Tradition and Creation

By Chen Yi

I think that contemporary society is like a great, complex network of attitudes, values, and worldviews, in which everything exists within different cultures and environments. This network keeps changing at every moment, with different parties interacting with each other, so that each experience that we come across can become an exciting source and medium for creation. As for music composition, it is the precipitate of a composer’s cultural and psychological background. A serious composer should learn to establish some relatively stable principles on which he or she can base creative work. Because I believe that language can be translated into music and because I speak out naturally in my mother tongue, there are Chinese blood, Chinese philosophy, and Chinese customs in my music. However, because music is a universal language, I hope to capture the essence of both Eastern and Western cultures, and to write more compositions that embody my own temperament as well as the spirit of this brave new epoch. I hope to improve the understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds and to further the peace of our new world.

My Musical Background

I was born into a family of doctors who had a strong interest in music. I had trained as a classical violinist since I was very young, and had played through almost all the major European classical violin repertoire before I really started composing seriously. When the Cultural Revolution overtook China in the 1960s, I tried hard to continue my music studies, practicing violin at home (with the mute attached), playing the piano (sight-reading score collections with a blanket hung between the hammers and the steel soundboard inside of the piano), and listening to record collections (with all the windows shut) before the Red Guards came to search our home and took all of them away. As a teenager, in 1968, I was sent to the countryside for two years of forced labor (with a hundred pounds loaded on my back, climbing to the top of mountains, and working sometimes twelve hours a day). I took my violin along, however, and, sometimes after hard labor, played simple songs interspersed with excerpts taken from my standard repertoire to local farmers. A positive aspect of this experience was the wider knowledge I gained of the life and music of my motherland and its people. I started thinking about civilization, and about the value of the individual’s life and the importance of education. I even tried to educate
the poor kids in the village. The more I “touched the ground,” the more I learned from the common people, who have carried on the rich Chinese culture for thousands of years.

When I was seventeen, I returned to my home city, Guangzhou, and served as concertmistress and composer with the Beijing Opera Troupe Orchestra (a 35-piece ensemble consisting of an enlarged single-wind Western orchestra and a Chinese traditional instrument ensemble). At this time I began my research of Chinese traditional music, as well as of Western and Chinese music theory in my spare time—research that occupied me for eight years. When China's school system was restored in the late 1970s, I became one of the top applicants admitted to the Beijing Central Conservatory, where I began an eight-year, systematic study of Chinese traditional music, as well as strict training in Western classical music techniques (advanced ear-training, a heavy load of piano lessons, harmony, counterpoint, music analysis, and orchestration) and music history (both Chinese and Western). The required courses of Chinese traditional music included Chinese folk songs (from all provinces and ethnic groups, in local dialects), traditional instrumental music (including plucking, blowing, and percussion instruments), local operas (history and the styles of singing, as well as reciting, acting, accompaniment, makeup, costume, stage setting, etc.), and narrative music (Qu Yi, which is musical storytelling that is half spoken and half sung). We also went to the countryside every year to collect folk songs (for five years in the undergraduate program, plus three years in the Master’s program). I could see what is natural—it’s so close to my native language and the customs of my daily life! I felt that if I were to create my music in a language with which I am most familiar, using logical principles that are related to nature, then my compositions would be very natural in emotion and powerful in spirit. This is my ideal. With my String Quartet and Duo Ye (for solo piano) winning the top prizes in China’s composition competitions, I obtained my Master of Arts degree in composition in 1986. That year, a whole evening concert of my orchestral works was presented at Beijing Concert Hall, which included my Symphony No. 1, Viola Concerto Xian Shi, Duo Ye (for chamber orchestra), Sprout (for string orchestra), and Music for Two Ensembles of Wind and Percussion.

**Duo Ye: A Piano Piece from a Field Trip**

*Duo Ye*, for solo piano, was written in 1984, and has been performed in recitals and piano competitions by numerous pianists throughout the world. It has also been adapted for chamber orchestra, for pipa solo, and rewritten for full orchestra (*Duo Ye No. 2*). Duo Ye is a form of age-old traditional song and dance of the Dong minority nationality in the Guangxi
Zhuang Autonomous Region of China. In Duo Ye, people stand in a circle with a bonfire in the center, and dance in slow steps toward one direction while singing a short phrase—"Ya Duo Ye"—in chorus, in response to a lead singer (often the tribune of a village), who stands aside and extemporizes the words of a song made with improvised short tunes, extending a warm welcome to guests or for celebrating a happy occasion. "Ya Duo Ye" are nonsense syllables; the phrase is sung as a refrain in the traditional dance Duo Ye, with intervals of a minor third, perfect fourth, and major second (see fig. 1). I traveled to the district of the Dong and Yao ethnic groups in Guangxi province with a group of composers from the Central Conservatory of Music in 1980. The warm scene left such a deep impression on me that I wrote the piano solo piece Duo Ye as a result of this field trip.

