



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Joyce Linehan (617) 282-2510 x 1, [joyce@ashmontmedia.com](mailto:joyce@ashmontmedia.com)

**ZHOU LONG'S MADAME WHITE SNAKE, CO-COMMISSIONED AND PRODUCED BY OPERA BOSTON, WINS 2011 PULITZER PRIZE FOR MUSIC**

*High res images of the Boston premiere in Fe. 2010 can be downloaded from [http://www.ashmontmedia.com/OB\\_mws\\_photos.html](http://www.ashmontmedia.com/OB_mws_photos.html)*

(BOSTON – 4/20/11) It was announced on April 18 that Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, an opera co-commissioned by Opera Boston and Beijing Opera, has been awarded the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Music. The Pulitzer Prize citation calls *Madame White Snake* "a deeply expressive opera that draws on a Chinese folk tale to blend the musical traditions of the East and the West." Opera Boston presented the world premiere of *Madame White Snake* on Feb. 26, 2010 at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston, where there were three performances and one preview. *Madame White Snake*, the first opera commissioned by Opera Boston was conceived by its librettist, Cerise Lim Jacobs, of Brookline, Massachusetts. and her late husband Charles.

Said Opera Boston General Director Lesley Koenig, "Opera Boston is excited to congratulate Zhou Long on winning the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Music for *Madame White Snake*, an opera that we are proud to have commissioned. *Madame White Snake* was Opera Boston's first commission, and we enjoyed a great relationship with our co-producers, the Beijing Music Festival. Given the work's pedigree and authenticity as a truly international work of art, we are grateful for its being honored with this quintessentially American award."

**Zhou Long**, a renowned Chinese-American composer, was cited by the *New York Times* as one of the leading Chinese composers, charged with "injecting a new vitality into the American classical music scene." In 2003, the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Zhou Long its Academy Award in Music, recognizing lifetime achievement, saying, "unlike many composers of today working between cultures, Zhou Long has found a plausible, rigorous, and legitimate way of consolidating compositional methods and techniques that allow him to express brilliantly both his experiences as a composer of Western music and his considerable knowledge of his native China. In [his music], Zhou Long displays a stunning (quasi-tactile) orchestral imagination that dramatically demonstrates his skill of embedding elements of the two cultures in a consistent, seamless, and original musical language."

The orchestration for *Madame White Snake* features both Western and traditional Chinese instruments. The *erhu*, a two-stringed instrument played with a bow, is colloquially called the Chinese fiddle. The orchestration also includes two traditional flutes - the bamboo flute and the *xun*, a wind instrument made of clay that is similar to the ocarina.

*Madame White Snake*, a classical transformation myth, is the story of a powerful white snake demon who transforms into a beautiful woman to experience love, only to be betrayed by her husband when he becomes suspicious of her. The principal cast at the premiere included soprano **Ying Huang** as Madame White Snake, male soprano **Michael Maniaci** as the transformed green snake Xiao Qing, tenor **Peter Tantsits** as Madame White's husband Xu Xian, and bass **Dong-Jian Gong** as the menacing Abbot Fahai.

Tantsits will return to Opera Boston in the upcoming season as Mark in Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*.

### **About Opera Boston**

Opera Boston presents rarely-staged repertory in all-new productions. Founded in 1980, the company has presented more than 70 operas, including 34 regional and two world premieres. In addition to its critically acclaimed, award-winning mainstage productions, Opera Boston offers a range of programs, including a chamber opera festival, a popular cabaret series and an educational program in Boston-area schools. For more information about Opera Boston, visit [www.operaboston.org](http://www.operaboston.org).

###