

0805131

THREE CHINESE POEMS

SU SHI *DREAMING OF MY DECEASED WIFE ON THE NIGHT OF THE 20TH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH*

LI SHANGYIN *HER PROMISES TO COME WERE EMPTY WORDS*

MEI YEOCHEN *SACRIFICE TO THE CAT THAT SCARED ALL THE RATS*

(MMVIII)

FOR CHAMBER SEPTET,

WITH MEZZO-SOPRANO AND ORIENTAL INSTRUMENTS

(C. 14 MINS)

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NOTES

To be performed as interpreted by the players.

36-key Chinese sheng

yusheng

mezzo-soprano (Pinyin fluent)

Tuned Tibetan crystal singing bowls; C, D, E, F, G, A, B,

with yarn, rubber, and coil mallets

(Tuned metallic singing bowls are viable, if less desirable)

20" orchestral gong, 8" opera gong, lion drum

Viola de gamba (Treble)

Viola de gamba (Bass)

SU SHI *DREAMING OF MY DECEASED WIFE ON THE NIGHT OF THE 20TH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH*

十年生死两茫茫
不思量自难忘
千里孤坟无处话凄凉
纵使相逢应不识
尘满面鬓如霜
夜来幽梦忽还乡
小轩窗正梳妆
相顾无言惟有泪千行
料得年年肠断处
明月夜短松岗

Shí nián shēng sǐ liǎng máng máng
Bù sī liang zì nán wàng
Qiān lǐ gū fén wú chù huà qī liáng
Zòng shǐ xiāng féng yīng bù shí
Chén mǎn miàn bìn rú shuāng
Yè lái yōu mèng hū huán xiāng
Xiǎo xuān chuāng zhèng shū zhuāng
Xiāng gù wú yán wéi yǒu lèi qiān xíng
Liào dēi nián nián cháng duàn chù
Míng yuè yè duǎn sōng gǎng

Ten years living dead both boundless
Not think of capacity self hardly possible forget
Thousand li alone grave not place say wife cold
Even if together meet must not recognise
Dust cover face, temples like frost
Night come deep dream suddenly return home
Little window properly dress make up
Mutual look not speak, just be tears too much flow
Expect must every year heart break place
Bright moon night thin pine guard

Ten boundless years now separate the living and the dead,
I have not often thought of her, but neither can I forget.
Her lonely grave is a thousand li distant, I can't say where my wife lies cold.
We could not recognise each other even if we met again,
My face is all but covered with dust, my temples glazed with frost.
In deepest night, a sudden dream returns me to my homeland,
She sits before a little window, and sorts her dress and make-up.
We look at each other without a word, a thousand tears now flow.
I must accept that every year I'll think of that heart breaking place,
Where the moon shines brightly in the night, and bare pines guard the tomb.

LI SHANGYIN *HER PROMISES TO COME WERE EMPTY WORDS*

来是空言去绝踪
月斜楼上五更钟
梦为远别啼难唤
书被催成墨未浓
蜡照半笼金翡翠
麝熏微度绣芙蓉
刘郎已恨蓬山远
更隔蓬山一万重

Lái shì kōng yán qù jué zōng
Yuè xié lóu shàng wǔ gēng zhōng
Mèng wéi yuǎn bié tí nán huàn
Shū bèi cuī chéng mò wèi nóng
Là zhào bàn lǒng jīn fěi cuì
Shè xūn wēi dù xiù fú róng
Liú láng yǐ hèn péng shān yuǎn
Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng

Come be empty word go without trace
Moon slant tower on fifth watch bell
Dream be far part call hard call
Write reason hurry achieve ink not thick
Candle shine half cover gold emerald
Musk vapour tiny degree embroider lotus
Liu young already regret Peng shan far
More separate Peng shan ten thousand times

Her promises to come were empty words, she's gone without a trace,
The moon is slanting on the tower as I hear the fifth watch bell.
In my dream we were far apart, I found it hard to call,
Hurriedly I try to write, but find the ink too thin.
The candle's radiance covers half the gold and emerald bed,
A tiny hint of musky scent remains on embroidered lotus.
Young Liu already regretted that Pengshan hill lay far away,
We two are separated by ten thousand Pengshan hills.

