



North American Guqin Association

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The North American *Guqin* Association Presents “Inheriting *Guqin* Music – Zha Fuxi Tribute Concert by Three Generations of Masters”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[San Francisco, CA] — The North American *Guqin* Association (NAGA) is proud to present “Inheriting *Guqin* Music – Zha Fuxi Tribute Concert by Three Generations of Masters” at 5:00pm on May 31st, 2015 in San Francisco Fort Mason Chapel (2 Marina Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94123).

World leading *guqin* master and Living National Treasure of China Li Xiangting will come from China to San Francisco to join his student, renowned *guqin* artist and NAGA director Wang Fei to guide us on a special musical journey to commemorate his teacher, grand master Zha Fuxi. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.sfiac.org> and <http://www.chineseticketbox.com> or by phone on 510-796-9988.

The *guqin*, a seven-stringed zither, is China’s oldest stringed instrument, with a documented history of about 3,000 years. It became part of a tradition cultivated by Chinese scholars and literati and has been associated with philosophers, sages, and emperors since the time of Confucius.

Zha Fuxi, one of the outstanding *guqin* masters of the 20th century, made a series of recordings at the LOC In 1945, which was of great significance in the history of the *guqin* and a major contribution to the field of world music. During the Cultural Revolution he had to stop playing. Most of his work is unknown to most people. 2015 will be the 120th anniversary of his birth and the 70th anniversary of the LOC recordings.

This concert will introduce *guqin* masterpieces from various past dynasties and will focus on Zha Fuxi’s musical style as well as presenting a newly composed work. There will be a narrative at the beginning of the concert based on the three generations of *guqin* players’ own stories, to illustrate the fate of the *guqin*, to reflect on what has happened in China during the last 100 years, and to show how the *guqin* survived China’s various political movements.

The concert will be a highlight of NAGA’s new project for 2015 “[The *Guqin* and Its Culture – a commemoration of *guqin* master Zha Fuxi and related activities](#)”. The project will take place from May 31 to June 5 in the Bay Area and will include [a *guqin* lecture, a symposium, a master class, a Chinese *yaji* \(artists’ salon\) and a workshop](#) for the public. It will honor Master Zha Fuxi’s great contribution to the *guqin* and enable more people to know about the *guqin*, his life, and his music.

“The goal of the project is not only to illustrate how Zha Fuxi’s *guqin* art is still alive and continuing to be inherited generation by generation, from China to the West, but also to introduce the importance of *guqin* music both in Chinese history and to world music, how it reflects the Chinese way of thinking, and how an understanding of *guqin* music is therefore an extremely effective vehicle for introducing Chinese culture.” – NAGA director Wang Fei.



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Li Xiangting is recognized as a world-class master. He has traveled extensively throughout the world to give over 50 *guqin* solo concerts, and has published numerous recordings and scholarly works. He is currently a distinguished professor of *guqin* at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. The Chinese Ministry of Culture has recently declared him one of the ten National Representative Heirs to China's Intangible Culture.

Wang Fei began her study of the *guqin* under Li Xiangting in 1985. She has won several awards for Chinese music and has toured internationally. She has received honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of State, the Library of Congress, and the American Folklife Center. She has lectured at Stanford, UC Berkeley and UCLA. Her music was included in an American textbook.

This project has been widely recognized and is receiving grants and honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Library of Congress, the American Folklife Center, the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and many individual donations from the *guqin* community in both China and the US.

"I'm pleased to be able to share the news of our support through the Challenge America award to the North American *Guqin* Association. The arts foster value, connection, creativity and innovation for the American people and NAGA's project demonstrates those attributes and affirms that the arts are part of our everyday lives." — *Jane Chu, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts*

"We are inspired by the dedication we see through your collective work and applaud your commitment to furthering this work for future generations" — *Amy Kitchener, Executive Director at the Alliance for California Traditional Arts*

"The committee for the Henry Reed Fund for the folk artists at The Library of Congress is pleased to support your multi-faceted project. Congratulations!" — *Elizabeth Peterson, American Folklife Center Director, and George Daves, Library of Congress Office of Grants Management*

"This is an honor and it is so important for the United States to recognize the artistry of your work and the history of the *guqin*" — *Lily Kharrazi, folklorist and Program Manager at the Alliance for California Traditional Arts*

For more information about this project and download artists photos, please visit the project web site at <http://www.guqin.org/zhafuxi>



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About the North American Guqin Association

The North American Guqin Association (NAGA) is a nonprofit cultural arts organization dedicated to the public presentation and preservation of the art of the *guqin*, spreading community appreciation of Chinese culture through the traditional art of the *guqin* and building a bridge for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the Chinese and American communities. NAGA offers *guqin* classes, performances, recordings, workshops etc.

