

Duo "Moonlight Rain (Zi Ye Yan Yu)" by Quanyi Fang:

The Creation of a New Work for Double Bass and Guzheng Inspired by Jiangnan region  
music

by

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A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved November 2022 by the  
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
December 2022

## ABSTRACT

This is a recording of a new piece for Double bass and Guzheng performer Qingfeng Li, who is internationally renowned. The composer composed this audacious and unique chamber work for double bass and traditional Chinese Guzheng zither in November 2021, dedicating it to me and Guzheng virtuoso Prof. Qingfeng Li. The objective of this project is to create a work for the classic Chinese instrument Guzheng that incorporates elements of Chinese folk music. This chamber music will be a duet for double bass and guzheng, with the guzheng's distinctive style and sonic effects blended into the double bass. The project will contain a recording of this new piece, as well as a written research document outlining the work's structure, the composer's collaboration process with me as a performer, and brief analysis of the work. Additionally, the author recorded this piece in a professional audio and video recording made in China, with Guzheng player Qingfeng Li.

This is the first combination of a traditional Chinese instrument, the guzheng, and a Western instrument, the double bass. This unusual melodic combination conveys the essence of traditional musical practices unique to the Chinese folk of Jiangnan. To investigate the connections between the pentatonic scale and traditional musical practices, I have studied Jiangnan music manuscripts compiled by ethnomusicologists. To better complement the traditional instrument of the guzheng in the piece, I studied the history of the guzheng and how to use techniques to express emotion in the piece. These connections are discussed in depth in the chapter on structure form, including how to break out of familiar compositional combinations and how to use the unique acoustics and techniques of the double bass to embody the Chinese folk pentatonic scale. I also

discuss the process of working with the composer, the rehearsal process, and the incorporation of necessary modifications in this document to make the music effective and idiomatic for the double bass. This new work at the intermediate and professional level will provide the double bass community with a new perspective on the repertoire. Working with a composer such as Quan-Yi Fang, both as a student and as a performer, has been a rewarding experience for me as I have discovered new challenges and explored new musical practices and techniques.

## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Xiaobo Wu and Lihong Zhu, for their unwavering support of my dreams throughout my entire life. I would also like to dedicate it to my professor, Catalin Rotaru, for giving me a fresh perspective on the meaning of life and the pinnacle of my musical vision throughout my academic career.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Prof. Quanyi Fang for writing this Duo piece and collaborating on it with Prof. Qingfeng Li. Many thanks to Catalin Rotaru, my double bass professor, for allowing me to learn from him and for always encouraging and inspiring me to become a better musician. Special thanks to Prof. Thomas Landschoot and Prof. Ted Solis for serving on my committee; I appreciate their time and all their help with this project.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Duo “Moonlight Rain (Zi Ye Yan Yu)”**

In November of 2021, Chinese composer Quanyi Fang composed a duet for double bass and guzheng. This duet was dedicated to me and Prof. Qingfeng Li by the composer. Using a combination of the Double Bass and the Chinese folk instrument Guzheng, the composition's arrangement is revolutionary. The work's core musical material is derived from the folk music of Jiangnan, China, which the composer creatively combines with Western compositional techniques to refine a musical language that is both ethnic and modern. The composer also uses rich timbre variations and acoustic weaving to break through the strict constraints of traditional tonality, giving the ethnic charm of Jiangnan in this highly expressive combination of instruments and presenting the humanities of Jiangnan. The composition combines traditional tonal and acoustic techniques. As a result, its techniques for both guzheng and double bass are highly innovative. In this piece the guzheng has evolved from a single melodic instrument to a piano-like harmonic instrument, and the double bass has evolved from an inherent accompaniment instrument to a melodic solo instrument that alternates with the guzheng. The Double Bass will use western playing techniques in this repertoire to simulate the sound of Chinese folk music as well as to fill in the bass range gaps in Chinese music.



## Guzheng

### Guzheng in the ancient China

It began during the pre-Qin Dynasty, flourished throughout the Han and Wei Dynasties, prospered during the Tang Dynasty, became less popular during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, and ultimately fell out of favor during the Qing Dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

According to existing historical documents, guzheng was already present in China during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 B.C.). For instance, the eight-tone classification of musical instruments emerged during this time period. Gold, stone, earth, leather, silk, wood, lagenaria, and bamboo are the eight categories based on the varied materials used in the construction of musical instruments. The Qin, Se, Zheng, and Zhu are examples of instruments that belong to the silk category. At this time, guzheng was evidently already a musical instrument. The classification of the eight tones signified a more mature stage in the evolution of Chinese instrumental music, and had a major impact on succeeding generations.

During the Han and Wei dynasties, the guzheng emerged as the principal accompaniment instrument for the “ Xianghe ballads ” of the northern Han period. According to “Song Shu - Yue Zhi”: Xianghe, the old song of the Han Dynasty, is also a song of silk and bamboo, and the festival performer sings it.”<sup>2</sup> The Xianghe song is primarily sung as a solo, with the singer pounding the drums and backed by a silk and bamboo (Si Zhu) band. Sheng mouth organ, flute, drum, pipa, lute and the se, qin, and zheng zithers are typically used as accompaniment. In the Collection of Music Poems,

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1. Yang Yan, " *The Inheritance, Innovation and Expression Characteristics of Zheng Music in the 1950s and 1960s*", Master's Thesis, Nanjing Arts Institute, 2007, p. 2.

