

# 胡同 HUTONG

SCENES FROM AN OPERA IN PROGRESS BY KUI DONG



THURSDAY, MARCH 12 AT 8PM



CINNABAR THEATER, PETALUMA



# 胡同 HUTONG

**SCENES FROM AN OPERA IN PROGRESS BY KUI DONG**

*Other Minds, in collaboration with  
Cinnabar Theater, Petaluma, Dartmouth College,  
and Opera America presents scenes in workshop  
from the opera-in-progress, Hutong, by  
award-winning Chinese-American composer, Kui Dong,  
with a libretto by Monica Datta and dramaturg  
Paul Schick. Story by Monica Datta.*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020, 8PM • CINNABAR THEATER  
3333 PETALUMA BLVD. NORTH • PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA**

## PERFORMERS

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### Cast

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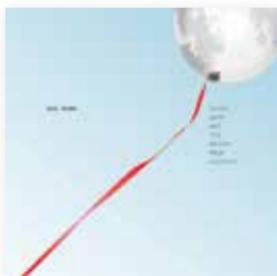
**Chelsea Hollow**, soprano  
**Kindra Scharich**, mezzo soprano  
**Jean-Paul Jones**, tenor  
**Joe Meyers**, bass-baritone  
**Randall Wong**, speaker

### Instrumentalists

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**Jennifer Cho**, violin  
**Brenda Vahur**, piano  
**Tim Dent**, percussion  
**Mary Chun**, conductor

## OTHER MINDS RECORDS



### Since When Has The Bright Moon Existed? [OM-1018-2]

Kui Dong draws inspiration from old forms, employs unusual instrumental combinations, and even commingles four languages within her compositions on this collection of world premiere recordings.



### Hands Like Waves Unfold [OM-1011-2]

Kui Dong's solo improvisations playfully exploit the full range and color of her prepared piano, with a dedication to the detail of each sound that only an accomplished composer could attain. Kui Dong uses piano preparations designed by John Cage as a starting point for her own improvisations.

AVAILABLE IN THE LOBBY AND ONLINE AT [webstore.otherminds.org](http://webstore.otherminds.org)

**Hutong** 衚衕

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A *Hutong* is a type of traditional narrow lane winding through various courtyard residences, or *siheyuans*. Hutongs are found throughout China but most notably in Beijing. The *siheyuans* were once inhabited by single wealthy families, but after the Cultural Revolution they were repurposed into communal living spaces that multiple families would occupy. These compounds are often so densely populated that much of day-to-day life spills out into the surrounding hutongs. Families cook meals, vendors sell their wares, old men play chess, children play, and people pass through on their way to work. It was in such an environment that composer Kui Dong spent the first seven years of her life in Beijing—a time that she looks back on with fond nostalgia. This is also where her opera *Hutong*, takes place.

**Synopsis**

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**Scene 1.** Ångström, a blind and deaf Norwegian sailor sets up an easel and canvas preparing to paint, while his assistant prepares smoked herring. Due to a freak accident involving a stray Albatross, the Sailor has a morbid phobia of birds.

The *Fenhuang* (phoenix) enters the sailor's apartment and though she is unseen, he knows she is present. She is followed by a mysterious mute detective (the violinist), and with ever increasing panic they frantically chase each other around the room.

**Scene 2.** Observed by the detective, two children amuse themselves by playing a game which consists of throwing an unhappy frog at each other.

**Scene 3.** In the courtyard of a hutong an *Ayi* (or housekeeper) sweeps. A French architect and a bevy of local architects pay a visit. The French architect spouts gibberish in Franglais of an academic, "art-for-art's-sake" nature, completely devoid of any cultural awareness or practical application. The Chinese architects mock him behind his back.

The French architect goes off on a further tangent, drawing parallels between soap bubbles and his theories of urban design. The *Ayi*, in exasperation, empties a bucket of soapy water on his head.

