# New Arrangement of Chinese feeling Music

Haojun Qi

M.Mus in Contemporary Performance Candidate
Supervisor: Enric Alberich
Berklee college of music Valencia Campus
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### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to express my profound gratitude and deep regards to my academic advisor, Enric Alberich, who helped me with the organization of the proposal; to my committee member, professor and also my friend Polo Orti, who taught me how to arrange a new song as well as let me know how to be a better bass player in a band, and to my committee member Mario Rossy, who helped me a lot in analyzing and using jazz harmony.

#### 1. Introduction:

My name is Haojun Qi; I was born in a traditional Chinese family. With this circumstance, I grew up listening to the traditional Chinese folk music. When I was young, my mother told me I could sing melodies at the age of two, maybe this was the reason she forced me to take the piano lessons when I was 6. Actually, I didn't like playing the piano because it took time away from playing and furthermore, many parents sent their children to learn this instrument at that time. It seemed that playing piano was not so special, so I gave it up after 2 years. However it really helped me to develop listening skills. From that time on, I always liked singing songs to cheer myself up. When I was 12, I bought my first tape. Time passed, and I found that listening to music couldn't satisfy me anymore; so I asked my parents if they could buy me a guitar. Then I got my first guitar at the age of 14 and taught myself how to play during the following days.

I still remember the first time I heard a CD named *Word of Mouth* by Jaco Pastorius. I was very attracted by the sound, which was a little weird for me at the moment. I was dying with curiosity about that sound until I knew it was from the instrument called fretless bass. That is the why I began to learn electric bass. It may have been late for me to start play music as my life goal, because playing an instrument needs so many skills, which are better to train from very young. Of course, I know that starting to play an instrument from childhood is the best way to prove "practice makes perfect". However, for me, the age of 17 was the first time I knew what I really wanted to do. This time I didn't go half way and I practiced bass almost everyday with all my aspiration. In 2006, I got the honorable mention in Shandong Guitar Festival. The next year, I got the second price in the Chinese Guitar Festival. At the age of 24, I finally got the first price in the same Festival. That is how playing electric bass transformed from my hobby into my life pursuit.

In the beginning of learning music, I was caught up by Chinese rock music. However, soon after I started my studies in electric bass, I turned my interests towards funk music. I listened to more Western bands and explored different grooves in different genres of music. After studying bass for three years, I was accepted in Shandong College of Arts, where I finished my bachelor degree in popular music performance.

During the time I was in the college, I also studied Chinese History, anthropology, and Chinese philosophy in another university. This has helped me a lot to understand music. Because I always know the farther back you look, the farther forward you will see. I chose to teach in the university after graduation. During this period, I helped some Chinese super stars recording their albums and I was the bass player in some talent shows. After that, I found out that the thing I most love to do is being a session player.

### 2. What brings me to Berklee:

I graduated in 2012, and in the same year I got the news that Berklee had opened the Valencia campus and offered a unique curriculum and an unparalleled faculty of inspiring educators and cutting-edge industry professionals. This matched perfectly with my life goal. As it is the top music school with the most professional teachers in the world, I knew it was an opportunity to realize my dream.

Actually, Berklee Valencia is a musical Disneyland for me. I have met many good musicians and most of them are very Jazz oriented. Berklee Valencia has a pretty high focus on Jazz and Latin music, because of the combination of Berklee tradition and the campus location. Neither Jazz or Latin music are my strengths, but it is a challenging and useful learning experience when I try to adapt to ensembles, forums, and other formats. After playing jazz and Latin music for a while, I started to look at music with different perspectives and also made some progress in my critical listening skills.

### 3. Proposal Objectives

A new Chinese feeling music—to fuse Chinese style music and Western

contemporary music.

Will this new type of music change the original feeling of a Chinese song?

#### 3.1 Justification:

Music has the possible effect to change people's sentiments. What I am doing and what I want to do is to use my music energy to make people feel better. I am trying to find a way to put an infusion of fresh blood into Chinese music. I take into account the relationship between lyrics and melody. It will bring different visual imagination to the listener.

Music is a worldwide language, although we may not be good at English or Spanish, music could express a powerful emotion. Although one may not understand my Chinese lyrics, with the movement of the music, it still can touch your heart. Especially since Chinese words are different than English> Chinese lyrics prefer not to address the feelings directly and leave it to the imagination to the audiences, while English songs prefer to present the feeling directly. I think music could connect with the imagination and they would give each other feedback.

