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Portfolio of Compositions with Technical Commentary

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PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS WITH TECHNICAL COMMENTARY

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Jin Jing

King's College London

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Abstract

The seven pieces in this portfolio are an exploration about how to incorporate diverse ethnic elements - such as Chinese Peking Opera, folk culture, and ancient instrumental music - into conventional Western ensemble forms, in conjunction with certain compositional methods of contemporary music. Over the course of this portfolio I have largely allowed the material itself to drive the overall shape of the music, like most Chinese composers, I have never relinquished melody as a driving force in my music.

In *Haiku* (2012) the electronic tape links the two acoustic instruments causing the listener to experience a dialogue between the flute and cello as if they were watching two different scenes simultaneously as via the split-screen cinematic technique.

The piano suite *Beijing* (2013) is characterized by distinctive elements from traditional Peking Opera, ancient Chinese folk melodies, and extensive use of pentatonic melodies. Tension is achieved through contrast of both dynamics and tempi, dissonance created through pitch oppositions inherent within a particular harmonic field, as well as through the use of freely atonal elements and the accumulation of varying and often disparate musical materials.

I approached the scoring for the sextet *Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau* (2013) by way of combining the instruments that I felt would offer me the most interesting and vivid combined timbre with which to effectively evoke Tibetan temple horns.

Double Riddles (2013) extensively draws on a large number of Chinese musical sources, extrapolating their materials (mostly pitch-related) and working this into my own compositions. These pieces were inspired the folk music and culture of Yunnan.

The westerly wind said... (2014) relies on several simple approaches to reflect an 'antique' style: layered yet coherent details at once juxtaposed and integrated to create a general mood redolent of the past, but which never resorts to pastiche.

Nuó (2015) attests to what I have found to be both an amazingly fruitful and challenging process of compositional research into the possibility for the integration of traditional aspects of Chinese music and culture with Western classical forms and modes of expression: combining Chinese musical materials alongside aspects of free atonality and pentatonicism.

A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion (2015) for symphony orchestra relies heavily on complex sound patterns based on gradations of colour derived from different techniques of orchestration.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I wish to offer my sincerest thanks to Prof. Silvina Milstein, my supervisor, for her support, belief and guidance from day one. Prof. Silvina Milstein helped me to obtain financial support from the Sino-British Fellowship Trust; it is my hope that they continue their relationship with King's College London so that others may benefit too.

I also wish to extend my thanks to Dr Rob Keeley, both for our informal conversations, the scores and music CDs he has passed on to me as well as being approachable, affable and always willing to listen. In addition, I wish to offer my sincerest thanks to Dr Paul Evernden, who has patiently helped me to express my thoughts in English.

During my doctoral studies I have had the great fortune to work with the ensemble Lontano and the four workshop recordings in my portfolio are testament to the high quality of their playing. Through my contact with this ensemble I was introduced to Odaline de la Martinez - Chachi - and I have learned a great deal through her own, very personal sense of musicianship. Her dedication is second to none. Also special thanks go to my friends, pianist Lin Wang, flautist Qian Zhang, and cellist Mu Zhu, for their dedicated and energetic performance of *Beijing* and *Haiku*.

Both my mother and father have each in their own way played a pivotal part in my musical upbringing and for their ongoing unconditional support, encouragement and empathy I can find no words sufficiently expressive: they have given me everything.

Lastly I wholeheartedly dedicate this portfolio of compositions to my husband and my son as the most sincere way by which I can express my gratitude and deep affection to both of them.

Portfolio of compositions

Haiku, for flute, cello and tape (2012); ca. 15'

Beijing four preludes for piano; 1. *Xi* (Drama); 2. *Yuan* (The Ruins);
3. *Tai* (The Mountain); 4. *Ye*; (Nocturne) (2013); ca. 12'

Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau, sextet for B^b clarinet,
trumpet, French horn, trombone, xylophone and piano (2013); ca. 13'

Double Riddles Duet for violin and viola (2013); ca. 8'

The Westerly wind said..., Quintet for flute, B^b clarinet, violin,
double bass and harp (2014); ca. 9'

Nuó, Quintet for B^b clarinet, F horn, piano, violin and viola (2015)
ca. 15'

A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion, for
symphony orchestra (2015); ca. 20'

CD track listing

1. *Haiku*, Ms. Zhang Qian, flautist; Mr. Zhu Mu, Cellist; Central Conservatory of Music, China, January, 2013
2. *Beijing*, Ms. Wang Lin, pianist; King's College London, March, 2013
3. *Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau*, Lontano Ensemble, cond. by Odaline de la Martinez; King's College London; June 2013
4. *Double Riddles*, Lontano Ensemble, cond. by Odaline de la Martinez; October, 2013
5. *The Westerly wind said...*, Lontano Ensemble, cond. by Odaline de la Martinez; King's College London; June 2014
6. *Nuó*, Lontano Ensemble, cond. by Odaline de la Martinez; King's College London; March 2015

Section 1

Introduction

From the relatively traditional *Beijing* and *Double Riddles* to the final work in this portfolio *A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion* (for orchestra), runs a common concern for the exploration of different modes of ‘narrative’ musical development, significant emphasis of which is placed on the role of the miniature and effective ways in which it can be combined to generate larger forms.

The portfolio attempts to address three major research concerns:

1. Modes of narrative musical development and issues regarding form.
2. The pursuit of linear narrative development.
3. The complete integration of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic materials often originating from ancient Chinese culture - musical, theatrical etc., as well as pentatonicism, within an overriding Western compositional ‘framework’ and approach.

Although it can be difficult and somewhat reductive to attempt to offer an overall ‘generalization’ of my portfolio regarding a technical and theoretical approach to my composition, nevertheless, the three main research questions outlined above do relate in a very direct and pragmatic way to the different compositional methods I employed over the course of the portfolio.

Perhaps my very first objective when composing is to create and mold sounds which are ‘pleasing’ for the ear, in that I mean, although operating in a atonal harmonic framework, I do consciously seek to utilize consonance. Examples of this can be seen throughout my work, most notably through the pointed interest in pentatonicism, as well as frequently using the consonant ‘building blocks’ of perfect 4ths and 5ths.

Simultaneously, each composition also carries within it my own aesthetic concepts, predilections and choices, as well as - as with many composers - certain 'habits', both good and bad, and stylistic signatures. These can be interpreted in the main as reflecting in music certain personal experiences - the accumulation of a large variety of core piano repertoire gained over many years of learning to play the instrument; a sincere passion and interest in Chinese traditional cultural practices and paradigms, including a large variety of forms specific to folk music. This is complemented by my own study of the music of 19th and 20th century Russian composers, as well as many of the Impressionist school, especially those of Debussy. The amalgamation of these experiences and influences, as well as more besides, has renewed my confidence in composition which, at its core, espouses the importance of melodic writing. My resolve has further been strengthened through working extensively with folk songs and forms, which have helped to guide me in a direction where I have a very clear idea of how to successfully stratify sounds (thereby creating my own sense of proxy tonality), as well as being able to manipulate the material in such a way to produce variegated timbres. These various approaches and methods mean that I can work with a variety of sometimes very different materials to form a clear structure, showing through the narrative progress of the work a logical developmental method which places strong importance on integration as a key characteristic of the composition.

Many Russian composers have had a very real impact on me as a musician. For example: Prokofiev's use of (neo)-Classicism, dissonance, and the 'momentum' he builds through his works using 'rough' and irregular rhythmic patterns, set in stark contrast to the lyrical melodies which often characterize his pieces, lead to what I see (and hear) as a wonderfully exaggerated contrast in both material, articulation and sensibility. At its core is an inherent sense of the dramatic and it is this aspect which becomes a mode of 'narrative' musical development.

Debussy is the other composer very close to me, both emotionally and as a source of technical inspiration. I see several aspects of his music which contain the same stylistic ‘seeds’ seen in traditional Chinese music: the synthesis of monophonic based ‘melodic tonality’ with harmonies different from those found in “harmonic tonality.”

Five core aspects of Debussy’s music which I have sought to reflect, albeit in my own way, are:

1. Glittering passages and webs of figurations which distract from the - occasional - absence of tonality.
2. Frequent use of parallel chords, which are not harmonies at all, rather choral melodies, enriched unisons, non-functional harmonies.
3. Bitonality, or at least bi-tonal chords.
4. Use of the whole-tone and pentatonic scale.
5. Unprepared modulations, without any harmonic bridge.

In *Haiku*, *Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau* and *The westerly wind said ...*, there is a shared common goal: the exploration and pursuit of sound based entirely from memory, i.e the (artistic) recreation of a sound (natural or manmade) which has lived in my consciousness, often for many years, and which now I try to evoke through a completely different medium (mostly instrumental) and within a completely ‘foreign’ context. These ‘remembered sounds’ are varied and include the Japanese Zen shakuhachi, the Tibetan Lama horns, as well as the many ensembles of traditional Chinese instruments; I have sought to appropriate, recreate and lovingly render many different and, I hope complimentary cultural symbols.

The production and very act of ‘remembering’ these sounds through traditional western notation and tempered pitch, determines not only the writing methods I employ for each work but also the linear narrative development, structure, melody, rhythm, harmony, as well as other compositional factors.

In *Double Riddles* and *Nuó*, I have tried to evoke the folk

customs of the southwestern region of China. The two most common features uniting these two works are:

1. Rhythmically lively and somewhat 'naive' or 'rough' - this is expressly to articulate the sense of music to be danced to.
2. The importance of melody; in *Double Riddles*, I quote directly from a Yunnan folk song; dance is dominated by two strong melodic themes.

The short form-based, extended piano cycle, *Beijing*, was structurally inspired by the 24 Piano Preludes by Scriabin; its content, however owes more to Debussy's 24 Preludes, each one musically articulating a 'story', or mini programme.

My orchestral work, *A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion*, tries to capture in sound, through a careful consideration of orchestral hierarchies, both the artistic conception and execution of the ancient paintings of Wang Hui, a Chinese ink painter of the Qing Dynasty (1632 - 1717). I was struck by the calligraphic techniques which characterize Wang Hui's work, both delicate and exquisite, yet at the same time vigorous and bold; I also looked to transfer from the painting ideas on layout and the ways in which Wang Hui integrates the various complex aspects of his work.

Over the course of this commentary, I make explicit reference to several Chinese composers, most notably Tan Dun, Chen Yi, Chen Qigang and Guo Wenjing. In studying their music, not only have I taken ideas relating to technique and orchestration, so too has this activity helped build my own musical and compositional aesthetic. Although arguably the models used in China to represent 'Modern Music', in fact, when considered alongside developments in Europe and the West, these composers' techniques are dominated by traditional approaches to composition, as well as adopting Schoenberg's twelve-tone series.

Tan Dun's works are full of bold ideas and display many novel aspects. It is his application and integration of multicultural symbols

in his music, his use of collage and multimedia. Chen Yi's work falls into the more 'traditional' genre of contemporary composition, and many concepts relating to how she manipulates her material can also be seen in my own compositions. Chen Qigang's oeuvre is steeped in elements of classical Chinese culture and freely mixes with the French school and he is last disciple of Olivier Messiaen. With a strong interest in Chinese literature, drama and opera demonstrable in a variety of his works, Guo Wenjing's music has a very distinctive personality, extreme Chinese melodies, vivid rhythms, and demonstrates a profound significance in the inheritance of ethnic culture.

Arguably the one unifying factor which draws the composers I have just mentioned together, is - to both a greater or lesser degree - a very real national pride. Here, I align myself with them and feel that absorbing aspects of local/ethnic and indigenous cultures (mostly minority ones within China now), specifically in relation to their abundant traditional/folk music, is the most effective way of invigorating one's own compositional language. I believe that my approach to this vast, rich body of extant cultural material and the ways I have sought to integrate it with western compositional methods, is no different to that of any other Chinese composer (and particularly those I have mentioned) who seeks to construct a narrative not only between the centuries, but continents.

Haiku for flute, cello and tape (2012)

Haiku was composed for two Chinese musicians, Zhang Qian and Zhu Mu, and includes a role for solo dancer. It was given its first performance at Central Conservatory of Music, China, in January 2013. The tape part was created in collaboration with my friend Chen Xiao-long and consists of the careful compilation, synthesis and postproduction of natural samples found in a sound library. I am very grateful to the two dedicatees and first performers of this work, particularly the flautist, who encouraged me to utilize her own voice in my composition, which represented an exciting new departure for me personally, and which I have sought to use again in my work, most notably in *Double Riddles*.

A haiku is a poetic form that usually has less than twenty words. It is generally a three-line poem about nature or the human condition. The writer captures an ordinary moment by using simple and direct words. Its aim is to show or point out rather than to tell. A haiku usually has a *kigo*, a seasonal reference, which can be obvious as in using a word like April, or it might be subtler; e.g., mentioning *sakura*, which blossoms during the spring. Haikus often contains a *kiru* or two contrasting ideas. The writer creates a leap between the poem's two parts, thus giving the poem semantic depth. Creating this change is the most challenging part of writing a haiku because it risks being either too obvious or unclear. Note the *kiru* in a poem by American poet Micheal Welch:

Meteor shower (...)

a gentle wave

wets our sandals

My overall intention for this work was to embody Zen's peaceful and silent contemplation. Japanese Zen originated in Chan Buddhism, which is manifested in many different streams of traditional Chinese culture: painting, architecture, music, drama and even the diet. For

me, it is in literature where Zen manifests itself most strongly with direct influence over the way we think and behave; it is in literature where the most elaborate manifestation of Zen are found, and the haiku is its quintessential form. This condensed genre of the written word, as in the poetry of the Chinese Tang dynasty, is characterized by its search for the meaning beyond words.