In Duo Ye, I took the pitch material (the three intervals) from the original refrain (pitch material "a" in the treble clef; see fig. 2) as the melodic motive to develop, and also used it to make up the dancing rhythmic chorale (pitch material "b" in the bass clef) as the accompaniment. In the beginning of the middle section of the piece, the "c" material is brought in (see fig. 3). It is developed from "a," but imitates a Beijing Opera tune (which represents my feeling as a visitor to the region).

The material is set homophonically or polyphonically. In presenting the singing style of the high-pitched mountain songs, I used many grace notes to decorate the basic notes of the melody. At the same time, I created hidden layers, with the same primitive pitch materials as in the repeated twelve-note rhythmic pattern that serves as the dancing accompaniment. The melodic contour of the pattern in the bass clef comes from material "c" (G, B♭, G, F, E♭, D, B, G♯), while the first, fourth, and sixth eighth notes are taken from the intervals of "a" and "b" (see fig. 4).

The overall rhythmic arrangement in the entire piece is dominated by an application of a telescopic principle originating in Shifan Luogu, a type of traditional percussion ensemble music in southeastern China. In Duo Ye, the combinations and contrasts between high and low parts, the design of the meters, and the numbers of groupings of notes, are all inspired by the original rhythmic organizations called "The Sum of Eight" and "The

Figure 1: Melody in the refrain of Chinese folk dance Duo Ye.
Figure 2: Pitch material “a” and “b” of Duo Ye (for solo piano).

Figure 3: Pitch material “c” of Duo Ye (for solo piano).

Figure 4: The twelve-note rhythmic pattern in Duo Ye (for solo piano).

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Golden Olive," from the Shifan Luogu (see fig. 5). The power of the primitive imagination, the highly energetic spirit, and the charming folksinging are represented in the composition as the soul of the music.

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Going to New York to study was an extremely interesting experience. I went to the music library at Lincoln Center to study new scores (written in many different styles), and attended numerous concerts, in small and large concert halls, clubs, churches, parks, subway stations, and on the streets. My mentor at Columbia University, Chou Wen-Chung, gave lectures on new music as well as on research in ethnomusicology, and analyzed many of his compositions with me in detail (culturally and technically). Mario Davidovsky taught me extensively in the areas of musical concepts, construction, and orchestral writing (as well as in electronic music composition). I also learned a great deal from my twentieth-century music theory course with George Edwards, from an early music course with Pat Carpenter, and from the Contemporary Music Practice course given by musicians of Speculum Musicae. These courses gave me the

**Figure 5:** Rhythmic structures from Chinese percussion-ensemble music Shifan Luogu.
ability to consider music not as new versus historical, nor as Eastern versus Western, but rather to consider the fact that human thought goes into all of these musics. I began to see similarities in musical styles, aesthetics, customs, feelings, and principles. As I considered composing in my own unique language, in my most natural voice and style, I began to be inspired by what I had learned from various cultural traditions, and even from scientific principles.

**The Points: A Pipa Piece from Chinese Calligraphy**

In 1991 I wrote *The Points*, for solo pipa, which was premiered by Wu Man at Columbia University, and presented by the New Music Consort in the NEWworksOCTOBER series. The pipa (a four-stringed Chinese lute in the shape of a pear) is held in a vertical position and played with a plucking technique, using picks that are worn on all five fingers of the right hand. It has a wide range, which covers almost all chromatic notes from A2 to E6. There are more than seventy techniques for the left and right hands, which include a variety of ways of producing tremolo, vibrato, glissando, pitch inflection, and harmonics.

In the formative stages of this piece, I researched the traditional pipa repertoire extensively (most pieces are classified strictly into either lyrical music or martial music categories), learning all methods and principles of fingering (applied to both hands), and listening to the “inner voice” from various schools of pipa performance, in order to get myself really familiar with the language of the instrument.

