



SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Excerpts from new opera *Paradise Interrupted* to be performed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Saturday, March 21 at 3:00pm and 7:00pm

New York preview precedes the world premiere at Spoleto Festival USA on Friday, May 22 in Charleston, South Carolina



FEBRUARY 12, 2015 (CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA)—Excerpts from *Paradise Interrupted*, a new installation opera by artist Jennifer Wen Ma and composer Huang Ruo, will be performed in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's The Temple of Dendur in The Sackler Wing

on Saturday, March 21. The Met Museum Presents performances offer a special preview of this work in progress before the world premiere at the 2015 Spoleto Festival USA in May. There will be two Metropolitan Museum performances at 3:00pm and 7:00pm. Tickets start at \$54 and are available online at metmuseum.org/tickets or by phone 212.570.3949. Tickets include Museum admission and are part of the Museum's "Bring the Kids for \$1" program.

Paradise Interrupted is co-commissioned and co-produced by Spoleto Festival USA and Lincoln Center Festival. The world premiere will take place Friday, May 22 in Charleston, South Carolina at Spoleto Festival USA with four subsequent performances May 24, 27, 29 and 31.

The one-act opera weaves together a story inspired by the biblical Garden of Eden and the Chinese love story *The Peony Pavilion*. For the score, award-winning composer Huang Ruo (*Dr. Sun Yat-sen*) musically marries Chinese tradition dating back to the Ming dynasty with Western idioms. The narrative follows a woman who searches for an unattainable ideal. As she sings, a vast garden grows from an empty stage and a host of characters come to life to accompany her in her journey. The garden installation has been created by Jennifer Wen Ma who is designing and directing the production. Known for her large-scale installations, public works, and as the chief designer for visual and special effects for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, *Paradise Interrupted* is her first opera.

The role of the dreamer will be performed by celebrated Chinese singer Qian Yi, who was lauded by *The New York Times* as ". . . China's reigning opera princess" following her performance in the Lincoln Center Festival's *The Peony Pavilion*. *Paradise Interrupted* also features singers John Holiday, Joseph Dennis, Joo Won Kang, and Ao Li. Spoleto Festival USA's Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy will conduct a 14-piece orchestra blending Western and Chinese instruments. All artists will take part in the preview performances. The Met Museum Presents preview is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *China: Through the Looking Glass*, on view May 7 through August 16, 2015.

ABOUT MET MUSEUM PRESENTS

A wide-ranging series of performances and talks at The Metropolitan Museum of Art that explores contemporary issues and innovations through the lens of the Museum's exhibitions and unparalleled gallery spaces. *Met Museum Presents* creates a platform for curators, thought-leaders, and artists to come together and explore the Met as a generative force.

The preview performances, inspired by the exhibition, *China: Through the Looking Glass*, are made possible by Adrian Cheng. Additional funding is provided by Sarah Solomon Billingham.

ABOUT SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston, South Carolina's historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with over 150 performances by world-renowned artists as well as emerging performers in opera, theater, dance, and chamber, symphonic, choral, and jazz music. For more information on Spoleto Festival USA 2015, May 22–June 7, please visit spoletousa.org or call 843.579.3100.

Paradise Interrupted is commissioned and produced with the support of the Tang Family Foundation. The Spoleto Festival USA performances are sponsored by BMW Manufacturing and made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Image credit: Conceptual rendering of preview presentation at The Temple of Dendur in The Sackler Wing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art by Jennifer Wen Ma; photo of Qian Yi by Guo Zheng Zhang.