



# Alice Ping YEE HO

## *Piano concerto “Pictures from an Imagined Exhibition” (world première)*

**Alice Ping Yee Ho** (b. 1960) is a celebrated Canadian composer known for her eclectic, innovative musical voice that bridges Eastern and Western traditions. Her diverse body of work spans opera, orchestral, chamber, and solo repertoire, often marked by its emotional intensity, textural richness, and cultural synthesis. With a career shaped by a deep curiosity for sonic possibilities and cross-disciplinary influences, Ho continues to redefine contemporary classical music through her deeply personal and globally resonant creations.

One of her most ambitious and evocative works to date is the Piano Concerto **“Pictures from an Imagined Exhibition”** (2024), a six-movement orchestral journey inspired by the visual art and lives of pianist-painter Christina Petrowska Quilico and Hong Kong ink master Wesley Tongson. Premiered by Petrowska Quilico with the Kindred Spirits Orchestra under the baton of Kristian Alexander, the concerto reimagines the tone poem tradition as a fluid, synesthetic dialogue between music and visual art, East and West, spirit and form.

The concerto opens with “Carried by the River,” a lyrical evocation of flow, memory, and continuity. The piano part, nuanced and expressive, rides atop undulating orchestral textures that reflect both Quilico’s layered paintings and Tongson’s meditative brushwork. In “Free Strokes,” Ho embraces Tongson’s unbound calligraphic energy, weaving rhythmic vitality and improvisatory flourishes into a spontaneous, breath-like musical language.

“Distant Drums” shifts into a darker, more primal register. Echoes of ancestral rituals and resistance are conveyed through fractured rhythms, ghostly percussion, and the haunting interplay of trumpet and timpani. The piano, insistent yet ethereal, channels a voice of resilience through repetition and silence.

With “Mystical Mountains,” Ho creates an expansive soundscape drawn from Tongson’s towering spiritual landscapes. Shimmering harmonies and modal inflections lend the music an otherworldly character, while the dialogue between piano and orchestra paints a sonic ascent through mist and transcendence.

The fifth movement, “Dancing Colours,” bursts forth with kaleidoscopic joy, channeling Quilico’s vibrant visual world into a scherzo-like celebration. The brass section opens with a jubilant fanfare, while the piano and orchestra engage in a vivid, virtuosic exchange flashes of sound capturing the spontaneity of light and colour.

The final movement, “Eclipsing Dreams,” is introspective and elegiac. Earlier motifs return transformed, softened by time and grief. It is a meditation on impermanence, death, and creative endurance honouring Tongson’s passing and Quilico’s indomitable artistic spirit. The music swells from fragile stillness to transcendent affirmation, closing the work in a gesture of luminous resolve.

Commissioned by the Kindred Spirits Orchestra with support from the Canada Council for the Arts, *Pictures from an Imagined Exhibition* transcends the traditional concerto form. It stands as a multi-sensory tribute to two visionary artists and a compelling testament to the power of music to bridge worlds sonic, spiritual, and human.