

Wuji Ensemble

Artistic Director: Law Wing-fai

Music Director: Wong Chi-ching

“Wuji” in Chinese means “boundless”, “endless” and “continuously evolving”. Founded in 2003, the group is dedicated to creating a performance platform for local musicians, cultivating cultural insights and nurturing artistic accomplishments. Ensemble members are all highly skilled and experienced performers of the Chinese plucked-string instruments including the *pipa* and *ruan*.

Wuji Ensemble commissions new works as well as new arrangements of existing repertoires in Chinese and Western music, complemented with other theatrical elements for a multimedia performance. Its new configuration of Chinese instruments and flexible performing formats are comparable to the character of Hong Kong – by using tradition as the axis and moving freely between the East and the West, the Ensemble hopes to open up a new path for creative expression.

Members of the Ensemble follow a regular regimen that includes meditation and calligraphy. On stage, Wuji members are required to memorize all the scores with no conductor, enhancing communication and rapport among the members. Their repertoire is highly experimental, ranging from traditional to western classical, pop and contemporary music.

Wuji Ensemble has published two CD recordings, *The Impression of Wuji Ensemble* and *Ruan's Touch of Fancy*. In February 2012, through its “Images of Dunhuang” project, Wuji became one of the first grantees of the Springboard Grant under the Hong Kong SAR Government’s Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme, presenting themed concerts, cultural workshops and master classes. Wuji’s Taiwan, Beijing and Shanghai Sub-ensembles were also subsequently established, extending Wuji’s artistic ideals beyond Hong Kong. In 2015, Wuji was confirmed to be a second-round grantee again of the Springboard Grant for the next three years, allowing Wuji to continue with its latest exploration in “Atmospheric Theatre”, resulting in a series of productions including *When Petals Fall in Serenity*, *Beyond the Senses*, *Sands and Beyond*, *Śūnyatā* and *Tranquil as a Chrysanthemum*. Among these productions, *When Petals Fall in Serenity* was featured in Taipei Hong Kong Week in 2015, and *Beyond the Senses* was invited by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to take part in London’s Hong Kong Music Series in July 2017. *When Petals Fall in Serenity* was again staged in Shenzhen, China in December 2018, and *Beyond the Senses* was performed at the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre earlier in January 2019.

Law Wing-fai (Artistic Director)

Law Wing-fai is a leading composer in Hong Kong, and one of the few to have crossed over the boundary between commercial music and the arts. He was Composer-in-Residence at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and currently Artistic Director of Wuji Ensemble. Law graduated from the University of California with a Master’s degree in Music (Composition and Electronic Music). He worked closely with Hong Kong’s New Wave directors in films during the 1980’s, having scored for more than 20 films including the award-winning *Boat People*, *Dream Lovers* and *A Simple Life*. He was the founding Head of Composition of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, a position which he subsequently held for many years. During the 1990’s, he was a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University where he gave lectures and wrote music. On returning to Hong Kong, he found a new angle in music composition, which resulted in many important works using Chinese-Western mixed instrumentation, the most representative of which are *When*

Mountains Roar and *Linli*. He also founded Wuji Ensemble, a group that is known for its unique character. In May 2008, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra presented a critically acclaimed concert featuring Law's works.

With a diverse oeuvre spanning serious and commercial music, Law has written for pop music, commercials, drama, opera and in particular, for over a dozen dance dramas such as *Song of the Good Earth* and *Rouge*. His long list of accolades include the Irino Memorial Award presented at the Asian Composers' League, the Hong Kong Film Award for Best Original Score, "Composer of the Year" by the Hong Kong Artists' Guild, and being selected as one of the "Twentieth Century Masterpieces by Chinese Composers" by the Chinese Culture Promotion Society in Beijing. Law's score for the drama production *The Peach Blossom Fan* was awarded "Best Original Music" by the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies. Law was also a five-time winner of the CASH Golden Sail Music Award between 2001 and 2008, with his opera *Dreaming Plum Blossoms Away*, *Flowing Fancies* for *pipa* and Western orchestra, *Feng Liu* for Chinese plucked strings, *A Thousand Sweeps* for *pipa* and Chinese orchestra, and *Flowing Phantasm* for Chinese orchestra. In June 2013, Law was awarded the Xinyi Cup granted by the Chinese Nationalities Orchestra Society in Beijing for his *pipa* concerto *A Thousand Sweeps*. In 2014, his atmospheric music theatre *When Petals Fall in Serenity* was premiered to raving reviews, and was testimonial to his creative achievements. Recently, Law is actively involved in "atmospheric" music theatre productions, and have successfully staged *Beyond the Senses*, *Sands and Beyond*, *Śūnyatā* and *Tranquil as a Chrysanthemum*.