My work *Haiku* is directly inspired by *Rhino River*¹, a haiku by Matsuo Basho². On my first reading, what immediately struck me was the way in which the words painted an exquisite scenery, the tone of which is both subtle and graceful. Immediately I could grasp a very clear outline of the musical response I wanted to compose: instrumentation, timbres, melodies and patterns were already becoming fixed in my mind, and I was eager to try and capture this first flourish of inspiration in music. A rough English translation by myself can be seen below:

*The white moonlight,
Mapping of the night like the day,
Restless tide clung to my doorway.*

On reading this haiku I had a very clear mental image, which it was then my task to translate as effectively as I could into music. This process resulted in a form akin to a film scene: the flute and cello take the role of a pair of interlocutors, while the tape provides background. In terms of motifs, specific composition features and methods, it was my express intention to separate the two instruments by virtue of their inherent characteristics, i.e. the material as well as gestures assigned to each of them. Whilst the tape links the two acoustic instruments and provides the auditory conduit which allows the audience to experience the dialogue between the flute and cello as if they were watching two different scenes simultaneously via a split screen cinematic technique.

¹ 犀川, Rhino River is a place where the poet used to live.

² 松尾芭蕉, Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) was the most famous poet of the Edo period in Japan, during his lifetime, Basho was recognized for his works in the collaborative *haikai no renga* form (a Japanese form of popular collaborative linked verse poetry), while today he is recognized as the greatest master of *haiku*.

Undoubtedly the flute plays the leading role within the composition, incorporating a kaleidoscope of timbral fluctuations such as glissando, wide vibrato, tremolo, guttural vocalizations, key clicking, speaking and singing, and white noise/air pitches. I also include some playing techniques designed explicitly to imitate the shakuhachi³; all these musical affectations are designed with the aim of imbuing my piece with the tone and temperament of a haiku of which specific examples can be seen in figs.1 and 2; fig.1 is the antecedent.

fig. 1

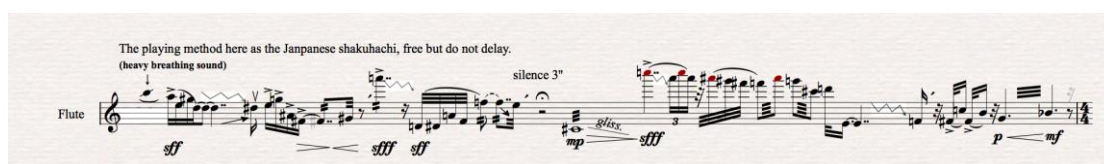


fig. 2



The role of the cello in *Haiku* is that of both narrator and bystander to a degree. Like the flute, several contemporary playing techniques characterize its gestures and melodic motifs, creating various interesting timbral fluctuations designed to echo both the flute and tape. At rehearsal mark E though, the cello substantially supports a climax through exploring its harmonic possibilities.

At rehearsal mark F, I use both the instruments as well as the tape, staggering their entrances to create an overlapping instrumental timbre with that of the samples, to reflect the image of rain.

³尺八, Shakuhachi is a Japanese end-blow flute, which was originally introduced from China into Japan in the 8th century and underwent a resurgence in the early Edo period. It was used by the monks of the Fuke School of Zen Buddhism in the practice of *Suizen* (吹禪, blowing meditation).

As explained earlier, the essence of traditional Japanese haiku is the concept of ‘cutting word’. After a cursory study of this technique, I decided that the tape would provide the equivalent of the ‘cutting word’ used in the poem. This also is a consequence of my use of cinematic techniques. Present in this piece are several ideas taken from explicit cinematic techniques: cut, fade in/out, master shot and dissolve; which have all been rendered musically.

The first appearance of the tape is designed to create both tension and excitement within the texture, the second functions as both a summary and coda. I envisaged the tape as another instrument and it plays an important role in the overall structure of the work, which at the macro-level is a sort of rondo, though not in a strict sense.

See schematic below:

Macro/Microstructure of Haiku							
A			B		C		
<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A'</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A²</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Coda</i>
<i>b.1 Ad libitum</i>	<i>bb.2-16</i>	<i>bb.17-27</i>	<i>bb.28-38</i>	<i>b.39 Ad libitum</i>	<i>bb.40-50</i>	<i>bb.51-65</i>	<i>bb.66-end</i>

Beijing: four preludes for piano (2013)

In *Beijing: four preludes for piano*⁴, each prelude has a Chinese title: 1. *Xi* (Drama); 2. *Yuan* (The Ruins); 3. *Tai* (The Mountain); 4. *Ye* (Nocturne). In composing these four short works, I have sought to musically distil a series of ephemeral yet formative experiences and feelings I had as a student in Beijing several years ago.

Prior to presenting the various strands that run through *Beijing*, I will offer a brief outline of my approach to writing for the piano in this piece. For me, the appeal of the piano as a solo instrument lies in its possibilities for outlining polyphony and effectively delineating complex rhythmic textures, as well as its ability to produce sudden changes of intensity.

From the early part of the twentieth century, composers have sought to address the timbral limitations presented by the piano through employing a number of alternative playing methods, as well as seeking to exploit its strengths in relation to its dual role, that of belonging simultaneously to both the string and percussion family. Several conventional, yet significant characteristics, combining different ethnic musical elements, as used both by Debussy and Messiaen for example, can also be found in the piano works of contemporary Chinese composers. For instance, in Chen Yi's *Duo Ye* (see fig. 3), the composer sought to mimic the traditional cabaret of an ethnic Chinese group called Dong, specifically their *dos yeeh*, which is the Dong language meaning sing and dance. There are two types: *yeeh tang* served as ritual function, and *yeeh po* served as multi-functional celebration, which also is one of the most common performance forms in the cultural life of the Dong. The second one, Zhao Xiaosheng's *Tai Chi* (see fig. 4), which is inspired by eight diagrams relating to movements from Tai Chi. Another seminal work drawing from ethnic traditions is in *Chang-Duan* by

⁴ *Beijing* was composed in December 2012 and received its premiere at King's College London in 2013, performed by Ms. Lin Wang.

Quan Jihao (see fig. 5), whose title relates to the general term for the unique rhythmic style found - broadly speaking - in the Chinese-Korean consciousness. This work is built upon three rhythmic patterns of significant compositional importance, forming, in turn, three distinctive movements. A last, brief mention must go to *Impromptu - Drum Tower* by Zou Xiangping (shown in fig. 6) which is based on an ancient Chinese folk chorus entitled *Grand Song* which has many distinctive features such as using neither conductor nor accompaniment, consisting of several different parts as well as making much use of natural acoustics in its harmony.

fig. 3 (Chen Yi, Duo Ye)

多 耶。

* 质朴的广西侗族同胞跳起了欢乐的“多耶”来迎接远方北京来的客人，这热烈的场面和激动的心情怎能叫人忘怀呢？

陈 怡 曲

• 多耶——一种古老的传统歌舞形式，领唱者念出编好的歌词（曲调与节奏都是即兴的），余众人因循慢步舞蹈并和之。

fig. 4 (Zhao xiaosheng, Tai Chi)

太 极

I 破

Largo di molto (♩ = ca. 30.6)

赵 麟 生 曲

fig. 5 (Quan Jihao, Chang-Dua, three movements)

组曲
“长短”的组合

一、唵得孔 权吉浩曲

Allegretto

二、晋阳照 (变形)

Lento *ad lib.*

a tempo

三、恩矛哩

Allegro

The image displays three pages of a musical score for a piano piece titled 'Chang-Dua' by Quan Jihao. The score is divided into three movements. The first movement, '唵得孔', is marked 'Allegretto' and features a complex, rhythmic texture with many sixteenth notes. The second movement, '晋阳照 (变形)', is marked 'Lento' and includes a section marked 'ad lib.' (ad libitum), followed by a section marked 'a tempo'. The third movement, '恩矛哩', is marked 'Allegro' and has a more active, rhythmic feel. The score is written in standard musical notation with treble and bass clefs, and includes various dynamic markings such as *mf*, *p*, and *pp*.

fig. 6 (Zou Xiangping, *Impromptu-Drum Tower*)



The works mentioned above acted, collectively, as source for several of the compositional techniques I have sought to explore throughout this set of preludes. The aspiration behind *Beijing*, as well as the approach unifying its four constituent movements, was to explore a personal, distinctive and direct musical language based on rethinking traditional compositional techniques and specifically piano writing.

Beijing is characterized by distinctive elements from traditional Peking Opera: ancient Chinese folk melodies and extensive use of pentatonic melodies. Tension is achieved through stylized contrast of both dynamics and tempi, dissonance created through pitch oppositions inherent within a particular harmonic field as well as through the use of freely atonal elements (predominantly chord clusters) and the accumulation of varying and often disparate musical elements.

Movement 1, *Xi* (Drama)

Xi, the longest one of these four movements, consists of four sections in different tempi, see fig. 7.

fig. 7

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
[Induction]			[Including CODA]
bb 1---6	bb 7---22	bb 23---49	bb 50---end

The first section is characterized by the use of three central gestures, which are then transformed over the course of the movement:

1. A melodic fragment (see fig. 6) which appears in the right hand and is derived from a similar traditional vocal motif (known as *xipi* style) found in Peking Opera (see fig. 9 and 10).

fig. 8



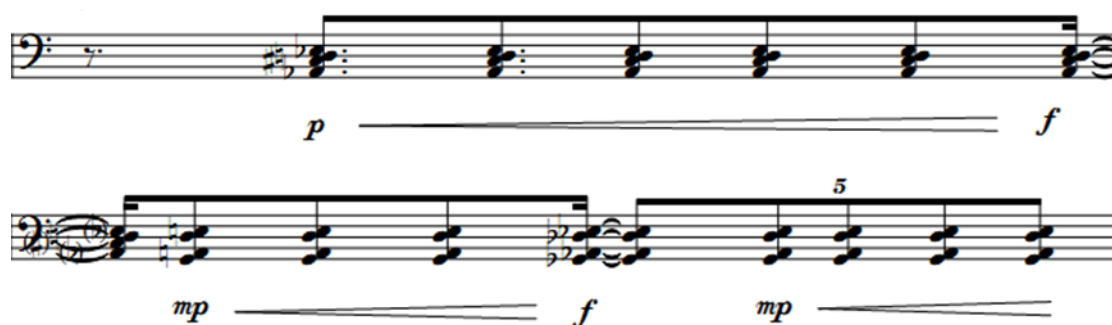
2. Dyadic figuration found initially in the left hand (see fig. 9), alternating between major and minor second doublings.

fig. 9



3. A tetrachord formed by superimposing a perfect fifth and two minor seconds, appearing initially in bar 3 (fig. 10). This tetrachord, whilst formed of one of the aggregate chords mentioned above, utilizes a completely separate and individual rhythm, redolent of a pattern found in traditional Chinese percussion music, which articulates a gradual process of acceleration from slow to fast and back. Traditionally this is achieved without strict notation, where the onus is on the player as to how (s)he interprets it, depending on their own preferences. This ‘rubato-style’ appears in almost all types of traditional Chinese music, including Peking Opera, Buddhist and Taoist music, ancient court music as well as the music performed at folk festivals.

fig. 10



In Peking Opera, the theatrical scenes can be divided into two types: ‘civil scenes’, consisting of dialogues, arias and ballads, accompanied by the strings and woodwinds, and ‘battle scenes’, notable for their acrobatics and martial arts, which are supported by the percussion. Two different vocal melodies co-exist in the civil scenes: the cheerful, lively *xipi* style and the lyrical, sorrowful *erhuang* style.

The beginning of second section (bb7-22) is immediately apparent through the increase in tempo, and is dominated by one main melodic fragment (bb7-13, see fig. 11), based in A^b major and derived and adapted from part of a popular tune of *xipi* style in *Kong Cheng Ji* (*The Stratagem of the Empty City*, see fig. 12). Subsequently this melodic fragment is heard in the left hand,

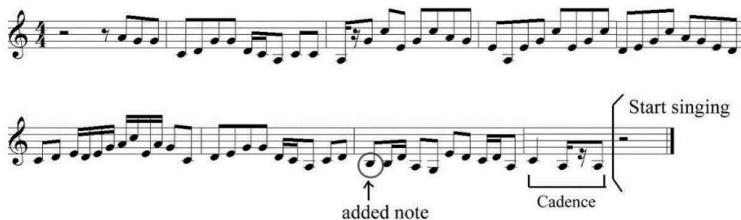
maintaining the same rhythmic form but consisting of shortened durations and transposed to G major (see fig. 16, bb.15-19).

fig. 11



fig. 12

From *The Stratagem of the Empty City*
Original key: F



I have chosen to offset the melody with three arpeggiated chords in the left hand, incorporating the idea of a harmonic pedal, see figs. 13 - 15.

fig. 13 (bb.8-9)

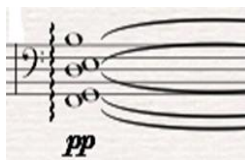


fig. 14 (bb.11-12)

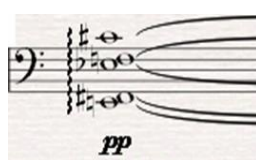


fig. 15 (bb.13-14)



From the upbeat to bar 15, the material in the right hand has been transposed and serves to accompany the transposed Chinese melody seen in the left hand. In bb.21-22 (see fig. 16), the sudden change of meter (from 4/4 to 6/8), alongside the ritardando, serves to disrupt the motoric nature of the preceding music. I have chosen to accentuate the insistent A^b major in the right hand (by use of an accent) for both harmonic and rhythmic reasons: in order to highlight the minor second dissonance in relation to the

prevailing G major tonality as well as to create rhythmic disturbance in the consistent quaver passage already established.

fig. 16

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 13 through 19. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. Measure 13 features a piano (*pp*) texture with a quaver passage in the right hand and a sustained chord in the left hand. Measure 14 continues with a piano (*p*) texture and a *simile* marking. Measure 15 is marked *legato* and *f simile*. Measure 16 shows a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. Measure 17 is marked *rit.* (ritardando). Measure 18 is marked *f*. Measure 19 is marked *mf* and *mp*. The score includes various dynamics and performance instructions.

