

Press article in English translation (Original version is in Dutch)

**September 26th, Concertgebouw at 8.15 pm, Prometheus Ensemble / Etienne Siebens
Hidden Eternity by Kee Yong Chong (world première)**

Written by music journalist Miss Thea Derks

Although K.Y. Chong, always optimist, won the competition for Young Chinese Composers of the Nieuw Ensemble, he is little known here in Holland. This is surprising, as there are quite some links between his life and our country. He was born in Kluang, nearby our former Indonesian colony. He followed a post-doctoral education in The Royal Conservatory of Brussels and master classes with Daan Manneke. Proudly, he states that the languages of Malaysia and Indonesia have mutual similarities as do have the ones between Flanders and the Netherlands. Yet, as his name indicates, he has Chinese origins.

At first, Chong was washing dishes in a Taiwanese restaurant in Brussels, but soon after, commissions for compositions started to emerge. Nowadays, Chong is travelling from one première in Germany, Italy or Switzerland to the other in Malaysia, Denmark or Estonia.

Critics and public are without exception very enthusiastic. A Malaysian newspaper wrote about his orchestral work 'Tearless Moon', which was being premiered last may in Kuala Lumpur: 'What a musical journey, with a mix of complexity and sentiment, which was passionate and afterwards very introvert!'

Another critic appreciated Chong's unconventional approach towards ethnic influences, enriched with suggestive clouds of sound, which evoke - enhanced by a spatial concept – a remarkable tension.

In "Hidden Eternity", which Chong composed for the Flemish ensemble Prometheus, he decided to work with two opposite groups. On the right side, you have three woodwinds, a bass and percussion. On the left, there is a string quartet, a harmonium and another percussion set-up. In the middle, you find a piano, on which is being performed by J. Michiels and I. Spinette, two pianists to whom the work is dedicated as Chong has always been very impressed by their interpretations full of inspiration of e.g. G. Kurtag, one of Chong's beloved composers. Yet, the work is not conceived as a concerto for piano, but rather as a chamber-concerto in a Ligeti-like way.

Chong is a great admiror of this Hungarian composer, who died last june in Vienna. He wrote "Hidden Eternity" as a memorial. 'When I heard Ligeti's *Atmosphères* and *Lontano*, I was deeply moved by his abstract world of sound, his micro-polyphonic textures without rythmic nor melodic motives. I'd never heard such a thing before! It felt as I was being submerged into an antique Chinese drawing, full of different layers in black and white. All these layers consist of transformations from one to another and refer to the yin-yan dialectics of chinese philosophy.

"Hidden Eternity" has the character of a ritual, a lament on the death of a master, whose 'enthusiastic research to a personal, newish language has always been a great example to me'. The title has a philosophical background.

Chong: 'Just as Ligeti, you can search for the ultimate and eternal art, but you'll never find it because it always escapes, somewhere in the shade.'