

Two Poems of the Song Dynasty

for Soprano and Orchestra

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by

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ABSTRACT

TWO POEMS OF THE SONG DYNASTY is an original composition for soprano voice and orchestra. The duration of this two-movement work is approximately 10 minutes. The instrumentation is: Flute 1, 2, Oboe 1, 2 (doubling English Horn), Clarinet in Bb 1-2, Bassoon 1-2, Trumpet in Bb 1-3, Horn in F 1 - 4, Tenor Trombone 1-2 , Bass Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Vibraphone, Cymbals, Triangle and Strings. This piece is of moderate difficulty; to be sung in Chinese with elements of *sprechstimme* and a vocal range from C4 to A5.

The two movements, “Sheng Sheng Man” and “Yong Yu Le” refer to old poetic forms from the Song Dynasty (1127-1279). The poets Li Qingzhao and Xin Qiji provide contrasting laments for the wars of their time; the first is an introverted metaphor of sorrow and the second is a more explicit recollection of old times.

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PROGRAM NOTES

During the last days of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) near the capital of Hang Zhou in the vicinity of modern Shanghai, two poets recorded their personal experience of their national tragedy.

The first is Li Qingzhao (1084–1151) who is regarded by many as the premier female poet of the Chinese language. And her lament provides the text for the first song of this modern setting and titled, SHENG SHENG MAN. It refers to an old poetic form based on an ancient melody for which many poets have provided their own lyrics. Although the original melody has been lost long ago, the poetry of Qingzhao's setting is still very moving. The poem was written in her late years after her husband's humiliation and death in warfare. The work is characteristic of the Wanyue style with its desolate imagery indirectly referencing her deep despair in the futility of a future without the object of her affection.

The second poem, YONG YU LE, was written by Xin Qiji (1140-1207), who also was a military general. He wrote this poem in his 60's after a stunning defeat against at the hands of his northern enemy. As in the first song, the title for this movement refers to a poetic form that is derived from a forgotten melody, however, the author gave his work a subtitle to indicate the main theme of the whole poem, "a recollection of old times..." In contrast to the first poem of implicit expressions, the second poem is straight forward and clear in a more explicit way, which is characteristic of the Haofang style. In his poem, Xin Qiji recalls many leaders and wars to express his worries for the future of the homeland and his inability to save her. -- Y. J.

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2 (doubling English Horn)

Clarinet in Bb 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Trumpet in Bb 1 - 3 [2nd Mvt. only]

Horn in F 1 - 4

Tenor Trombone 1, 2 [2nd Mvt. only]

Bass Trombone [2nd Mvt. only]

Tuba [2nd Mvt. only]

Timpani

Vibraphone

Cymbals

Triangle

Strings

[Duration 10'30"]

THE TRANSLATED POEM I

SHENG SHENG MAN

(Translated by Jiaosheng Wang. University of Pennsylvania, 1989)

Searching, seeking.

 Seeking, searching:

What comes of it but

Coldness and desolation,

A world of dreariness and misery

And stabbing pain!

As soon as one feels a bit of warmth

A sense of chill returns:

A time so hard to have a quiet rest.

What avail two or three cups of tasteless wine

Against a violent evening wind?

Wild geese wing past at this of all hours,

And it suddenly dawns on me

That I've met them before.

Golden chrysanthemums in drifts—

How I'd have loved to pick them,

But now, for whom?

On the ground they lie strewn,

Faded, neglected.

There's nothing to do but to stay at the window,

Motionless, alone.

How the day drags before dusk descends!

Fine rain falling on the leaves of parasol-trees—

Drip, drip, drop, drop, in the deepening twilight.

To convey all the melancholy feelings

Born of these scenes
Can the one word “sorrow” suffice?