2. Chen Yingshi, Chen Lingqun: “ *A Brief History of Chinese Music*”, Higher Education Press, 2006, p. 94

the four types of harmony songs are divided into four tunes: Ping, Qing, Se, and Chu, with the zheng playing the role of accompanist regardless of the number of accompanying instruments. Throughout the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties eras, the zheng was the principal accompaniment instrument for courtly musical music. There were three distinct concepts of courtly Yan music, often known as banquet music, throughout the Tang Dynasty. In a general sense, Yan music refers to the music played at banquets by the ruling elite, and its meaning is analogous to that of "common music." Consequently, the music of nine or ten parts of the Sui and Tang dynasties, as well as the music of all religious workshops, might be referred to as Yan music. In a restricted sense, Yan music refers to Jing Yun He Collection's "Qing Song" from the Tang Dynasty. In the second broad sense, Yan music refers to a type of music having a distinct musical style. In other words, the music of the Tang Dynasty was developed on the basis of the extensive exchange of music between various ethnic regions, and many of the works were influenced by the music of ethnic minorities, particularly the music of "Guizi", thereby exhibiting a new style that was radically different from the traditional music. As a result of the enormous worldwide musical and cultural contacts that occurred during this time, the instrument (Zheng) evolved swiftly. From the standpoint of zheng music, the zheng of the Sui and Tang dynasties evolved from the twelve-stringed instrument of the Qin and Han dynasties to the thirteen-stringed instrument known as the "Qing Yue Zheng", which was played directly by hand. With a vast number of compositions and a variety of styles, the Tang Dynasty's zheng music also made significant contributions to the history of guzheng. For instance, "The King of Qin Breaks the Formation (Qing Huang Po Zhen Yue)" and "Yi Zhou" from the Tang daguerreotype were later adapted as

solo zheng compositions. In addition, the zheng was widely utilized in a variety of musical styles, including Qing music, Xiliang music, Baiji music, and Gaole music<sup>3</sup>

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the guzheng underwent a period of decline, eventually spreading from the court to the people. Due to the establishment of the Kun Shan Qiang (later developed into Kunqu), the guzheng returned to the accompaniment band of this genre during the late Ming Dynasty. Then, the important ensemble music of Jiangnan silk and bamboo emerged from the band, and although the guzheng was not a required instrument, it was frequently played in the band.

## (2) Guzheng in Contemporary and Modern China

At the start of the 20th century in China, Chinese folk instruments were heavily influenced by Western civilization, and a wave of reform and transformation swept the country. Liu Tianhua, a contemporary Chinese composer and Erhu performer, developed a series of improvements to the Erhu that had a significant effect on instruments such as the pipa, flute, and guzheng. During this period, the guzheng gradually began to divide into two distinct performance style of schools. The southern school, comprised primarily of the Chaozhou school, the Kejia school, the Fujian school, and the Zhejiang school. In the south school, performance emphasized the flowing, gentle, subtle, and delicate style, as well as the meticulous grasp of the left hand "rhyme" in the technique. The northern school of zheng has a lively and harsh style, with large ups and downs, and emphasizes the expressive power of the right hand in its performance, emphasizing the simple,

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3. Jin Jianmin, "*Zheng, Zheng Score, and Zheng Song in the Tang Dynasty*," *New Sound of Music*, Journal of Shenyang Conservatory of Music, 1992, No. 1.

solemn, powerful, and bold musical expression of the northern school of zheng. The primary ones are Shaanxi zheng school, Henan zheng school, and Shandong zheng school.<sup>4</sup>

As indicated previously, the guzheng is a traditional Chinese folk instrument with a lengthy history, and its growth over the course of more than a millennium has provided it with an excellent traditional repertoire. From the early 1900 to 1949, these excellent traditional repertoires were exchanged and disseminated by folk artists through music society organizations and music gatherings, laying a crucial foundation for the professional music activities revolving around the guzheng. For instance, Shandong zheng player Jin Zhuonan and Zhejiang zheng player Wang Xunzhi exchanged zheng skills in the Daoist Society, and it was during this time that the Southern School's "High Mountain Flowing Water (Gao Shan Liu Shui)" was passed from Wang Xunzhi to Wei Ziyou, who then passed it on to his disciples, and the piece spread gradually in the north. Because of such connections and events, the tradition of traditional Chinese music has been transmitted orally and enthusiastically.

