

# YOUTH

## Tribute to composer

A young Chinese musician will stage concerts in Blue Note venues in China, **Chen Nan** reports.

A Bu, 21, has just returned to Beijing from New York, where he is pursuing his bachelor of music degree at Juilliard School, with a major in classical piano performance. It is going to be an eventful summer for the pianist, who is already a sensation in China's jazz circle.

He gained wide attention as a 13-year-old when performing at the Beijing Nine Gates Jazz Festival in 2012. He even shared stage with such international jazz greats as Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter.

A Bu is going to perform in two concerts — at Blue Note Shanghai on Saturday and Blue Note Beijing on June 16, commemorating Chick Corea, the Grammy-winning jazz legend who died of cancer at the age of 79 on Feb 9. Corea would have been 80 on Saturday.

A Bu initiated the concerts because he had known the US jazz pianist and composer.

In June 2013, Corea gave a solo recital in Shanghai. A Bu met him for the first time during a dinner arranged by the event organizers before the concert.

"I cannot remember what we said exactly but I was very excited when he invited me to perform with him. It was not planned," A Bu recalls, adding that Corea watched some videos of him performing onstage and the pianist was keen on collaborating and supporting young musicians.

"I was too young and I didn't play

very well. He was very nice. I just basked in the thrill of the music while performing with him," A Bu says.

On Sept 13, 2016, Corea performed in Beijing along with his band during a concert marking the opening of Blue Note Beijing, the first branch of the Blue Note Jazz Club on the Chinese mainland. The New York establishment was founded in 1981 by Danny Bensusan in the city's Greenwich Village. Many legendary jazz musicians, including Corea, have performed on the Blue Note stage.

A Bu, who was studying in New York then, flew back to Beijing to attend the concert.

"Corea greeted a room full of guests and he joked that the last time he saw me, I was just a little boy. He also joked that he could detect my New York accent clearly already," recalls A Bu.

"It was a dreamlike experience, which was very rewarding, just like having a master class by Corea."

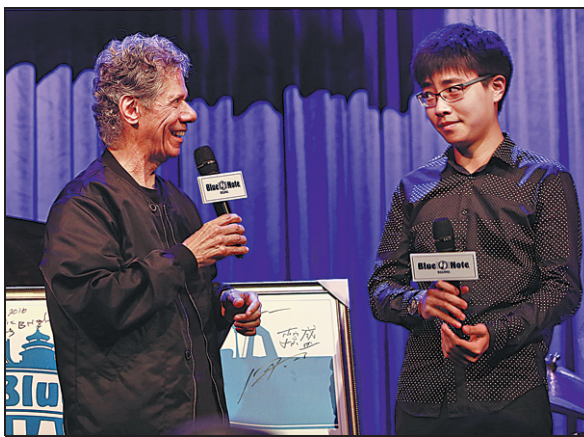
For the upcoming concerts, paying tribute to Corea, A Bu has selected classic pieces by Corea and will perform with other Chinese musicians, such as saxophonist Li Gaoyang, bassist Liu Yue and drummer Xu Zhitong.

Before the concert in Shanghai on Saturday, A Bu will share his stories of Corea with the audience. One of the songs he will perform is *Windows*, composed by Corea.

"He was here in Beijing to introduce Blue Note to the Chinese



A Bu has performed worldwide during his decadelong music career, as shown in this file photo of him playing at the Moscow Conservatory in 2017. WILSON SHI / FOR CHINA DAILY



A Bu and US jazz musician Chick Corea share their stories with audience at the concert to mark the opening of Blue Note Beijing in September 2016. FADIL BERISHA / FOR CHINA DAILY

audience. It was like opening a window for music lovers, who may not be familiar with jazz music," says A Bu.

Other music pieces he is going to present include Corea's most famous compositional pieces, *Humpty Dumpty*, *500 Miles High* and *Spain*.

At the opening of Blue Note Beijing in 2016, Corea expressed his excitement in front of his audience.

He said: "When I was cutting my teeth in New York in the '60s, seeing Miles Davis and John Coltrane play, Asia seemed so far away. Not now.

“He once told me that it's important to sustain that passion and interest in music. ... Though he was in his 70s, he was just like a friend to me, not a big star.”

