

*Melissa Monson, one of our previous speakers, is sharing tips with a regular column "Communicating Effectively." Hope you find it helpful. - Jack Wong*

## *Communicating Effectively:*

### **Turning Notes into Images**

*by Melissa Monson*

In early October I had the pleasure of hearing and meeting the Shanghai Quartet. Violinist and composer Yi-Wen Jiang was born in Beijing where he grew up hearing and playing Chinese folk songs. Several years ago he decided to compose and arrange the folk melodies for his string quartet. The body of work became the disc ChinaSong - a collection of folk songs – “the themes speak to the individual listener because they are expressive, direct and easily absorbed and understood”.\*

The Shanghai Quartet’s program closed with Harvest Celebration, an original work by composer Jing-Ping Zhang and a favorite of Yi-Wen Jiang. After hearing it performed I can understand why. The piece is very energetic and highly visual as the rapid changes in meter and rhythm allow the listener to not only see the excitement of the celebration but to experience the joyful dancing and singing of the Chinese farm workers. The music created a powerful and lasting picture.

Each December the New York Times newspaper produces a special Children’s Book Supplement and names the ten best illustrated books. This year top honors went to The Lion and the Mouse which doesn’t have a cover title and has only seven words - all sounds like “screech” on its pages. It is a wordless picture book which succeeds through the strength of the visuals done by award winning artist Jerry Pinkney. His powerful drawings of the lion and the mouse, not words, move the story along and convey the moral of the story which is that actions count.

*(continued on pg. 2)*

*Communicating Effectively: Turning Notes into Images*  
by Melissa Monson

*(continued from pg. 1)*

Motivational speakers rarely use slides or visuals, instead they craft their speeches by using words and phrasing to convey a message or get an audience to hear and see an issue. Ronald Reagan the 40th president of the United States was a master at creating word pictures to persuade and invoke strong emotions and action from an audience. The mind has an amazing ability to transfer images through disparate mediums into tangible, actionable visuals.

Presentations, unlike speeches, are generally used to convey information or instruct and for that reason are a perfect medium for using visuals.

Unfortunately slides are often the repository for a speaker's notes and as a result are dense with words and loaded with copy. A word of caution. Visuals should support the spoken word, not compete with it. The most effective slides are heavy on image with few bullet points and even fewer words. Use images selectively as the speaker will always lose out when an audience must make a choice between seeing or hearing.

An image whether conjured up through music, pictures or words usually lingers the longest. ■

*\*Yi-Wen Jiang, Shanghai Quartet, ChinaSong, 2002 Delos International Inc.*



**MONSON Communications LLC**  
capitalizing your message in global markets.

ROADSHOW PRESENTATIONS. MARKETING. PUBLIC RELATIONS. Melissa Monson is based in San Francisco, California. She develops roadshows, and coaches management teams who are raising equity in the private and public markets. She writes the column "Communicating Effectively" for the Hong Kong Regulatory Forum and was a guest speaker in November 2008.

[www.monsoncommunications.com](http://www.monsoncommunications.com) | [melissa@monsoncommunications.com](mailto:melissa@monsoncommunications.com) | 415.297.8100 copyright © Melissa Monson, 2009