I would love to add the concept of Western pop music into the Chinese traditional one.

### 3.2 Methodology:

In traditional Chinese music there are several pentatonic scales based on the **Chinese chromatic scale** called the "**12 Lü**" (Chinese: 十二律, Pinyin: shí èr lù). The first reference to, "the standardization of bells and pitch," dates back to around 600 BCE while the first description of the generation of the pitches dates back to around 240 CE.<sup>1</sup>

This chromatic scale was derived using the same calculations as Pythagoras did, based on 2:3 (perfect fifth) ratios (8:9, 16:27, 64:81, etc.);

<sup>1</sup> Needham, Joseph (1962/2004). Science and Civilization in China, Vol. IV: Physics and Physical Technology, p.170-171.

known as the Pythagorean intervals. Although these 12 Lü frequencies approximate the 12 known in the West, some of the notes are a bit flat or sharp to our ears because the Chinese system does not use equal tempered tuning.

### **Note Names**

- \* 黄钟 Huáng Zhōng -- Tonic/unison
- \* 大吕 Dà Lǚ -- Semitone
- \* 太簇 Tài Cù -- Major second
- \* 夹钟 Jiá Zhōng -- Minor third
- \* 姑洗 Gū Xiǎn -- Major third
- \* 中吕 Zhòng Lǚ -- Perfect fourth
- \* 蕤宾 Ruí Bīn -- Triton
- \* 林钟 Lín Zhōng -- Perfect fifth
- \* 夷则 Yí Zé -- Minor sixth
- \* 南吕 Nán Lǚ -- Major sixth
- \* 无射 Wú Yì -- Minor seventh
- \* 应钟 Yìng Zhōng -- Major seventh



Most Chinese music uses a pentatonic scale, with the intervals (in terms of  $l\dot{u}$ ) almost the same as those of the major pentatonic scale. The notes of this scale are called "宫(gong) equals to 3(Mi),商(Shang) equals to 2(Re),角(jue)

equals to 3(Mi), 徽(zhi) equals to 5(Sol), 羽(Yu) equals to 6(La)". By starting from a different point of this sequence, a scale (named after its starting note) with a different interval sequence is created, similar to the construction of modes in modern Western music.

After 1949, Western music came into China and classical music had a huge impact on Chinese music. We began to use Pian tone, so to speak: when it is Key of C major, Pian tone is in the forth and the seventh degree, which is equal to C natural scale.

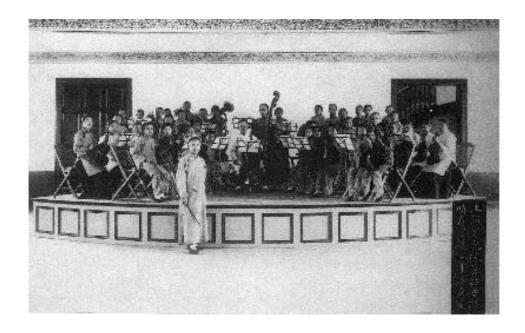
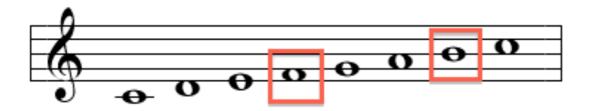


Image of orchestra 1949, China

Add pian tone in Chinese music has enriched the song itself, however the feeling of Chinese music never changed, we still use a pentatonic scale as the main part of the song.



Therefore I have a new idea for Chinese music--A new Chinese music

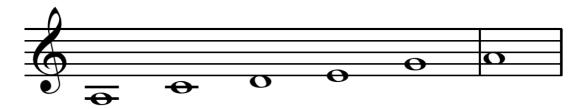
feeling—to fuse Chinese music style and Western contemporary music together. Will this new type of music change the original feeling of the Chinese song?

To achieve the end goal, I composed new songs, but also incorporated existing songs and melodies from Chinese traditional music. I think the most important task is to find the right harmony for a simple melody. I needed to know more about jazz harmony, especially the re-harmonization techniques, to make it work in the Chinese melodies. I also needed to find the right combination of instruments to fit the sound I'm searching for in different songs. After all the preparation, I started to rehearse and develop the timber/tone. I played with the band and asked my MTI engineer to explore the sound together with me.

