



Watch: Video of Lincoln Center's 'Paradise Interrupted'

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By [Michael Rosin](#)



Chinese opera singer Qian Yi performs an aria from 'Paradise Interrupted' with Zhou Yi accompanying on the pipa. (Courtesy Lincoln Center)

From Verdi's *Nabucco* to Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah*, operas have found inspiration in the Bible. A Chinese opera also inspired by the ancient parables, [Paradise Interrupted](#), will have its New York premiere on July 13 at the Lincoln Center Festival.

The opera centers around two stories: Eve's path after she is banished from the Garden of Eden and a magical dream from the ancient Chinese play, *The Peony Pavilion*. Composer Huang Ruo combined both Chinese and European operatic traditions in his work, as did director and visual designer Jennifer Wen Ma, who

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was responsible for the lighting and visual effects during the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Singer Qian Yi, described as “China’s reigning opera princess” by The New York Times, portrays the protagonist. Early on in the musical drama, the soprano sings a personal aria, "Arise, Verdant Landscape." "It is sung," Ma explains, "as she sees a beautiful black garden begin to appear in front of her eyes. At first she merely marvels at the garden, and then begins to summon more of it into existence with her singing. However, even amidst this majestic scenery, she laments to find herself still alone.”

In the video below, watch Qian sing the aria with accompaniment on the pipa by Zhou Yi.



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