MEI YEOCHEN *SACRIFICE TO THE CAT THAT SCARED ALL THE RATS*

众鼠惊祭猫
自有五白猫
鼠不侵我书
今朝五白死
祭与饭与鱼
送之于中河
咒尔非尔疏
昔尔啮一鼠
衔鸣绕庭除
欲使众鼠惊
意将清我庐
一从登舟来
舟中同屋居
糗粮虽其薄
免食漏窃余
此实尔有勤
有勤胜鸡猪
世人重驱驾
谓不如马驴
已矣莫复论
为尔聊褊歔

Zì yǒu wǔ bái māo
Shǔ bù qīn wǒ shū
Jīn cháo wǔ bái sǐ
Jì yǔ fàn yǔ yú
Sòng zhī yú zhōng hé
Zhòu ěr fēi ěr shū
Xī ěr niè yì shǔ
Xián míng rào tíng chú
Yù shǐ zhòng shǔ jīng
Yì jiāng qīng wǒ lú
Yì cóng dēng zhōu lái
Zhōu zhōng tóng wū jū
Qiǔ liáng suī qí bó
Miǎn shí lòu qiè yú
Cǐ shí ěr yǒu qín
Yǒu qín shèng jī zhū
Shì rén zhòng qū jià
Wèi bù rú mǎ lú
Yǐ yǐ mò fù lùn
Wéi ěr liáo chǎn xū

Self have 5 white cat
Rat not invade my books
Today morning 5 white die
Sacrifice with rice and fish
See off it at middle river
Incantation you not you neglect
Before you bite one rat
Hold in mouth cry around yard remove
Want cause crowd rat frightened
Thought will clear my cottage
From board boat come
Boat in together room live
Dry grain although its thin
Evade eat drip steal from
This real you have industriousness
Have industriousness surpass chicken pig
Ordinary person stress spur horse drive
Say not like horse donkey
Already finish not again discuss
For you somewhat cry

When I had my Five White cat,
The rats did not invade my books.
This morning Five White died,
I sacrifice with rice and fish.
I see you off in the middle of the river,
I chant for you: I won't neglect you.
Once when you'd bitten a rat,
You took it crying round the yard.
You wanted to scare all the rats,
So as to make my cottage clean.
Since we came on board this boat,
On the boat we've shared a room.
Although the grain is dry and scarce,
I eat not fearing piss or theft.
That's because of your hard work,
Harder working than chickens or pigs.
People stress their mighty steeds,
Saying nothing's like a horse or ass.
Enough- I'm not going to argue,
But cry for you a little.

COMMENT

Following from an increasing personal interest in the Chinese language, and culture, the three poems of Three Chinese Poems are taken from contrasting contexts within the history of Chinese literature. The aim was to ally the thematic character of the pieces with the music, while creating a fusion of Western and Asian forms, as in the coming together of instruments of quite different provenance. The Sheng is a type of mouth-organ that has developed from a simple 21-note model carved from wood for the mainstay of Chinese cultural celebrations throughout the ages, to a common 36-key model reinforced by metal in widespread usage today. The bold and brassy textures seemed to offer lots of potential to juxtapose against voice. The Lusheng is a larger (up to 7 metres), therefore lower sibling to the Sheng, and generally constructed from wood has a more mellow and pastoral texture, while keeping the dynamic range of the Sheng. Also limited to a pentatonic tuning (as was the early Sheng) it worked as a good model for building typically Asian melodies that shift in and out between the other textures. In turn, this motivated the choice of mezzo, rather than soprano, the conventional choice for Chinese opera, for the lower textures worked well alongside the lusheng. Crystal singing bowls are a type of ceremonial instrument used widely in Tibet for meditation, and as such their tuning from C-B is claimed to offer different vibrations for healing across different areas of the physique. Although their use here is not

particularly therapeutic or mystical in this sense, the ethereal, sine-type texture works I feel well with voice and the two wind instruments. Striking, as opposed to ‘singing’ the bowls has a quite distinct reverberating warmth that made it useful for simple settings alongside melismatic vocal melody. The gongs provide a) context, and b) textural colour, particularly used in sustained rolls, and the lion drum as a fairly conventional rhythmic device. Finally, the viols have a less brash, and altogether subtler tone than their more modern counterparts, which makes them preferable here, and they have an unusually exotic following also, which I felt better suited the piece. I’ve stayed away from extended techniques and harmonics on count of there being no (discoverable) model for their correct scoring.

The structure is then based around the 3 poems with ‘areas of ellision’ or intermission between that often make some more virtuosic solo explorations amongst without the vocal setting. Overall, the piece over the 14 minutes gains in textural layers, developing from a sparse, simple and ethereal setting with the singing bowls and the outset, to the numerous competing textures of the final poem, particularly the closing measures. The piece in a sense closes into its own density during the final poem, only released by the enduring ‘xü’ after the closing FFF.