After 1959, when folk instrumental music majors were established in various institutions of higher education, the successors of the zheng music genre, who were dispersed across different regions, began teaching and researching zheng music at music academies across the world. Zheng music which had been passed down in folklore and taught verbally by artists for generations, began a new stage of transmission in music and art colleges. After entering the professional education system, folkloric zheng musicians

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4. Zhou Yi, *"The Development and Innovation of the North and South Schools of Guzheng"*, Master's Thesis, Northwest University for Nationalities, May 2019. page 8

formed a theoretical system of pedagogy and performance which integrated the compilation of traditional scores, the study of scores, the compilation of fingering, the inheritance of genres, and the creation of new compositions from the teaching of the guzheng performance skills.<sup>5</sup> Guzheng, which had previously disseminated through folklore, officially entered collegiate music instruction, opening a new chapter in the development of its theoretical framework. Then, in tandem with this, new zheng compositions gradually evolved. Some of these works reformed traditional guzheng performance techniques such as Zhao Yuzhai's *Celebrating the Year* (Qing Feng Nian) in 1956, Wang Changyuan's *Battle of Typhoon* (Zhan Tai Feng) in 1965, etc. Some composers also explored artificial string tuning such as Wang Zhongshan's *Yunling Sound Painting* in 1994, etc. Some composers adapted Chinese traditional music to modern western techniques such as Zhou Long's *Flowing Water* (Kong Gu Liu Shui in 1983, Tan Dun's *Nanxiangzi* in 1985, Luo In the 1970s, *Qin Sang Qu* and *Jiang Nv Lei* by Zhou Yanjia, *Yun Shang Su* by Zhou Yuguo, *Opera Rhyme* (Xi Yun) by Wang Jianmin, *Lin An Yi Hen* by He Zhanhao, etc.

As a traditional Chinese folk instrument, the guzheng has undergone a radical transformation throughout the 20th century, whether it is the flow from the ancient court to the folk and then from the folk to the academy during this period, gradually abandoning the past situation of oral instruction and entering the stage of systematic learning; or the many breakthroughs achieved in the face of the influence of Western civilization and modern techniques, which have facilitated the instrument's development. The evolution of the guzheng has been infused with new vigor. Modern zheng music is

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5. Jia Haizhan, *"On the Performance Practice and Composition Concept in the "New" Sound of Zheng Music: Twelve Post-1980 Works as Examples"*, Master's Thesis, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, March 2020, p. 9.

still developing in the twenty-first century, despite the development of Chinese composers' skills and ideas. At the same time, after entering the academy, folk instrumentalists are again aware of the significance of tradition, the most significant of which is the inheritance of genres, and they continue to search for the heirs of the past genres in an effort to preserve the folk genre tradition and pass it down from generation to generation. In conclusion, the evolution of guzheng music in the twenty-first century continues to follow the road of innovation and inheritance.

## **“Bass” instrument in Chinese history**

Traditional Chinese music has a long history of development, but the majority of it is performed by small ensembles. Unlike Western music, which is concerned with the richness of harmonies, traditional Chinese music is highly regional, resulting in a colorful and diverse musical language with musical characteristics composed of dialects and regional cultures. In traditional Beijing opera and Jiangnan sizu music, small orchestras are typically utilized. It is neither as large as an orchestra nor as intimate as traditional chamber music. Typically, traditional Chinese music ensembles include one or two stringed instruments such as the erhu, jinghu, etc., one or two wind instruments such as the bamboo flute, sheng, etc., and a variety of percussion instruments. In contrast to western orchestras, when Chinese national music is performed, the notes are not written down but rather transmitted orally. Before 1949, China had not yet established a national instrument orchestra. In 1953, Mr. Peng Xiuwen used the orchestration of the Western symphony orchestra as a point of reference and established the concept of a modern Chinese national orchestra with a combination of four voices: bowed strings, plucked strings, wind, and percussion, which expanded the range and volume of the national orchestra and established the first new type of professional national orchestra in China. We can divide the four orchestrations established by Mr. Peng Xiuwen for the Chinese National Orchestra into three sections based on the high, middle, and low voice sections. In the Chinese national symphony orchestra, there is an abundance of high and alto-sounding instruments. Gaohu, erhu, zhonghu, pipa, zhongyuan, guzheng, soprano sheng, alto sheng, soprano suona, alto suona, etc. are examples of high and alto instruments. Although China has a wide variety of indigenous instruments, there are very

few that can be used as the bass section of an orchestra. When it comes to bass section instruments, we must first comprehend the significance of the bass section. The bass voice is the backbone of an orchestra; without it, the music would be empty and powerless. Only in the presence of a strong bass voice can the high and middle voices play with sound penetration and timbre cohesion; thus, the lack of national bass instruments has become the primary issue.

The result was the reformation of bass instruments. Other national wind instruments, such as the bass suona, bass sheng, etc., are more successful at borrowing the essence of Western instruments and can already meet the needs of the current national symphony orchestra. After the middle of the 20th century, China's national orchestra temporarily lacked a bass bowed instrument, so the cello and double bass were used to substitute for the bass section. Due to the appearance of the double bass and cello, they do not visually fit in with our Chinese national instruments. In the 1950s, some national orchestras reformed the bass part of new Chinese bowed string instruments such as the Gehu, bass Gehu, Ruan, bass Ruan, Morin khuur, low Morin khuur, bass pipa, etc. for use as bass instruments in national orchestras. However, the timbre and sound of these reformed bowed string bass instruments are not satisfactory. The Morin khuur and Ruan are closer in appearance to the double bass, with a larger resonance cabinet, whereas the Gehu maintains the appearance of the huqin class, with a smaller resonance cabinet. The Gehu has a smaller resonance cabinet volume than the other three bass instruments, so more Gehus are required to achieve the same volume. In Chinese national orchestras, some folk orchestras continue to use the cello and double bass as the bass section of the bowed bass string instrument. Using double bass and cello to play the bass part of the bowed



string section has become the standard configuration for the modern Chinese national orchestra's bass section.