NAGA frequently collaborates with world-class artists to produce concerts and events and to bring China's cultural heritage to local communities. NAGA's achievements have been widely recognized in both the US and China.

NAGA projects have been featured at the San Francisco International Arts Festival, the International Ancient Arts Festival in India, the Pan Asian Music Festival, the United States of Asian Pacific Art Festival, the San Francisco Diaspora Festival and other arts and music festivals. Our partners include the Asian Art Museum, the Cantor Art Museum, Stanford University, UC Berkeley and UCLA.

NAGA often collaborates with prestigious companies and agencies from different areas such as CNN and the People's Daily, to produce unique cross cultural and inter-disciplinary projects. Some highlights are:

1. 2002 – NAGA collaborated with the People's Daily, the largest online media organization in China, to present the first ever online concert. This helped the *guqin* to be declared by UNESCO in 2003 as a part of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
2. “The Guqin in China” with CNN.
3. “Scholarly Arts of China” With the Asian Art Museum
4. 2007 – NAGA promoted the “Guqin Day” project to local cities, as a result of which the city of Milpitas proclaimed the world's first Guqin Day.

Please subscribe to the following NAGA social networks for breaking news and events:

NAGA: <http://www.guqin.org>

NAGA E-Newsletter: <http://www.chineseculture.net/guqin/joinus.html>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/nagaguqin>

Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/chineseculture>

Facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/guqin>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2681353>

Weibo: <http://www.weibo.com/nagaguqin>



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About the guqin

The *guqin* (also called *qin*, literally "ancient instrument"), a seven-stringed zither, is China's oldest stringed instrument, with a history of some 3000 years. It has a longer history than any other instrument in use today. It has always been viewed as a symbol of Chinese high culture and the music most expressive of the essence of Chinese music. In Imperial China, a well educated scholar was expected to be skilled in four arts: *qin* (the *guqin*), *qi* (the game of Go), *shu* (calligraphy) and *hua* (painting). It became part of a tradition cultivated by the Chinese scholars and literati, and an instrument associated with philosophers, sages, and emperors. The *guqin* is also a very important subject in Confucius's education system.

Guqin music has its own notation, which itself has a history of at least 1500 years. There are over 150 *guqin* handbooks in existence, which contain in excess of 3,000 pieces of music as well as essays on the theoretical aspects of the instrument and its music.

There is much symbology surrounding the instrument. For example, it measures 3' 6.5" (Chinese feet and inches), to symbolize the 365 days of the year; the upper surface is rounded, representing the sky, the bottom is flat and represents the earth. The five strings of the earliest *qins* symbolize the five elements: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. When Bo Yikao, son of King Wen, first ruler of the Zhou Dynasty around the 11th century BC, died, the Emperor added a sixth string to mourn his son; the sound of the sixth string is sorrowful. The seventh string was added by the second Zhou ruler, King Wu to inspire his soldiers when his country went to war; the sound of this string is very strong. Finally, the 13 mother-of-pearl inlays along the outer edge represent the 13 months of the lunar year.

As a result of the many political movements in 20th century China, especially the Cultural Revolution, the guqin came to be viewed as one of the "Four Evils" and was the only traditional Chinese musical instrument to be banned during the Cultural Revolution. As a result the practice of playing the guqin and the instrument itself became endangered. More recently the guqin has enjoyed a return to favor with the government and was featured in the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony and has also been used in some popular movies such as Zhang Yimou's *Hero*. However, despite the resurgence of interest in the guqin, today few people can really master it even in China. Not all international institutions shared the Chinese government's past disdain for the guqin and in 2003 UNESCO declared the art of the guqin a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Guqin music was also included as the only representation of Chinese culture on the gold disk placed on board NASA's Voyager spacecraft in 1977.