#### 3.3 Process:

First, I used Chinese pentatonic to compose my songs, which made the songs have a strong Chinese style. Then I added contemporary harmony and rhythm into the songs. Since I learned Chinese history and Chinese philosophy during my university time, I wrote the Chinese lyrics with typical objects, sceneries and the history of China. Even a Chinese poem was also quoted into a song. Even though one may not understand the meaning of my song, the melody could be comprehended as part of the Chinese style.

These 3 songs I composed with lyrics have strong Chinese feelings. But, regardless of the lyrics; the most important thing is the melody. I used minor Chinese pentatonic scale as a basic melody in three of the songs.



However, when you are listening to these three songs, you may think the

melodies are quite different, but the feelings are the same. It is because I used different Pian tones to compose these songs.

At first glance, there is no big difference between the Chinese pentatonic structure and Western pentatonic structure. Digging deeper, the Chinese pentatonic has five leading tones with 2 pian tones, while Western pentatonic has seven tones, and there are no leading tones or pian tones. This distinction is fundamental, because it provides the main rules of melody. In a listening sense, pian tones are unstable tones in the scale. When pian tones appear, a descending melody should solve it.

#### 3.4 Tools:

Using the Ex-writing products by myself

Piano, keyboard, Acoustic Guitar, Electric Guitar, Electric bass, Acoustic Bass,

**3.5 Expected Outcome:** I would expect about half of the audience that listen to this music, to enjoy it after hearing it, although the combination is unexpected.

#### 3.6 Creative:

I made a 4 songs EP by using Chinese Traditional melody but with contemporary arrangements. By contemporary arrangements, I'm referring to three factors that I think are essential: harmony, instrumentation and the timber/tone. Chinese traditional music has a very different way of harmonizing the melody and it's more complicated than a just pentatonic scale, so I think it is a good exploration to combine Chinese traditional melody and harmony, which will also give the melody a different color and feeling. For the instrumentation, I will have bass, drum, keys (piano or keyboard), and percussion as the basics, and add color by using guitar or other instruments. For the tone, I want to try out the very natural sound and the very filtered sound

of the instruments, which also requires the exploration of different microphones.

### 4. Describing the song & production:

### 4.1. Grassland Lady

Recorded on October 26th, from 2 to 5 p.m.

### My band partners:

1. Piano: Djudju Hartono

2. Double Bass: Max Ridley

Pecussion: SergioMartinez Diaz

4. Voice: Haojun Qi

5. MTI: Pierluigi



### Lyrics Translation:

There was a girl who lived in grassland and brought me to the region of dreams.

However I was in a despondent mood when she came into my mind again: I saw her standing out of the moon light with a suitcase held in her hands.

I saw her running before the wind and crying for the sunset.

Between the vast sky and the boundless earth, flocks and herds appear as grass bends to wind. (A Chinese poem)

She asked herself, how to describe a remote place if she could never arrived.

She looked far into the distance, hoping in vain to see the answer.

Sitting in the prairie, looking at silver bloom against black,

She muttered with melody, and the wind sang back in return.

I heard the flute whistling and the bell ringing,

It was the chant rolling in her heart.

In my dream, I could see her dream.

I pray for the sun only shinning for her.

At last she turned back and told me.

"You have the ability to hear the sound a flower blooming,

You can see the sun right behind the dark clouds."

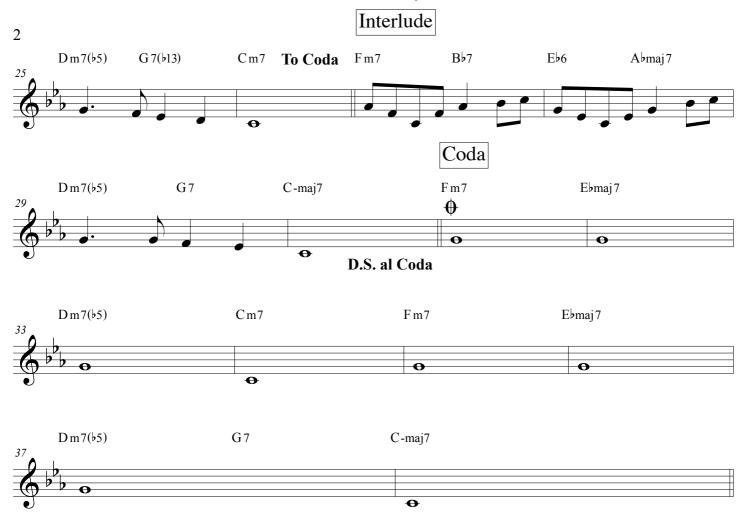
I also want you to know,

The destination for me is the place where my destiny is standing right beside me.