Wong Chi-ching (Music Director)

Wong Chi-ching entered the China Broadcast Chinese Orchestra in 1976 and was the Section Leader of Plucked-strings and *Pipa* Principal of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO) from 1987-2013. Now an active soloist in the Greater China region, she founded Wuji Ensemble and Wuxin Ensemble in 2003, and is currently Music Director of Wuji Ensemble.

Wong has performed as *pipa* soloist and with various renowned international orchestras on different occasions. In 2009, Wong recorded the CD *The Impression of Wuji Ensemble* with Hugo Records. 2011, the HKCO presented Ms. Wong in the solo concert "Flowing Fancies", featuring dialogues between the *pipa* and calligraphy. The same year, Hugo Records released two solo albums by Ms. Wong – *Pipa Wuqu* and *Pipa Wenqu*. Between 2012 and 2014, Wong led Wuji Ensemble in the widely acclaimed two-year project "Images of Dunhuang", which consisted of a series of concerts and talks. 2013 saw Ms. Wong involved in a series of monthly concerts of music for the soul in Beijing, as well as performed in two solo recitals, *When Petals Fall in Serenity*, presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, to raving reviews. In 2014, as Music Director and *pipa* soloist, Ms. Wong participated in composer Law Wing-fai's atmospheric music theatre *When Petals Fall in Serenity* as part of the 25th anniversary celebration programmes of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. This production was later being invited for re-runs in Taipei as part of Taipei Hong Kong Week 2015 in September 2015. Most recently in April 2016, Ms. Wong was invited back as soloist to perform with HKCO in the concert *Music Styles of Virtuosi North and South*.

Ms. Wong is actively involved in Wuji Ensemble's current three-year project of "Atmospheric Music Theatre". Her interactive and soul-searching Salon Concerts series with artists from various disciplines are also highly acclaimed and popular.

Lam Tsan-tong (Ensemble leader/*Pipa/Ruan*)

A graduate of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Lam Tsan-tong started learning the *pipa* from the age of 10. Lam was a champion in the advanced *Pipa* class of the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. During the high school period, she was invited to give recitals in the 1st Young Soloist Series presented by the former Regional Council. In 2001, she won the China *Pipa* Competition-Outstanding Award (Professional Group).

As an active musician, Lam performs extensively in Hong Kong and abroad. She has collaborated frequently with choreographers, and theatre artists. She is currently the manager of Wuji Ensemble and a member of “On the Road Again” concept theatre.

Au Yuen-ying (*Guzheng/Ruan*)

Au Yuen-ying holds a Bachelor’s degree in music from Hong Kong Baptist University and a Master’s degree at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She was accustomed to Chinese music at a young age, obtaining performance diplomas in both *guzheng* and *pipa*. Au has championed and won several prizes in the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. In 2006, and was awarded the silver award in the *guzheng* solo section of the International Chinese Music and Arts Competition. In 2009, she was presented with the “Student Performing Art Prize Award” by the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Education Council. In 2012, Au was the first-runner up in the regional Guangdong *Guzheng* Competition of the Professional Youths Group *Guzheng* Solo Section. As an active ensemble performer or a soloist, Au has performed in various countries in Europe, the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, as well as several cities in China, in international arts festivals and cultural exchange events to promote and raise the interest for Chinese music to the West. Au is passionate about music and is a devotee to music education. She completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Music) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Fong Yee-kwan (*Ruan*)

Fong Yee-kwan started learning the *pipa* when she was a secondary student and won a third prize in the advanced *pipa* class of the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. She has also been to Beijing several times to sharpen her performing skills. In 2001, she was chosen as a school representative to join the Chinese History and Culture Educational Tour to Beijing and Yunnan for experience sharing with local students. She graduated from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University with a Bachelor Degree. During her study, she took the subject of “Performing Arts Appreciation” and received faculty commendations for her report on Chinese culture, which is now kept in the university library. She recently joined Qin Music Co., and is working in the fields of music education, music administration and communications.

