

# World Premiere: 'or/and'

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[asiasociety.org/texas/events/world-premiere-orand](https://asiasociety.org/texas/events/world-premiere-orand)

a multimedia chamber operatic poem by composer Shih-Hui Chen, librettist Monique Truong, and director Doug Fitch

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Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/U1M1mI1ZheQ>

## Schedule

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Friday, September 23, 2022

7:30 p.m. Performance

*Panel Discussion and Reception to Follow*

Saturday, September 24, 2022

7:30 p.m. Performance

*Panel Discussion to Follow*

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## Health and Safety

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Additional policies and procedures are in place to ensure our community's health and safety. Please review our health and safety guidelines to prepare for your visit.

[Learn More](#)

**or/and** is a multimedia chamber operatic poem, following the journey of a composer who finds her voice only when she accepts the seeming contradictions of her immigrant identity. Choosing “and” over the divisive “or,” this work taps into the inclusive power of AND to help mend our divided world.

When we meet the composer, she’s struggling to write a piece of music inspired by two events half a world apart — a sacred ceremony of the indigenous Paiwan people of Taiwan and the Women’s March in Houston. She was in attendance at both, and she gleaned from them different lessons about herself that she can’t yet reconcile. This search for the right notes is mirrored by a search for the right words. Her only daughter is heading to college, and there’s a pivotal sentence that the composer-mother wants to complete: “Before you go, I want you to know...” Musical and maternal instincts flow, once the composer begins to understand that she belongs to a continuum, buoyed by human connections rather than divisions.

Asia Society Texas is thrilled to present the world premiere of this work. A panel discussion will follow the performances on both nights. A reception will follow the opening night performance and discussion on September 23.

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## About the Artists

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Immigrating to the U.S. in her early 20's, Taiwanese American composer **Shih-Hui Chen** is fascinated by the narratives at the intersection of identity, culture, and tradition. In her works, she seeks to cross boundaries between music and society, between the music of distinct cultures, and between music and other art forms. Chen is the founder/director of 21C: Classical, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Asian Music, a performing arts festival that fosters international exchange between Asia and the U.S. through an annual series of lectures and performances.

Shih-Hui Chen has worked with Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony and National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra. Recognition of her work has come from institutions that include: American Academy in Rome, Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Fulbright Scholar Program, and American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is currently on faculty at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University.



**Monique Truong** (Librettist) is the Vietnamese American author of the award-winning novels *The Book of Salt* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003), *Bitter in the Mouth* (Random House, 2010), and *The Sweetest Fruits* (Viking, 2019). In addition to her collaborations with Shih-Hui Chen, Truong has written lyrics for composers Joan La Barbara, Francisco J. Núñez, and Randall Eng.



**Doug Fitch** (Director/Scenic Design) is a polymath artist working in architecture, opera, puppetry, sustenance, and furniture design. He has created productions for NY Philharmonic, Tanglewood, the Kitchen, MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum, the Los Angeles and Santa Fe Opera houses, the Salzburg State Theater and the Salzburg Marionette Theater, designed homes for Joshua Bell and Alan Gilbert, co-founded food-art collective Orphicorps, and written the books: *Organs of Emotion*, *With Skin and Hair* and *Orphic Fodder*.



Soprano **Lini Gong** lives in Germany and has performed in nearly fifty operas at many of the world's leading opera houses, including Hamburg State Opera and the Opera Stuttgart. She has been active in contemporary music since 2008, working with composers including Wolfgang Rihm, Georg Friedrich Haas, and Peter Ruzicka.

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## **About Asia Society Texas**

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Asia Society Texas believes in the strength and beauty of diverse perspectives and people. As an educational institution, we advance cultural exchange by celebrating the vibrant diversity of Asia, inspiring empathy, and fostering a better understanding of our interconnected world. Spanning the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, our programming is rooted in the educational and cultural development of our community — trusting in the power of art, dialogue, and ideas to combat bias and build a more inclusive society.

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