## Grassland Lady



### Grassland Lady



### 4.1.1 Arrangement:

For the introduction of the song I used Khoomei. Khoomei, Hooliin Chor (in Mongolian, 'throat harmony'), or Mongolian throat singing is one particular variant of overtone singing practiced by the Mongol people in Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, and Tuva. It's inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO of 2009, under the name "Mongolian art of singing, Khoomei". The Mongolian art of singing Khoomei, is a style of singing in which a single performer produces a diversified harmony of multiple voice parts, including a continued bass element produced in the throat. It is traditionally a softer sounding style, with the fundamental (or drone) usually in the low mid to midrange of the singer's normal voice. In this style, usually 2 or 3 harmonics can be heard between one and two octaves above the fundamental. In Khoomei, the abdomen is fairly relaxed, and there is less tension on the larynx than in other styles. Pitch is manipulated through a combination of movements of the lips, throat, tongue or jaw.

Ethnomusicologists studying throat singing in these areas mark Khoomei as an integral part in the ancient pastoral animism that is still practiced today. Often, singers will travel far into the countryside looking for the right river, or will go up to the steppes of the mountainside to create the proper environment for throat singing.<sup>3</sup>

This is why I put Khoomei into my song, *Grassland lady*. The background of the song describes a lady living in a grassland in Mongolia. If someone could imagine beautiful grass textures when hearing the introduction, it is already half a success.

<sup>-</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mongolian art of singing, Khoomei, Inscribed in 2009 (4.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00210,

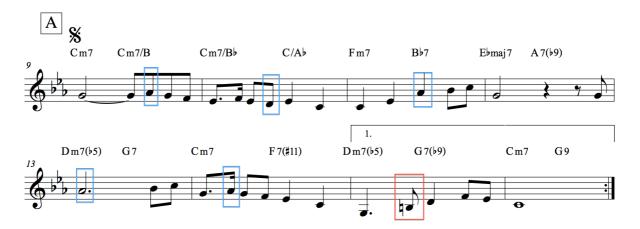
<sup>3</sup> Slobin, Mark. Ethnomusicology. Volume 36, No. 3, Special Issue: Music and the Public Interest. (1992), pp 444-446

### 4.1.2 Melody & Harmony:

Firstly, I used a 4 bars motive development pattern to compose the melody, although its rhythmic pattern has changed a little, it won't change the function of a 4 bars motive development pattern.

Secondly, I use the minor Chinese pentatonic scale to compose the basic melody; adding harmonic minor with nature minor, which called pian tone in Chinese to enrich its melody.

Harmony: Descending minor line cliché progressions followed by diatonic to express more intense emotion.



In this key, blue marks are the nature minor of second and sixth degree

The red mark is the sharp seventh degree in harmonic minor.

The song was composed skillfully to break regularity and those four bars are repeated during the whole song.

Harmony: I wrote and original triad harmony for the song.



Then I used the re-harmonization technic to change harmony from triad to

seventh chord.

Also, I used descending minor line cliché progressions to follow diatonic in the song, which would express the level of the emotion more clearly.

Frame drum: Bolero Jazz Ballad

### Frame Drum



I get the sound from Frame Drum by swiping with the hands instead of the sound from the brushes to make my song sound more close to nature.

If one can see a beautiful composition and somehow a very sad story hidden behind when hearing the song, it works.

### Udu Drum



/ = Ghost notes

= Slap sound

X = Open sound

This groove loops through the whole song.

I considered that acoustic is the key to make the sound and feel match the lyrics perfectly. For this, I choose Udu, Frame drum, Bass drum and percussion toys to add colors and textures to the music.

