

Lei Liang
b.1971

YUAN

for Saxophone Quartet

ED30048

PREVIEW
Low Resolution

Full Score

Preface

In Chinese, the syllable yuan encompasses a multitude of meanings, including the three words that inspired this composition: injustice (冤), grievance or lamentation (怨) and pledge or prayer (愿). I began working on the piece while contemplating a tragic story that happened during the Chinese Cultural Revolution in Hunan province. A woman's husband was tortured and killed by the local village official. Without the means to seek justice, she grieved only by wailing like a ghost in the woods behind the official's home every night. In the end, both herself and the official went insane.

This modern story of injustice echoes a recurring theme through Chinese history and literature, and is a universal experience. The Chinese playwright Gao Xingqian (20th century) tells a parallel tragic story in his classic play *Injustice to Dou-E*. I intended the play to unfold in three stages - injustice, lamentation and prayer, which correspond to the three meanings of a single syllable yuan.

The principal materials of the opening and closing sections are based on an excerpt from *Injustice to Dou-E*, more specifically, the melodic and rhythmic contours of the sound of Chinese text. The fast running notes emulate the intricate contours of the text, while maintaining its overall melodic contours. A modulated four-part system often found in the lamento of Baroque music appears in this piece in many forms, sometimes as a slowly descending ostinato in the background, sometimes as a more complexly woven melodic line. This tetrachord also functions as a building block for the piece. A folk song of the Yao minority people in Hunan province is quoted in the closing section. At the end, the players use detached mouthpieces to create mournful cries, as if the tormented souls could only find comfort in the company of warmth.

YUAN is commissioned by the Concerto Series and Commissioning Fund, Inc., and made possible with the support of the Egon Wellesz Foundation. It was completed during a residency at the Villa Maestri, Italy, courtesy of Fondazione William Walton.

Lei Liang
2008

Performance Notes

All parts are transposed, including the "mouthpiece" sections.

A "mouthpiece" refers to a detached alto saxophone mouthpiece. Its pitches (notated in diamond shape) are approximate. Slurred phrases are to be played continuously and smoothly without stressing any note in passing, except indicated otherwise (e.g., with accents).

All "open slaps" should be as non-pitched and as percussive as possible, though the performer's discretion.

Some multiphonics are provided with specified fingerings (written without fingerings), e.g. mm. 139-141, 153-155 (alto). Some are provided with suggested fingerings (written in parentheses) which may be replaced. The indicated pitch should be the primary pitch of the multiphonic sonority. When the same fingering is used (between soprano, alto and baritone saxophones), one should not emphasize the same sonority in all parts; rather, it is desirable to emphasize their timbral differences. However, the performer is always free to choose other fingerings to replace the ones written. Two multiphonics (written without fingerings) in mm.112-113 (baritone) and mm.114-115 (alto) are to be fingered at the performer's discretion.

Notated pitches for "T. Rare" are approximate, including the "mouthpiece" sections.

The composer wishes to thank Elliott Sharp for his fingering suggestions and editing.

PREVIEW
Low Resolution

Commissioned by the World-Wide Concurrent Premieres, Inc.
and made possible by a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation

YUAN

for Saxophone Quartet

Transposed score

Lei Hong (44973)

$\text{♩} = 104$

Soprano Saxophone in B \flat

Alto Saxophone in E \flat

Tenor Saxophone in B \flat

Baritone Saxophone in E \flat

S.

A.

T.

B.

key clicks

ppp

28

S.

A.

T.

B.

B

34

S.

A.

T.

B.

44

S.

A.

T.

B.

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Musical score for measures 42-46, featuring five staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and another Soprano). The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *ppp*, and performance instructions like *plu*, *plu*, *ppp vlt*, and *flut*. The notation includes slurs and phrasing marks.

C

Musical score for measures 47-51, featuring five staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *sfz*. The notation includes slurs and phrasing marks.

Musical score for measures 52-56, featuring five staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *sfz*. The notation includes slurs and phrasing marks. A performance instruction *Open Slip* is present in the bottom staff.

PREVIEW
Low Resolution