## CHAPTER 2

### FORM AND STRUCTURE OF THE DUO

#### **Main theme structure**

Before composing this song, composer Fang Quanyi had composed a Guzheng duet, "Hui Zhi Qing (The emotion of Anhui)", to express his impressions and emotions about the customs and people of his "second hometown" Anhui. This is also the first time he stands in the perspective of an "outsider" to portray the style of Jiangnan in his mind. This is undoubtedly a challenge for Fang. As a minority composer growing up in northeastern China, he was not exposed to the the unique customs and traditions of the Jiangnan region, nor had he grown up in a traditional opera-kunqu environment,nor with the traditional Chinese music Jiang nan si zu. It should be said that Fang Quan's Jiangnan music, though not in the traditional sense, incorporates many of his own reflections on this style as an "outsider". The whole piece is based on the complete pentatonic scale of bB, C, D, F, and G (see Example 1). The pentatonic scale is one of the cores of traditional Chinese music and has a long history. The method of calculating the pentatonic scale and its tuning was recorded in the book of "Guanzi - Di Shi" thousands of years ago. The pentatonic scale consists of major 2nds, minor thirds, pure 4ths and pure 5ths, but the intervals between two adjacent tones are either major 2nds or minor thirds, all of them are harmonic intervals, so the beautiful melodies shaped by it are favored by many composers. At the beginning of the piece, the guzheng plays a series of tones from the bB system, with the long sustained

tones of the left hand and the same pitch played by the right hand across two octaves, creating an open sound space. This is followed by a series of undulating and continuous upward melodies, fully demonstrating the beauty and elegance of Jiangnan.

**Example 1: Opening: mm . 1-4**

The musical score for Example 1: Opening, measures 1-4, is presented in three systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The second system consists of a grand staff and a separate bass clef staff. The time signatures are 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The dynamics are *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. A triplet is marked in the first staff. The word "Rubato" is written above the first staff.

The melody of the double bass enters at bar 17, again with a theme based on the bB system, while the guzheng voice emphasizes the pure fourths, pure fifths and major diatonic intervals of the pentatonic scale in succession. The triplet pattern is repeated from bar 25 onwards, intensifying the rhythm of the music and giving the double bass more room to perform.

**Example 2: Bass entrance: mm . 26-31**

The musical score for Example 2: Bass entrance, measures 26-31, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 26-28) and the second system (measures 29-31) each consist of three staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The middle staff is a single bass clef. The bottom staff is a single treble clef. The music features a bass line with eighth notes and triplets, and a guzheng line with chords and triplets. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

From bar 53 onwards, the music continues to increase in speed and enters a fast passage. The composer uses extremely dense patterns in this section. In bars 53-66, a dense cluster of tones appears in the guzheng voice, like the galloping of a thousand horses. In bars 67-86, the bass section plays this cluster with an intensity that is rare in works traditionally performed by the bass. Then, at bar 85, the group shifts to the guzheng. The two voices then rotate several times until the beginning of bar 121, when this dense group is played simultaneously, making the climax of the piece appear at the right place near the "golden point" of the piece. From bar 141 onwards, the music reproduces the melody of the first part, maintaining the tempo of the breakbeat and finally returning to calm.

## Form structure and rhythmic structure

According to the tempo markings given by the composer in the score of "Moonlight Rain" (see [Table 1]), it can be seen that the tempo changes. Rubato from measure 1 to measure 17 with no exact tempo marking. Started with measure 17, first tempo marking quarter notes equals 70 appears along with bass accompaniment. then speeds up to 130 in measure 53, and finally returns to rubato again in measure 141. This design and arrangement points directly to the principle of the three-part nature of traditional song structure in Western music. Indeed, from the point of view of melodic material, the themes used in both rubato are identical, presenting the general principle of exposition - development - recapitulation that is so common in the Western form tradition.

It is interesting to note that the Chinese instrument chosen for this work, the guzheng, and the composer's intention at the outset of the work to depict the musical style of the Jiangnan region in China, make it inevitable that the entire work will be written in the Chinese musical style. Therefore, the use of elements related to Chinese music cannot be avoided. This is already present in the tempo layout of the whole work.