The structure of *The Points* comes from the eight standard brushstroke movements of the Chinese character yong [eternal] in Zhengkai calligraphy (see fig. 6); the melodic material comes from Qinqiang music (a type of Qu Yi popularized in Shaanxi province). In this work, I integrated the essence of the traditional lyric and martial techniques; but its unique structure, melody, and basic tunings—I retuned the strings from A2, D3, E3, A3, to B₃, E₃, E₃, A₃, in order to easily meet the needs of playing the Qinqiang music material and the dissonant chords—were worlds apart from the traditional. The title refers to the contact points between brush and paper where a stroke commences, as well as to the characterization of the eight strokes, which have sensitive articulations and gestures (each stroke starts with a point—a unique touch to make its own shape—and

*Figure 6: The Chinese character yong [eternal] in Zhengkai calligraphy.*

永
goes continuously in a designated direction in order to complete the whole stroke). *The Points* also aptly captures the nature of plucked string music: the melody is created out of the musical “points” plucked forth by the fingers.

Since all eight strokes have different shapes, they need to be drawn carefully, with different gestures and speeds; sometimes the ink should be dark, sometimes faint; heavy or light. There is balance in the whole picture but there are different spaces between the strokes. By translating the concept into music, I constructed the whole piece based on the method of drawing each stroke of the character, one after another in order. In different sections, there are gripping portamenti, colorful vibratos, and vigorous strumming. There is one section in which an initial thick, humming male vocal sound suddenly becomes a subtle yet bright soprano sound. I also use nontraditional position-jumps and string-spanning techniques borrowed from my Paganini violin repertoire, which allows greater flexibility for executing rhythms, dynamics, and melodic shape (with wide-range jumps between the lower and upper registers). There is also a forceful section that culminates in the major climax of the piece, which calls for sixty measures of extremely fast-moving sixteenth notes (inspired by a famous line from the poem “Song of the Lute” by the great poet Bai Ju-yi, who lived during the Tang Dynasty: “Like a pouring of large and small pearls into a plate of jade”). The concluding section is tranquil, simple, and lyrical, yet each note carries deep emotion, with subtle fingering variations and different types of harmonics, which make up the gradations of dynamics and timbres. The work ends with the sudden appearance of the lun zhi, a type of tremolo produced by using the five fingers of the right hand to pluck the strings rapidly, creating a strong, high tone, sustained for 36 beats. The last brush stroke comes as a finishing flourish. I hope that this work’s conceptual daring, structural integrity, technical complexity, and rich “folk flavor” all help me to share my creative experience with my audience.

**Sparkle: An Octet from the Form of a Folk Tune**

After *The Points*, the New Music Consort commissioned me to compose the octet *Sparkle*, with funds provided by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. Pitch, rhythm, and form materials of *Sparkle* are drawn from the traditional Chinese Baban [Eight Beats] rules of the grouping of notes (see fig. 7).

With 68 beats in the entire piece, the original Chinese folk tune Baban consists of eight phrases; each phrase has eight beats (eight quarter notes) except the fifth phrase. Four quarter notes are added to the end of the fifth phrase. If we multiply 68 by the ratio 0.618 (the Golden Section), we
The Golden Section and the Fibonacci Series are found in both nature and human society. One can find the ratio in the proportions of the human body and in the leaves of some plants, as well as in human construct-
tions such as the designs and floor plans of some buildings, and in ancient Chinese theories of mathematics—even in the sizes of sheets of paper in the contemporary world. Because it reflects natural beauty and proportion, it is applied extensively in every field. In the course of several generations of performances of Baban, folk musicians must have transferred this natural feeling of balance from the visual arts and natural sciences to the form and rhythm of the music.

There are four kinds of groupings in the eight phrases of Baban. In the first kind, used in the first, second, and fourth phrases, three groupings are arranged as 3, 2, and 3 quarter notes; in the second kind of grouping, used in the fifth phrase, a group of 4 quarter notes is added to the end of the first kind of grouping; in the third kind, used in the third, sixth, and eighth phrases, two groupings are arranged as 4 and 4 quarter notes; and in the fourth, used in the seventh phrase, there are two groupings, arranged as 5 and 3 quarter notes.

Excluding the additional four beats at the end of the fifth phrase, there are eight beats in each phrase that belong to the first and second kinds of groupings, and the sum of each neighboring two numbers of beats (2 or 3) in the first two kinds of grouping is five. The relations between groupings represent the figures from the Fibonacci Series: 2, 3, 5, and 8. The relation of 3, 5, and 8 is also reflected in the fourth kind of grouping.