### 4.2. Night of Shanghai

Recorded: from February 5<sup>th</sup>, 11 p.m. to February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 a.m.

My band partners:

1. Piano: Djudju Hartono

2. Bass: Haojun Qi

Pecussion: SergioMartinez Diaz

4. Drum: Andre Walker

5. MTI: Yohahn Jo





The original song was written in the last century's 1940's and Zhou Xuan<sup>4</sup>, an iconic Chinese singer and film actress at that time, sang it. The song was composed with nature minor and simple harmony, however it was played with a jazz big band.

Original song link:

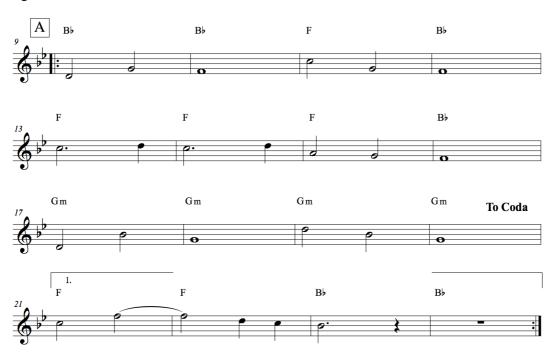
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjXYwDNhMG8



Shanghai was in the war years at that time, and the song was sung in Shanghai's French concession where there were many foreign invaders, so Shanghai's nights had a Western style to please the invaders.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh. "Chapter 12 - China" In Corey Creekmur, Linda Mokdad. The International Film Musical (Traditions in World Cinema).

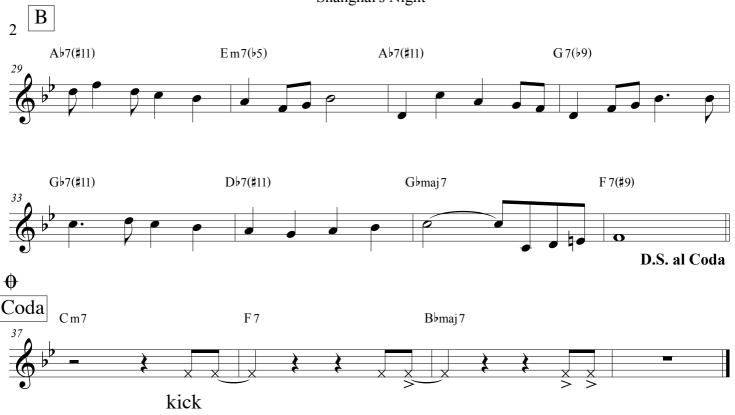
### Original Score:



# Shanghai's Night



### Shanghai's Night





Shanghai is quite different now from before.

According to the new image of Shanghai, I did the new arrangement with electric guitar, electric bass and keyboard, drum and percussion.

### 4.2.1 Melody & Harmony:

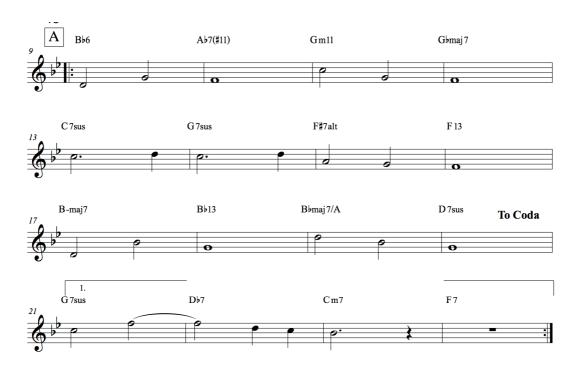
The melody itself has a very traditionally Chinese diatonic and remains similar to the original one, however I did some changes with a fake melody.

Harmony:

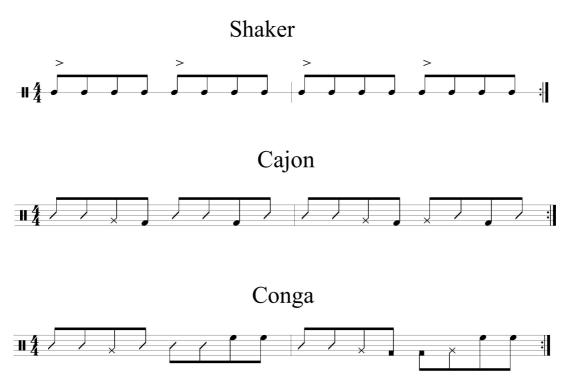
The relationship between the melody and harmony falls on the tension.