**Table 1: Tempo marking:**

Measure	Rhythm	Harmony	Solo
1-16	Rubato	Pentatonic melodic lines	Guzheng
17-53	♩=70	Mainly Triplets	Double Bass
54-140	♩=130	Continuous second notes	thirty-Guzheng and Bass

From the above diagram, it can be seen that the tempo layout of the whole piece changes from the loose tempo, to the medium tempo, to the fast tempo, and finally back to the loose tempo. This tempo layout is very similar to the "loose - slow - medium - fast - loose" tempo layout of the "Tang da qu" in Chinese traditional music. The Tang da qu was originally based on the development of the Han and Wei dynasty's music style called Wei da qu, and the Six Dynasties Qing shang da qu. Those two original musical styles develop the traditional musical form structure, which is common with western three-part structure. However, among the available documents and scores, except for the Tang Dynasty Yan le Da qu from more than a thousand years ago, which can still be found in Japanese Yaku's music style, the music of Han-Wei Xiang he Da qu and Six Dynasties Qing shang Da qu has been completely lost in the long history. Nowadays, the Tang da qu, which represents the symbol of the Tang Dynasty, has gradually attracted the attention of contemporary composers and has a special meaning for them, that is, this category of composers is more interested in the structural sense (including the structural framework and tempo layout) of the Tang da qu rather than its melodies and tones and other musical materials. They use the structural thinking pattern as a source of inspiration for their compositions, and then use it to break through and innovate. This tempo layout coincides with the "plate - variable speed structure" (also known as progressive structure). "Plate - variable speed structure" is a way of structural composition rather than a fixed pattern of structure. .... The gradual change pattern, i.e. "loose board - slow board -

medium board - fast board - loose board, is the most typical."<sup>6</sup>For example, Chinese composer Zhu Jianer's Symphony No. 10 "Jiangxue", Chinese American composer Zhou Long's "Daquan (Percussion and Orchestra)", Chinese composer Ye Xiaogang's chamber music "Hibiscus", Chinese composer Zhao Xiaosheng's piano piece "Taiji", Chinese composer Ye Xiaogang's Guzheng solo piece "Linqan", Chinese composer Zhu Shirui's "Water Thinking II (the structure of the suite is infiltrated into the plate shifting structure), and Chinese composer Jia Guoping's Shattered Shadows, all infiltrate this structure.

In summary, the work "Moonlight Rain" inherits the principles of the traditional Western structure and does not make much innovation or breakthrough. On the contrary, the tempo layout draws on the very special and common pattern of tempo gradations in traditional Chinese music. It can be seen that the composer has incorporated the typical structural framework and tempo patterns of both the East and the West into his own compositions.

### **Instrumental**

As a new work by Fang, "Moonlight Rain" is an eye-catching choice of instrument. As we all know, Guzheng and Double Bass are two unrelated instruments, which belong to different countries and regions, with different sound quality, timbre, and rhythm system.

It is a challenging task to integrate these two instruments into one piece of repertoire.

Throughout the piece, one can find that throughout the work, Fang places great emphasis

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6. Chen Guoquan, "The "Board-Shift Structure" and Contemporary Music Composition in China". Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music. 1994 (3). p.5.

on the melodic nature of the music. This seems to be at variance with the overall trend of contemporary music composition. In fact, the reason for this is closely related to his personal thinking. He once said, "Contemporary music is pursuing 'innovation', which is more about the creation of timbres, such as using different means to disintegrate timbres and widen the timbral space. I am concerned with the possibility of expressing new timbres based on conventional playing, to pursue what I understand as innovation."<sup>7</sup> With this creative idea in mind, Fang has made certain "modifications" to both the Guzheng and the Double Bass.

First of all, the Guzheng is mainly used to play music with a single melodic line, which is one of the characteristics of traditional Chinese music. However, in this work, Fang gives the Guzheng the image of a "piano" and transposes the fingerings of the two-handed piano into the Guzheng performance. For example, in bars 68-69 of the work, the right hand of the Guzheng vocal part plays the main melody with shaking fingers, while the left hand, which is supposed to be a part of the rhythm section, takes on a similar function as an accompaniment. Finger shaking (Yao Zhi) is one of the most important techniques in Guzheng playing. It means that the fingers play the same string continuously inward and outward to form a prolonging effect. In fact, in the traditional Guzheng performance, the left hand only uses the techniques of vibrato, slide, press and tremble to change the tone, but it does not have the function of playing absolute pitch. However, the left hand of the guzheng is used extensively to play clear melodic lines in "Moonlight Rain".

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7. Fang Quanyi, Wechat message to author, Spetember 10, 2022.

**Example 3: Guzheng Technique, Shaking Fingerings: mm . 67-69**

The musical score for Example 3, measures 67-69, is presented in three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a piano (*p*) dynamic. It begins with a measure of rests, followed by a melodic line that spans across measures 68 and 69, indicated by a long slur. The middle staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line that mirrors the top staff's melody, also spanning across measures 68 and 69. The bottom staff is in treble clef with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a fast, rhythmic accompaniment consisting of sixteenth-note patterns.