Section three (bb.23-49) consists of five separate motifs; Motif 1 and 2 which echo each other (see fig. 17) first appear between bb.23-26. Then they reappear together, seen in fig. 18. Motif 1 functions as a figurative texture based on a minor second; the second is a rhythmic pattern apportioned to a combination of alternating three-note chords and octaves. In combining these two complementary ideas, I sought to evoke the highly stylized rhythmic playing method *Chang Chui* found in *Luo Gu Jing*, which is a set of an old notation method written in Chinese characters to simulate (in text) the overall sound of a Peking Opera percussion ensemble, establishing a set of words, each of which is representative of a specific instrument. Fig. 19 shows an example of this method with a modified multi-voice score.

fig. 17 (motifs 1&2, bb.23-26)

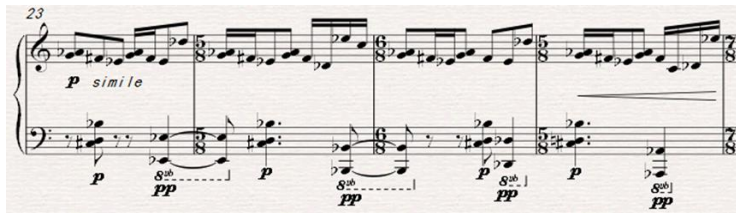
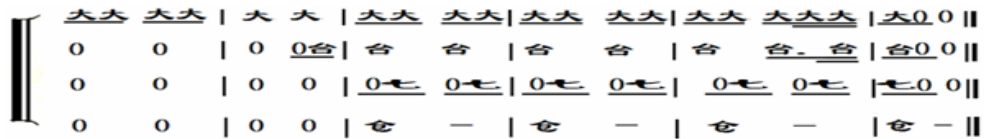


fig. 18 (bb.35-38)



fig. 19 (Chang-Chui, multi-voice score modified)



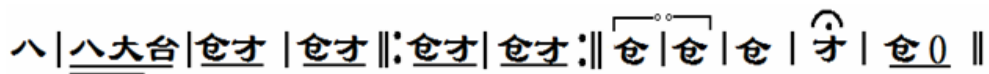
Motif 3 appears in bar 31 (see fig. 20, bb.31-32), and is derived from the central melodic fragment in found in the first section (bb.7-13, see fig. 11). Commencing from the fifth beat in bar 31, this motif is then repeated in the left hand, establishing a trend towards heterophony by a minor third with the right hand.

Fig. 20 (bb.31-34)



Motifs 4 and 5 are both based on strongly rhythmic models, the latter dominated by the consecutive semiquaver patterns in the left hand (see fig. 20, bb.33-34). In also echoing each other they form a combination which evokes another Chinese rhythmic playing method: *ji-ji-feng*, which is used to highlight dramatic contradictions, as well as reflect in purely musical terms, the heightened emotional states of the main characters in the drama.

fig. 21 (*Ji-Ji-Feng*)



These two melodic ideas are presented concurrently between bb.44-48, immediately preceding a dramatic cessation, a bar of silence akin to a breath which also serves as a natural bridge to the fourth section (see fig. 22).

Fig. 22 (bb.44-48)

The musical score for Figure 22 consists of three systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (measures 44-45) features a piano staff with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, and *ppp*, and a bass staff with *ppp simile*. The second system (measures 46-47) includes a piano staff with dynamics *pp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*, and a bass staff with *ppp*. An *accel.* marking is present above the piano staff in measure 47. The third system (measures 48-49) shows a piano staff with a *f* dynamic and a bass staff with a *f* dynamic. The piece concludes with a bar of silence in 4/4 time.

As well as the designated melodic motifs populating the third section described earlier, there are two important pieces of transitional material evident here: the first one appears in bar 27 to 30 (see fig. 23) and is a melody organically developed from the popular Peking Opera tune used earlier in the movement (see figs. 11 and 12).

Fig. 23 (bb.27-30)



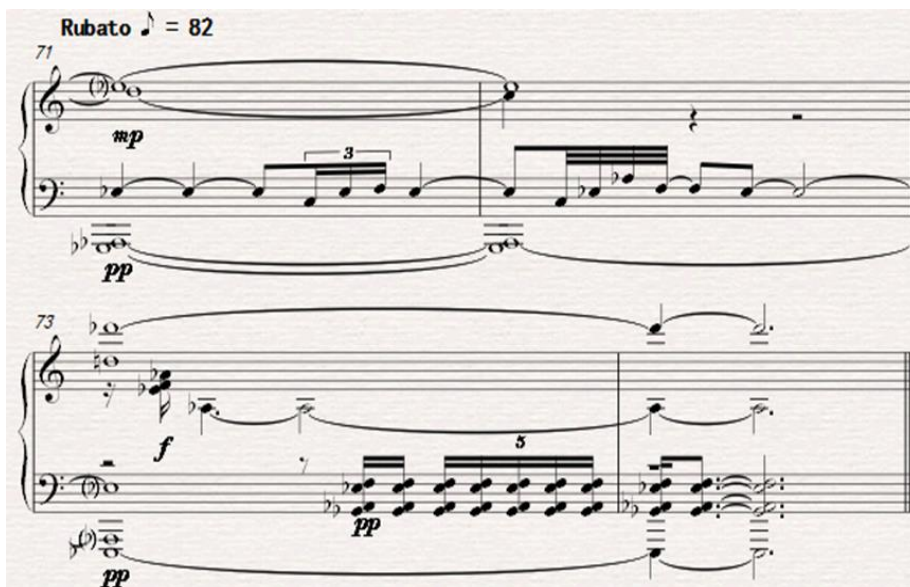
The second one (fig. 24, bb.39-41), consists of clusters formed by the superimposition of minor 2nds. Here I tried to conjure up the world of Chinese gongs and cymbals; the incessant quaver rhythm allied to the pitch accumulation and use of crescendo, accentuates the percussive nature of the piano and, similar to un-tuned Chinese gongs and cymbals, we lose any sense of pitch, or even a pitch region, instead being left with the semblance of a metallic resonance.

fig. 24 (bb.39-41)



The fourth section (bb.50-70) contains the climax to the movement as well as a coda (bb.71-74, see fig. 25). These last four bars act as a summation of both the vocal motif (fig. 8) and dyadic figuration (fig. 9), serving as a poetic echo of the introduction.

fig. 25 (Coda, bb.71-74)



Movements 2, 3 and 4: Yuan, Tai and Ye

Whilst composing *Beijing*, I consulted the set of 24 Preludes, Op. 11 by Alexander Scriabin alongside Chopin's set of 24 Preludes, Op. 28. These two sets of preludes have influenced me greatly with respect to the way I have approached writing for solo piano. I consider these two sets of 24 preludes as exhibiting piano writing

at its most lyrical, valuing expressivity over mere keyboard wizardry. This allies closely with my own aesthetic; I am personally drawn to these works for their genuine sense of beauty, exhibited through the presence of clear and audible melodies, often expressing profound sadness, tenderness as well as melancholy. These miniatures inspired me to emphasize in my own work the importance of melodic elements, as well as working with polyphony.

Even a cursory study of Scriabin's Op. 11 and Op. 28 will reveal that both composers treated the prelude as an independent genre: a miniature that expresses only one character or idea. Both composers employ traditional forms such as binary and ternary. The preludes adhere to succinct formal designs with the refined taste and technical mannerisms of a miniaturist⁵, each prelude espouse its own miniature form, the shortest being a mere twelve bars long. Whilst the musical language I have chosen to employ in *Beijing* is far from that of both Chopin and Scriabin, nevertheless, I have tried, where I felt compositionally appropriate, to emulate certain technical facets of these two composers, specifically with relation to their approach to the piano miniature: form is one such example.

The title of the second movement, *Yuan*, which can be translated as 'The Ruins', was inspired by the city wall of Beijing, built during the Ming Dynasty. Most of the walls surrounding the city were demolished in the 1950s, with only a small number of the city gates and towers standing today. Although the Chinese government implemented several restoration projects over the years, I feel a certain sadness tinged with nostalgia when I see the remains of the walls; I tried to express both these sentiments in this movement. In order to achieve this sense of the ephemeral I have used some traditional elements specifically regarding tonality as well as playing techniques. The focus of *Yuan* lies in the dual omnipresent melodic voices, sometimes in perpetual motion and at other times resulting in juxtaposition of dynamism and stasis: the ostinato in the bass and the incessant melodic line in the treble

⁵ Richard A Leonard, *A History of Russian Music: Scriabin* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), 219.

which undergoes transformation through expansion over the course of the movement's short span, as shown in fig. 26 (bb.1-6). In addition, I abstracted some features from a Yunnan folk tune, *Song Lang* ('Farewell', fig. 27) to create a melodic fragment in the right hand.

fig. 26 (bb.1-6)

Musical score for fig. 26 (bb.1-6). The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Lento* with a tempo of 68. The right hand (RH) starts with a *legato* melody in the first measure, marked *mp*. The left hand (LH) plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked *p* and *simile*. The score consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system covers measures 1-2, the second system covers measures 3-4, and the third system covers measures 5-6. Dynamics in the RH include *mp*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*. The LH dynamics include *p* and *mf*. There are also markings for *legato* and *mf* in the LH. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

fig. 27, *Song Lang*

Musical score for fig. 27, *Song Lang*. The score is in 2/4 time, marked *Moderato*. The title "送郎" (Song Lang) is written in Chinese characters at the top. The tempo "Moderato" and the location "云南" (Yunnan) are also indicated. The score is in G major and consists of two systems of two staves each. The right hand (RH) plays a melody marked *dolce*. The left hand (LH) plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The dynamics include *dolce* and *dim.*

The third movement, *Tai*, refers to the Taishan Mountain in China. *Tai* also means peace as well as grand. I was also inspired by the *Tiao-Shan-Gong*, an ancient profession where men would deliver large and heavy cargo on their backs to the inhabitants living high up on the mountain. *Tiao-Shan* means ‘bear the mountain’, and *Gong* is ‘laborer’. These workers developed a particular physical technique to facilitate their task: swinging their arms backwards and forwards in time with their footsteps whilst chanting to the same rhythm. These separate physical aspects which, when assimilated contribute to a considerable overall effect, are reflected in the score through the use of three voices moving together - though contrasted rhythmically - to form a rich, polyphonic and stratified textural shape (see bb.1-14, fig. 28). Additionally, the melodic line woven among them, is from a folk tune entitled *You Tie Dao* (‘Roam’, see fig. 29).

fig. 28 (bb.1-14)

Allegretto Moderato ♩ = 80

mp simile mf

6 mp mf f

11 mp f p simile

fig. 29 (*You Tie Dao*)



The fourth prelude, *Ye* (Nocturne), again is a personal reflection of my city at night. The music reflects various nebulous sensations and feelings: impulsive, aspirant and the extraordinary, which seem to coalesce in the dark. To these ends I make free use of dissonance (featuring the tritone), as well as making use of double-stem notation to emphasize important notes - the right hand describing a few fragments of a transformed Shandong folk tune, *Dou Ge* ('Amusement', shown in fig. 30), with the same notational approach in the left hand. However, this notational approach is not to highlight any sense of linear melody but to pinpoint important harmonies, as well as drawing the pianist's attention to the counterpoint between hands which (s)he should be sensitive to (see fig. 31).

fig. 30 (Dou Ge)

逗 歌

Moderato 山东

The score is written for piano in 2/4 time, marked Moderato. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The piece is titled '逗歌' (Dou Ge) and '山东' (Shandong). The first system shows the beginning of the piece. The second system includes a first ending (1.) with a ritardando (rit.) marking. The third system includes a second ending (2.) with a repeat sign.

fig. 31 (bb.8 - 12)

The score is written for piano in 2/4 time. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. Red arrows point to specific notes in measures 8-11. The score includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking in measure 10.

Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau (2013)

Sextet for B^b clarinet, trumpet, French horn, trombone, xylophone and piano

Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau was composed for a workshop given by members of the Lontano ensemble, conducted by Odaline de la Martinez at King's College London in 2013. This sextet is scored for B^b clarinet, trumpet, French horn, trombone, xylophone and piano. The work as a whole is characterized by the use of pentatonic (or nearly pentatonic) modes; several melodic motifs found in the piece are almost exclusively pentatonic and this extends to whole sections of the score too. On the macro-level I sought to emphasize the linear dimension wherever possible, whilst avoiding functional harmony.

Concomitant new social and cultural interactions between the Far East and the West in the past century reveal that many Western musical directions and trends have influenced the development of Chinese contemporary music, for example, though not by any means exclusively: Impressionism and Expressionism; serialism; electronic music and aleatoric practices. These have had a profound effect on the creative practices of many contemporary Chinese composers. In my own work I seek to transcend the idea of merely imitating any one particular 'style', Western or otherwise. At the same time, I am conscious of my cultural background and made the choice many years ago to engage positively with it, rather than take a more iconoclastic approach, thereby hoping that my work will be considered within the context of contributing towards a musical language which better reflects Chinese cultural heritage, specifically by making clear allusions to the past and past practices, both musical and cultural.

For a number of years, Chinese composers have been searching for inspiration in ancient poetry, novels, historical events, folk customs, etc. As well as these, one can find numerous examples of those

composers who have directly utilized traditional music: ballads, opera or drama, ancient songs and the practice known as folk recitation as the core materials with which to create original music of their own. Works created following this particular aesthetic approach to the reconnecting with the past and its traditional practices and influences, seek to communicate the particular essence of contemporary Chinese music within the global, multicultural context, overcoming cross-cultural differences in aesthetic standards as well as in the creative process of the selection of musical material.

In terms of cross-cultural creation Tan Dun is one of the most successful Chinese composers. In the 1990s, Tan Dun began working on a series of orchestral pieces that would synthesise Western classical music and Chinese ritual. 'How, or if, a classical orchestra could sound not classical, could it convey the sense of another culture, a ritual of instruments and vocalization? Could this, which is common in Chinese theatre and folk celebration, be done with a Western orchestra? What would primitive sounds be like with Western harmony? Why must harp be only harp, and koto only koto, forever separate?'⁶ These are the questions Tan Dun addressed as he began writing the first piece, *Orchestral Theatre I: O* (1990), in what would become his multimedia Orchestral Theatre tetralogy (1990-1999). They also convey the core issue related to the creation of various types, cultural integration, for most Chinese composers still under consideration, including me. By adding music for xun⁷ soloists, Tan later developed the work into his *Orchestral Theatre I: Xun* (1990), later revised in 2002, which has a solo xun part and an ensemble of 11 xun divided into three parts, i.e. high, middle and low.

