

Program for Evening Concert

**18 October 2016
7:30pm - 8:30pm**

**Imperial Ballroom, Level 35
Mandarin Orchard Hotel**

Reorientate

TRANSLATE. RELATE. REORIENTATE



ReOrientate is a Hong Kong based collective that is gaining acclaim for its unique world music drawing from Silk Road idioms to weave modern cognitive illusions that reframe diverse heritages. Familiar across cultures yet defying categorization, ReOrientate creates word play among the musical languages spanning the vast diaspora—from Far East to Far West—of cultures emanating from the centroid of today's China, India, and Pakistan, from the Spanish flamenco gypsies who migrated eastward from India, to the Polynesians who migrated westward from Yunnan, to the Turkic cultures in between. ReOrientate draws upon musical traditions from Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, and Taoist roots, bringing traditional acoustic forms back together in an interplay of modern electronic soul to transcend both communication barriers and time. Join ReOrientate on a journey to celebrate the universal relationships that emerge from human diversity.

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web <http://www.dekai.org>

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The award-winning members of ReOrientate include Indian Channel V Popstars winner and founding pop group Viva! member Seema Ramchandani, Hong Kong ATV Asia Million Star winner and singer/songwriter Gretchell Yaneza Yeung, international Chinese orchestra conducting competition world finalist and erhu maestro Rupert Woo, prestigious French Jazz-a-Tours alumnus and gypsy/flamenco/jazz/fusion guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Antoine Richard, and the creator of ReOrientate, Debrett's 100 most influential people of Hong Kong honoree and percussionist/keyboardist/DJ/composer De Kai, among many others. ReOrientate has performed at international festivals including Clockenflap, Freespace, and Detour; been featured on numerous radio and television appearances; and performed and been presented internationally at numerous TEDx events.

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“East of West, West of East” performance **Singapore, 18 October 2016**

Translation is hard. Language structures thought; and different languages can structure thought very differently. The divergence of cultures is nowhere more evident than in the chasm of understanding that often emerges between the East and West. Bridging that chasm has never been more urgent; yet the increasingly powerful cultures continue to talk past each other.

Traditional Eastern and Western cultural and philosophical languages differ vastly in the way they frame ideas, creating continual barriers to understanding. The linguistic traditions of the West emphasize things or “objects”, objectivity, logical precision, and an assertive belief in a single universal “right” perspective on things. But the linguistic traditions of the East instead emphasize relationships, subjectivity, ambiguity and metaphor, and a respectful belief in seeking of “balance” between different valid perspectives on things.

A new mindset for this era is needed. A mindset that celebrates harmony in diversity, rather than discord in divergence. ReOrientate sees in music a remarkable opportunity to engage listeners toward this understanding in effective and entertaining ways both Eastern and Western. With its novel use of the diverse musical languages of the Silk Road diaspora to create cognitive illusions, ReOrientate illustrates concretely how both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions can simultaneously apply without contradiction.

The conceptual underpinnings of ReOrientate’s music are discussed in my TEDxBeijing 2016 talk, which cautions against the perils of obsessive “thing-think” in cognition (video currently in production). In the West it is a common mindset to cast all non-Western music as a single kind of object named “world music” —as if non-Western music were not an immensely complex web of relationships between innumerable musical languages and cultures. One often hears the trope that “music is a universal language”, revealing again the oversimplified mindset of seeking an absolute truth. In reality, music is far from a universal language—how one interprets even the simplest of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic idioms often depends heavily on one’s cultural background.

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True intelligence lies not only in understanding things, but in relations between things.

Seen in the tradition of Eastern thought, ReOrientate avoids the futile belief that “world music” could be framed in a single true “universal language”. Instead, ReOrientate deliberately creates music that can be understood in multiple valid ways, depending on one’s cultural frames of reference. The same erhu melody is interpreted in classical pentatonic terms by a Chinese listener, but in jazz/blues terms by a Western listener. The same percussive rhythm is interpreted as a waltz by a Chinese listener, a meter-switching rhythm by a Middle Eastern listener, or an acid jazz groove by a Western listener. ReOrientate’s music aims to be relatable to all who hear it, regardless of cultural background. Each listener finds one’s own comfortable frame of reference to relate to the music. And from whatever frame of reference that is, ReOrientate’s transcultural music provides bridges that entice each listener to relate to the other, less familiar cultural frames of reference—to appreciate the richness of other cultures’ diverse ways of framing things, but in harmony and resonance with one’s own familiar ways.

Seen in the tradition of Western thought, ReOrientate creates what is scientifically described as cognitive illusions—musical versions of optical illusions. Instead of attempting to impose a universal language on music, ReOrientate focuses on the universality of relationships between the musical languages of humanity. By taking relationships and reifying them into objects of focus, ReOrientate reminds us to communicate not just through explicitly framing things — but more importantly, through explicitly framing relationships between alternate ways of framing things. ReOrientate uses music to show that the needlessly opposed Eastern and Western traditions in thought and mindset can actually translate—by using performance to concretely realize abstract cognitive models of culturally dependent perception into accessible, uplifting, relatable music and dance.

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ReOrientate's original music features a ensemble of multilingual vocals, regional acoustic instruments, flamenco, and electronica/soul, emphasizing the multitude of connections between the traditional and modern, between East and West.

"East of West, West of East" performance **Singapore, 18 October 2016**

EAST ASIAN ERHU — Rupert Woo

SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIAN VOCALS — Gretchell Yaneza Yeung

WEST EURASIAN ROMA (GYPSY) GUITAR — Antoine Richard

WORLD PERCUSSION / KEYS / ELECTRONICA — De Kai

REORIENTATE — Chinese erhu and xiao, vocal traditions of Arabic/Persian origin and hypnotic electronica reframing Spanish bulerías.

USKUDARA — East Asian harmonies on a traditional Central Asian song of Turkic origin reframed with rumba flamenca and wobble bass

THE CUCKOO SAYS — a beloved flamenco poet's ode to a cuckoo in the dusty Andalusian hills of the gypsies, in dialog with a traditional Hindi song of a South Asian cuckoo... lilting Hindi, Spanish and English lyrics over melodic instrumental cognitive illusions that can be reframed as East Asian or equally well West African/Iberian

LAUNG GAVACHA — Chinese erhu and guzheng reframing traditional Punjabi celebration music on a novel interwoven overlay of Spanish rhythms

WIGGLE — Chinese erhu motifs, gypsy Andalusian cadence, swirling electronica and Afro-Latin rumba flamenca reframing a traditional Qawwali devotional song

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LISTEN (TO EACH OTHER) — interleaved Chinese, Indian and English vocals and instrumentation upon rhythmic cognitive illusions that can be reframed alternatively as gypsy bulerías or acid jazz/soul

TANGLE — Arabic/gypsy cadences with Mandarin, Hindi, or English neosoul vocals on rhythmic cognitive illusions that can be reframed equally well as tangos flamencos or breakbeat jazz

JIANG NAN XIAO QU — traditional Chinese erhu melody reframed by a Punjabi Sufi poem of the beloved Bulleh Shah over meditative electronica chill, on rhythmic cognitive illusions that can be reframed alternatively as a slow waltz or flamenco soleá

KYA HAI YEH JADOO — Chinese instrumentation with Indian vocal traditions and Spanish tangos / reggaeton, reframing traditional gypsy tangos melodies

AAJA NACHLE — strong Chinese instrumentation on a traditional Punjabi celebratory song reframed with rumba flamenca and electronica

THE POWER OF ONE — anthem to the power of each individual to make a difference, set to engaging rhythmic cognitive illusions that can be reframed as either gypsy bulerías or funk