By contrast, the third kind of grouping is in a square structure, $4 + 4 = 8$, and is balanced symmetrically. The symmetrical phrases (including the fifth phrase) are contrasted with those related to the Fibonacci Series. They form the basis for the changes, contrast, and balance for the entire piece. Among those four phrases, the third, fifth, and eighth are also in positions that are in accordance with the Fibonacci Series. In Chinese mythology, the form of Baban can be considered a parallel of a "seamless heavenly robe" (an idiomatic expression, meaning "flawless").

In the Chinese tradition, people favor the number 8—the sound "ba" (the number 8) also symbolizes good fortune—which indicates the number of the most famous mountains, the directions of the compass, the divisions of the agricultural seasons in the lunar calendar, the principal syndromes in traditional medicine, the sounds of musical instruments as classified by their physical sound-producing materials, the standard strokes of the character "yong" in calligraphy, the Eight Diagrams in Taoism, and so on. The folk tune Baban has become the maternal melody and model of many Chinese traditional music pieces throughout China. According to my extensive research, the variation methods used in all of these pieces include melodic decoration (adding grace notes and complications to the rhythms of the main melody), note borrowing (using some notes to replace the original, which may cause the mode to change), structural changes
(adding bridges), and enlarged form (expanding the original form without completely changing the structure of the original tune), or simply using the original melody as a framework for improvisation. In ensemble music, heterophonic variation is also used in different instrument parts, based on these instruments' special performing techniques. After years of serious study of Chinese traditional music, I have applied all of these methods, together with my knowledge of Western classical and contemporary music, to create my own musical works.

Written for flute (doubling piccolo), Eb clarinet, two percussionists, piano, violin, cello, and double bass, the octet Sparkle is an eleven-minute *moto perpetuo*-like ensemble piece, expressing my impressions of sparks—everlasting flashes of wit, so bright, nimble, and passionate. I constructed it into a composite ternary form with parts arranged in a symmetrical design (A, A1; B, C, B1; A1, A). There are two pitch sources. One is taken from the pentatonic folk tune Baban (mm. 37–44, 168–79, 281–88, and 305), and the other is a twelve-tone row (A, Eb, C#, D, A#, F#, G, F, E, B, C, and B♭, from m. 117). They are integrated with each other horizontally and vertically throughout the piece. The meter design in part A and A1 is based on the grouping principle in Baban (6, 4, 6; 6, 4, 6; 4, 4, 4; 6, 4, 6; 6, 4, 6; 4, 4; 4, 4, 4; 5, 5, 6; 4, 4, 4, 4). General impressions of the style of Chinese mountain-song singing and Chinese instrument playing also influence the sounds that are heard in the textures of the ensemble.

**Qi: A Mixed Quartet in Proportion**

After writing some orchestral and choral works for the Women's Philharmonic and the vocal ensemble Chanticleer during my residency, supported by Meet The Composer's New Residencies program, I composed a mixed quartet entitled **Qi** (for flute, cello, percussion, and piano). I wrote **Qi** for the New Music Consort, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, with a grant provided by the Meet The Composer/Readers Digest Consortium Commissioning Program.

In **Qi** (the Chinese character means air, breath, energy, and spirit), I tried to use a combination of Western instruments to create the sound from the East, as well as to express my feelings of the Qi: It is untouchable and mysterious, but very powerful; it melts into air and light; it's like the space in Chinese paintings; it fills in the space between the dancing lines of Chinese calligraphy; and it's the spirit in the human mind. In this composition I translated my general feeling of the Qi (i.e., nature) into my musical language, in a free and slow tempo. There are also exaggerated textures that are full of tension; through them I tried to sound the inner voices and spirit of human beings, to experience aurally this eternal power. Inspired by the form of the Chinese folk tune Baban, I used the Golden Section theory extensively in the creation of **Qi**—for the hier-
architectural design of the structure, texture, timbre, tempo, dynamics, and rhythm.

Qi has two parts that have exactly the same duration (part I is from A to
the end of E, part II is from F to the end of M), plus a small coda (N; see
fig. 8). The duration of the total 201 measures, all in 4/4 meter, is about
ten minutes. The work is in binary form with a recapitulation (J to M in
part II). Measure 71 stands right in the middle of the two parts. The major
Golden Section is located in G (m. 85), where the tempo is doubled from
56 beats per minute (mm. 1-84) to 112 bpm (mm. 85-196). In order to
make the length and timing of the music equivalent during analysis, the
previous measure numbers should be counted twice. Thus, 70 \times 2 = 140
constitutes part I; (14 \times 2 = 28) + 112 = 140 yields part II (the first 14
measures are in the previous tempo). If we put the two parts together as a
whole (140 + 140 = 280), we get the Golden Section at the beginning of
m. 85 (280 \times 0.6 = 168; 168 \div 2 = 84). According to the Golden Section
theory, the big proportion is from A to G (mm. 1-84); the small propor­
tion is from G to N. 85 \times 0.618 = 52.53; thus, the first secondary GS (posi­
tive) is on E (m. 53). 112 \times 0.6 = 67.2; 112 - 67 = 45; thus, the second sec­
tondary GS (negative) is on J (m. 130, the 45th measure from m. 85).