Various dramatic sounds colour the ritual-like *Orchestral Theatre I: O* - yelling, chanting, murmuring, striking and singing, produced both instrumentally and with the orchestra members' voices; vocalized syllables belong to no specific language and have no real meaning,

⁶ <http://tandun.com/composition/orchestral-theatre-i-o/>

⁷ Xun is an ancient ceramic wind instrument found only in China, capable of several dozen distinct sonorities.

but are intended as pure sound. It follows the structure of Chinese theatre, in which opening free beats become a rhythmic sequence, suddenly interrupted by an orchestral murmuring; this cycle plays back and forth between instruments and voice. The orchestration treats instruments in atypical ways, often borrowing from Chinese music. (For example, strings are sometimes played as percussion, the harp is played like the 'zheng', the piccolo like a bamboo flute.) The piece has no story-line or theme, but unlike a totally abstract musical work, expresses strong dramatic and emotional images.

Regarding my composition, I approached the scoring for this sextet by way of combining the instruments that I felt would offer me the most interesting and faithful combined timbre with which to effectively imitate Tibetan temple horns. An important mark of the Tibetan Buddhist calendar is the pilgrimage to Lhasa. Every year tens of thousands of pilgrims leave home for Lhasa, the holy city for Tibetans and Buddhists. This manifestation of religious devotion moves me deeply and has inspired me to write this work. Tibetan musical elements and sonorities appear throughout this piece. In particular, I refer to the Tibetan temple horns used in Buddhist ceremonies and celebrations. The bass horn, called *tong chin*, often plays a prominent role. Its huge size, sheer volume and deep, rough timbre even when played solo are capable of conveying an awe-inspiring atmosphere. One of the smaller horns, the *jar ling*, has a distinctly soft and tender sound. When the *tong chin* and the *jar ling* play together they produce music that unfolds without regard to vertical relations. The combination of the timbres of the three common Western brass instruments (trumpet, trombone, and horn) can produce a sound evocative to the *tong chin*.

I have also been influenced by the composition techniques used in the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th and 9th movements of the *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* by György Ligeti. In these pieces, sustained sounds are used as the basic musical material. Ligeti utilizes triplets, quintuplets, syncopation, etc. and playing techniques such as single, double and triple tonguing, tremolo, trill, etc. These timbre

techniques enliven the relatively simple tonal material over the course of the pieces.

I chose only one percussion instrument, xylophone, to avoid an excessively rich percussion section, while I have sought to use the piano as an extra percussion instrument, albeit a more colourful one. To these ends I intend it to contribute to the prevailing heavy atmosphere, as well as to reinforce the bass register; accentuate repeated rhythms and, perhaps most importantly, to invoke the heavy steps and breathing of the pilgrims alluded to in the title. The xylophone is the sole instrument allotted harmony; within the relatively compact rhythmic forms used throughout the work, I designed the xylophone's articulations to be close together, in order to compensate for its dryness.

The structure of this piece was conceived somewhat intuitively, based as it was on the transformation of musical materials and changes in sonority. The overall structure can be divided into six parts as shown in the chart below, see fig. 32.

fig. 32

Part	A	B	C	D	A'	CODA
Bar Number	1-30	31-44	45-56	57-76	77-90	91-95

Part A presents all the different materials used in the composition and introduces a gloom and heavy atmosphere. In Part B the piano and xylophone are to the fore, while the other instruments sustain a single note in the background. Part C is the climax of the composition. In Part D, the xylophone is the focus and the sustained notes of the other instruments provide contrast. This part unfolds gradual weakening process, persisting until a final recapitulation of material from Part A. Part A' is a definitive recapitulation. but the atmosphere is both gentler and calmer than at the beginning of the composition, thus providing a striking contrast to Part A. Finally, the coda functions like an exclamation, presenting sound forms that initially appeared linearly, in a strong

somewhat peremptory manner.

In bb.1-4 (fig. 33), I use the combined sounds of the brass instruments (trumpet, trombone, horn) with clarinet to evoke the solemn, long-drawn-out Tibetan temple horns tones; for subsequent analytical ease let us term this material 1 (the first box as shown). This also contains the successive intervals of a minor second and a perfect fourth glissando in the melody reflecting typical gestures used by Tibetan temple horns, while the horn and clarinet imitate the two-part complex characteristics of the *tong chin* and the *jar ling* (material 2, box 2). The combination of these two types of material is intended to have an introductory character.

Fig. 33 (materials 1 and 2)

The musical score for Figure 33 is presented in five staves. The top staff is for Clarinet in Bb, the second for Horn in F, the third for Trumpet in C, the fourth for Trombone, and the fifth for Xylophone. The score is divided into two main sections. The first section, marked 'Largo' with a tempo of quarter note = 44, spans measures 1-4. A box labeled 'A' encloses the first two measures. The second section, marked 'Lento' with a tempo of quarter note = 54, spans measures 5-8. A second box encloses measures 5-6. The Clarinet part features a melodic line with glissandos and trills. The Horn and Trumpet parts play sustained notes with dynamic markings of *mf* and *mp*. The Trombone part has a sustained note with a dynamic of *mf*. The Xylophone part is marked '4 Medium Hard Mallets' and has a dynamic of *p*. The score includes dynamic markings of *p* and *mf*, and the instruction 'con sord.' for the Horn and Trombone parts in the second section.

Subsequently, materials 1 and 2, namely the brass and clarinet parts, are frequently varied throughout the work.

In variation 1, fig. 34, bb.9-13, materials 1 and 2 appeared in varied form. The second box shows the use of heterophony between the clarinet and trumpet.

fig. 34 (variation 1)

Musical score for Variation 1, measures 9-20. The score is for four instruments: Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), C Trumpet (C Tpt.), and Trombone (Tbn.). The tempo is marked **Largo** with a quarter note equal to 44 (♩ = 44) for measures 9-10, and **Lento** with a quarter note equal to 54 (♩ = 54) for measures 11-20. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The score includes dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano) for measures 9-10; *p*, *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* for measures 11-20. The instruction *senza sord.* (without mutes) is present for the Horn and Trombone. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a slur in measure 19.

In variation 2 (fig. 35), bb.21-26, the rhythm of material 2 is transformed in bar 21.

fig. 35 (variation 2)

Musical score for Variation 2, measures 20-26. The score is for Clarinet (Cl.) and Horn (Hn.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The score includes dynamic markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano) for measures 20-21; *p* and *mf* for measures 22-23; *p* and *f* (forte) for measures 24-25; and *f* for measure 26. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a slur in measure 24.

In variation 3 (fig. 36), bb.60-63, the rhythm of material 2 is lengthened, yet some pitches are cut from the original gesture of material 2.

fig. 36 (variation 3)

Musical score for Variation 3, measures 60-62. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system (measures 60-61) features three staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), and C Trumpet (C Tpt.). The Cl. staff has a whole rest in measure 60 and a half note in measure 61. The Hn. and C Tpt. staves have a long note in measure 60 and a half note in measure 61. Dynamics include *pp*, *cresc.*, *pp*, *mp*, and *simile*. The second system (measures 62) features three staves: Cl., Hn., and C Tpt. The Cl. staff has a half note in measure 62. The Hn. and C Tpt. staves have a half note in measure 62. Dynamics include *mp* and *simile*.

In variation 4 (fig. 37), bb.72-76, the durations of the rhythm found in material 2 are lengthened further than at bar 71 onwards.

Fig. 37 (variation 4)

Musical score for Variation 4, measures 72-74. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system (measures 72-73) features four staves: Cl., Hn., C Tpt., and Tbn. The Cl. staff has a half note in measure 72 and a half note in measure 73. The Hn. staff has a whole rest in measure 72 and a whole note in measure 73. The C Tpt. staff has a half note in measure 72 and a half note in measure 73. The Tbn. staff has a half note in measure 72 and a half note in measure 73. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The second system (measures 74) features four staves: Cl., Hn., C Tpt., and Tbn. The Cl. staff has a half note in measure 74. The Hn. staff has a whole rest in measure 74. The C Tpt. staff has a half note in measure 74. The Tbn. staff has a half note in measure 74. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*.

In variation 5 (fig. 38), bb.77-78, material 1 is reproduced through a unison between clarinet, horn and trumpet (up an octave) and

trombone (down an octave) in bar 77. The reason for using doublings in this work is due to an attempt to recreate the Tibetan monasteries music style: different types of horn playing one tone together in octaves shapes stacked.

fig. 38 (variation 5)

In addition, there is a third important piece of material (fig. 8): a short melody whose function is to connect various musical sections. It first appears in the xylophone and later appears frequently, always in a varied form.

fig. 39 (material 3)

The first variation of this material 3 occurs in bar 20, where the trumpet simply doubles the xylophone part, see fig. 9.

fig. 40 (variation 1 of material 3)

Musical score for Variation 1 of Material 3. It consists of two staves: C Tpt. (top) and Xyl. (bottom). The C Tpt. staff has a dynamic marking of *mp* and the Xyl. staff has a dynamic marking of *mf*. Both instruments play a melodic line with a descending trend, starting with a half note followed by eighth notes.

The material is varied a second time in bar 27; its rhythm is lengthened, some of its pitches are removed, its melodic trend shifts from a descending to an ascending one, and all instruments play the melody in unison, see fig. 10.

fig. 41 (variation 2 of material 3)

Musical score for Variation 2 of Material 3, starting at bar 27. It features six staves: Cl., Hn., C Tpt., Tbn., Xyl., and Pno. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *cresc.*, and *mp*. A circled 'C' is present above the Clarinet staff and below the Piano staff. The instruments play a melodic line with an ascending trend, starting with a half note followed by eighth notes.

Material 4 appears periodically at an interval of several bars, e.g. bars 37, 44 and 56. Variation is achieved by removing notes until bar 81 and bar 84 (fig. 42). From bars 81 to 84, there is restatement and consolidation by the xylophone and piano, and material 4 appears in solo trumpet in both bars 81 and 84.

fig. 42 (material 4)



The whole work stems from the first three types of material which themselves are related to one another. My aim, by working with a small amount of material, was to achieve concentration as well as a uniformity of sound. A fourth piece of material arose out of material 1, the former consisting of a sustained note. It appears in each part of the whole piece. Whilst it may appear simple, even blunt on the surface, nevertheless it plays an important role in supporting the sound morphology of the whole work. Its effect here is equivalent to that of the sustained pedal in a piano work, or a pedal in an instrumental ensemble work. This material is arranged so to imitate the deep resonance characteristic of Tibetan monasteries music.

Finally extra material, named 5, is first used in the piano part starting from the fifth bar with a clarinet note superimposed (see fig. 43).

fig. 43 (material 5)

The musical score for Figure 43, material 5, consists of six staves. The Clarinet (Cl.) part features a triplet of eighth notes starting at measure 5, marked *pp* and *dim.*, followed by a quarter note. The Horn (Hn.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *pp* and a quarter note marked *mf*. The C Trumpet (C Tpt.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *f* and a quarter note marked *mf*. The Trombone (Tbn.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *f* and a quarter note marked *mf*, with glissando markings (*gliss.*) on the final two notes. The Xylophone (Xyl.) part has a quarter note marked *p* and a quarter note marked *f*. The Piano (Pno.) part features a triplet of eighth notes marked *pp* and *dim.*, followed by a quarter note marked *pp* and *dim.*.

The example above includes three rhythmic values: triplets, crotchets and quavers. Subsequently, in bb.17-37, material 5 is seen only in the piano part. In bb.38-42, a somewhat piquant sonority is achieved through mixing clarinet, horn and trombone. This timbre is given fresh rhythmic impetus through the presence of the quadruplet in the piano part, before turning into a triplet articulated by the brass in bar 50, see fig. 13.

fig. 44

The musical score for Figure 44, starting at measure 50, consists of four staves. The Clarinet (Cl.) part is silent. The Horn (Hn.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *p* and *simile*, followed by a quarter note. The C Trumpet (C Tpt.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *p* and *simile*, followed by a quarter note. The Trombone (Tbn.) part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *p* and *simile*, followed by a quarter note.

In bar 57, fig. 14, there are four parts and two rhythmic forms.

fig. 45

57 **Lento** ♩ = 54 **E** ♩ = ♩

Cl. *poco a poco dim.* *mp*

Hn. *poco a poco dim.* *mp*

C Tpt. *poco a poco dim.* *mp*

Tbn. *poco a poco dim.* *mp*

Bar 69 (fig. 46), the two rhythmic forms articulated by trumpet, trombone and piano.

fig. 46

69 **F** ♩ = ♩

Cl. *f* *mf* *dim.*

Hn. *f* *mf* *dim.*

C Tpt. *f* *dim.* *p*

Tbn. *f* *dim.* *p*

Xyl. *pp* *f*

F ♩ = ♩

Pno. *f* *dim.*

Bar 92, fig. 16, sees a completely new rhythmic pattern introduced, played on clarinet and trumpet, which is another way of continuous tones to continue and unified the music.

fig. 47

92 Senza Tempo ♩ = 60

Cl. *ppp* *simile*

Hn. *pp*

C Tpt. *ppp* *simile*

Tbn. *ppp* *simile*

The musical score for Bar 92, fig. 47, is set in 9/4 time and marked 'Senza Tempo' with a tempo of ♩ = 60. It features four staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), C Trumpet (C Tpt.), and Trombone (Tbn.). The Clarinet and C Trumpet parts play a complex, continuous rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, marked *ppp* and *simile*. The Horn part plays a long, sustained note marked *pp*. The Trombone part plays a series of notes with a dotted rhythm, marked *ppp* and *simile*.

Section 2

Double Riddles, duet for violin and viola (2013)

As in my previous piano work, *Beijing*, here too I have drawn extensively on a large number of Chinese musical sources, extrapolating materials (mostly pitch-related) and working this into my own compositions. Here specifically, I drew inspiration from the traditional folk music and culture of Yunnan⁸. The fifty-two ethnic minorities of Yunnan have contributed to creating distinctive musical styles. Consequently, this province has been favoured by composers who have found its native folk music a rich source of inspiration. Examples of contemporary works that have, both directly and indirectly influenced my own compositional approach to integrating aspects of traditional Yunnan culture and folk music into my own work, include Guo Wenjing's *Symphony for Chinese National Instruments, Three Melodies of Western Yunnan*.

