

## Programme Notes

### Jen Shyu | NINE DOORS (extraits / excerpts)

Nine Doors is a ritual and celebration of our lost loved ones and how, through the eyes of a 6-year old girl, trauma and tragedy can be overcome and transformed into a life better lived. When Shyu lost her friend Sri Joko Raharjo “Cilik,” a famous Javanese shadow puppeteer who died with his wife and infant son in an automobile accident at the age of 30, she created this piece to honor him and his family and provide the audience members a chance to meditate on their lost loved ones as well. His 6-year-old daughter, who survived the crash, is the central character. Time stops as she encounters powerful female legends—from the Wehali Kingdom of Timor to the Korean folkloric myth of Baridegi—who become her guides. A mysterious phone booth in a gardener’s yard in Otsuchi, Japan, which has become a comfort to the families who lost loved ones in the 2011 Tsunami, also enters into the story. The work reflects the parallels that exist between life and death, different cultures, and the importance of empathy over destructive assumptions that divide humanity.

*Nine Doors* incorporates Shyu’s 15 years of study of traditional music from five countries: epic storytelling (Pansori), East Coast shaman music (동해안별신굿 or “Dong Hae Ahn Byeol Shin Gut”), and Binari, usually performed as a blessing for an audience, all from Korea; music from sub-districts Aileu and Ataúro from East Timor; Bedhaya or Javanese sacred dance from Indonesia; and the “speaking-the-song” or “katari” with Japanese biwa, the rare 4-stringed instrument originally used by monks and priests.

Thank you to all my teachers: Kwon Song-hee and Bae Il-Dong (Pansori); Ha Kyung Mee (gayageum); Seo Hanna (East Coast Shaman Music, 동해안별신굿); Jo Mun-ju (Binari); Sim Woonjung (soribuk); Arai Shisui (biwa); Zhu Ding Sun, Chen Yin, and Zhang Ri Gui of Taiwanese folk song and moon lute. Tonight’s performance is dedicated to the late Sri Joko Raharjo “Cilik” and his family; and to the late Taiwanese poet Edward Cheng whose text “Contemplation” closes the work.

*\*Nine Doors is expanded from Song of Silver Geese which was premiered at Roulette on March 28, 2016, and recorded featuring Mivos Quartet and Shyu’s band Jade Tongue.*