

## 28 February 2023 - Love for China highlighted by Belgian pianist

By Tan Yingzi | chinadaily.com.cn

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Peter Ritzen conducts his new symphony, *Love for China*, at Chongqing Guotai Theatre on Feb 22, 2023

A concert featuring *Love for China* — composed and conducted by Belgian pianist Peter Ritzen and performed by the Chongqing Symphony Orchestra — was held at Chongqing Guotai Art Center on Feb 22, 2023.

The concert was conducted by the municipal cultural and tourism commission and co-hosted by the orchestra and Chongqing Opera House.

"The aim of this work is to imagine the impressions of me, a Western artist, in a symphonic work where Western harmony and the ultimate Chinese element go musically hand-in-hand, without mixing them," Ritzen said.

He has played throughout Europe, Asia and the United States, but he has an especially profound connection with China. So he used some of his former inspirations in China — Chongqing in particular — in his creation.

For example, in the symphony's overture, *Starlights of Chongqing*, he conveys his impressions of the colorful play of lights on bridges, buildings and ships in a summer breeze, which form a beautiful and harmonious scene describing China's southwestern metropolis.

Inspired by Chinese folk songs, including local folk songs — *Song of Shoulder* and *Jubilance for Sunshine* — the musician created a pure symphonic orchestra enhanced with Chinese percussion instruments in three of its five movements in *Love for China*. The other two use a chorus.

At the end of the show, Chinese tenor Fan Jingma performed a selection from the Chinese symphony *Chinese Rhapsody: My Loved Motherland* with the Belgian maestro and orchestra.

Ritzen said he's planning to incorporate more traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the erhu, in his creations in the near future.



A concert featuring *Love for China*, composed and conducted by Flemish pianist



Peter Ritzen and performed by the Chongqing Symphony Orchestra, was staged at Chongqing's Guotai Art Center on Feb 22, 2023