

A photograph of two women in a dramatic, intimate pose. The woman in the foreground is lying down, her body covered in blue and white patterned paint. She has dark hair and red lipstick. The woman behind her is also lying down, her body covered in yellow and green patterned paint. She has dark hair and green lipstick. The background is dark and moody.

# *Venom* OF LOVE

ELECTRONIC  
BALLET MUSIC

ALICE PING YEE HO



## ***VENOM OF LOVE* - COMPOSER'S STATEMENT**

*Venom of Love* is a four-act musical composition for ballet based on the enthralling Legend of the White Snake 白蛇傳, one of China's Four Great Folktales. This 60-minute composition deals with elements of fantasy and eroticism from a primeval, magical world. The music follows an evocative journey of desire, with rivalries between mortals and the spirits, and the ultimate sacrifice to attain eternal love. Fusing synthesized and acoustic instrumental sounds with soprano voice and percussion, this work is a dramatic dance/musical theatre composition telling an ancient myth in contemporary form.

Commissioned by Toronto's Little Pear Garden Dance Company, *Venom of Love* received a successful world premiere and rave reviews for its 2014 debut production at the Toronto Harbourfront Centre.

In this recording, the four acts comprise 20 musical tracks, and the descriptive titles help lead the audience into an exotic "Once upon a time" journey through ancient Chinese folklore.

Alice Ping Yee Ho 何冰頤



# SYNOPSIS OF THE BALLET *VENOM OF LOVE*

Courtesy Emily Cheung, director of Little Pear Garden Dance Company

## ACT 1 – RISE OF DEMONS

(tracks 1-6)

The opening scene takes place in a dark, mysterious underworld, with waterfalls and eerie animals creeping in and out. It is an annual meeting of the animal demons. The very powerful Queen of Demons calls the meeting, and animal demons (bats, birds, deer, monkeys) slowly gather around. With the Queen in the lead, all demons gather around two large eggs; they are witnessing the birth of White Snake and Green Snake. All celebrate. The Queen is especially fond and possessive of White Snake's immaculate beauty. The celebration ends abruptly when a demon spots a human form in the background. Demons quickly and quietly leave the stage. White Snake, curious and hidden in the background, spies on the human, who is the Scholar.

## ACT 2 – LOVE ENCOUNTER

(tracks 7-11)

This scene starts with a playful dance between Green Snake and White Snake and the demon monkey. The Scholar enters the scene, unaware of Green and White Snakes' presence, and mischievous Green Snake decides to play tricks on him. After a few tricks, the Scholar is exasperated and confused. White Snake stops Green Snake and, wanting to know the Scholar better, transforms into a human. Unaware that she is not human, the Scholar falls instantly in love with White Snake. Green Snake is jealous and scared, and tries to prevent the Scholar and White Snake from being together. Ignoring Green Snake's advice, White Snake leaves with the Scholar. The scene ends with Green Snake alone and sad.

## ACT 3 – FORBIDDEN LOVE

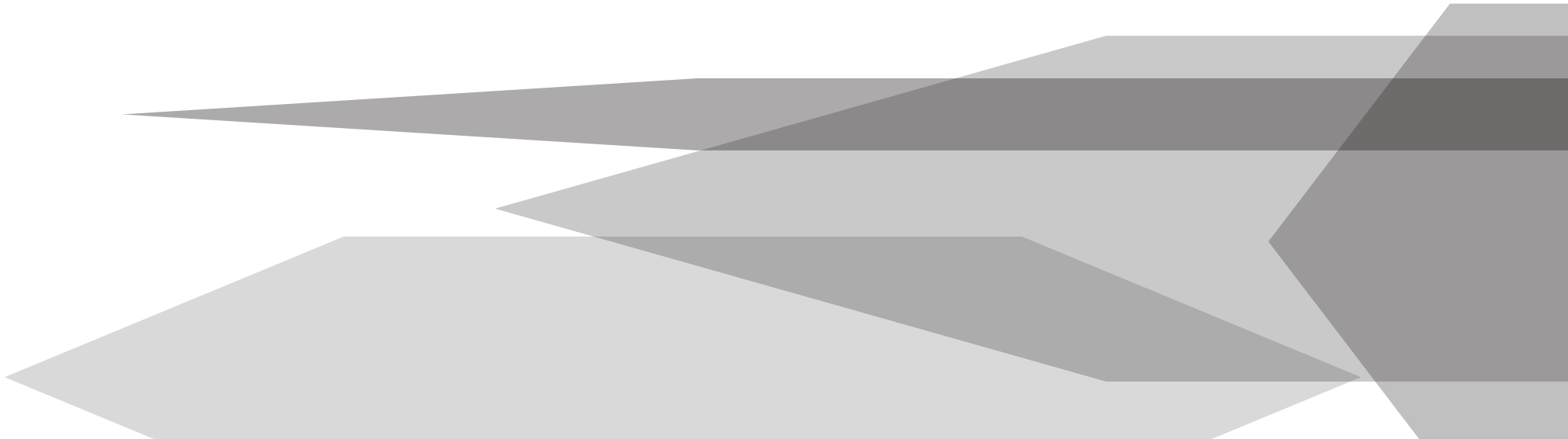
(tracks 12-15)