In part I, A (mm. 1-12) and B (mm.13-24) are put together as an in­
troduction, which exposes all the basic pitch and timbral materials. The
same length (12 mm.) is used in both A and B, which anticipates the bi­
nary form of the whole piece. Furthermore, the opening phrase in the
solo cello introduces all the major pitch materials developed in the en­
tire piece. Material “a,” the opening tritone, is taken from the oldest folk
song that I heard during my field trip to Guangxi province. (This song
was sung by the head of a Yao ethnic-group tribe, and tells of how, in
Chinese myth, the giant Pangu created heaven and earth.) The major
and minor seconds of “b” are taken from the intervals used in the ca­
dences of most choral folk songs of the Zhuang ethnic group. The “c”
material, a set of fast notes at the end of a phrase, is my imitation of the
shape of mountain song-singing, which is close to the sound of speech
(see fig. 9). The Golden Section method is introduced for the first time
in the ministructures. In m. 8 of A, the sudden loud sound is “punched in”
with a combination of bongo, crotale, and a screaming high note on
the flute. The loudest point occurs at m. 21 of B, where the whole en­
semble is playing.

Let’s look at the music from C to F (mm. 25–70, the end of part I).
When we put C and D together as the big proportion (mm. 25–52), and
leave E as the small proportion in the section (mm. 53–70), the small GS
starts right at E with a pizzicato cello solo. Synchronously, m. 53 is the
point of one of the secondary Golden Sections (from A to G) of the piece
as a whole.
Figure 8: Structure of Qi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(70 \times 2 = 140) m in the tempo of quarter note=112</td>
<td>(14 \times 2 + 112 = 140) m in quarter note=112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quarter note=56</td>
<td>quarter note=112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.1  13  25  39  53</td>
<td>m. 71  100  112  130  154  170  186  197  201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A    B    C    D    E</td>
<td>F    G    H    I    J    K    L    M    N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd GS</td>
<td>2nd GS (negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 61</td>
<td>Major GS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction | Exposition & Development | Climax Section | Recapitulation | Coda |
| 13m+12m=25m | 36m+24m=60m | (16+11)+18=45 (24+16)+(16+11)=67 |

Figure 9: Melody of Qi, mm. 1–5.

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Now we will take a closer look at C (mm. 25–38), where the music is lined up with the number of groupings on the piano part: 13 + 1, 11 + 1, 9 + 1, 7 + 1, 5 + 1, 3 + 1, and 1 + 1 (reducing the beats of quintuplets, plus one beat of septuplets inserted). The telescopic rhythmic arrangement is inspired by the Chinese traditional percussion-ensemble music Shifan Luogu, described above (see fig. 5), although one more important aspect I should mention is that no matter what rhythmic pattern the ensemble plays, the accented ending note is emphasized by tutti (which inspired me to have the logical single beat inserted with a sudden faster pattern). D (mm. 39–52) again has the same number of groupings: 13 + 1, 11 + 1, 9 + 1, 7 + 1, 5 + 1, 3 + 1, and 1 + 1—this time in the cello part (double sextuplets).

On the other hand, if we take the 70 measures of part I as a whole (from A to F), the negative GS falls in m. 25, where C starts. There are 46
measures in the later and bigger portion (mm. 25–70); the GS falls in m. 53, where E starts. Subsequently, there are 28 measures in the subdivided bigger portion (mm. 25–52), and the smaller GS falls in m. 39, where D starts. As for the 18 measures in the subdivided smaller portion (mm. 53–70), the smallest GS falls in m. 64, where the maracas are brought in again to echo the opening timbre and end part I.

After we reach the end of part I, there are 14 measures (same length as C or D) from F to G (mm. 71–84) to bring the music to part II. The percussion carries over the pulse from the previous fast-moving patterns in the piano and cello, which become soft, low, non-pitched quintuplets. The tension is increased, and we arrive at G (m. 85), where the tempo becomes faster, and the high tom-tom sixteenth notes are equivalent to 32nd notes (in the previous tempo). Although F delineates the midpoint of the whole piece, the music can’t stop there but has to go on to G. Interestingly, if we exclude the introduction (mm. 1–24), and count from m. 25 to m. 84 (a total of 60 measures), the (positive) GS is located in m. 61 (60 \times 0.6 = 36), which is the softest point in part I!