So Pui-yi (*Ruan*)

So Pui-yi obtained her Masters of Music degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and her Bachelor degree from the Education University of Hong Kong. She joined the Junior School of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and completed the course with good results. Pui-yi participated in the Hong Kong Music Festival’s *Pipa* Intermediate and *Zhongruan* Senior groups, and was the champion in both groups. She was also awarded a merit in the Hong Kong Music Festival’s *Pipa* Senior section, a second prize in the *Zhongruan* Advanced section, and was the champion of MUSES Chamber Award. She has also an awardee in student artistic achievement presented by the Summer Youth Programme Committee. In addition, Pui-yi was the “Excellent Student” of Shatin District and a “Good

Student” of the New Territories District. Pui-yi was in Austria as an exchange student for promoting Chinese music, and has performed in several western countries, including Austria, Spain and many other cities in Europe.

Mo-Men-T

Mo-Men-T is a Hong Kong-based quintet, formed in 2012 as an ultra-modern jazz affair. The collaboration soon bore fruit, as each member pitched their unique musical influences into the band. From this came a creative mixture of such musical currents as modern jazz, funk, and post-rock. The result is a fresh sonic experience, one that is at once familiar and unpredictable. Compositions from Mo-Men-T are edgy and adventurous, able to stretch from a piano whisper to fiery fortés. Each member is empowered to freely express themselves, together pushing the music forward in search of new artistic heights.

In live performances, Mo-Men-T bonds with the audience through music sprung in the thrill of the moment. As the music evolves from logical to free-form, patience to aggressive, the listener is exposed to the shifting gravities of improvised music. To add more fuel to the fire, Mo-Men-T is not afraid to tread the avant-garde to venture into a bold and exciting musical frontier replete with meter-less and atonal forays.

Following its 2012 debut EP, “Compositions and Improvisation” and their full-length album “Infinite Lines” in 2013, Mo-Men-T has performed at a variety of local and international music venues, notably the Taichung International Jazz Festival 2012, Hong Kong Green Jazz Festival, Hong Kong People’s Fringe Festival, Freespace Fest 2013, Taipei Fringe Festival 2014, Music Fairground 2013 & 2016, Freespace Happening 2016, 2017 & 2018, Jazz Re-visit 2018, Sappho Taipei, Witch House Taipei, Fullcupmusic, Hong Kong Fringe Club, 1563, Lost Stars and HMV Hong Kong. The band has been invited to perform and conduct workshops at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong and the Education University of Hong Kong.

Mo-Men-T remains active in the studio, completing a new 28-minutes long composition “Recurrence” in 2017 which was released in late 2018 in the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority’s “Freespace Mixtape, Vol. 2”. This specific project, featuring *pipa* virtuoso, Mavis Lam Tsan-tong, fuses the unique timbre and playing style of Lam with Mo-Men-T’s soundscape to capture their renowned onstage adventurousness for the enjoyment of listeners.

Lui Ngao-yuen (Composer/Double Bass)

Lui Ngao-yuen has been working as a musician since 1999, performing with different bands around Hong Kong and China. He moved to the UK in 2003 and studied Jazz Performance and Composition at Leeds College of Music under the tutelage of Stuart Riley in double bass, Graham Hearn in composition, and Norwegian trumpet player Didrik Ingvaldsen in improvisation and composition. During his time in the UK, Lui performed with various jazz ensembles as a double bassist in events such as BBC Radio 3 FUSE Music Festival. In 2006 he graduated with an exceptional first-class award in Jazz Performance.

Lui composed music for solo instrument, ensembles, big bands and orchestras, with settings ranging from rock and funk to modern jazz, contemporary and experimental music. His works were performed by Composers’ Orchestra, an avant-garde ensemble conducted by Didrik Ingvaldsen.