White Snake and the Scholar are dancing together, in love. The Queen enters the scene with other demon animals, sees the couple, and is furious. In anger, the Queen orders the Scholar to be killed. White Snake begs for the Queen's mercy and agrees to be locked up forever in a pagoda in exchange for the Scholar's life. The Queen agrees to White Snake's plea. White Snake tries to say farewell to the Scholar, and is transformed into her original snake form by the angry Queen. The Scholar, realizing that White Snake is a demon, faints in shock. White Snake asks Green Snake to take care of the Scholar. White Snake enters the pagoda, with the rest of the demons watching. The scene ends with the fainted Scholar and Green Snake beside him.

## ACT 4 – REBIRTH

(tracks 16-20)

As the scene opens, the Scholar is chained to a tree. Green Snake gathers her demon friends (including the demon monkey) and convinces them to join her in a rescue attempt. The group, led by Green Snake, rescues the Scholar. As they are escaping, the Queen catches them. A fight ensues. In a grand battle, the Scholar defeats the Queen, but not before the Queen kills Green Snake. The Scholar is grievously injured, and eventually dies of his injuries. The demon monkey, a friend of White Snake, takes some water from the waterfall and pours it onto the Scholar's lips. The water is magical, and the Scholar is transformed into a blue demon snake. The transformed Scholar then goes to the pagoda to find White Snake, and they live happily ever after.



## ALICE PING YEE HO

[www.alicepyho.com](http://www.alicepyho.com)

Considered “among the most important composers writing in this country” (D. Ariaratnam, *The Record*), Alice Ping Yee Ho is a Hong Kong-born Canadian composer acclaimed for her “distinctly individual” style and “organic flow of imagination”. She has received numerous national and international awards, including the 2019 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, Louis Applebaum Composers Award, K.M. Hunter Artist Award, top prizes at the 2014 Prince Edward Island Symphony Composers Competition and Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Friendship Orchestral Composition Competition, the 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Original Opera for *The Lesson of Da Ji*, the 2013 Boston Metro Opera International Composition Competition, the Luxembourg Sinfonietta

International Composition Prize, and the International League of Women Composers Competition.

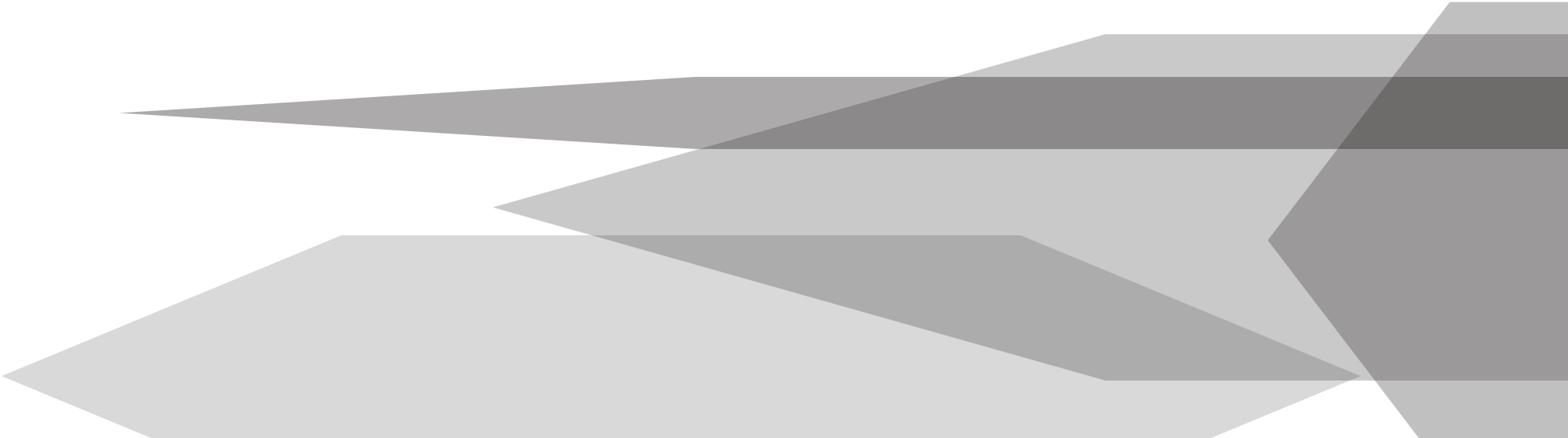
Her works have been performed by many major ensembles, including the symphony orchestras of Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Victoria, Hamilton, and Windsor in Canada; the Lapland Chamber Orchestra of Finland; China National Symphony Orchestra; Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra; Polish Radio Choir; the Ellerhein Girls Choir of Estonia; Luxembourg Sinfonietta; and Amsterdam’s Nieuw Ensemble.