In the 1st movement, *Ava Hill*, the music begins with a very distinctive sound - both intense and 'sharp' - and formed from a specific percussion timbre combined with tapping the wood of the sounding board of the strings, intended to evoke the natural landscape of the ethnic *Wa*. The 2nd movement, *Jino Dance*, is most notable for its use of the rhythmic elements characteristic of the unique big-drum dance, as well as distinctive folk melodies associated with the *Jino* mountainous people; the melodies are shared between three voices of *xiao* (a vertical bamboo flute). The distinctive title of the 3rd movement, *Sacrifice/Torches/Potent Liquor*, refers to three traditional customs; the sense of collaboration frequently seen between the various different ethnic groups populating

⁸ Yunnan is a province located in the far southwest of China, bordering both Guangxi and Guizhou province in the east, Sichuan province in the north, and the Autonomous Region of Tibet in the northwest. It also shares borders with Burma, Laos and Vietnam in the southeast.

the region, has been interpreted by the composer through a series of musical symbols, all of which have shaped Guo's understanding and experience.

Double Riddles was composed in October 2013, and received its premiere at King's College London in December of the same year. From the offset, I intended to mimic (as far as one can when removing a subject from its original context) the shape and features of several traditional Yunnan folk music types.

A wide range of traditional Chinese ballads that consist of both singing and speaking are based on a variety of folk songs and stories, as well as well-known historical events. These are commonly accompanied by dramatic/theatrical elements and dance, the latter representing perhaps the most direct, expressive medium of traditional Yunnan music. I decided to incorporate a familiar Yunnan folk song, *Guess Tune* (shown in fig. 48), and drew on several of its key features: style, rhythm, tonality and melody. When working with the original source material. It aimed to subject the material to forms of both regeneration and transformation. At the same time, and perhaps due to the nature of the way in which I was working with the melody, I realized early on in the writing process that, in order to retain the unique character which this simple melody exhibits in its original socio-musical context, it was necessary for me to reimagine it in such a way that it required a compositional gambit whereby I added something at once both vivid and distinctive: my solution was to utilize the players' voices (see fig. 49, bb.8-14).

The phonemes used carry no meaning and were chosen for merely sonic reasons. It is common practice in Chinese folk songs to insert such 'filler words' to help strengthen rhythm. Here, I have borrowed this concept, and, along with the notes assigned to the violin and viola, have attempted to bring about a sense of Chinese cabaret, which relies on the cohesion of several different, and sometimes disparate, forms of both expression and entertainment. Due to practical considerations such as consistency of pronunciation in relation to the overall quality of the performance, I limited the inclusion of the vocal motifs in the score to three instances: bb.8-15 (a short canon); b63, and at the end of b102, both times using a non-pitched shout: 'yo-wei'. The three vocal inclusions also act as a signal, or compositional 'sign post', neatly dividing the three main sections of the work, as seen in fig. 50.

fig. 50

Introduction	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Coda
bb.1--7	bb.8—63	bb.64--101	bb.102—129	bb.130—140
Leisurely ♩ = 72	Cheerful ♩ = 132	Presto ♩ = 122	A tempo ♩ = 112	Cheerful ♩ = 132

Guess Tune, which is like the kernel of the whole work, appears first in the introduction. Here though, I chose to use the first four pitches only (see fig. 51, in comparison with fig. 48). I further developed and extend this material through the inclusion of grace notes, the augmentation of intervals to include both perfect fourths and fifths, as well as instigating the motoric gesture of reiterating a single pitch for harmonic emphasis, as well as textural contrast (first heard in b6). This gesture becomes more apparent later in the work: in b42 (see fig. 52), bb.61-62 (see fig. 53), and bb.125, 127 and 129 (see fig. 54).

fig. 51

Leisurely ♩ = 72

The score for fig. 51 is in 4/4 time with a tempo of ♩ = 72. The piano part (top staff) features a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings of *pp*, *p*, and *mf*. The bass part (bottom staff) provides harmonic support with triplets and dynamic markings of *pp* and *mp*. A *pizz.* marking is present at the end of the piano line.

fig. 52

The score for fig. 52 is in 3/4 time. Both the piano and bass staves feature a series of triplets. The piano part starts with a *pp* dynamic and ends with a *ppp* dynamic. The bass part starts with a *pp* dynamic and ends with a *ppp* dynamic.

fig. 53

61

The score for fig. 53 is in 6/4 time. The piano part (top staff) includes a *pizz.* section. Dynamic markings range from *pp* to *pppp*. The bass part (bottom staff) provides a harmonic accompaniment with dynamic markings of *pp* and *pppp*.

fig. 54

125

♩ = 82 ♩ = 102 ♩ = 72 ♩ = 92

The score for fig. 54 is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures with changing time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 3/4, 5/4, and 3/4. The tempo markings are ♩ = 82, ♩ = 102, ♩ = 72, and ♩ = 92. The piano part (top staff) features dynamic markings of *pp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *p*. The bass part (bottom staff) includes dynamic markings of *f*, *ppp*, *f*, *p*, and *ppp*, along with *arco* and *pizz.* markings.

The repeated C sharp (See fig. 6 and 7) is used to create a dissonance with the duplicated G, see fig. 5, and represents a transposition of a minor second up of the four pitches used in

the introduction. The incessant and somewhat obsessive nature of this gesture also represents a very clear attempt to 'write out' an echo of the musical material.

The fact that *Guess Tune* is constantly being taken apart and transformed over the course of the piece, serves to explore the idea of mimicking. Other musical forms present in traditional Yunnan culture also have had a very significant impact on me as a composer, and I have tried in my own personal way to work with them in this piece. They include one particular cabaret type, the *Lusheng* dance of the ethnic Miao, as well as the *Naxi* ancient music of the ethnic Naxi, a form of musical instrument ensemble that has existed since the 14th century.

Traditional cabaret, as a distinct cultural form popular in Southwest China, includes dance, acrobatics and martial arts, as well as its own distinctive music. The *Lusheng* is an antique reed wind instrument, regarded as the symbol of the Miao people, which has been incorporated into the cabaret found in Yunnan province, so much so that a particular dance has evolved, inspired by the instrument; this dance, in turn, has become an integral part of the cabaret. *Naxi* ancient music is one of China's most celebrated, as well as one of its oldest musical styles, performed on traditional instruments such as the *Dizi* (bamboo flute), *Xiao* (vertical bamboo flute) and *Pipa* (Chinese lute), to name but a few.

Instrumental unisons are one of the most striking features of *Naxi* ancient music, consequently its texture usually consists of a single horizontal line. The problem when transmuting this style/aesthetic to a Western art form - a piece intended for the concert hall - is that the melody can become monotonous if left unadorned. This issue lay behind the idea of making the original melody more complex by colouring it through the integration of dance-like rhythms, as well as performing it more rapidly. For example, in bb.43-48, in the first section, there is a deconstructed form of the melody in sextuplets, providing an alternating pattern between the two instruments which is also a recognizable variation from the

melody of the vocal part in bb.8-15; between bb.49-63, the violin switches both rhythm and octave, whilst the viola maintains its movement round the interval of a perfect fourth until the end of the first section. Whilst I acknowledge that the use of octaves in contemporary music is somewhat of a pariah, a vestige of the nineteenth century, or, the 'rediscovered' tool of the Spectral school, nonetheless for me using the octave lends a specific, vivid expressivity to the material, and is well coupled with both the rhythmic shape of *Lusheng* dance, as well as faithfully imitating its unique sound: a combination of both diatonic and chromatic scales.

The key approach in section 2 consists of displaying *Guess Tune* in its entirety. In contrast to the previous section, where I purposefully chose to develop only a few fragments of the melody, here we hear the melody clearly and unadorned and, in so doing, it acts to 'refresh' the sound palette. Moreover, in this section I make extensive use of both perfect fourths and fifths, specifically to mimic both the timbre and rhythmic shape of the *Lusheng* dance.

The third section begins after a single-bar general pause (b102). This serves as a transition between the yell and the subsequent 'natural' playing technique. It should be seen akin to a breath; a similar compositional conceit can be seen at the end of the first section, between bb.63-64. In section 3, another tremolo-like texture appears in the violin by means of the continuous repetition of the same motif, a deconstructed version of the main melody - *Guess Tune*. Concurrent with this, the viola, marked *espressivo*, plays a combination of double-stopped octaves, perfect fourths and fifths, as seen in fig. 55.

fig. 55, the beginning of Section 3

Structurally the coda (bb.130-140) belongs to the third section. All the melodic fragments used here are derived from *Guess Tune*; the plethora of both perfect fourths and fifths (heard both linearly and vertically), coupled with the inclusion of *pizzicato* passages, reflects the unity of the material, and the approach which I have adopted to developing it. By following a consistent approach to the form of the piece with relation to my own methodology, working with ‘found elements’ - *Guess Tune* etc. - it was my aim to create an imitation of a ‘cheerful’ dance scene, the kind of which is central to the popularity of *Lusheng* cabaret. Imitation as well as the idea of mimicking has not only been central to the conception of *Double Riddles*, but has been deliberately emphasized throughout the work.

The final, emphatic Bartok pizzicato chord in both instruments, ends in the nominal tonic of the work - C, with a general pitch progression of C, C sharp, C. By adding D sharp, A sharp, A natural and B in the violin, I thus avoided the resultant perfect fourth and fifth between C and G, see fig. 56.

fig. 56, the coda

Cheerful ♩ = 132

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Cheerful" with a tempo of ♩ = 132. The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (piano) and a bass clef staff (cello/bass). The piano part begins with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The cello/bass part starts with a dynamic of *p*. The first system concludes with a first ending bracket over the final two measures. The second system continues with the piano part featuring a *pizz.* instruction and dynamics of *ff*, *f*, *ff*, *fff*, *ff*, and *ff*. The cello/bass part also features a *pizz.* instruction and dynamics of *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *ff*, and *ff*. The score includes various articulations such as *arco* (arco) and *pizz.* (pizzicato) and dynamic markings like *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *fff*, and *mp*.

Quintet, the westerly wind said... (2014)

For flute, clarinet in B^b, violin, double bass and harp

The genesis of this work, written for a doctoral composers' workshop given by members of the Lontano ensemble under Odaline de la Martinez at King's College London in June 2014, is deeply personal to me. At the beginning of the compositional process, one morning when I sat at my desk to begin composing this piece, a westerly wind howled through the window next to me, blowing on my face. Coincidentally, on the same day, I heard by chance a nostalgic Taiwanese folk song expressing feelings of homesickness, of which the westerly wind was a metaphor. My title, *the westerly wind said...*, thus seemed apt.

From the beginning of the compositional process, the sound world I wished to conjure from the harp was central to the character of the work as a whole: pentatonic harmonic and melodic motifs; conventional techniques of *zheng*⁹, such as arpeggiated chords, glissandi, portamento (wide vibrato) and tremolo. Changing registers in the part of harp; the convergence of different sounds which helps provide contrast. I have sought to make use of all these approaches in order to evoke the sensibility of ancient Chinese classical music.

To briefly summarize the creative concept behind this work, I would like to highlight a few key aspects relating to its composition, on both a practical as well as a more personal level: pursuit of 'pure' sound and timbre and simplicity to evoke an 'antique' style: layered but coherent details at once juxtaposed and integrated to create a general mood redolent of the past, but which never resorts to pastiche.

⁹ *Zheng* is a kind of Chinese zither which has 16 or more strings and movable bridges. The bridges can be moved to pre-set pentatonic scales or any tones, as well as by pressing actions of left hand on the left side of the bridges to produce changes of pitch and ornamentations.

The work is divided into four sections, as seen in fig. 57:

fig. 57

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Bar 1 – 15	Bar 16 - 41	Bar 42 – 63	Bar 64 - 77

The first section (bb.1-15), significantly reflects the use of several of the compositional aspects mentioned above. I was inspired by a traditional Chinese song both melodically and harmonically, *A moonlit night on the spring river*¹⁰, shown in figure 58. It was my aim to emulate the elegance of the original, I was not content with simply copying the melody and imitating its various techniques of transformation.

¹⁰ As originally a Pipa solo composed by an unknown composer, it has been popular in China since Ming Dynasty. Its earliest music score documentation was firstly seen on hand-copies around 1820 A.D. Around 1925 two musicians in Shanghai rearranged it into a Chinese national orchestra, named as *A Moonlit Night on the Spring River*, which is the name of a poem from Tang Dynasty by Zhang Ruoxu. It also has been adapted for other instrumental versions including *zheng* and piano.

fig. 58 (A moonlight night on the spring river)

春江花月夜
(主旋律谱) 中央广播民族乐团演奏谱

【一】江楼钟鼓
(琵琶)由慢渐快 原速 (箫、琵琶) 慢起渐快

mp mf mp f mp f

(合奏) (琵琶) $\text{♩} = 60$

mp mf

【二】月上东山
(箫、琵琶) (琵琶) (合奏)

【三】风回曲水*

【四】花影层台
(琵琶) (合奏)

* 演奏时第三、第八段删去。

(1)

In the very first bars of this work (bb.1-4), I present two distinct entities: the harp and the strings. I have attempted to mix the harmonic palette of both here by means of creating a sort of ‘silhouette’ of the other, and vice versa. For example: the harp, which is in the key of C major and is distinguished by its predilection towards the major pentatonic scale found within the key

of C, as well as by the reliance on arpeggiated figures. If one assumes that C is the keynote of this work, as is evidenced in the very first bars, then one can better understand the idea of creating a harmonic silhouette mentioned above.

The melodic writing for the string instruments is also based on the major pentatonic scale, the violin is in the key of G major - omitting the first and fourth degrees of the C major gives a third anhemitonic pentatonic scale: G, A, B, D, E. Thus a sort of 'silhouette' is created by articulating in different ways not only the tonic chord, but crucially the fifth degree as well. The melodies given to both the violin and the double bass are based on pentatonic scales - the violin in the key of G major, and the bass in the key of C major. I achieve a small climax in bb.4-5 by moving melodically in both the string parts, from low to high tessituras, as well as writing in a rhythmic acceleration seen in the violin, thereby heightening the tension through a sudden change of pace. This is immediately followed by a transition from harp to the two woodwinds by way of a glissando.