As the screenshot below shows:

- a. The original song in the forth bar of the first line was B flat major triad. I used M.I technique to change it into Gbmaj7.
- b. At the second bar of the first line, I first used D7 however the sound wasn't strong. So I used triton substitution technique to change the chord to Ab7#11.
- c. The first two bars of the last line, I first used II-V relation (Dm7/G to G7) chord however the sound was more like F7sus; since the chord tone of Dm7/G was the same as G7sus, I changed it to G7sus. As a bass player I didn't want to play the same root, so I replaced G7 to Db7 in the second bar.



Rhythm: In the introduction of the Shanghai's Night, I used a shaker. Besides this, Cajon and Conga were accompanying through the whole song to give it a more like Latin Funk sound.



### 4.2.2. Arrangements:

Except for the importance of the harmony groove, another important thing for

this song is the new arrangement.

- In Part A, I choose funk style to be the straight 16-note groove in this song.
- In Part B, I use a swing feel and more syncopation for the melody to contrast it with Part A

4.3. *Longing, Hopeless* Recorded> March 7<sup>th</sup>,

from 8 to 11 PM.

My band partners:

Piano: Yu Lu

Haojun Qi: Voice

MTI: Austin Han



### Lyric Translation

Little carps find their companions in the waters.

Little larks gather with their peers in the sky.

Spring water flows into the autumn streams.

Spring earth turns into autumn muds.

Some are to be destined to be close to each other when they are born the same, while being isolated until their heart knows.

His shoes got wet before the sky was crying. Her shoes got wet before the sky was crying. I almost forget the reason why I miss you so much But it becomes solicitude.

I almost forget what I want to tell you But it turns into an expectation.

I almost forget what I was praying throughout the night without any words.

But it changes into hope.

Even I forget everything about you,

That song still appears in my mind.

Red colors are blooming in the flowers.

The country songs are sounding near your ear.

The East Wind is swinging around the west

South hedge is facing the north.

What a man sows, so does he reap?

As a man loves, he doesn't stop.

It is dark outside, but you cannot fall asleep.

You cannot fall asleep before the daylight.

I travelled a lot during my university time. One day I met a writer in a small mountain during my trip. We talked a lot and wrote some poems together. One morning after I had bid my farewells to her, a melody suddenly came into my mind. I wrote the song at once.

# Longing, Hopeless





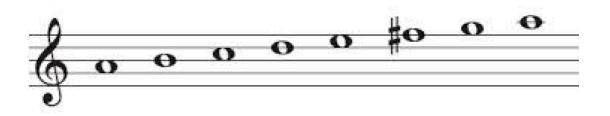






### 4.3.1 Melody & Harmony:

We can see the scale is the Dorian scale. In China we name it "商" seventh pentatonic scale, which is the family member of Chinese pentatonic scale. Its Pian tone is in the second and sixth degree. I used this scale to compose the song.



Melody: I also use4 bars motive development pattern to compose this song.

### 4.4. People in another land

Recorded: from April 7<sup>th</sup>, 11 p.m. to

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 5 p.m.

My band partners:

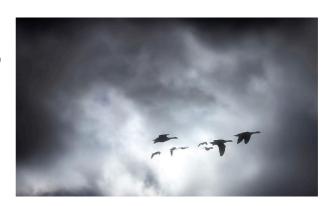
Piano: Djudju Hartono

Bass: Haojun Qi

Pecussion: Sergio Martinez Diaz

Drum: Andre Walker

MTI: Yohahn Jo



### Lyric Translation

(There is a man who is holding a photo and asking everyone passing by) Hey dear friend, where are you from?

Do you know her? Have you ever been touched by her beauty?

A hundred years ago, she took my heart and entrust it to the cloud.

The cloud changes into the rain, and moistens my hometown.

(No one knows about her and feel sorry for the man, he turn to ask all the animals passing by)

Hey, wild goose, you fly from north to south,

Could you please send my love to her?

Tell her no matter at the moment of sunrise or sun set,

There is someone waiting for her news.

I use my most moveable sound to wait for you till the end.