A two-time JUNO Award Nominee (2015, 2018), she has an impressive discography released on the Centrediscs, Naxos, Marquis Classics,

Blue Griffin, Electra, and Phoenix labels. She has five solo discs (Centrediscs/Naxos) devoted to music written for different genres, including *Ming* for percussion; *Glistening Pianos* for two pianos; *The Lesson of Da Ji* featuring her full-length award-winning opera; and *The Mysterious Boot* featuring chamber music for flute, cello, and piano. Her fifth CD is a new recording of her children’s opera, *The Monkiest King*, with the Canadian Children’s Opera Company. This cross-cultural opera with librettist Marjorie Chan received two nominations (Outstanding New Opera and Outstanding Performing Ensemble) for the 2019 Dora Mavor Moore Awards. Her most recent opera project, working with renowned Canadian writer Madeleine Thien, is a commission by City Opera Vancouver

titled *Chinatown*, to be produced in fall 2021.

Ms. Ho holds a Bachelor of Music degree in composition with high distinction from Indiana University and a Master of Music degree in composition from the University of Toronto. She is a noted classical pianist and an active advocate of contemporary music. She has performed in many new music festivals, including a solo piano recital recorded by CBC Radio 2 in which she premiered Tan Dun’s solo piano work *Traces II*. She now makes her home in Toronto.





## VANIA CHAN

[www.vaniachan.com](http://www.vaniachan.com)

Lyric coloratura soprano Vania Lizbeth Chan (Master of Music, Manhattan School of Music) made her Carnegie Hall debut in Weill Recital Hall, winning first prize in the Barry Alexander International Competition.

Her “gently shimmering coloratura” voice (*Opera News*) performs early music, standard opera/opera, and new contemporary works.

Notable projects include *The Lesson of Da Ji* at Toronto Masque Theatre (winner of a Dora Mavor Moore Award, and *Opera News* Critics’ Choice review for CD recording). Her work with Soundstreams includes *The Little Match Girl Passion*, Claude Vivier’s *Musik für das Ende*, and the Dora Award-winning *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin/Gállábártnit*. Performances with Toronto Operetta Theatre include the roles of Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*) and Cunegonde (*Candide*).



Photo: Helen Tansey

# CREDITS

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*Little Pear Garden*  
DANCE COMPANY

**Little Pear Garden**  
**Dance Company**

**FACTOR**  
THE FOUNDATION ASSISTING CANADIAN TALENT ON RECORDINGS  
WITH SUPPORT FROM CANADIAN PRIVATE RADIO INDUSTRY

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# ALICE PING YEE HO

## *Venom* OF LOVE

ELECTRONIC BALLET MUSIC

### ACT I – RISE OF DEMONS

- 1 The Cave
- 2 Oriental Beasts
- 3 The Birth
- 4 Ripening
- 5 The Ritual
- 6 The Scholar

### ACT III – FORBIDDEN LOVE

- 12 In Love
- 13 Rage of Demon Queen
- 14 Plea of White Snake
- 15 The Pagoda

### ACT II – LOVE ENCOUNTER

- 7 The Dance
- 8 The Watcher
- 9 Love Encounter
- 10 The Rain
- 11 Green Snake's Agony

### ACT IV – REBIRTH

- 16 The Rescue
- 17 The Battle
- 18 Death
- 19 Transformation
- 20 Eternal Love

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