From the perspective of a composer who can't play the bass, there is no doubt that the double bass must be one of the instruments that stands outside the "halo" of our past perception of Western solo instruments. In symphony orchestras, the double bass is mostly used as an accompanist, and most of the music they play does not have a complete and continuous melodic line. Fang takes this into account, so in this work, he "elevates" the double bass to a violin-like position, where it plays the main melodic line. For example, the new passage at measure 17 places the theme melody in the bass voice. In the passage starting at measure 84, the bass plays the theme melody in the same way. In addition, Fang also sets up a large number of fast jumping passages in the bass voice, this type of fast challenge passage is often found only in double bass works that are transposed from cello works. As shown in Example 4, the double bass plays thirty-two notes in succession, creating a sense of tension against the more ethereal Guzheng part above, thus creating a sense of space.



Example 4: Bass Technique: mm . 99-102

99

Musical score for measures 99 and 100. The score is written for piano with three staves: two treble clefs (upper and middle) and one bass clef (lower). In measure 99, the upper and middle staves are silent, while the bass staff contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. In measure 100, the upper and middle staves each have a single chord with a grace note, and the bass staff continues with the eighth-note pattern.

101

Musical score for measures 101 and 102. The score is written for piano with three staves: two treble clefs (upper and middle) and one bass clef (lower). In measure 101, the upper and middle staves have chords with grace notes, and the bass staff continues with the eighth-note pattern. In measure 102, the upper and middle staves have chords with grace notes, and the bass staff continues with the eighth-note pattern.

## Conversation between Guzheng and Double Bass

How to deal with the relationship between the Guzheng and the double bass in this work is a crucial issue, both from the perspective of the combination of Chinese and Western instruments and also from the perspective of the instrumental repertoire.

In fact, there are many composers who have explored this area in contemporary music. For example, in his 2011 Concerto for Piano and Ethnic Orchestra, Chinese American composer Liang Lei completed a concerto for the piano Chinese traditional instrument orchestra. Liang chooses to concentrate the piano on the highest and lowest registers, leaving the middle range empty for the orchestra. Liang says "the fingering constitutes one of the basic materials in the piece, allowing the traditional Chinese instrumental fingering to unfold on the piano keyboard"<sup>8</sup> Although Liang's work was written for the concerto genre, it is undeniable that he made his own thoughts on how to integrate the piano, a Western instrument, with the traditional Chinese national orchestra. Fang was also trying to "dialogue" between the guzheng and the double bass in "Moonlight rain".

In measure 59-66 of the work, the Guzheng pattern imitates the sound of gongs and drums, appearing continuously in the upper register with no idea of stopping. The bass part is in a state of "rest" at this time. This is because Fang takes into account the difference in timbre, sound quality and rhythm of the two instruments, so he uses the bass to either play in the lower register when the Guzheng is in the upper register, or to stop playing. Thus, the sound space in his ideal state is presented. On the other hand, the instrumental arrangement of the theme melody in the overall structure of the piece also reveals the connection between the two instruments as a repertoire, instantly "separated"

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8. Liang Qing; *"One-Tone-Multiple-Sounds: Liang Lei's Strings of Memory -Analysis of Concerto for Piano and Folk Band,"* Musical Arts, Journal of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, No. 2, 2017

and sometimes fused.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Significance of “Moonlight Rain” for Double bass

#### **Overview of the creation of solo works for Double Bass in China**

As a double bass player, most of the works I play are from Western composers such as Bottesini, Dragonetti, Seperger, Vanhal, etc. There are not only original works written for double bass as repertoire, but also many adaptations for cello and violin works to expand the double bass repertoire. Nowadays, there are only a few pieces written specifically for the double bass in China, and “Wolf Totem” by Tan Dun is the only concerto for double bass and orchestra written by a Chinese composer. When I started to research, I could not find much history on it. It is not only because the double bass has been developed in China for a short period of time, but also because the tone of the instrument itself and the level of the performers’ techniques made composers prefer other solo instruments. This problem has led to the fact that the repertoire of double bass in China is limited to foreign composers, while other Western instruments such as violin and piano have a unique “Chinese repertoire”. For musicians, the instrument is the medium that conveys the emotions of the performer and the audience. Understanding and performing the music of composers from different regions and cultures is also one of the most important aspects of promoting cultural background. For example, when playing the works of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, it is necessary to use different interpretations and

techniques to explain the emotions of two different periods, different countries and different cultures. In this regard, why can't the double bass, although it is a Western instrument, interpret the unique cultural background and heritage of China in the same way as the violin and piano, using the unique musical language of China? Many double bass professors have pondered this question in their educational process, and they have adapted some small works (mostly beginner works) for violin and erhu by adjusting the pitch position. Most of these adaptations are associated with folk tunes from the northern part of China (e.g. Inner Mongolia). The low register of the double bass is well suited for thick and broad melodic lines, which is very similar to the horse-head fiddle of Inner Mongolia, making it the source of most of the adaptations of beginning double bass works. For example: "Gadameilin" (adapted by Mr. Fu, Professor of the Central Conservatory of Music), "Song of the Grassland" (adapted by Mr. Zhang Baoyuan, principal bass of the China Opera orchestra), "Horse Racing" (adapted by Mr. Zheng Deren, Professor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music), "Pastoral Song", "Senjidema" (adapted by Mr. Hou Junxia professor of the China Conservatory of Music), "Grassland" (adapted by Mr. Niu Min, principal bass of the China Film Orchestra), and so on. Although these works fill a certain gap in the amount of double bass repertoire, they are never works that use Chinese elements for double bass. Because most of these adaptations do not reach the skill point of professional level playing, higher professional level players will not choose such repertoire. Moreover, most of these adaptations are often about 4 minutes long, and none of them are on the scale of a sonata or concerto, so they cannot be used to the maximum extent in concerts.