Notation presented some problems initially, since it is convention to score in *jianpu* or numerical notation, for interpretation within Asian culture. It is dubious, however, whether this could be real-time translated by Western chamber performers, and so traditional stave Western notation seemed preferable, despite any patriarchalism this implies. Getting to grips with *jianpu* myself was a motivation, and indeed perhaps a more desirable outcome may be a dual-notation score, but this was problematically complicated and easy to misread while putting the work together. Pinyin translation similarly seemed more viable than *hanzi* for Western readers, and perhaps more particularly was necessary for the accentuation of individual syllables internal to each structure.

Very little specification has been given to technique and scoring, since by nature the poetry settings desires a good deal of flexibility and ‘free’—if you like—improvisation. Resources on oriental instrumental technique remain relatively sparse in print in the UK, and online is not always too beneficial, so while every effort has been made to imply overall effect in each instance, interpretation should find more natural results than listing each and every desired texture.

0805131

Lyrically

$\text{♩} = 46-52$

Sheng

Lusheng

Mezzo-soprano

Tibetan crystal
singing bowls

Percussion

Guzheng

Treble Viol

Bass Viol

*soft yarn mallet
unless other specified
G slow, regular singing*

A

E

A

D

3

B

D

C...

F

3

20" Gong

niente

ppp

lion drum

ppp

(rim)

2

pp

niente

ppp

3

3

3

niente

ppp

2

This musical score is for the opera 'The Legend of the White Snake'. It features a vocal soloist and a large orchestra. The vocal parts are for Sh. (Soprano) and Lush. (Lushan). The orchestral parts include Crystal (Crystal Palace), Perc. (Percussion), Zheng (Zheng), Tr. Viol. (Trumpet and Violin), and B. Viol. (Bass Violoncello). The score is in 2/4 time and includes lyrics in Chinese and English. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'.

Lyrics:

Qian lí gū fēn wú chù huà qī liáng
 前 离 孤 分 无 处 化 凄 凉

Zong shi
 宗 师

24

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Crystal

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

mp *pp* *ff sub,* *mf* *pp*

ff sub, *mf* *pp*

ff sub, *mf* *pp*

p *mp* *ff sub,*

f sub,

f *ppp*

ff sub, *mf* *pp*

ff sub, *mf* *pp*

xiāng féng yīng bù shí

Chén mǎn miàn bìn rú shuāng

2

$\text{♩} = 501$
Icy

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Crystal

cord mallets
mp
l.v.
rubber mallets
yarn mallets
singing, not struck, yarn

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

mf
sPpp
ppp

Mezzo.

zhèng shū zhuāng

Xiāng gù wú yán

wéi yōu lèi qiān xíng

Crystal

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

This musical score is for the 'The Yellow River Cantata' by Xian Xinghai. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Chinese, and the score includes dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *mp*, *mf*, and *niente*. The piano part includes complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and a section with a 7/6 time signature change. The vocal line includes lyrics such as 'Liào děi nián nián cháng duàn chù', 'Míng yuè yè duǎn sōng gǎng', and 'nièntè'. The score is written for a single voice and piano.

[illegible]

[illegible]

71

Sh. *ppp* *sfp*

Lush. *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

Mezzo. *molto legato* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

Lái shì kōng yān qù jué zōng Yuè xié lóu shàng wǔ gēng zhōng

Perc. *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

Zheng *p* *pp* *ppp*

Tr. Viol *sPpp* *ppp*

B. Viol

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a page numbered 11, starting at measure 71. It features seven staves. The Sh. staff has a melodic line with triplets and a dynamic change from *ppp* to *sfp*. The Lush. staff has a melodic line with a dynamic change from *ppp* to *mp*. The Mezzo. staff has a vocal line with lyrics in Chinese: 'Lái shì kōng yān qù jué zōng Yuè xié lóu shàng wǔ gēng zhōng'. The lyrics are underlined. The Mezzo. staff also has a melodic line with triplets and a dynamic change from *mp* to *ppp*. The Perc. staff has a rhythmic line with a dynamic change from *pp* to *mp*. The Zheng staff has a melodic line with a dynamic change from *p* to *pp*. The Tr. Viol staff has a melodic line with a dynamic change from *sPpp* to *ppp*. The B. Viol staff has a continuous triplet pattern throughout the measures.

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Crystal

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

niente, n.v.

pp

3

ppp

mp

f pp

pp

mf

pp

non vib.

vib.

gliss.

pp

pp

mp

f mp

f

pp

ff sub pp

pp

niente

ppp

f

mp

f

ff

sub

ppp

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for page 12 and includes parts for Sh. (Shamisen), Lush. (Lute), Mezzo. (Mezzo-soprano), Crystal (Crystallophone), Perc. (Percussion), Zheng (Zheng), Tr. Viol (Trumpet/Violin), and B. Viol (Bass Violoncello). The Sh. and Lush. parts feature complex melodic lines with triplets and dynamic markings ranging from ppp to f. The Mezzo. part is mostly silent. The Crystal part has a melodic line starting with a triplet. The Perc. part has a short, low-intensity (pp) sound. The Zheng part is silent. The Tr. Viol part has a melodic line with vibrato markings and dynamic markings from pp to ff. The B. Viol part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, followed by a melodic line with dynamic markings from ppp to ff. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'niente, n.v.', 'non vib.', 'vib.', and 'gliss.'.