Currently residing in Hong Kong, Lui composes and performs original music with his quintet Mo-Men-T. The band's debut album, *Composition & Improvisation*, was released in the summer of 2012, followed by performances at the Hong Kong Fringe Club, Taichung Jazz Festival, Hong Kong People's Fringe Festival and Hong Kong Green Jazz Festival. The second album, *Infinite Lines*, was released in 2013 and they also toured in Taipei and performed at the Freespace Fest in the same year. Besides working with Mo-Men-T, Lui continues to collaborate with musicians around the world, including the JohnChen Ensemble, with which he performed about 100 concerts between 2006 and 2011. At 2009 Silk Road Arts Festival, he played in the live band supporting Theatre Fanatico's production *Heading West 2*. He also performed in the contemporary dance production *Moving/Void* as an improviser in 2011. In 2012, Lui was commissioned by Hong Kong New Vision Arts Festival to perform and compose original music for the theatre production *O You Heavenly Creatures!*.

Lui is Artistic Director of Count-In Music Limited which he established in 2013, and was the producer of Music Fairground in 2013 and 2016. He currently teaches at Hong Kong Design Institute and The Education University of Hong Kong as part-time lecturer in popular and jazz music.

Mike Yip (Composer/Electric Guitar/Synthesizer)

Born in 1980, Mike Yip is a composer and electric guitarist whose work is characterized by a cross-boundary approach to cultures, traditions and genres, as well as experimentation in new performance practice and improvisation.

Mike studied jazz guitar with renowned guitarist Eugene Pao. He has performed with music styles ranging from rock, jazz to experimental music for more than 10 years. His contemporary jazz group "Mo-Men-T" released their EP *Compositions & Improvisation* in 2012 and their LP *Infinite Lines* in 2013. The group collaborates with Swiss jazz composer and saxophonist Christoph Grab from Zurich University of the Arts in West Kowloon Freespace Happening 2016, and *pipa* virtuoso Mavis Lam in West Kowloon Freespace Happening 2018. In addition, Mike is an ensemble associate of the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble.

Deeply attracted by the aesthetics of contemporary art music, he recently completed postgraduate studies in composition in the University of Hong Kong under the supervision of Professor Chan Hing-yan. His research focuses on the exploration of the potential use of the electric guitar in the concert world, as well as the combinational use of electric instruments, Western traditional instruments, ethnic instruments, and signal-processing technology in music compositions.

Mike's distinctive musical approach gives rise to numerous intra- and inter-disciplinary projects, including dance work *Wordless Letter* for synthesizers and 2 dancers with choreographer Yuh Egami in 2018, chamber composition *E* for violin, trombone, electric guitar and double bass in 2017 (commissioned by Hong Kong Sinfonietta), and theatrical work *Looking At The Stars* with Ming Wong in 2015 (commissioned by M+ for Mobile M+: Live Art).

Mike is currently a lecturer at Hong Kong Design Institute, teaching guitar composition & arrangement, acoustics, and instrumental course. He is also a teaching assistant at the University of Hong Kong on subjects including jazz history, world music, the music of China, contemporary composition, and harmony.

Vic Tsui (Percussion/Drum Set)

Vic Tsui is a drummer from Hong Kong. He is obsessed with music and drums, and creating good vibe with dynamic and fluidity sounds and textures. He is the founder drummer of The Majestic G (TMG) 麟角樂團. TMG is an original septet group and create music “that makes you move”. TMG released their first single *Sunrise* in June 2017, and has received rave reviews in Hong Kong and Taiwan! *Sunrise* reached No. 2 on Commercial Radio FM903 ‘Quotable Chart’ (HK), and stayed on for 6 weeks. In Taiwan streetvoice.com, the most significant and influential online platform for independent music, *Sunrise* was No. 1 for three weeks on their ‘R&B/Soul/Blues/Jazz/Latin’ chart, got their ‘Expert Recommendation’. TMG released their debut EP *Wild Runner* in 2018 and have been performed in Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Clockenflap and Freespace Happening, and opening act for Taiwan funk band ‘Sticky Rice’ at their Sticky Rice Live in HK 2017. TMG is currently participating in Renaissance Foundation Hong Kong’s (RFHK)’s Ear Up Music program.

