

## Biography

Wu Fei is a classically trained composer, singer and renowned master of the guzheng – the 21-string Chinese zither. She has taken her music around the world, appearing at such venues as the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, Shanghai’s Expo 2010, New York’s MoMA, the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands, Vossa Jazz in Norway, the Europalia Festival in Belgium, and the Big Ears Festival in Tennessee.

Wu plays in the guzheng’s vernacular – a musical language at least 2,500 years old – mixing Western classical and Chinese traditions with a contemporary, idiosyncratic sound. She composes for choir, string quartet, chamber ensemble, Balinese gamelan and orchestra. Her many commissions have ranged from a composition for Percussions Claviers de Lyon, which premiered in the Forbidden City, to live performances in Paris and Tokyo for luxury brand Hermès. She has received commissions from Nashville’s Intersection ensemble, Chatterbird ensemble and individual soloists globally.

Her composition for chamber orchestra, “Hello Gold Mountain,” featuring Wu Fei on guzheng and vocals and Shanir Ezra Blumenkranz (of the Silk Road Ensemble) on oud, earned her a MAP Fund award. The work was inspired by the real stories of Jewish refugees who fled to Shanghai from Europe in World War II and built new lives in China. Her work in television has included compositions for AMC’s *Hell on Wheels* and PBS’ web series *The History of White People in America*.

In addition to her original compositions, Wu has collaborated with artists from many different disciplines and genres, ranging from Emmy-winning directors Pierce Freelon and Jon Halperin to Grammy-winning musicians Béla Fleck, Abigail Washburn and percussionist Billy Martin (Medeski-Martin-Wood) to avant-garde composers John Zorn and Fred Frith.

Wu has appeared in concerts and workshops at numerous universities and institutions around the world, including Princeton University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Chautauqua Institution, UNC Chapel Hill, UC Irvine, Vanderbilt University, the China Conservatory of Music, the Norwegian Academy of Music and the University of Los Andes of Colombia.

Wu has released two solo recordings and two collaborative albums – one with classical guitarist Gyan Riley, and the other with singer-songwriter Abigail Washburn, released on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and listed among the “Best Albums of 2020” by *The Times*’ culture section. Each of Wu’s recordings exhibits her unique solo improvisational vocabulary, her knowledge of Chinese traditional and folk music, and the craft of her compositions for Western classical chamber orchestras.

She received her early musical education at the China Conservatory of Music and earned a master’s in composition at Mills College in California before immersing herself in New York’s downtown improvisation scene at venues including The Stone, where she has frequently performed and curated. A native of Beijing, Wu currently resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2022-2023, Wu will give concerts and workshops at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and other venues in Europe and the United States.