[illegible]

[illegible]

111

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Crystal

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

niente

Liú láng yǐ hèn péng shā - n yuǎn Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng

20" gong

mf

mf

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a multi-instrument and vocal ensemble. It begins at measure 111. The Sh. part has a melodic line with triplets and a trill. The Lush. part is mostly silent, with a 'niente' marking. The Mezzo. part has lyrics: 'Liú láng yǐ hèn péng shā - n yuǎn Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng'. The Crystal part has a long sustained note. The Perc. part has a '20" gong' marking. The Zheng part has a melodic line with a trill. The Tr. Viol part has a melodic line with a trill. The B. Viol part has a melodic line with a trill. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*.

117

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Gèng gé péng shān yī wàn chóng
pp

Crystal

Perc.

20" gong
ff
 lion drum

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

pp
pizz.
pp
pizz.
pp

ff
mf
f

17

Lush. *mp* *ff* *mf* *ppp* *ppp*

Mezzo.

Crystal

Perc. *pp*

Zheng

Tr. Viol *mf*

B. Viol *mf*

Detailed description: This musical score page (17) features seven staves. The Lush. staff (top) is in treble clef and contains a complex melodic line with triplets, dynamic markings of *mp*, *ff*, *mf*, *ppp*, and *ppp*, and various articulations like accents and slurs. The Mezzo. staff is in treble clef and is mostly empty. The Crystal staff is in alto clef and contains a melodic line with slurs. The Perc. staff is in alto clef and contains a rhythmic pattern with slurs and a *pp* marking. The Zheng staff consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs, with a melodic line in the treble and a supporting line in the bass. The Tr. Viol staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and a *mf* marking. The B. Viol staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and a *mf* marking.

132

Sh.

mp sf>p pp sf>p mp *mf* *pp* *mp*

Mezzo.

vocalise: oooo
vary timbres

pp mp pp p ppp *gliss.* *niente* *mfppp*

Crystal

3 *3* *3*

Perc.

mf pp ppp *20" gong* *ppp*

Zheng

mp *3* *3*

Tr. Viol

mf *mf* *pp* *mf*

B. Viol

mf *pp* *mf*

139

Sh. *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *ff* niente

Lush. *pp* *ppp*

Mezzo. *hum* *mp* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*

Zi yǒu wǔ bái mǎo Shǔ bù qīn wǒ shū Jīn cháo wǔ bái sǐ Jì yú fàn yū yú

Crystal

Perc. *p* *p* *ppp* 8" gong *p* lion drum *mp* *ppp*

Zheng

Tr. Viol *p* *f* *p* *ff* *mp*

B. Viol *p* *pp* *ff*

Sh. *mf* *niente*

Lush.

Mezzo. *mf* *f*

Sòng zhī yū zhōng hé Zhòu ěr fēi ěr shū Xí ěr niè yì shū Xián míng rǎo tīng chú Yù shǐ zhōng shǔ jīng

Crystal

Perc. 20" gong

Zheng

Tr. Viol *f* *mp* *f*

B. Viol *mp* *f* *p* *f*

This musical score is for the piece "The Great Wall" by Tan Dun. It is a full orchestral score with vocal soloists and a large ensemble. The score is written for the following instruments and voices:

- Vocal Soloists:** Soprano (Sh.), Alto (Lush.), Mezzo-soprano (Mezzo.), and Tenor (Crystal).
- Ensemble:** Percussion (Perc.), Gong (Zheng), and Violins (Tr. Viol. and B. Viol.).

The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex arrangement of vocal lines and instrumental accompaniment. The vocal lines are written in treble clef, while the instrumental lines are written in their respective staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *mf*, *mp*). The lyrics are in Chinese and English, with the English lyrics being a translation of the Chinese lyrics. The score is divided into measures, with the first measure being measure 157. The score is a full orchestral score, meaning it includes all the instruments and voices that are part of the ensemble.

162

Sh.

Lush.

Mezzo.

Crystal

Perc.

Zheng

Tr. Viol

B. Viol

—mǎ lú, Yí — yǐ mò fù — lún Wéi ěr

[illegible]