

Tunes from Two Cities: vibing in Shanghai and NY with two pianists

BEIJING, CHINA, January 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "[Tunes from Two Cities](#)" is a CGTN television program that invites you to embark on a musical tour aloft the rhythm of some specially concocted tunes. In this episode, famous Chinese pianist Tian Jiaxin, also a global Steinway artist, and jazz pianist and composer A Bu, the first Chinese winner of the prestigious Montreux Jazz Solo Piano Competition, started their musical journeys in [Shanghai](#) and [New York](#), respectively. They explored and created music dedicated to these two metropolitan hubs.

"We chose Shanghai and New York because they have so much in common. Both are modern metropolises," said Tian. To illustrate each city's temperament via piano music, the two musicians soaked up the vibe of each city and drew inspiration from a variety of elements, like architecture, cuisine, clothing, customs and people's general lifestyles.

For Tian, "fusion" is the best label to pin on Shanghai. She rode to the top of Shanghai Tower, the highest building in China, to see how the Huangpu River divides the city into two parts. "One is filled with skyscrapers and the other with old alleys characterized by hustle and bustle," she said. At Shanghai Yuyuan Garden, Tian listened to the pingtan, a folk art that originated in lands to the south of the Yangtze River. She believes pingtan can be seen as the quintessential Shanghai music and also a unique symbol of Chinese music.

In her creation for Shanghai, she combined traditional Chinese culture with international musical elements before innovating and rearranging them. Tian used the piano to imitate the sound of the bianzhong, an ancient Chinese musical instrument. She also incorporated two versions of "Jasmine Flower" in her music. "The folk tune is accompanied by stringed and woodwind instruments from lands to the south of the Yangtze River to show the charm of Shanghai," she explained. She also added jazz and other exotic musical elements to express Shanghai's free and vibrant urban culture and the idea of "fusion."

Meanwhile, pianist A Bu strolled through New York and created his special piece of music. "The thing about the streets in New York is that by turning just a block to the right or left, you get to see so many different things," said A Bu. In his eyes, New York is a city of jazz music. He wrote down his thoughts and inspiration while walking around, and the last part of the musical piece he wrote concludes with a blues section.

Two musical scores for two world-famous cities have thus been created, providing an innovative

way of comparing them. The cultural and musical characteristics of Shanghai and New York were incorporated into the two pianists' music, representing the spirit of each city from the artists' perspectives.

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