After a small climax, there is a timbral transition to woodwinds, by way of glissandi on the harp. Here partial tones, which, according is generally regards in Chinese music theory as a way of extending a pentatonic scale into a hexatonic or even heptatonic scale. This partial tones can only play a supporting harmonic role - colouring the main pitches - as they are never regarded as principal tones.

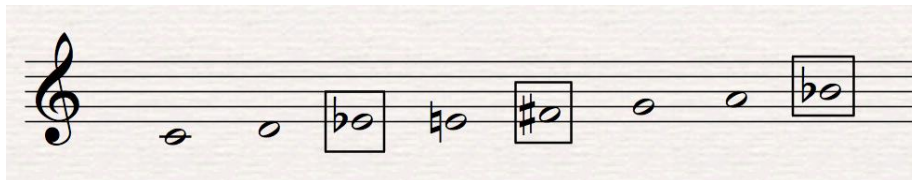
There are four partial tones that are common to all pentatonic scales; in the C major mode, they are F, F sharp, B and B flat. The Chinese names are: 清角 *ching-jiao*, 变徵 *bian-zhi*, 变宫 *bian-gong*, 闰 *ruen* (see fig. 59). All of these partial tones create an interval of a semitone with the next note: I make extended reference to this particular characteristic in this piece.

fig. 59



Practically speaking, I have worked with the concept of partial tones, as well as making explicit use of a keynote in my work, as a means of referencing traditional practices, whilst at the same time eschewing traditional, existing harmonic rules of governance for the simple reason that I wanted to avoid creating a work too reliant on pentatonic harmony. I also wanted to work much more on increasing the layering of the timbre, and be free to work with contrast in the overall sound I was creating. In bb.8-12, the melodic upper voices of both the violin and the bass are still built from a pentatonic scale in C, with three partial tones (E flat, F sharp and B flat), see fig. 60.

fig. 60



Between bb.8-15, the harp remains wedded to the pentatonic scale in C, this is to facilitate the smooth execution of glissandi, a key characteristic of 'zheng'; by using a dual pedal - C and C flat - I was able to mimic the unique portamento (wide vibrato) style which is another feature of zheng, see fig. 61. This particular musical paragraph exemplifies my approach to a sort of compositional collage: pitting simple modal melodies against other, often disparate, materials to achieve contrast. Similar examples of this practice can be seen in the third section (the violin at bar 42), as well as in the fourth section (the flute at bar 67).

fig. 61

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Harp (Hp.), Violin (Vln.), and Double Bass (Db.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 8-11) features the Flute and Clarinet with rests, while the Harp, Violin, and Double Bass play. The Harp part is marked *espress.* and *ppp*, with a *disson.* instruction. The Violin and Double Bass parts are marked *arco* and *ppp*. The second system (measures 12-15) features the Flute and Clarinet with rests, while the Harp, Violin, and Double Bass play. The Harp part is marked *pp* and *pp*. The Violin and Double Bass parts are marked *ppp*. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and dynamic markings.

Although the second section (bb.16-41) no longer relies on pentatonic scales as the chief pitch material, nonetheless, there is still present the remnants of what could conceivably be termed a pentatonic style or temperament. In this section, the melodies are fractured and heard less as full melodies but rather as melodic fragments, none of which is fully formed but rather always seeming to pre-empt the following one, whilst each one remaining inconclusive. These melodic fragments are scattered around the whole ensemble, achieving an overall texture characterized by the continual link up play between instruments - a sort of *klangfarbenmelodie*; this, in contrast to the first section, represents a more linear compositional thinking. Another technique which I allude to, and which again, I do not follow strictly and to the letter, is pointillism; the syncopated rhythms I employ, alongside the aforementioned melodic treatment present in this section, are all harnessed in order to help create instability within the overall sound.

It is the woodwind which adopts the central role in the second section, with the harp and strings cast as a constant echo to

their articulations. The minor second frequently appears throughout the ensemble and this approach mirrors that in the first section where I develop the use of the partial tone, as well as that of the portamento playing technique seen in bar 14. From bar 37 I strengthen my approach to the portamento, including A/G sharp in various voices. In deference to the traditional rules of harmony which, though I by no means follow rigorously, nevertheless inform, both on a conscious and unconscious level, a great deal of my compositional approach to the manipulation of my harmonic material, I have constructed a quasi-perfect cadence. Having emphasized at various points in this section the G sharp, at b42 I return to G natural - the dominant of my pitch centre, C, and also forming a minor second, see figure 6.

fig. 62

The musical score for Figure 62 consists of five staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Harp (Hp.), Violin (Vln.), and Double Bass (Db.). The music is in 3/4 time and begins at bar 37. The Flute part starts with a *p* dynamic and features a trill in bar 38. The Clarinet part has a *ppp* dynamic and a trill in bar 38. The Harp part has a *p* dynamic and a trill in bar 38. The Violin part starts with a *mp* dynamic and a trill in bar 38. The Double Bass part has a *mp* dynamic and a trill in bar 38. The score includes various dynamic markings (*p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *mp*) and articulation (trills, slurs). A chord chart for the Harp part is provided: $\flat B \flat C \flat D$ and $\sharp E \flat F \sharp G \flat A$. The score ends at bar 42.

The third section, bb.42-63, is centred around the violin and a melody which, whilst built upon a pentatonic scale, through the inclusion of partial tones which enabled me to alter a lot of selected pitches, helped avoid what would otherwise have been the perpetuation of an overtly pentatonic environment. The musical trend

of bb.42-48 is an upwards trajectory, save for the violin, which pushes the music into the second small climax of the piece.

Immediately after this event, the violin melody undergoes sustained development up to and including bar 56 where it ends on an E flat. Although we hear an E natural on the clarinet in the same bar (again, an example of the importance of the minor second in this section), in bar 57 the flute, though two octaves higher, echoes the initial violin E flat; this is an example of harmonic foreshadowing, as the fourth section begins on the enharmonic equivalent - D sharp.

Between bb.57-63, G sharp is the most dominant pitch. This is seen mostly in the harp material, supported harmonically by the violin, which has a sustained G sharp, so too by the bass and the clarinet which form the background, in support of both the harp and the flute. In the opening bars of the fourth section (bb.64-77), I have endeavoured to 'resolve' the preceding harmonic and pitch material to the tonic, i.e. C, the section opens with a melodic motif on the flute commencing on D sharp (as mentioned above); the dominant G sharp seen previously and given such harmonic weight and importance is thus, through a gradual descent (D sharp - D natural - C), resolved.

The five arpeggios heard on the harp are an echo of the three at the very beginning of the piece, here transposed up a semitone, see fig. 63 and 64. The harmonic framework of the harp also follows a descending contour of D sharp - D natural - C, whilst incorporating too the partial tone of B natural. The violin here echoes the harp with a B natural artificial harmonic, sustained to the very end of the work; the clarinet and bass articulations are embellishments of the main melodic material outlined above, and constitute the final textural layer.

fig. 63

Andante ♩ = 56

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Harp

Violin

Double Bass

mp

mp

mp

pizz.

pizz. *p* gliss.

p gliss.

p gliss.

pp cresc.

mf

\flat B \flat C \sharp D
 \sharp E \flat F \flat G \flat A

fig. 64

64

Fl.

Cl.

Hp.

Vln.

Db.

pppp

ppp

sf

mp

mp

mp

mf

p

\flat B \flat C \sharp D
 \sharp E \flat F \flat G \flat A

Section 3

***Nuó* (2015)**

Quintet for Clarinet in B flat, Horn in F, Piano, Violin and Viola

Background and context

The quintet, *Nuó*, which was also composed for the Lontano ensemble under Odaline de la Martinez, was given its first performance at King's College London in March 2015. This work, like several of its predecessors - *Beijing*, *Double Riddles*, *the westerly wind said*, and *Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau* - attests to what I have found to be both an amazingly fruitful and challenging process of compositional research into the possibility for integration of traditional aspects of Chinese music and culture with western classical forms and modes of expression; combining Chinese musical materials alongside aspects of free modality, particularly pentatonicism, and atonal elements.

Nuó is a type of ancient Chinese religious rite dating back to the Shang and Zhou dynasties (around 16th century - 3th century BC). These rites were part of the everyday life of the average Chinese person, and were practiced in order to ward off evil and disease, as well as providing protection from general harm. Aspects of these rites found their way into the cultural life of China through manifestations such as *Nuó* opera, dance and song, *Nuó* sacrifice and other such ceremonies. Now it is only performed in remote townships and ethnic minority areas as a form of ancient sorcery. In

some areas, the *Nuó* has been transformed in a folk dance simply for entertainment, replacing solemnity and mystery with artistic expression.¹¹

Its masks, a unique symbol of *Nuó* culture, is closely related to the rich and colourful dance forms and complement their myriad of diverse movements. Participants wear vivid wooden masks, each personifying a different expression, some of which are bold and powerful, some ferocious, some amiable and kind, whilst others convey naiveté. As illustrated in the pictures below:



Among the many contemporary Chinese composers who have been inspired by various aspects of *Nuó* and its ritualistic practices, Tan Dun is perhaps the most celebrated outside of China. In his works, he often sets out to explicitly reflect in music the beauty of the natural world, as well as depict aspects of the mysteries of shamanistic ritual. He has also taken inspiration from Chinese

¹¹ For example, according to local history, the Nuo dance was performed in Nanfeng, Jiangxi Province, in the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD) to dispel evil spirits. During the Ming and Qing period (1368 - 1911), the Nanfeng Nuo Dance absorbed various performing feats from operas, puppet shows, and martial arts and gradually developed into an entertainment. It currently preserves 82 dance forms, 180 sorts of masks, and 5 kinds of props including weapons, religious instruments, lighting, food offerings, and daily outfits.

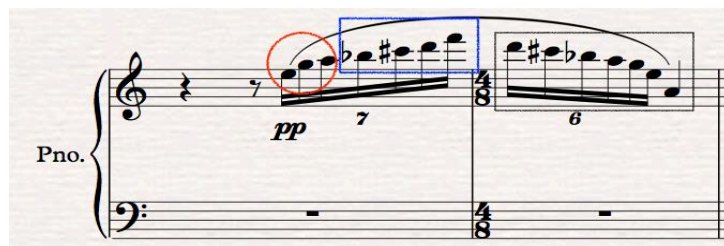
peasant culture and several of his most important compositions reflect the ongoing dialogue with his heritage, which is always placed in the context of a distinctly western influence and compositional outlook.¹²

Components of Composition

I sought to make the main feature of the music to be its clear and distinctive sound world, thanks in part to a strictly streamlined approach to the various components used. There are two basic components that make up *Nuó* and, by virtue of the different ways in which they are configured, evolve and develop an overall pitch system:

A 7-note motif, which is represented by a chromatic group of pitches formed from a pentatonic scale incorporating semitones. The original form which I designed in advance can be seen in the piano part at bar 82, marked as motif A, see fig. 65.

fig. 65 (b82: the original form of motif A)



Earlier antecedents can be seen in bb.6 and 12, in variation of the original form (A¹ and A², see fig. 66 and 67).

¹² *Nine Songs*, (20 singer-performers, 3 percussions, 2 contrabassoons and 3 Chinese instrumentalists, 1989); *Ghost Opera*, (string quartet and pipa, with water, metal stone and paper, 1994); *Orchestral Theatre I: O* (1990); *Orchestral Theatre II: Re* (1992); *Orchestral Theatre III: Red Forecast* (1996); *Orchestral Theatre IV: The Gate* (1999); *Paper Concerto for Paper Percussion and Orchestra* (2003).

fig. 66 (b6: extended pitch collection - A¹)

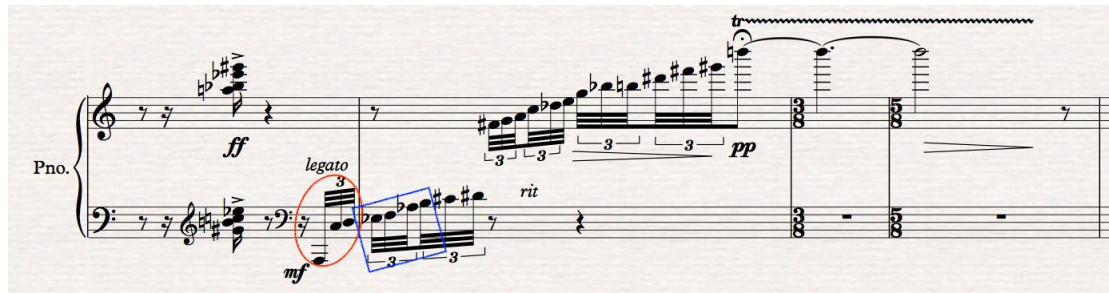


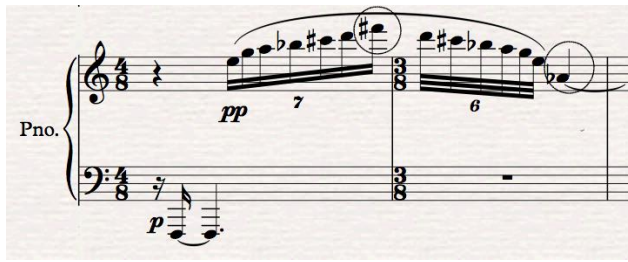
fig. 67 (b12: extended pitch collection - A²)



The collection of pitches that makes up motif A is constructed through the integration of different, complimentary intervals such as both major and minor seconds etc. The relationship between A and its variations - A¹ and A² - shown in fig. 66 and 67 above, can be clearly seen through a comparison of the circled notes (three pitch pentatonic group), in comparison with the ones within the square outline (four pitch semitone group).