He is also the founder member of Mo-Men-T. Mo-Men-T is a modern jazz quintet and they released the EP *Compositions and Improvisation* (in 2012) and album *Infinite Lines* (in 2013), with original compositions and improvisational pieces. They have been performed in Taiwan Taichung Jazz Festival, Hong Kong Green Jazz Festival and Freespace Happening, Jazz Re-visit (2018), and renowned venues in Hong Kong.

He is currently working with the local artists – Vincy Chan 陳韞 and Olivier Cong 江逸天 for live performances and studio works.

Bowen Li (Keyboard)

Bowen Li is a freelance pianist and composer, performing with different bands in Hong Kong and London. He moved to London in 2014 to study in Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where he majored in jazz performance and composition, and graduated in July 2018. Bowen receives tuition from some of the best in the field including Martin Speake (Paul Motion, Bobo Stenson, Ethan Iverson), Mark Lockheart (Polar Bear, Kenny Wheeler, Radiohead) and Liam Noble (Larry Grenadier, Eric Harland).

During his time in London, Bowen performed with various groups as a pianist. He played with the Traditional Jazz Ensemble in the main show of Ronnie’s Scotts, and led his own group or played as a sideman in jazz venues such as the Vortex, Olivers, Blackheath Halls, The Crown, Up the Creek, Buster Mantis...

Bowen has also performed widely in Hong Kong, played in venues such as the Fringe Club, Visage One, 1563, Salon 10, Peel Fresco, Street Music Concert Series, Brew Note Coffee, Wontonmeen and also music festivals such as Freespace Happening, Music Fairground 2013, Hong Kong People’s Fringe Festival and Green Jazz Festival.

In the summer of 2017, Bowen got interviewed by KaJeng Wong (classical pianist) on Ming Pao Weekly and Tsang Tak Hong (jazz bassist) on RTHK, talking about jazz piano playing.

He also curated jazz workshops and ensemble classes in various music institutions, such as the Contemporary Musicians Education Centre, UNI Music, Orpheus Music Centre, Cat Music Studio and Oneness Music Centre.

Bowen composed music for solo instrument and small to medium ensembles, with settings ranging from pop, rock, funk to traditional and contemporary jazz music. He led his own group Jack Fish, Bowen Li's Quartet and performed original music.

So Ho-chi (Trumpet)

After finishing the Bachelor of Music (Honours) degree, majoring in composition and electronic music, from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, So Ho-chi is now pursuing the Master of Music in the Academy majoring in composition and electronic music which is funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Music Scholarship. During his years in the Academy, he has presented pieces ranging from instrumental chamber works, vocal and choral works to orchestral work, multimedia productions and electroacoustic works. His works has been selected to perform in various music festivals, competitions and concerts, such as ISCM World Music Days 2019 Tallinn, Asian Composers' League, *Sound Forms* – a festival of multi-channel sound organized by Contemporary Musiking Hong Kong, Hong Kong Phil Composer Workshop – *Beyond the Ring*, SOUND-IMAGination, New Generation Composition Competition, Academy Concerto Trial and The Annual Concert of The Greeners' Sound.

With his improvisation skill, So Ho-chi has engaged in certain music concerts and multimedia productions as a trumpet player. He has also participated in several performance groups such as The Greeners' Sound, Opera Hong Kong and the Academy Jazz Ensemble.

Composer

Lai Sheung-ping (Composer)

Lai Sheung-Ping received her D. M. A. in Composition from The Ohio State University, her M. M. in Composition from Cleveland Institute of Music, and her M.M. in Music Education (Jazz Pedagogy focus) from Capital University. As a composer, her music covers a wide variety of genres and styles, which presents a unique synthesis of the East and the West. As an educator, she believes in breaking cultural barriers and achieving peace and harmony through music and arts education. Her recent research presentation of "Smooth Integration of Chinese music and Jazz through Pentatonic Structure" at the Jazz Education Network Conference 2019 generated much enthusiasm from international audience.