## **The meaning of creation**

"Moonlight Rain" is a rare and completely original work for double bass, and although it is chamber music, it allows the instrument to depart from its recent role in the Chinese repertoire, in which it could only perform adaptations. In chamber music, the double bass is typically used as an accompaniment or accent for the bass voice, but is rarely featured as a solo instrument in comparison to other instruments.

The combination of Chinese and Western instruments has entered a new era of diversification, and "Moonlight Rain" is a groundbreaking combination of both Chinese and Western instruments, which is extremely innovative in terms of instrumentation. At least, no such combination exists in the world. The Chinese respect and obey nature, and they emphasize the unity and harmony between man and nature. Traditional Chinese classical music is sensual and focused on life, attempting to capture the inner feelings and spiritual experiences of individuals. Consequently, it presents a distinctive Chinese musical style that is subordinate to "rhythm" and "emotion." This attitude necessitates the standardization of musical instrument sounds in the West, which takes a rational and scientific approach to the world. Western instruments are made of metal and standardized wood, whereas Chinese instruments make extensive use of the distinctive qualities of natural materials such as bamboo and wood. Different cultural influences determine the timbre of different instruments, and the specific timbre necessitates the selection of different materials for the construction of different instruments, thereby further defining distinct musical styles. The differences in timbre between Chinese and Western instruments reflect their profound cultural differences, as do their aesthetics and philosophies.

The most frequent double bass ensembles are the standard quintet, the duo with the piano, and the trio that plays a cello part in an adaptation. Tonally, the combination of the double bass and Chinese instruments is too low in range to incorporate typical Chinese string instruments (erhu, gaohu, etc.). In this work, however, Fang argues that traditional Chinese classical instruments frequently incorporate Western techniques and the finest Western musical structures and performance styles. The combination of the unique low tone of the double bass and the crispness of the guzheng allows the perfect fusion of Chinese and Western music, which not only enriches the artistic expression of the double bass, but also broadens the new concept of the fusion of guzheng music in China, giving new vitality to two very different styles of instruments and reflecting the artistic value of the combination of Chinese and Western music. It is a commendable effort to express Chinese classical music with western instruments, which exemplifies the viability of using the foreign for the Chinese. This composition combines the advantages of Western music with the characteristics of Chinese classical music.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

When the viola, a member of the string family, first entered China it was relatively unnoticed, but nowadays new music works are being written for it. This "dramatic change" is the result of historical necessity and changing attitudes, as well as the joint efforts of countless composers, performers and theorists. In the midst of the 21st century wave of contemporary music creation in China, Fang has keenly captured the fact that the double bass, as a Western instrument, has been introduced to China for over a century, but in the face of the current situation where China's love for classical music is not what it used to be, it has always been defined as an exotic bass instrument and has not received much attention. The public's perception of it still remains at the level of a row of instruments in the corner of the symphony orchestra. It should be said that for today's double bass, it is urgent to create a new work for it, so that it can move past playing only adaptations. In this work, we also focus on the fusion of the two instruments. This is a breakthrough for Fang Quan Yi and Wu Yuxin, and an "escape route" for the entire Chinese double bass. We hope this begins a movement toward a richer future for this instrument which is so marvelous, but, thus far, relatively unappreciated in China.

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APPENDIX A  
COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

Fang Quan Yi (1968), Doctor of Composition, member of Chinese Musicians Association, director of Chinese Composers Society, supervisor of master's degree, graduated from the composition department of Central Conservatory of Music in 1994, studied composition under the famous composer Prof. Du Mingxin. In 2013, he entered the composition department of the Central Conservatory of Music to study for his doctoral degree in composition under Professor Jia Guoping, and received his doctoral degree in composition. 2016, he was introduced to the School of Music of Anhui Normal University as a high-level talent, and is currently a composition teacher in the composition and conducting department of the School of Music of Anhui Normal University.

APPENDIX B  
PLAYER BIOGRAPHY

Li Qingfeng. Professor of the College of Music, Anhui Normal University, master tutor; teaching master, member of Chinese Musicians Association, deputy secretary general of Chinese Guzheng Society.

He has been a pioneer in guzheng performance and teaching research in Anhui Province, and many of his guzheng students have been engaged in guzheng education and performance in higher education institutions and art groups in China, as well as in basic education. He has held many concerts and public classes for graduate and undergraduate students, and has actively participated in various fields of zheng music art activities, encouraging students to actively participate in various guzheng competitions at home and abroad. He has held more than 40 solo guzheng concerts and national tours. He has visited Germany, Australia, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan many times to hold academic exchanges and concerts. He has published more than 14 academic papers, established the first guzheng orchestra in Anhui Province, and won the best results in the professional zheng orchestra competition many times.