The pitch collection seen in the second bar of fig. 65 (again, within a square outline) is a retrograde of the previous seven pitches. The combination of pentatonic plus semitone is a core melodic feature of the work, for example, fig. 66 and 67 show two instances where the original collection of seven pitches has been extended to generate different, whilst still complementary, musical gestures, both ascending and descending. Fig. 68 clearly shows how I alter specific pitches within the larger collections to freshen the melodic line and keep the music in a state of constant renewal.

fig. 68 (b87)



Additionally, several chords appear throughout the work, which reflect the harmonic implications of motif A. These chords retain an inherent pentatonic quality whilst also incorporating semitones, see fig. 69, bb.58-59.

fig. 69 (bb.58-59)

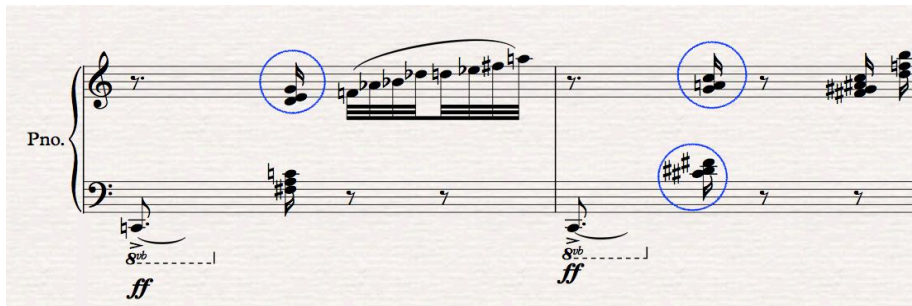


Fig. 70 shows three chords taken from bb.6, 31 and 62. Even though I have employed different ways of generating melodic and harmonic material in this work, the semitone is of paramount importance to the infrastructure of all the chordal patterns, as can be seen below.

fig. 70



Another basic ingredient, based on compound intervals and semitones taken from the pitch collection A, is the central motif B formed through a variety of intervallic conversions. This motif, as well as making distinctive use of contrast within register and timbre, also allowed me to extend the melodic and harmonic possibilities; many other gestures and melodic fragments developed somewhat organically from this motif.

Motif B first appears in the viola, bb. 9-20 and from there onwards, is heard many times in different guises and on different instruments. I sought to make the repetition of a particular phrase a leading characteristic of the work as a whole. Though I do not treat motif B as a *ritornello*, nor is my musical approach in line with the tenets of minimalism, nevertheless I wanted to explore the impression on an audience that repetition brings; I had in mind the effect of ‘deepening’ the aural impression in so far as ingraining this particular set of pitches in the aural subconscious of the listener.

fig. 71 (bb.9-20: motif B)



The primary musical feature of motif B is its musical framework. Certain pitches are increased or decreased in order to vary the melodic line whilst at the same time retaining a rough idea of the original melodic contour. By subjecting the melodic gestures to a process of nuanced modification at each and every occurrence, I sought to evoke - through my own imagination - a pervading sense of *Nuó*; each time motif B is heard in the work, the pattern of intervallic relationships has been slightly tweaked: bb.65-76 in the horn; bb.67-69 in the strings; bb.70-79 in the clarinet and viola; bb.94-103 in the piano and strings, and bb.113-120 in the viola again.

Motif B is formed principally on the basis of the chromatic semitone but, as is common with my practice and seen in previous works, I always try to ‘bend’ my melodic material out of shape, subjecting it to constant - sometimes infinitesimal - gradations of change, thus providing me a constantly multiplying pool of raw material with which to develop my work from. For example, in bar 43, the melodic line of the horn is from motif B; this then reappears at b85, the essential melodic shape and semitone relationship intact, see fig.72 and 73.

fig. 72 (b.43)



fig. 73 (b85)



Additionally, the rhythmic texture dominated by triplet semiquavers (appearing in bb.25, 29 and 110), is also derived from motif B, see figure 7. It also characterizes the coda (bb.122-end), seen in the viola part.

fig. 74 (b25)

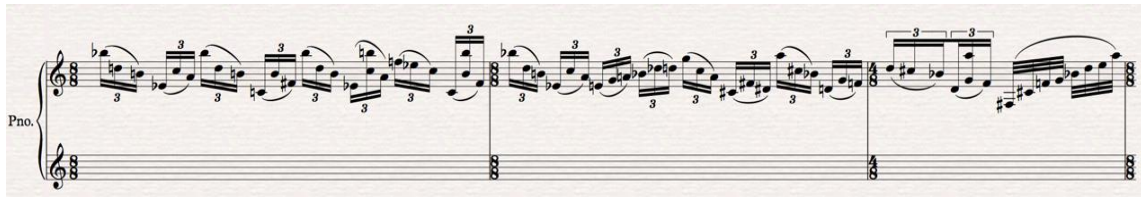
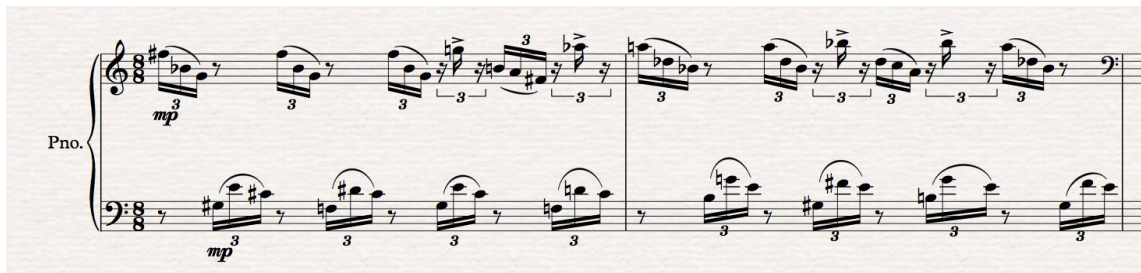


fig. 75 (b29)



fig. 76 (b110)



By using two basic motifs (A and B - mentioned above) which permeate the piece from beginning to end, I hoped to strengthen the grammar of the work through creating a centralized basic layout. The polyphonic texture which is used throughout the piece stems from intentionally focusing on horizontal pitch relationships, whilst maintaining an interleaving of melodic lines and gestures to generate both momentum and direction.

For example, in bb. 21 - 22 and bb. 110 - 111, I processed three possible combinations of counterpoint taken from the whole ensemble: clarinet plus violin; horn plus viola, and harp, see figure 8.

fig. 77 (bb.21 - 22)

Musical score for fig. 77 (bb.21 - 22). The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vla.). The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 94 (♩=94) and 96 (♩=96). The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the Clarinet and Horn, *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the Violin and Viola, and *f* (forte) for the Piano. The Piano part features a complex melodic line with triplets and a fermata over the final measure. The Violin and Viola parts have a similar melodic line with triplets and a fermata over the final measure.

fig. 78 (bb.110 - 111)

Musical score for fig. 78 (bb.110 - 111). The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vla.). The dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) for the Clarinet and Horn, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the Violin and Viola. The Piano part features a complex melodic line with triplets and a fermata over the final measure. The Violin and Viola parts have a similar melodic line with triplets and a fermata over the final measure. The Violin and Viola parts are marked with *pizz* (pizzicato).

Similar combinations of counterpoint and texture, both rhythmically and imitatively, abound throughout the piece. Another technique that can be seen in *Nuó* and characterizes my work as a whole, is the use of the unison; containing the dual functionality of summary and stability within the musical framework, this is another example of me reusing traditional harmonic and melodic practices within a predominantly a personal idiom.

Structure

The overall design of the work (see fig. 79) corresponds to a compound ternary form (A - B - A¹) subdivided into a plurality of phases which can be clearly seen in the schematic shown in figure 9. Whilst music can be determined by traditional formal prototypes, here the overall arrangement of the form depends solely on the development of the musical ideas contained within the piece. I pay most attention to variation on the minute level: nuanced harmonic inflections; rhythmic alteration; flexible instrumental colours etc. These are all considerations which are of primary importance and which have a very practical influence on the resultant structural considerations.

fig. 79 Macro/Microstructure

Structure	A				B	A ¹					
	<i>Antecedent</i>	I	II ¹	II ²	III	IV	V ¹	VI ¹	V ²	VI ²	<i>Coda</i>
Tempo	♩=69	♩=84	♩=94	♩=116	♩=120	♩=108	♩=62	♩=84	♩=132	♩=76	♩=132
Bars	1-7	8-20	21-30	31-41	42-64	65-79	80-92	93-103	104-112	113-121	122-end
Remarks	motif A	motif B	A+B	A+B	A+B (climax)	A+B	A	B (unison)	A	B	overtone fragments from motif B

For Orchestra (2015)

A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion



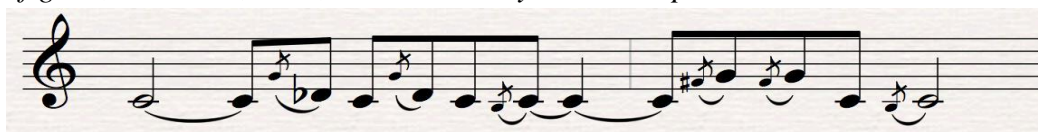
A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion, my second large-scale orchestral work, was completed in May 2015. While conceiving this work, I found myself emotionally - and perhaps for nostalgic reasons - drawn to several ancient Chinese paintings; their heightened sense of the picturesque, an aesthetic lauded by the refined scholars of past dynasties, many of whom lived in seclusion, appealed to me directly. I found the paintings a rich source of inspiration. The piece relies heavily on complex sound patterns based on gradations of colour derived from different techniques of orchestration.

Distribution and Function of the 4 pitch-class sets

A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion is characterized by the elaborations of three pitch-class sets that also could be viewed as motifs:

1. A Chinese-style melodic phrase confined to an interval of a perfect fifth at its outer limits. Whilst the duration of the two main pitches (C and G) differ at every sounding, and the music incorporates the inclusion of the semitone, the presence of the perfect fifth is always 'heard', as demonstrated in the linear writing for woodwind and brass. see fig. 80.

fig. 80, bb. 28-30, oboe, the Chinese-style melodic phrase



2. A five-pitch motif, featuring both horizontally and vertically, built from an expanding interval sequence: minor second (1 semitone), major second (2), minor third (3), perfect fourth (5), and tri-tone (6).

2a. The five-pitch class set referred to above but in explicitly horizontal form which is, for arguments sake, the 'original' form. This is characterized by a circulating repeat, as well as significant changes in register, resulting in ever changing melodic contours; by adding 1 and 6 (minor second and tri-tone), I was also able to extend the melodies, see

fig. 81, 82, and 83. There are several iterations of this motif occupying the foreground of the orchestral material; however, later on in the work, it is used in counterpoint to the Chinese-style melodic phrase.

fig. 81, b42, oboe



fig. 82, b74, vibraphone



fig. 83, bb79-83, cello



2b. The five pitch-class set assembled vertically, sometimes compressed into a very short duration as a horizontal 'statement', see fig. 84, as well as through the techniques of overlapping and repetition, to form an aleatory texture as seen in fig. 85.

fig. 84, b117 (Vlns. I, II & Vla.)



fig. 85, b207 (Vc., Db.)

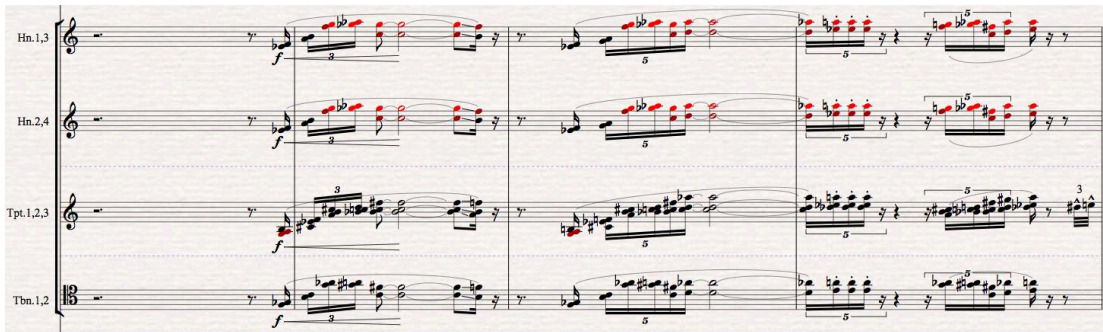


3. A 12-tone row. The five pitch-class set (2, 2a and 2b) referred to above is often combined with the row to create a palpable dramatic tension, achieved from the possibility of creating compound intervals and dissonance. Throughout much of *A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion*, I use the row in its prime form, treating it as an ostinato where each pitch has an equal duration; each subsequent sounding of the row is heard through a different method of articulation, thus ensuring that the listener is met with a series of subtle changes in color and timbre, see fig. 86 and 87.

fig. 86, 12-tone row, prime form



fig. 87, using fragments of 12-tone row, bb51-54



In fig. 87, we see a snapshot of the brass section where three distinct factors are at work:

1. Trumpet 1 - melody (B, F, C sharp, D and F sharp) is the first five pitches from the tone row.
2. The five pitches, as well as the upward trajectory of the gestures in all instruments is derived from the five pitch-class set.
3. All six voices in parallel motion and homophonic, thereby thickening the melodic line to attain something akin to blocks of sound, rather than melody per se.

Throughout this piece, blocks of orchestral sound based on intervals 1 (minor second) and 6 (tri-tone) signifies an important motif in and of itself, forming an integral element of the harmonic background to the work (see fig. 88).

fig. 88 (bb.35 and 81)

The image displays two musical staves for fig. 88. The left staff shows four parts: Eng. Hn., Cl. 1,2, B. Cl., and Bsn. 1,2. Each part features a trill (tr) and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The right staff shows four parts: Hn. 1,3, Hn. 2,4, Tpt. 1,2,3, and Tbn. 1,2,3,4. Each part features a dynamic marking of *pp*. The notation includes various musical symbols such as trills, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Intervals 1 and 6 are subjected to a variety of permutations and compositional gambits: decorative tones, as well as extra melodic notes inserted between three statements of the five pitch-class set in order to extend the phrase; relationships between voices (non-strict imitation) are in most cases characterized by the distance of either interval 1 or 6 (see fig. 89).

fig. 89 (bb.27 - 39)

The image displays two musical staves for fig. 89. The top staff shows three parts: Fl. 3, Ob. 1, and Ob. 2. The bottom staff shows three parts: Fl. 3, Ob. 1, and Ob. 2. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, dynamic markings (*mf*, *pp*), and performance instructions like "(bend down at the end)". Blue lines connect notes across staves, indicating relationships between voices.

