Erhu (Chinese violin) and the western violin are both essential leading instruments in the east and the west. Thousands of years ago, most bowed string instruments originated in Persia. It is believed that during the Silk Road period, one traveled to Europe and became the four-stringed violin while the other went to China and became the most popular solo instrument in Asia, the two-stringed erhu. In 2009, after thousands of years, the two instruments were reunited by the establishment of 6ixwire Project, a crossover duet founded by two of the world’s leading young soloists on the two instruments, Xiang Gao (AKA X. Gao) and Cathy Yang. This United States-based ensemble’s repertoire covers original and arranged compositions of all styles of music ranging from Western classical to jazz. They successfully bring the Eastern and Western cultures together in creative concert productions for the international audience today.

Among the orchestras that 6ixwire Project members performed with as soloists in recent seasons are the Detroit Symphony, the Czech Philharmonic, the Gothenburg Symphony-National Orchestra of Sweden, the Estonia National Symphony, the Mexico State Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, the Memphis Symphony, the Alabama Symphony, Aspen Music Festival orchestras and the Knoxville Symphony among others. As an established performing art duo, 6ixwire Project is frequently featured on China’s CCTV’s live concerts, which are broadcast for worldwide television audience of more than one billion people. In 2010, 6ixwire Project successfully premiered Sleep now, O Earth, the theme song composed by founding member Xiang Gao for a concert celebrating the 40th anniversary of Earth Day in the United States. In May 2011, 6ixwire Project was the feature ensemble for the Washington National Opera, hosted under the patronage of world famous opera sensation Placido Domingo, and Chinese ambassador to the United States Zhang Yesui. In February 2012, 6ixwire Project performed a United States and China jazz tour as well as a multimedia theatrical concert titled Encounters that was created to transport the audience to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) and promote cultural understanding and exchange.

The internationally acclaimed erhu virtuoso Cathy Yang is also a guzheng (Chinese zither) soloist and a professor of music at the China Contemporary Cultural Academy. As an international concert soloist, Ms. Yang has performed as a soloist at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center among other major concert halls in the United States. Besides her frequent concert appearances in China, in 2005, Cathy appeared as an erhu and guzheng soloist in Nike Morris’s Wheel of Life in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the West End’s Peacock Theater in London. The Chinese government has chosen Ms. Yang many times as a Chinese cultural ambassador to perform in Vienna, Frankfurt, Munich, Los Angeles and other cities. In May 2008, while visiting the United States, Ms. Yang performed as a soloist before thousands of New York Met fans—the first performance by a traditional Chinese musician at Shea Stadium. Ms. Yang was also a featured soloist during the 2008 Spoleto Music Festival (Charleston, South Carolina). Among the prestigious awards Ms. Yang has received in China are top prizes at the Long Yin Instrumental Competition, the Tian Hua erhu competition, the Chinese Ministry of Culture Annual Music Competition and the Chinese National Cultural Foundation award.

Recognized as one of the world’s most successful performing artists of his generation from China, 6ixwire Project member Xiang Gao is cited by the New York Times as “a rare and soulful virtuoso.” He has performed for many world leaders. Most recently, Mr. Gao was a featured soloist to perform for the Chinese President Hu JinTao and the visiting King Carlos I of Spain. His musical integrity and virtuoso technique have gained accolades from audiences and reviewers around the world. Mr. Gao is the youngest professor of music at the University of Delaware and the “Zijiang Professor of Music” at the East China Normal University in Shanghai. In 2007, the Stradivari Society in Chicago selected Mr. Gao to be a recipient of world famous Stradivarius violins for his international solo concerts. As a jazz singer, keyboardist, songwriter and composer, Mr. Gao is also the founding artistic director of two non-profit music organizations in the United States, the University of Delaware Master Players Concert Series and the China Music Foundation (USA).