APPENDIX C  
MUSICAL SCORE FOR “Moonlight Rain(Zi Ye Yan Yu)”

Used by permission of the composer Fang Quanyi and Li Qingfeng

**Rubato**

古筝

低音提琴

5

古筝

低音提琴

7

古筝

低音提琴

accel. . . . .

古筝

9

*p* *ff*

低音提琴

古筝

11

*mf*

低音提琴

古筝

14

*ff* *p* *mf* *pp*

低音提琴



17  $\text{♩} = 70$

古筝

低音提琴

20

古筝

低音提琴

23

古筝

低音提琴

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written for Guqin (古筝) and Double Bass (低音提琴) in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 70. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system (measures 17-19) starts with a Guqin part playing chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The Double Bass part plays a melodic line with a tremolo effect. The second system (measures 20-22) shows the Guqin playing more complex textures with arpeggios and chords. The Double Bass part continues with a melodic line. The third system (measures 23-25) features the Guqin playing chords and the Double Bass part including triplets. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p* (piano).

26

古筝

低音提琴

29

古筝

低音提琴

32

古筝

低音提琴

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is divided into three systems. Each system consists of two staves: the upper staff is for the Guqin (古筝) and the lower staff is for the Double Bass (低音提琴).  
System 1 (Measures 26-28): The Guqin part features a melodic line with slurs and a final measure with a fermata. The Double Bass part plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets. Measure 28 ends with a fermata.  
System 2 (Measures 29-31): The Guqin part continues with a melodic line, including a measure with a fermata. The Double Bass part continues with the eighth-note triplet pattern. Measure 31 ends with a fermata.  
System 3 (Measures 32-34): The Guqin part starts with a dynamic marking of *mf*, followed by a crescendo to *f*. It features a complex texture with chords and a melodic line. The Double Bass part continues with the eighth-note triplet pattern, also marked with *f*. Measure 34 ends with a fermata.

35

古筝

低音提琴

38

古筝

低音提琴

41

古筝

低音提琴

6

44

古筝

低音提琴

47

古筝

pp

p

低音提琴

50

古筝

低音提琴

7

♩=130

53

古筝

pp

低音提琴

56

古筝

f

mf

低音提琴

mf

f

59

古筝

低音提琴

8

62

古筝

低音提琴

64

古筝

低音提琴

67

古筝

低音提琴

70

古筝

低音提琴

9

72

古筝

低音提琴

*f* *p*

75

古筝

低音提琴

10

78

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

81

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

83

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

*p*

*mf*



85

古筝

低音提琴

11

87

古筝

低音提琴

89

古筝

低音提琴

91

古筝

低音提琴

93

古筝

低音提琴

95

古筝

低音提琴

91

古筝

低音提琴

93

古筝

低音提琴

95

古筝

低音提琴

97

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

99

古筝

低音提琴

101

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

103

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

*f*

105

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

107

古筝

低音提琴

*f*

109

古筝

pp

低音提琴

pizz.

f

111

古筝

低音提琴

113

古筝

低音提琴

115

古筝

低音提琴

117

古筝

低音提琴

arco

*f*

*mp*

119

古筝

低音提琴

arco

*f*

*mp*

121

古筝

低音提琴

*ff*

Musical score for measures 121-122. The score is for Guqin and Double Bass. The Guqin part has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Double Bass part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The Guqin part features a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with chords. The Double Bass part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *ff* is present in the Double Bass part.

123

古筝

低音提琴

Musical score for measures 123-124. The score is for Guqin and Double Bass. The Guqin part has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Double Bass part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The Guqin part features a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with chords. The Double Bass part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

125

古筝

低音提琴

*p cresc.*

Musical score for measures 125-126. The score is for Guqin and Double Bass. The Guqin part has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Double Bass part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The Guqin part has a sustained chord in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The Double Bass part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *p cresc.* is present in both parts.



127

古筝

低音提琴

129

古筝

低音提琴

131

古筝

*f*

低音提琴

*f*

133

古筝

低音提琴

135

古筝

低音提琴

137

古筝

低音提琴

139 *rit.* *Rubato*

古筝 *ff*

低音提琴 *ff*

142

古筝 *p* *pp*

低音提琴

144

古筝 *f p* *ff* *pp*

低音提琴

146

古筝

mf

p

pp

21

低音提琴

148

古筝

ff

mf

低音提琴

152

古筝

低音提琴

*ff*

*ff*

*p*

*mf*

*pp*

*mp*

*p*

155

古筝

低音提琴

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*p*

*tr*

158

古筝

低音提琴

*mp*

161

古筝

低音提琴

*p*

*mp*

*p*

164

古筝

低音提琴

165

166

167

古筝

低音提琴

168

169

170

古筝

*p*

低音提琴

173

古筝

*mp*

低音提琴



176

古筝

rit. . . . .

低音提琴

178

古筝

*pp*

低音提琴