**A Bu**, Chinese pianist, speaking of how US jazz legend Chick Corea influenced his creative growth

Central Conservatory of Music in the capital.

His father, Dai Bin, a music lover, found that the boy enjoyed playing impromptu for hours after finishing the practice sessions assigned by his teachers. Then he invited Chinese pianist Kong Hongwei, who formed one of the country's pioneering jazz bands, Golden Buddha, to teach his son for more than five years.

The father usually took his son to Beijing's popular jazz venues, where the boy not only watched a lot of live jazz performances but also jammed with musicians.

Because of the pandemic, A Bu has spent a lot of time practicing in his home in New York, which allowed him to write music.

In January, he released a third album, titled *One Step East*, featuring 11 pieces he composed and adapted from classic jazz songs, which showcased the chemistry between the musical languages of the East and the West that he absorbed.

"I feel lucky that I found something I love. I get ideas for composing from everyday life and I collect them on my phone or notebook," says A Bu.

"They may not all be developed into full music pieces but they're part of the creative growth."

Before A Bu goes back to New York to continue his study, he will give live concerts in a few Chinese cities, featuring his original compositions.

Contact the writer at [chennan@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:chennan@chinadaily.com.cn)

## Civil service career attracts those who want to help

Fan Zhu, a senior at Guangxi University for Nationalities, knew she had failed the local civil service examination when she saw her name was not on the list for a health checkup.

"Maybe I didn't perform well in the interview," she says. "I should attend the training courses before I take the exam next year."

Fan had rejected several job offers before registering for the civil service exam.

"Being a civil servant is my top priority in my career plan," says the 21-year-old, who has decided to take a temporary job and sit the exam next year.

Like many young Chinese today, Fan says she would prefer the government job not only because of its stability but also for its social recognition, thanks to the country's intensified anti-corruption efforts over the past decade and civil servants'

contribution in helping the masses overcome difficulties.

Wang Xiaoxi has worked for five years as a civil servant in Wuhan, Hubei province.

The 32-year-old who works in a district organizational department, says the government has made great efforts to optimize its recruitment process to guarantee openness and transparency.

"Based on my observations and experience, there's no chance that someone could get in through a back door here, or use their connections or influence to secure advantages," she says.

During Wuhan's lockdown in early 2020 to curb the spread of COVID-19, Wang stuck to her post to provide logistical support for people in need, despite being pregnant.

"Facing the unknown virus, very few of my colleagues were hesitant to work on the front lines as



Hopefuls wait for the beginning of the civil service exam in Hefei, Anhui province, on March 21. CHEN SANHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

community and delivery workers. Protecting people amid uncertainty is our responsibility," she says.

The actions of civil servants during

the pandemic and China's poverty alleviation campaign have given more young people enthusiasm for the profession.

"Their contribution and sacrifices

make me more determined to be a servant for our people," says Fan.

Born in a rural area of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Fan has witnessed profound changes in her village over recent years thanks to the country's poverty alleviation and rural revitalization campaigns.

"Civil servants at the grassroots level, who have worked hard to help families shake off poverty, also encouraged me to bring tangible benefits to the public," she adds.

Though civil service posts in villages and townships may be tougher than those in cities, Fan would like to work on rural revitalization.

Su Yuemei, a 25-year-old from Long'an county in Guangxi, has worked hard to become a civil servant. She has taken the local civil service exam every year since 2018, and finally got an offer this year.

The reinforcement of anti-corruption efforts is necessary to promote the modernization of the national governance system and governing capabilities, she says.

Guangxi plans to recruit 2,905 civil servants in 2021, and the number of applicants for the exam now exceeds 160,000.

"The number of newly recruited civil servants in Guangxi has been declining in recent years, but the overall number of applicants has remained stable," says Li Hongwei, head of the Guangxi branch of Huatu Education, a training institution for civil service exams.

More than 50 percent of their trainees are fresh graduates.

Wei Wanqing, vice-president of the School of Public Policy and Management at Guangxi University, says: "So many young people choose to apply to the civil service every year, which shows their recognition of the country's effective anti-corruption efforts as well as the profession."

XINHUA

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