**Thunderstorm**

MO Fan (composer and librettist)

Based on the play *Thunderstorm* (1934)by CAO Yu

Conductor, ZHANG Guoyong

Director, ZHA Mingzhe

**Shanghai Opera House make their UK debut - presenting the European premiere of *Thunderstorm*, based on the famous Chinese drama by Cao Yu**

Following a successful visit to the London Coliseum by Shanghai Ballet in 2015, Shanghai Opera House make their UK debut with four performances of *Thunderstorm*, an opera by Chinese composer MO Fan, based on the famous play written by CAO Yu. Conducted by ZHANG Guoyong and directed by ZHA Mingzhe, *Thunderstorm* opens at the London Coliseum on Thursday 11 August for four performances.

*Thunderstorm* began life as a play, written by CAO Yu and premiered in 1935. It is one of the most popular Chinese dramatic works of the period. The story unfolds in the space of one day and centres around the disastrous effects of rigid traditionalism and hypocrisy on the wealthy, modern Zhou family. The operatic version of *Thunderstorm* was premiered in May 2006 at the Shanghai Oriental Art Center to celebrate Shanghai Opera House’s 50th anniversary. The performances at the London Coliseum mark the European premiere of *Thunderstorm*.

*ZHOU Puyuan, master of the Family of Zhou has a son ZHOU Chong with his wife Fanyi, but his elder son ZHOU Ping was born by his former maid Shiping. Fed up with her imperious husband, Fanyi starts an affair with ZHOU Ping her stepson. The fearful ZHOU Ping seeks solace in his relationship with Sifeng the young maid, who then becomes pregnant. One evening during a thunderstorm, Shiping comes to the family house by accident, and then it becomes clear that she is also the mother of Sifeng. Sifeng, finding it hard to accept that her lover is in fact her brother, runs into the thunderstorm and is stuck by lightning. ZHOU Chong, who has always been Sifeng’s secret admirer, dashes out to save her but is also killed instantly. ZHOU Ping kills himself in despair, while Fanyi and Shiping become mad. ZHOU Puyuan loses his whole family within one day*.

Composer and librettist MO Fan has written a wide variety of works including operas, dance dramas, cantatas, tone poems and concertos. His works have been performed across Europe and Asia. MO Fan has twice been the recipient of the prestigious Wenhua Prize – winning for *Thunderstorm* at the 8th China Arts Festival in 2007 and for another opera *Tu Lou* in 2013 at the 10th China Arts Festival in 2013.

Vice President of the National Theatre in China, ZHA Mingzhe is one of China’s most accomplished directors. Known for his moving portrayals of the ordinary lives of Chinese people, ZHA Mingzhe has won many national awards, including “Excellent Director in the New Century” by the Chinese Dramatists Association and the magazine *Chinese Theater* in 2005.

ZHANG Guoyong is the Principal Conductor of Shanghai Opera House, Professor and Dean of Conducting at Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Vice Chairman of the China Musicians Association. He has conducted throughout Europe and Asia including with Russian State Orchestra, Russian Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic and Hong Kong Philharmonic and is an expert in Russian works, especially the music of Shostakovich. In 2006, he was invited to sit on the jury of the 8th Cadaques International Conducting Competition.

Completing the creative team is set designer LUO Jiangtao, costume designer MO Xiaomin and lighting designer ZHANG Shunchang.

*Thunderstorm* opens at the London Coliseum on Thursday 11 August 2016 for four performances – 11, 12, 13 August at 7.30pm, 14 August at 3.00pm

Tickets for *Thunderstorm* are available from £5 - £65 at [www.eno.org](http://www.eno.org) / 020 7245 9300

–ends–

**Notes to Editors:**

**Shanghai Opera House** was established in 1956 following its predecessor, the Xin-an Ensemble, which was established in 1935. It is one of the best known and most influential performing groups in China and performs new Chinese works alongside productions of classic Western and Chinese operas. Shanghai Opera tours throughout China and also co-produces work with some of the world’s most famous opera houses. In 2008, Shanghai Opera House performed at the famous Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland and at Dalhala AB in Sweden. Shanghai Opera House regularly attracts the world’s greatest conductors and singers, including Lorin Maazel, Daniel Oren, Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and José Carreras.

The **London Coliseum** is the West End’s largest and most spectacular theatre, with 2,359 seats. Built in 1904, the London Coliseum was designed for Sir Oswald Stoll by Frank Matcham, the leading theatre architect of his day. Their vision was to create the largest and most impressive ‘people’s palace of entertainment’ in London. Today, the London Coliseum attracts over 400,000 audience members per year and is the home of **English National Opera**. Other regular visiting companies to the London Coliseum include English National Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet. The London Coliseum is the host venue of the British Fashion Awards.

**Cast**

**Cast A**

Fanyi - XU Xiaoying

ZHOU Ping - HAN Peng

ZHOU Puyuan - ZHANG Jianlu

Sifeng - JI Yunhui

ZHOU Chong - ZHANG Fantao

Shiping - LI Na

**Cast B**

Fanyi - SONG Qian

ZHOU Ping - YU Haolei

ZHOU Puyuan - YU Yang

Sifeng - WU Wanting

ZHOU Chong - LI Xinyu

Shiping - JIA Wenxuan