

Fēng 风 (Wind) Concerto for Piano, Percussion and Wind Instruments (2012-3)

In recent years, I have been interested in the application of symmetry in music. One of my favorite composers, Olivier Messiaen has developed a compositional system that utilizes seven modes of limited transpositions, of which each of these modes is symmetrically constructed. I have enjoyed adapting them to create symmetric harmony for several of my recent works, including "Earth" a large-scale song cycle and "Dream of a Hundred Flowers" for Saxophone Quartet and 4 Chinese Instruments, etc. In this Concerto, I also utilized some of these modes. More adventurous for this particular piece, I tried to create structurally the symmetry of form, and its contents corresponding to the harmony as well. My obsession perhaps relates to the source of my inspirations: nature, such as the reflection of water that is a natural form of symmetry. I also adapted four Chinese poems from the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), each of which imaginatively described the theme of my piece "Fēng" (Chinese pronunciation of "wind"). The narrator and musicians are all involved in reciting the poetry at various places, which aims to create the atmosphere and hopefully add some special flavors to the music.

This work was commissioned by the 47th annual University of Wisconsin at River Falls Commissioned Composer Program in 2012.

Instrumentation

1 Speaker (baritone/bass voice)
1 Piccolo* doubling Alto Flute; 1 Flute 1 Clarinet in Bb; Bass Clarinet; Alto Saxophone; Baritone Saxophone;
1 Trumpet in C; 1 Trumpet in Bb; 1 Tenor Trombone; 1 Bass Trombone
2 Percussions:
1 Piano

Duration: ca. 18'

Four Tang Poems about *Wind*:

风

唐 李峤

解落三秋叶，
能开二月花，
过江千尺浪，
入竹万竿斜。

Wind

Li Qiao (Tang)

At an aeolian breath the leave of autumn wither,
And buds of spring into full bloom all blow,
And towing billows sweep across the rolling river,
And ten thousand bamboos slant and bend low.

渡浙江问舟中人

唐 孟浩然

潮落江平未有风，
扁舟共济与君同。
时时引领望天末，
何处青山是越中？

To a Fellow Passenger on the boat
on the Zhejiang River

Meng Haoran (Tang)

The Water is smooth, the tides ebb, the winds still,
And I take a little boat along the river with thee.
Now and then I eargerly gaze towards the distant sky,
And wonder where is middle Yue, with its green hill?

塞上听吹笛

唐 高适

雪尽胡天牧马还，
月明羌笛戍楼间。
借问梅花何处落，
风吹一夜满关山。

The Flute Heard at the Frontier

Gao Shi (Tang)

From pastures returns the steeds beneath the snow-white sky,
Among the towers of post arises the sound of flute in moonlight.
But where does this tune of plum bloom drift in its flights?
By the nightly wind it is wafted along the passes on high.

秋风引

唐 刘禹锡

何处秋风至，
萧萧送雁群。
朝来入庭树，
孤客最先闻。

Song of Autumn Wind

Liu Yuxi (Tang)

Whence rises the autumn wind with a souging moan,
Which sends a flock of wild geese across the sky?
Soon as the gale whistles through the court tree at morn,
The lonely alien guest awakens first to its sigh.