006, Liu Fang received the prestigious French l'Académie Charles Cros award for her new album "Le son de soie" produced by Accords Croisés in Paris.