### **Kui Dong**

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Described by newspapers and magazines such as *Washington Post*, *Gramophone International UK*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Charleston Post and Courier*, and *The Boston Intelligencer* as “exquisitely...ceaselessly compelling”, [possessing] “21st-century sensibilities”, “exceptional beauty and imagination”, “a hybrid sonic labyrinth”, and “beautiful, haunting and thought-provoking,” Kui Dong’s music has been performed and commissioned by numerous ensembles and received honors and prizes from a wide spectrum of prestigious institutions, including Central Ballet Group of China, The National Centre for the Performing Arts of China, Hong Kong’s Phoenix Television Broadcasting Company, Japan’s Public Interest Incorporated Foundation and Fukuyama Arts Foundation, Spain’s Tenerife Symphony Orchestra, UK’s Arditti Quartet, Austria’s Ars Electronica, The Tanglewood Music Center, USA Commissioning Award, The Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation and Library of Congress, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, and Meet the Composer.

Her music can be found on two releases from Other Minds Records, in addition to New World Records and Sono Luminous. Her first novel will be published by Knowledge Press and the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House in 2020.

Kui Dong is a professor of Music and current Music Department Chair at Dartmouth College.



### Monica Datta

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Monica Datta studied architecture and urbanism in the United States, United Kingdom, and Spain. She is interested in the use of space in fiction and architectural theory, as well as the disjunction between speculation in architecture and fictions of urbanism from literature. Her writings have appeared in *Blackbird*, *The Collagist*, *Conjunctions*, and *The New Inquiry*; she has received support from the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Kundiman and the Fine Arts Work Center.

### Mary Chun

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A fierce advocate of new work, Mary Chun has worked with many composers such as John Adams, Olivier Messiaen, Libby Larsen, William Kraft, and Tan Dun. At the invitation of composer John Adams, she conducted the Finnish chamber orchestra *Avanti!* in the Paris, Hamburg, and Montreal premiere performances of his chamber opera *Ceiling/Sky* to critical acclaim. Passionate about new lyric collaborations, she has music-directed a number of world premieres, including Libby Larsen's opera, *Every Man Jack*; Mexican-American composer Guillermo Galindo's *Decreation: Fight Cherries*, a multi-media experimental portrait of the brief life of the brilliant French philosopher Simone Weil; Carla Lucero's *Wuornos*; and Joseph Graves' and Mort Garson's *Revoco*.

#### APRIL 2

MYRA MELFORD/MARK DRESSER/OGURI  
IKUE MORI/ZEENA PARKINS/WILLIAM WINANT  
WILLIAM PARKER/HAMID DRAKE/  
PATRICIA NICHOLSON

#### APRIL 3

ROSCOE MITCHELL/AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE/  
JUNIUS PAUL/VINCENT DAVIS  
MATS GUSTAFSSON/JOE MCPHEE  
JEN SHYU

#### APRIL 4

JOËLLE LÉANDRE/LAUREN NEWTON  
DARIUS JONES/AMIRTHA KIDAMBI  
WADADA LEO SMITH/JESSE GILBERT

#### APRIL 5

MARY HALVORSON/SYLVIE COURVOISIER  
ELLIOTT SHARP  
ANTHONY BRAXTON/JACQUELINE KERROD

### **About Other Minds**

*Charles Amirkhanian, Executive and Artistic Director*

Founded in 1992, Other Minds in San Francisco is a leading organization for new and experimental music in all its forms, devoted to championing the most original, eccentric and underrepresented creative voices in contemporary music. From festival concerts, film screenings, radio broadcasts and the commissioning of new works, to producing and releasing CDs, preserving thousands of interviews and concerts and distributing them free on the Internet, Other Minds has become one of the world's major conservators of new music's ecology.

For more information, visit us online at [otherminds.org](http://otherminds.org).

### **About Cinnabar Theater**

The Cinnabar Theater, located in Petaluma, California, is a professional non-profit theater producing opera and musical theatre, drama, and a chamber music series in a 120-seat venue, under the auspices of the Cinnabar Arts Corporation. The venue is also home to the Young Repertory Theater (founded in 1983), the longest running and largest youth performing arts program in Sonoma County.

Cinnabar Arts enriches the cultural fabric of the community through the production of intimate and thought-provoking theatrical and musical performances. By educating and inspiring youth in performing arts, Cinnabar develops future artists and audiences.

### **Credits**

Art direction and design: Mark Abramson

Text by Randall Wong, DMA

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