

PRESS CONTACT:

Press@TheWallis.org

Laura Stegman, LauraStegmanPR@gmail.com

Libby Huebner, nyjazz@aol.com, 562.799.6055

PHOTO FOR DOWNLOAD:

<https://thewallis.org/photos.php?id=417>

**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS,
IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE MASTER PLAYERS CONCERT SERIES,
PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
*SHANGHAI SONATAS: A NEW MUSICAL IN CONCERT***

A Compelling Tale of Music's Unifying Power to Bring Cultures Together,
Shanghai Sonatas is About Jewish Refugee Musicians Finding Sanctuary
in the 1940s Jewish Ghetto of Shanghai

Thursday, March 16 to Saturday, March 18, 2023
The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater

(Beverly Hills, CA, February 15, 2023) – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, in collaboration with the University of Delaware Master Players Concert Series, presents the **World Premiere** of *SHANGHAI SONATAS: A NEW MUSICAL IN CONCERT*, from Thursday, March 16 to Saturday, March 18, 2023, in The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater. A compelling tale of how the unifying and healing power of music brings cultures together, *Shanghai Sonatas* is about Jewish refugee musicians finding sanctuary in the Jewish Ghetto of Shanghai in the 1940's. As a Jewish violinist takes on a troubled Chinese teenager as his student, a connection is made that helps both of them overcome their trauma and survive the war. This musical theater work, setting ripples in motion that carry through to this day, is based on first-person accounts of European musicians who used their optimism, humor, and musical talents to survive, forging friendships with their Chinese neighbors who saved their lives until Allied forces brought freedom to the region in 1945.

Holocaust Museum Los Angeles is a sponsor of this production. **Violins of Hope Los Angeles**, under the leadership of its chair Susanne Reyto, collaborates with this production to provide education as well as violins that survived the Holocaust to be played by actors and orchestral musicians on stage and to be utilized in The Wallis' GRoW education programs prior to the performances..

Shanghai Sonatas: A New Musical in Concert is directed by Chongren Fan, with concept and music by Sean (Xiang) Gao, who is producing artistic director. Book is by Alan Goodson, and lyrics are by Joyce Hill Stoner. The evening performances are guest conducted by Noreen Green, known for her work as artistic director of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. Music director and assistant

conductor Asher Denburg conducts the Saturday matinee. The cast features Cáitlín Burke, Anzi DeBenedetto, Sara LaFlamme, Stephanie Lynne Mason, Neal Mayer, Drew McVety, Juliet Petrus, Ethan Le Phong, Julian Remulla, Adam Shapiro, and Xiaoqing Zhang. Costume designer is Joanne Fulmer, sound designer is Dave Sanderson, cultural consultant is Zhuoyi Wang, production stage manager is John Freeland Jr., and dramaturg is Jeremy Stoller. The Shanghai Sonatas Orchestra features the 6-WIRE ensemble and local Los Angeles musicians sharing the stage with faculty, alumni, and student musicians from the University of Delaware School of Music. The full musical production is currently being developed in New York City by MEMOR NYC, INC., co-producers Willa Ao, Sean Gao, and Fanghua Jiang, and executive producers Hamilton Chang, Irene Chu and Diane Fisher.

Shanghai Sonatas: A New Musical in Concert is recommended for ages 8 and up.

KCRW is a media sponsor.

The Shanghai Sonatas Educational Residency (SSER), promoting awareness of the Holocaust, genocide, and racial violence, was created by a team of global educators under the direction of Sean Gao at the University of Delaware with grant support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Delaware Humanities.

Tickets for this performance (\$39-\$125) are on sale now, as are single tickets and subscriptions to all performances in The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season. [TheWallis.org/shanghai](https://www.thewallis.org/shanghai)

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase single tickets, subscriptions and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm) or visit [TheWallis.org](https://www.thewallis.org).

The Wallis is closely monitoring the ever-changing local health and safety environment carefully and addressing known health factors at the moment. Should plans change and any performance be required to be postponed or cancelled or if venue capacity limitations are instituted, ticket holders will be notified immediately with options for their purchased tickets per The Wallis' ticketing policies.

The health and safety of patrons, staff, and artists inside and outside the venue are a top priority for The Wallis. Facial masks are no longer required but are strongly encouraged and recommended. The Wallis' health and safety protocols are also subject to change at the venue's sole discretion or in accordance with LA County and City of Beverly Hills regulations. Current Health & Safety Protocols and updates may also be accessed at [TheWallis.org/Safety](https://www.thewallis.org/Safety). Policies are subject to change.

SEAN (XIANG) GAO (Producing Artistic Director, concept & music), named one of Musical America's Top 30 Professionals of the Year in 2021, is one of the world's most successful presenters, producers, composers, and pedagogues. He has solo performed violin with more than one hundred orchestras worldwide and for many world leaders. As the University of Delaware Trustees Distinguished Professor of Music, he is also the founder and director of the world traveling 6-WIRE ensembles. (<https://6-wire.com/>). Gao was born and raised in Beijing, China, and is a proud alumnus of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance. He dedicates this musical to his American parents Rich and Susan Rogel.

ALAN GOODSON (Book Writer) is a playwright, translator, lyricist, actor, and director based in Los Angeles. His plays have been presented at new play festivals around the country. In addition to his original work, he

translates plays and lyrics from German, Hungarian, and Swedish into English. As an actor he has performed in many theaters throughout California as well as in Europe and has been seen in over a dozen American and European films. His activities as a director have been centered in Vienna, where he has directed in diverse genres, from clown theater to chamber opera. He is a longtime member of the Dramatists Guild, Actors' Equity Association, and SAG-AFTRA.