THE TRANSLATED POEM II

YONG YU LE – Recalling the old times in the Beigu Pavilion of Jingkou
(Translated by Zheng Zhang)

In this ancient land,
What trace remains of Wu's brave king Sun Quan?
Towers and pavilions where girls danced and sang,
Your glory is swept away by wind and rain;
The slanting sunlight falls on grass and trees,
Small lanes, the quarters of the humble house;
Yet here, they say, Liu Yu lived.
I think of the days gone by,
When with gilded spear and iron-clad steed he charged,
Like a tiger, to swallow up vast territories.

In days of Yuan Jia,
Hasty preparations were made,
To march to the Langjuxu Mountains,
But the men of Song were routed from the north.
Now forty-three years have passed,
And looking north I remember,
The beacon fires that blazed the way to Yangzhou;
Bitter memories these,
Of sacred crows among the holy drums
In the Tartar emperor's temple,
Who will ask old Lian Po,
If he still enjoys his food?

1. SHENG SHENG MAN

Text By Li Qing Zhao

Yang Jiang

Slow and Sorrowful ♩ = 56 **rit.** **a tempo**

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet in B \flat 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn in F 1, 2, 3, 4

Slow and Sorrowful ♩ = 56 **rit.** **a tempo**

Timpani

Percussion Triangle

Slow and Sorrowful ♩ = 56 **rit.** **a tempo**

Soprano *mf* (half-sung) *mf lv.* *f*

寻 寻 觅 觅, 冷 冷 清 清, 寻 寻 觅 觅,
Xun Xun Mi Mi, Leng Leng Qing Qing, Xun Xun Mi Mi,

Violin I

Violin II *pp* *div.*

Viola *pp* *div.*

Violoncello *pp* *pizz.* *div.*

Double Bass *pp* *pizz.*

9 **rit.** **a tempo**

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Perc.

S. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp

pp

pp

mf sim.

mf

f

mp

p

pizz. unis.

pizz.

pp

pp

冷冷清清,
Leng Leng Qing Qing,

悽悽
Qi Qi

惨惨
Can Can

戚
Qi

17

Fl. *mf* a1 *mf*

Ob. *mf* a2

Cl. *mf* a1

Bsn. *mf* a1 a2

Hn.

Timp.

Perc.

S. Solo
威。
Qi.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

25

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Perc.

S. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp

pp

pp

mf

Triangle
pp

乍暖还寒时候, 最难将息, 将息。 三
Zha Nuan Hai Han Shi Hou, Zui Nan Jiang Xi, Jiang Xi. San

45

Fl. *mf* a2

Ob. *mf* a2 b

Cl. a2 b

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Perc.

S. Solo

Vln. I *mf* b div. unis.

Vln. II *mf* b div. unis.

Vla. pizz.

Vc. pizz.

Db.

Fl.

Ob. *solo*
mp

Cl. *solo*
mp

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Perc. *p* *l.v.*

S. Solo *p* *mp*

如 今, 如 今 有 谁 堪 摘? 堪 摘? 守 着
Ru Jin, Ru Jin You Shui Kan Zhai? Kan Zhai? Shou Zhe

Vln. I *mf* *sfp* *p*

Vln. II *mf* *sfp* *p*

Vla. *mf* *sfp* *p*

Vc. *mf* *sfp* *p*

Db. *mf* *sfp* *p*

2. YONG YU LE

Text by Xin Qiji

Moderate and Grand ♩ = 72

Flute

Oboe

English Horn

Clarinet in B♭

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in B♭

Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Moderate and Grand ♩ = 72

Timpani

Cymbals

Percussion

Vibraphone

Moderate and Grand ♩ = 72

Soprano

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

千古江山，英雄无
Qian Gu Jiang Shan, Ying Xiong Wu

10

Fl. *mf* *solo*

Ob.

Eng. Hn.

Cl. *mf* *solo* *a2* *pp*

Bsn. *p*

Hn. *p* *mf* *p*

Tpts.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp. *pp* *gliss.*

Perc. *mf* *l.v.* *scrape with the fingernail*

Vib. *mf* *bowed motor on - slow l.v.*

S. *mf* (half-sung) *mp*

覓, 啊! 孙 仲 谋 处, 舞 榭 歌
Mi, Ah! Sun Zhong Mou Chu, Wu Xie Ge

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *mf* *div.*

Db.

