



longing for _

YANG CHEN : *longing for _*

Out: November 11th, 2022 on **People Places Records** (CD/ DL/ Video)

Genres: Modern Composition, Electronic, Experimental Pop, Solo Percussion

RiYL: Seth Graham, more eaze, Tigue, Pantayo, Will Guthrie, Bang On A Can

1. Yaz Lancaster – EUPHORIC
2. Andrew Noseworthy – All Good Pieces Have Two Things
3. Charles Lutvak – rest / stop #1
4. Jason Doell – through intimate, swims
5. Sara Constant – silt
6. Charles Lutvak – rest / stop #2
7. Sarian Sankoh – till the dam breaks
8. Stephanie Orlando – crank/set
9. Charles Lutvak – rest / stop #3
10. Connie Li – Nighttime renewals toward more friendship, more love, like snowfall, I want to sing with you

Yang Chen: percussion, voice, bass, bike.

Andrew Noseworthy: guitar (2); **Jason Doell:** various instruments/ objects (4) **Sara Constant:** flute, electronics (5); **Sarian Sankoh:** lead vocals (7); **Marie Sankoh, Karlee K. Nancy Sankoh, Olive Sankoh, Jolie A. Yaz Lancaster, Connie Li:** additional vocals (7); **Connie Li** – violin & voice (10)

All tracks mixed and mastered by **Andrew Noseworthy**

All tracks recorded at **Sound Cabin** with engineer **Rajen Mistry**

Produced by **Yang Chen** and **Danielle Sum**. Album art by **Adrienne Scott**, design and typography by **Michelle Ngo**.



PREVIEW: [STREAM](#) | [DOWNLOAD](#) (MP3/ AIF)

On the very front page of **Yang Chen's** website, the Toronto-based artist openly declares that they're “a *percussionist with many side-hustles*.” Make no mistake, though—this isn't some sort of trite euphemism. In fact, one mere spin of Chen's ambitious debut album is apt to convince most adventurous listeners that the artist's manifold pursuits are all a seamless part of their artistic identity. *longing for _* manages to be relentlessly pluralistic and cohesive all at the same time. Even though its program drops allusions to numerous musical worlds, employs instrumentation spanning steel drum to bicycle, and encompasses a diverse array of North American composers, the energy it exudes is more apt to evoke the Internet-addled curiosity one hears these days from daring young electronic producers than a jumbled, 'kitchen sink' approach.

It helps that each of the composers are friends of Chen's and that they share values and interests belied by the album's surface of wild heterogeneity—most notably a penchant for open-ended collaboration. Each of these works were crafted through extensive collaboration with Chen, and many of them feature the composers themselves performing in some capacity.

The disc opens with the cosmic élan of up-and-coming NYC violinist-composer **Yaz Lancaster's** *EUPHORIC*. Lancaster's music has recently been featured at Bang On A Can's 2022 Summer Festival and on India Gailey's acclaimed recording *to you through*. The Wire touted their contribution to Gailey's disc as “the highlight of a palpably emotional set.” *EUPHORIC*, for steel pan and electronics, acts as a dreamy homage to recently-deceased hyperpop queen SOPHIE.

Andrew Noseworthy's sardonically-titled *All Good Pieces Have Two Things* both maintains and disrupts the flow. Its playful referentiality provides common conceptual ground with Lancaster, while its bouncing between raunchy metal-inspired angularity and passages of elusive drift, imparts a very different (not to mention volatile) emotional tenor. **Charles Lutvak's** *rest/stop* triptych for solo vibraphone—arguably the most straightforward piece of the set—is threaded throughout the album, providing grounding and continuity. Lutvak's mallet writing is crisp and unadorned but makes exquisite use of varied articulation and space.

On *through intimate, swims* Chen teams up with Toronto composer **Jason Doell** for a more textural affair. Together the pair gathered a collection samples from of cymbals, bass guitar, a huge thunder sheet, and a koto-like instrument made out of a door and long metal strings. This audio was subsequently re-assembled through aleatoric software to form a foundation atop which Chen and Doell improvise. **Sara Constant's** *silt* also involves a considerable degree of spontaneity. The composer initiated their collaborative process using 15 watercolour images, which she asked Chen to interpret. The results were then shaped into a text and graphic score for the duo to play. Constant extracted the preferred take from the recording sessions and augmented it with electronic processing.

Sarian Sankoh's *till the dam breaks* switches gears entirely, presenting a warm, weightless R&B track into which Chen injects cascades of steel pan. Following this beautifully and viscerally evocative song, **Stephanie Orlando's** *crank/set* plunges back into abstraction. Chen deploys an array of unique strategies in order use a bicycle as an instrument. Their live performance is set against a backdrop of manipulated bike sounds, to form an electroacoustic maze of sound.

The album closes with the smeared psychedelic expanses of another New York-based violinist/ composer, **Connie Li**. The piece taps into Li and Chen's shared experience, drawing upon Teresa Teng's *Yue Liang Dai Biao Wo De Xin*—a karaoke staple and one of the best-known and best-loved Chinese pop songs of the 1970's and 80's. *longing for _* will be available in conventional formats—CD, download, and streaming from all major platforms, however Chen has also commissioned a video for each work, allowing the album to be watched as a series of short films.

Over the past few years, Yang Chen has become a vital presence within the Toronto music landscape, making potent connections between numerous aesthetic realms including pop, traditional musics, and various strains of sonic exploration. In addition to collaborating with composers such as the ones found on *longing for _*, they play taiko with **RAW (Raging Asian Womxn) Taiko**, and drum for “soft-moshing congee kids” **Tiger Balme**. Chen also works as operations manager for **Labyrinth Ontario**—a satellite of renowned musician **Ross Daly's 40-year old modal music institute in Crete**—and plays in the organization's **in-house ensemble**. Chen is the subject of *an episode of Lunchbox Dilemma*, a docu-series featuring Asian-Canadians and their coming of age experiences, from CBC Gem. They hold a Masters' Degree in percussion performance from NYU, and a Bachelor's from University of Toronto's music program.

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