JOYCE HILL STONER (Lyricist) has written lyrics or music for 22 musical theater productions including *I'll Die if I Can't Live Forever* (Off-Broadway), which was purchased by Samuel French and called "the best mini-musical in town" by *The New York Times*. Her other productions include *Turn Back Columbus (Please Don't Discover Us!)* (Toronto); *Murder at the Last Resort* (Cleveland); in NYC: *1-900-THE-SHOW*, *As She Dreams It*, and *The Roswell Follies: An Alien Revue* (NYC Fringe Festival). Additional musicals concerned Whistler, N.C. Wyeth, C.W. Peale, women's suffrage, and the underground railroad. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was in the Lehman Engel BMI workshop in the 1970s.

CHONGREN FAN (Stage Director) is a New York-based bilingual director from Shanghai, China. He is the Artistic Director of Yangtze Repertory Theatre and Artist-in-Residence at Pan Asian Rep. Recent productions: Damon Chua's *The Emperor's Nightingale* (Theatre Row, 2019 OBA Award nomination); Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Romulus the Great* (TBG Theatre); Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's *410[GONE](TFTNC)*; Marie Jones' *Stones in His Pockets* (Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre). He has been a Jonathan Alper Directing Fellow at Manhattan Theatre Club, Resident Artist at Mabou Mines, and guest lecturer at Barnard College and Yale School of Drama.

ASHER DENBURG (Music director and assistant conductor) National tours of *Spamilton*, *Cirque Musica Holiday Spectacular*; *Breath and Imagination* (Lyric Stage Company of Boston /Front Porch Arts Collective, IRNE nomination for Best Music Director); ongoing residencies in NYC at Green Room 42 & Chelsea Music Hall. As orchestrator: *Bachelors of Broadway*; *Never Sleep Alone* (Virgin Voyages); *Fable* (NYMF, world premiere); ghostwriter for the Boston Pops, Chicago Symphony.

DR. NOREEN GREEN (Guest conductor) is the Founding Artistic Director and Conductor of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony (LAJS), which she created in 1994. A trailblazing, inspirational conductor, educator and lecturer known worldwide for her knowledge and skill in presenting music with Jewish themes, she has served as guest conductor in the United States, Israel, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the Caribbean. Wherever she appears, Green exudes a spirit of joy and harmony – bringing people together through the universal language of music through a Jewish lens. In 2022, due to her noteworthy accomplishments and prominence in her field, Green was inducted into the prestigious *Marquis Who's Who Biographical Registry*. In November 2022, she spoke at the United Nations on Music and the Holocaust: History, Memory and Justice. In January 2023, she gave a presentation on Jewish Music Repertoire in Multi-Cultural Programming at the International Conductors Guild Conference in Valencia, Spain.

ADDITIONAL BIOS [HERE](#)

About Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national, and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as "au courant" (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, "If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis." Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933

Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GROW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. Michael Nemeroff is Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

For downloadable photos, please visit: TheWallis.org/Press.

Like The Wallis on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE MASTER PLAYERS CONCERT SERIES
SONGS OF SHANGHAI SONATAS: A NEW MUSICAL IN CONCERT
World Premiere**

Concept, Music & Produced by Sean (Xiang) Gao

Book by Alan Goodson

Lyrics by Joyce Hill Stoner

Conducted by Noreen Green

Director Chongren Fan

Music Director and Assistant Conductor Asher Denburg

Costume Designer Joanne Fulmer

Sound Designer Dave Sanderson

Cultural Consultant Zhuoyi Wang

Production Stage Manager John Freeland Jr.

Dramaturg Jeremy Stoller

CAST:

(in order of appearance)

Julian Remulla Old Ming-Kai, Kano Ghoya, Japanese overseer of the Ghetto, and Lao Sun, a peddler

Xiaoqing Zhang Tan Hua, former star of the Peking Opera

Stephanie Lynne Mason Miri, a taxi dancer and Lotte, a peddler, Hermann's wife

Sara Laflamme Li Li, a taxi dancer

Caitlín Burke Mei Mei, a taxi dancer, and Wong Ma, a peddler, Lao Sun's wife

Ethan Le Phong Ming-Kai (Kai Kai), Tan Hua's son

Drew McVety Leo, a classical violinist

Juliet Petrus Rachel, a classical violist, Leo's wife

Neal Mayer Sammy, a jazz/classical musician and Hermann, a peddler

Adam Shapiro Ernst, a classical violinist

Anzi Dibenedetto Narrator

WHEN:

Thursday, March 16 to Saturday, March 18, 2023

Thursday – Saturday, 7:30 pm; Saturday, 2:30 pm

RUNNING TIME:

Approximately 2 hours with a 15-minute intermission.

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

Tickets for this performance (\$39-\$125) are on sale now, as are single tickets and subscriptions to all performances in The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season. TheWallis.org/shanghai

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase single tickets, subscriptions and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm) or visit TheWallis.org.

Shanghai Sonata, a new musical in concert is recommended for ages 8 and up.

Holocaust Museum Los Angeles is a sponsor of this production.

KCRW is a media sponsor.

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to current health and safety variables, performances are subject to change, postponement, or cancellation.