Method and Orchestration

A Plum Tree Blossomed Fully in Front of Bi Fang Pavilion is written for traditional symphony orchestra, each of the four instrumental families take on different functions within the composition:

Generally, the strings from the background from which other sounds and timbres grow organically. For example: bb.28-42, the alto and bass strings are at a muted dynamic in order to support the timbre of a solo woodwind instrument; bb.246-274, I make extended use of 'bright' thin timbres (artificial harmonics and overtones, as well as glissandi) in order to complement the metallic sounds of the percussion used here; in bb.207-209, the strings cover a similar range to the brass, in order to embellish the melodic statements heard on the low brass. And, between bb.144-159, celli and double basses are in the process of an upwards trajectory, from bass to treble, clearly distinguishing between the different timbral qualities of register constituent in the same instrument.

The key function of the woodwind family is to carry melodic statements, whilst also incorporating the various unique timbres within an overall polyphonic texture - both foreground and background, being supported by the strings, for example in bb.51-61, as well as lending support to other instrumental groups such as the brass, bb.135-187, where the woodwinds and strings play both tremolos and trills in the high treble, allowing for the timbre of the brass and percussion to come through.

Similar to my approach to the woodwind writing, so too with the brass I utilize them primarily to articulate important melodic statements; of secondary, but no less importance, is using the sonic capabilities of the family, particularly tutti, to thicken the orchestral texture. Whilst this possibility certainly features in my work I have tried to approach this particular family carefully, so as not to overuse the effect of pure sonic might; often I have divided the brass into two or three constituent groups in order to form different textural shapes: the trombone and tuba are regularly paired together, often with other bass instruments such as the bassoon, contrabassoon, cello and double bass.

My approach to the percussion family also involves frequent subdivisions within the group:

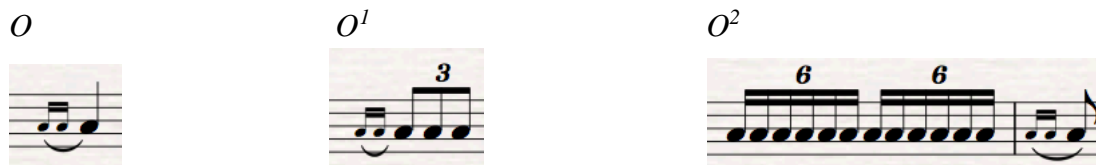
A. Pitched and non-pitched metal percussion in the treble register

B. Membranophones and non-pitched metal percussion in the alto and bass register

C. Wooden percussion

The percussion too is used to articulate and support melodic material, primarily linked to fixed rhythmic patterns, often repeated to determine the overall length of specific passages of music. This technique was inspired by the *Ban Gu*, a drum used in Beijing Opera, which takes a central role in the musical narrative, articulation and organization, using the rhythmic pattern O, as well as derivative versions O¹ and O² to indicate impending unisons and tuttis within the texture (see fig. 90). For example, in bar 73, O¹ can be seen immediately before an orchestral tutti; O², between bb. 166-171, immediately precedes a percussion unison; in bar 206, after the climax, O breaks the silence and draws forth the most dense tutti of the whole work.

fig. 90, the rhythmic patterns



My approach to the selection of timbres vis a viz melodic material can be summarized in two key points:

1. A loose imitation of the timbre of certain traditional Chinese instruments, for example: using the flute in its lowest register with a very wide vibrato to mimic the natural sound of the bamboo flute; the oboe, again its bass register, is a keen imitation of the *Guan Zi* pipe; muted trumpet plus oboe, together forms a timbre very close to that of the *Suo Na* horn; arpeggios on the harp combined with grace notes on the vibraphone elicits a sound akin to the *Zheng* zither.

2. I always chose to highlight, whenever possible, the expressive timbres of individual instruments. For example, when a solo cello is used to articulate a melody, I will often utilize the whole range of the instrument, the different characteristics of the treble and bass registers bringing gradations of change to my melodic material. Additionally, I have made use of some non-pitched Chinese percussion instruments such as the small *Beijing Gong*; the natural decay of the sound, combined with its own unique timbre helps convey a mournful tone to my work, particularly at the very end of the piece.

The introduction of each new sound is carefully considered, and my approach can be understood through highlighting three specific aspects of composition:

1. Using similar sounds; the wood blocks in bb.166-173 precede the introduction of the other percussion instruments.
2. I like to 'hide' the initial 'genes' of the new sound within the decay of the previous sound complexes. These will then emerge clearly as the preceding sound finishes; for example, the flute, cello and clarinet are all subjected to this method of sound metamorphosis in bb.61, 78 and 117 respectively.
3. Retain certain sounds whilst layering the new sound(s) over, thereby emphasizing the difference between them, and creating a contradistinctive *mélange*. A good example of this last technique can be seen in bb.49-51, where the woodwind and strings disappear as a natural consequence of their upward gestural trajectory, allowing space for the entrance of the brass underneath.

To highlight each instrumental sound within a *tutti* texture, I frequently stagger the entrances of each instrument or instrumental group. A clear example of this technique can be seen in bar 81. The two rhythmic combinations in the percussion, seen in figure 8, also correspond to the technique of staggered entries.

fig. 91, b173

Musical score for percussion instruments in figure 91, b173. The score is written for four staves: Timp., Perc.1, Perc.2, and Perc.3. The instruments are: Big Chinese Cymbais (Naobo), (Wood Block), Bass Drum, and Big Chinese Cymbais (Naobo). The dynamics are marked *mf*. The score shows a rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and rests, with a *mf* dynamic marking. The percussion parts are: Timp. (Big Chinese Cymbais (Naobo)) with a *mf* dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes; Perc.1 (Wood Block) with a *mf* dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes; Perc.2 (Bass Drum) with a *mf* dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes; Perc.3 (Big Chinese Cymbais (Naobo)) with a *mf* dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes.

fig. 92, b230

Musical score for percussion instruments in figure 92, b230. The score is written for four staves: Timp., Perc.1, Perc.2, and Perc.3. The instruments are: (B.C.Cym.), Tubular Chime, (Bass Drum), and (B.C.Cym.). The dynamics are marked *ff*. The score shows a rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and rests, with a *ff* dynamic marking. The percussion parts are: Timp. ((B.C.Cym.)) with a *ff* dynamic and a muffled sound; Perc.1 (Tubular Chime) with a *ff* dynamic and a muffled sound; Perc.2 ((Bass Drum)) with a *ff* dynamic and a muffled sound; Perc.3 ((B.C.Cym.)) with a *ff* dynamic and a muffled sound.

The pitches are generally assigned to instruments of a similar or identical sound quality, or from within the same instrumental family; pitches are arranged vertically following the rule of the natural overtone series too, so, there are wider intervals in the bass, smaller ones (leading to a more harmonically dense texture) in the treble: see fig. 93 (the strings at b81); fig. 94 (brass at b224), and fig. 95 (woodwind and brass at b110).

fig. 93

Musical score for fig. 93, featuring Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three measures. The Violin parts play a sustained chord of G4, B4, and D5, marked *pp*. The Viola part plays a sustained chord of G3, B3, and D4. The Violoncello part plays a melodic line: G2 (quarter), A2-B2 (eighths), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), G3 (quarter). The Double Bass part plays a sustained chord of G2, B2, and D3. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

fig. 94

Musical score for fig. 94, featuring Horns (Hn. 1,3 and Hn. 2,4), Trumpets (Tpt. 1,2,3 and Tpt. 2,3), and Trombones (Tbn. 1,2, Tbn. 3, and Tba.). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three measures. The Horns and Trombones play a sustained chord of G4, B4, and D5, marked *pp*. The Trumpets play a melodic line: G4 (quarter), A4-B4 (eighths), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). The key signature has one flat (Bb).

fig. 95

The image displays a page of a musical score for a full orchestra, labeled 'fig. 95'. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for various instruments. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. 1, Fl. 2,3, Ob. 1,2, Eng. Hn., Cl. 1,2, B. Cl., Bsn. 1,2, Cbsn., Hn. 1,3, Hn. 2,4, Tpt. 1,2,3, Tbn. 1,2, Tbn. 3, and Tba. The score shows a dynamic progression from *ff* (fortissimo) to *pp* (pianissimo) and back to *f* (forte). A bracket labeled '8^{va}' spans the first few measures, indicating an octave shift. A '5' is written below the notes in the first few measures, likely indicating a fingering or a specific articulation. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *ff*, *pp*, and *f*. The articulation is marked with a '5' and a '7' (likely a fingering or a specific articulation). The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *ff*, *pp*, and *f*. The articulation is marked with a '5' and a '7' (likely a fingering or a specific articulation). The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *ff*, *pp*, and *f*. The articulation is marked with a '5' and a '7' (likely a fingering or a specific articulation).

With reference to the schematics below, one can derive an overall sense of the large scale structure, and not only clearly see the relationships of the interconnecting subsections (divisions of musical structure), but also their defining characteristics: the prevailing textures of each section, dynamics, and dominant register.

Fig.10a

Section	I				II			III	
Foreground	Bassoon I,II	Oboe I,II	Percussion (group 1)	Brass	Flute	Cello	Clarinet	Vibraphone Harp	Woodwinds
Middle ground	Clarinet	Flute	Flute, Trumpet	Percussion 1	Harp	Vibraphone Harp		Percussion (group 2)	<i>Ban-gu</i> (Chinese drum), used for beating time (function: connection)
Background	Tuba, Double bass	Tuba, Double bass	Strings	Woodwinds Strings	Strings	whole orchestra harmony	Strings	Strings	Strings
Register	Bass	Alto	Treble	Treble	Alto	Alto\Bass	Treble\Alto	Alto	Alto
Dynamics	<i>pp</i>	<i>mf - p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>mf - f</i>	<i>f - pp - ff</i>	<i>mf - pp</i>	<i>p - mf</i>	<i>p - pp</i>
Bars	1 - 27	28 - 42	42 - 51	52 - 60	61 - 77	78 - 117	117 - 134	135 - 155	156 - 172

Fig.10b

Section	IV-a		IV-b		Coda (Recap)
Foreground	Oboe Horn Trombone	Violin I, II Ban-gu	Brass	Percussion (group 5)	Vibraphone Harp
Middle ground	Percussion (group 3)		Woodwinds Percussion (group 4)		Percussion (2)
Background	Woodwinds Strings		Strings	Strings	Strings
Register	Alto	Treble	extreme Treble extreme Bass		Alto
Dynamics	<i>mf-f-ff-fff</i>	<i>pp - mp</i>	<i>ff - fff</i>	<i>ffff-ff-f-mf-pp</i>	<i>p - pp - ppp</i>
Bars	173 - 202	203 - 206	207 – 231	231 - 245	246 – 285

The percussion is divided into 5 groups:

1. *Ban-Gu*, Small drum, Vibraphone
2. Glockenspiel, Bells, Triangle
3. Chinese cymbals, Ban-Gu, Bass drum, cymbals
4. Chinese cymbals, Ban-Gu, Bass drums cymbals, tom-tom
5. Ban-Gu, Chimes, Bass drum.

Epilogue

Over the course of the portfolio I have attempted to address directly the three major research questions outlined at the beginning of this Commentary. With varying degrees of success, I believe that each piece reflects clearly one, sometimes more of these research aims.

The seven works which make up this portfolio of original compositions all reveal a strong emphasis on a predominantly linear narrative development consistent with what I would term ‘traditional’, or orthodox compositional practice in China, and, to an extent, the whole of Eastern Asia.

Vertical harmonies containing several voices primarily arise from aggregates involving pentatonic natural intervals, for example the major second, major and minor third, and perfect fourth and fifth; pitches found in the pentatonic scale are indeed ‘stacked’ to form harmonies, yet rarely do they form triads.

These works also testify to my predilection for building works around essentially monophonic material, freely developing textures colored by unisons and octaves; melodic fragments are engendered through rhythmic and harmonic patterns which emerge during the composition process. My ear is also drawn to extended solo melodies and these appear frequently in the seven works gathered here. These melodies which form and instruct my core approach to the composition of any given work derive from a variety of sources and/or inspiration; some of them come directly from folk songs or develop from the integration of twelve-tone technique and pentatonic elements.

In relation to questions regarding genre and instrumentation, four pieces in the portfolio were written specifically for the flexible grouping of the Lontano ensemble. In *Double Riddles*, I ask both players to sing a short melody in addition to playing, something that I wouldn’t have had the confidence to ask had I not known the musicians I would be writing for probably. In *Pilgrims from the snow-covered plateau*, the most striking feature is the sustained unisons and overlapping octaves. *The Westerly wind said...* exhibits several techniques to ‘soften’ the sound to

conjure up the ones of an antique style, for example imitating on the harp the Zheng, a traditional Chinese instrument. *Nuó* rooted in lively and 'rough' hewed dance rhythms, consciously strives to create an 'immersive' experience for the audience.

From the first to the last piece, I have consciously set out to forge a musical language which is personal to me, one that reflects not only my experiences, both musical and cultural whilst growing up, but also that is open to exploring and working with new approaches and influences.

Perhaps the most important issue which emerged for me whilst composing the works found in this portfolio was that of pentatonicism, specifically whether I should embrace or divorce from it. I realized that were I to abandon it all together, it would be more challenging to effectively embody what I find to be most exquisite and unique aspect of traditional Chinese music. This path would also mean that successfully integrating a huge library of extant musical resources which I have drawn on extensively over the course of these seven works, would have proved much harder.

With utmost respect for the many Chinese composers working today whose approach consists of an amalgamation of pentatonicism, twelve-tone technique, as well as strict serialism, I believe that an important task for us as Chinese composers interested in not only preserving but developing the traditional aspects of our native music is to work towards a completely new and systematic theses prescribing in clear, exact and pragmatic fashion a new set of 'rules' and goals for the application of pentatonic theory within the rapidly changing and dialectical world of contemporary music.

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