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Eng. Hn.

Cl. *f*

Bsn. *mf* *< sf* *p* *sfz p* *f*

Hn. *mf* *sfz p*

Tpts.

Tbn. *mp < sf*

B. Tbn. *mp < sf*

Tba.

Timp.

Perc.

Vib.

S. *f*

人道 寄奴 曾住. 想 当年, 金戈 铁马, 气吞
 Ren Dao Ji Nu Ceng Zhu. Xiang Dang Nian, Jin Ge Tie Ma, Qi Tun

Vln. I *p* *pizz.* *arco ord.* *sfp*

Vln. II *p* *pizz.* *arco ord.* *sfp*

Vla. *pizz.* *ord. arco. unis.* *mf* *sfp*

Vc. *p* *mf* *sfp* *sfp* *f*

Db. *mf* *sfp* *sfp* *f*

52

Fl. *mp* solo

Ob. *mp*

Eng. Hn. *mp* *mf*

Cl. *mp*

Bsn. *mp*

Hn. *p* *f* mute

Tpts.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc.

Vib.

S. 四 十 三 年, 望 中 犹 记, 啊, 啊, 烽 火 扬 州 路.
 Si Shi San Nian, Wang Zhong You Ji, Ah, Ah, Feng Huo Yang Zhou Lu.

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Db. *mp*

Fl. - - - - -
 Ob. - - - - -
 Eng. Hn. - - - - -
 Cl. - - - - -
 Bsn. - - - - -

Hn. *sf* mute out
 Tpts. *sf*
 Tbn. - - - - -
 B. Tbn. - - - - -
 Tba. - - - - -

Timp. - - - - -
 Perc. *mf* *l.v.* *mf* *l.v.*
 Vib. *mp* *l.v.*

S. (half-sung) *mp* *mf*
 可堪回首, 佛狸祠下, 一片神鸦社鼓, 神鸦社鼓,
 Ke Kan Hui Shou, Fo Li Ci Xia, Yi Pian Shen Ya She Gu, Shen Ya She Gu,

Vln. I *mf* unis.
 Vln. II *sfp*
 Vla. *sfp*
 Vc. *f* *sfp* *mf*
 Db. *f* *sfp* *mf*

72

Fl. *f* *a2*

Ob. *f*

Eng. Hn. *f* *a2*

Cl. *f*

Bsn. *f*

Hn. 1 *mf*

Hn. 3 *f*

Tpts.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba. *f*

Timp.

Perc.

Vib.

S. *f*

尚 能 饭 否? 啊!

Shang Neng Fan Fou? Ah!

Vln. I *f* div.

Vln. II *f* div.

Vla. *f* div.

Vc. *f*

Db. *f*

76

Fl. *sfp* *mp* *ff*

Ob. *sfp* *mp* *ff*

Eng. Hn. *sfp* *mp* *ff*

Cl. *sfp* *mp* *ff*

Bsn. *sfp* *mp* *ff*

Hn. *f* *sfp*

Tpts. *f* *sfp*

Tbn. *f* *sfp*

B. Tbn. *mp* *sfz*

Tba. *mp* *sfz*

Timp.

Perc.

Vib.

S. *f*

啊 Ah 啊 Ah 啊! Ah!

Vln. I *sf p* *mf* *ff*

Vln. II *sf p* *mf* *ff*

Vla. *sf p* *mf* *ff*

Vc. *f* *ff*

Db. *f* *ff*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 76 to 79. The woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet, Bassoon) plays a melodic line starting in measure 76 with a *sfp* dynamic, moving to *mp* and then *ff* by measure 79. The strings (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass) provide harmonic support, with dynamics ranging from *sf p* to *ff*. The brass section (Trumpets, Trombones) has a more active role, with dynamics like *f*, *sfp*, *mp*, and *sfz*. The vocal soloist (S.) enters in measure 76 with the vocalization '啊 Ah' and continues through measure 79 with '啊! Ah!'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.