Now we’ll take a look at the structure from G to the end of M (mm. 85–196) in part II. There are 112 measures in the same tempo (112 quarter notes per minute). Since 45 + 67 = 112, the small proportion is from G to the end of I (15 [G] + 12 [H] + 18 [I] = 45). This is the biggest section of the piece, which lasts for 45 measures (mm. 85–129). 45 \times 0.6 = 27, and the 27th measure from bar 85 is the beginning of I (m. 112). 27 \times 0.6 = 16.2, and the sixteenth measure from the beginning of bar 85 is the beginning of H (m. 100), where the percussion starts a cadenza.

As for the big proportion of 67 measures (from J to the end of M), 40 (J and K) + 27 (L and M) = 67. The beginning of J (m. 130) is the secondary (negative) GS of the entire work and the beginning of the recapitulation. I. (m. 170) is the point where the melodic theme returns in a duet between flute and cello. 40 \times 0.6 = 24; thus, 24 (J) + 16 (K) = 40. Measure 154 (K) is the point where the piano solo starts, and it lasts for 16 measures. 27 \times 0.6 = 16.2; thus, 16 (L) + 11 (M) = 27, and m. 186 (M) is the transition part, which lasts for eleven measures before the coda begins. As a short conclusion, the coda lasts for five measures in the primary slow tempo (56 quarter notes per minute). In Qi, again, the grouping method based on the Baban form (see fig. 7) is used rhythmically in two places: mm. 117–28 in the percussion part, and mm. 157–68 in the piano part.

As usual, I hear Chinese instrumental sounds when I compose, even when using Western instruments. For Qi, I was asked to feature each of the four musicians in the ensemble; I could write anything I wanted, both musically and technically. I wrote the percussion part with the sound and rhythmic patterns of Beijing Opera percussion ensembles in mind (a muffled sound in the Chinese cymbals; a set of gongs, cymbals, and a big
The pizzicato cello imitates the Chinese plucked-string instruments as well as the sound of the erhu in the high range; the flute is played with the tone quality of a dizi (transverse bamboo flute), and also imitates the weeping sound of a xun (a wind instrument made from clay) in the low register; the piano has the gestures of a zheng (zither) and other plucked instruments. I use all four instruments carefully to hit certain points, to form the lines and textures horizontally and vertically, and I wrote the parts in various registers and for various tone qualities. All the instrument parts are formally and structurally functional, and express the emotions I felt. In Qi all four musicians are treated as soloists, though at the same time, the combinations between all instruments are sensitive, colorful, and powerful.

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I am grateful to Dan Thompson and Current Musicology for providing this opportunity to share my creative experiences. I look forward to future opportunities to write about the creation of my orchestral and choral works. In doing so, I hope to make a contribution to our new culture and society.

Notes

1. A collection of these pieces was released by the China Record Corporation (AL-57).

2. Duo Ye, for solo piano, is published by Theodore Presser (110-40728), and recorded by Shi Shucheng on China Record Co. Guangzhou (CCD 90-088). Duo Ye, for chamber orchestra, has been released on China Record Co. Beijing (AL-57); Duo Ye, for solo pipa, has been recorded on CRI (CD 804) and on Avant (AVAN 021) by Min Xiao-fen. Duo Ye No. 2, performed by the Women’s Philharmonic, and conducted by JoAnn Falletta, appears on New Albion (NA 090).

3. The Points has subsequently been performed worldwide, and recorded on Nimbus Records (NI 3568) by Wu Man, as well as on CALA Records (CADC 0504) by Min Xiao-fen. It is published by Theodore Presser Company.

4. The piece was premiered on 21 October 1992 at the Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music. The work has been performed subsequently by many excellent chamber ensembles in the United States and Europe, and recorded on CRI (CD 804) by the New Music Consort, conducted by Claire Heldrich, and is published by the Theodore Presser Company.

5. The Music of Chen Yi, orchestral and choral works recorded on New Albion (NA 090); and choral works included on the CDs Wondrous Love and Colors of Love (1999 Grammy Award) on Teldec (16676-2) and (3984-24570-2).

6. Qi was premiered in 1997 and recorded on CRI (CD 804), published by Theodore Presser Company (114-40901).