

CELEBRATE ASIA COMPOSITION COMPETITION SELECTION

World premiere: March 21, 2014

SHUYING LI

The Siege Overture

Julia Tai, conductor

Composer, conductor and pianist **Shuying Li** (b. 1989) began her musical education in her native China. Upon completing a double major at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, she won a scholarship to study at the Hartt School in Connecticut. She now attends the University of Michigan, pursuing a master's degree under the tutelage of Michael Daugherty.

Li has won numerous awards and competitions in her brief career, including the Libby Larsen Prize from the Alliance for Women in Music for the Overture to her opera, *The Siege*. That same score won over the judges of the *Celebrate Asia* Composition Competition and earned Li the honor of this debut with the Seattle Symphony.

As Li explains, "**Overture to *The Siege*** reflects and anticipates the events in the opera, and depicts the restraint, frustration and confused feelings when people are besieged. In fact, as the novel *Fortress Besieged* as well as the opera *The Siege* imply, maybe all of us are besieged by all kinds of things. Even if some people are able to break the restraint, they eventually will find that the so-called 'new free world' is just a larger siege that embraces the previous small world. Living a life sometimes equals dealing with all kinds of troubles. And absolute freedom is just a beautiful dream."

The opening of the Overture sets an evocative mood with free rhythms and breathy sound effects. One instrumental color that stands out is the baritone saxophone, exploited here for the biting snarl of its low range in a lively *Allegretto* section.

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