

JOHN WONG

Percussion

John Wong is in great demand as a performer and educator. He makes regular appearances with the Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and National Arts Centre Orchestras, as well as being heard on CBC Radio 2 in concert broadcasts. In February 2006 with two week's notice, he premiered Alexina Louie's *Infinite Sky with Birds* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, showcasing a virtuosic vibraphone as "leader" to the ensemble. His NACO debut was in 2002 as a winner of its Bursary Award, appearing as soloist in Ney Rosau's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*. Other orchestral appearances include the TSO's 2006 Northern Lights tour to Timmins, ON, and the 2008 New Creations Festival in Messiaen's *Turangalila* Symphony.

In chamber music, Mr. Wong made his Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival debut in 2006 performing the world premiere of John Cheetham's *Heroes* for High Tuba, Low Tuba, and Marimbas. He has also performed with Soundstreams Canada, most recently in 2007 in the Cree opera *Pimootewin* ("The Journey"). Broadcast by CBC Radio 2, this work was composed by Melissa Hui with libretto by Tomson Highway. *Pimootewin* featured a 7-piece ensemble, the Elmer Eisler Singers and kuroko (traditional Japanese stage hands dressed in all-black). It is the first known Cree opera, and John will join the Ontario tour in May 2009.

A devotee of music education, John Wong has been a member of the well established "Bangers and Smash" duo since 2004, with NACO percussionist Jonathan Wade. "Bangers and Smash", in collaboration with the National Arts Centre Orchestra's "Music in the Schools" program, brings music to students who otherwise cannot attend a NACO concert. John and Wade load up a cargo van and transport percussion goodies to several schools in the Ottawa area for two weeks to demystify an orchestra's percussion section. To keep it interactive, kids are invited to join them on the shakers and tambourines.

Upcoming projects for Mr. Wong includes participating in a CD of Colin Mack's compositions, performing vibraphone in a collection of chamber music along with flautist Robert Cram and pianist Claudia Cashin-Mack. Mr. Wong can also be heard on an upcoming CD released by Analekta featuring the Shostakovich Symphony No. 7, recorded by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Peter Oundjian.

John studied with Pierre Beluse, Andrei Malashenko, and D'Arcy Philip Gray at McGill University in Montreal, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree with Outstanding Achievement in Percussion. He also holds an Artist Diploma from the Glenn Gould School, where he studied with John Rudolph and David Kent. With a busy career in percussion, you would think John might take on calming hobbies, but he regularly smashes a ball in the squash court. He also enjoys cycling and fishing.

John Wong is on the faculty of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, where he is teaching private lessons and percussion ensemble classes to prepare advanced students for careers in chamber and orchestral music. He is currently accepting students.

August 2008