### 4.4.1 Melody and Harmony:

Rhythm: The idea for the percussion part arrangement was the following concept: Polyrhythm of ¾ in the melody over 6/4 in the percussion.

Percussion rhythm name: *solea por bulerias* (flamenco rhythm from the north of Spain of Andalucia)

Melody and harmony go in 3/4

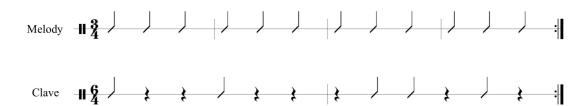
Pecussion goes in 2 measures (bars) of 6/4 as 1 cycle

Clave de la Soleá por Bulerías





### Polyrhythm



### 5. Aim of the project:

My target is to market those people who are in a low mood.

When we feel sad, depressed or heartbroken, we would love to leave for a while. To run away and find someplace where could make us in a peace.

However we have no time to go to the forest, mountain, and grassland to take a breath.

All these songs were written during my trip.

I hope to take the listener to see shallow rivers, where melodious birds sing madrigals in their falls, after hearing this music.

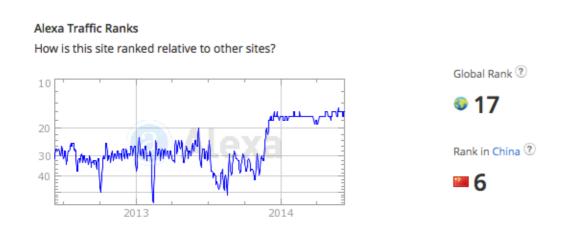
I wish my music could bring the power from nature to heal their feelings and inner wounds.

I intend to promote it through social media: Weibo, micro blogging in China<sup>5</sup>
This is a social website that Chinese people use it everyday and according to Nielsen research, Weibo is the most valuable social media site for resonating and engaging with a potential online audience.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Special: Micro blog's macro impact". *Michelle and Uking* (China Daily). 2 March 2011. Retrieved 26 October 2011.

### How popular is weibo.com?

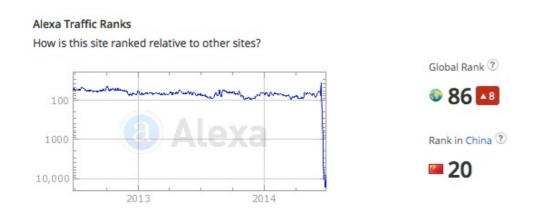




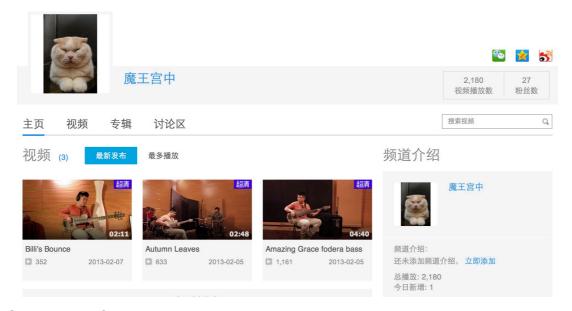
It had around 505 million users in 2013 and Weibo is growing fast. Weibo's innovation with images has helped it forge a symbiotic relationship with other online giants like Youku - China's equivalent of YouTube - capturing the imagination of a tech-savvy young generation keen to posting videos, both as citizen journalists as well as to show off their talents online.

I also intend to use Youku. Youku permits users to upload videos regardless of length.

### How popular is youku.com?



This is my personal website in Youku.



### Other ways of promotion:

### Personal Website

- Make it a destination by keeping it updated and including news, giveaways, polls and things to make it worth visiting.
- Put the promo online in downloadable form for easy access by the media and fans.
- Get on both MySpace and Facebook and stay active. Update and promote them.
- Enhance the value of press releases by always attaching a photo or

- graphic file or a link to one.
- Send announcements to the mainstream press but include bloggers,
   Internet radio, record stores, colleges and even large offices.

### 5.1. Promotion in a cultural way:

Trying to shoot the song into a microfilm or maybe just a video would be one of my main goals. Like a rich, sultry film, my songs not only possess a very strong sense of images, but also of certain circumstances. Sceneries and stories inspired me while I was travelling, that means there are many people that feel the same as I did. I can also use those pictures in my songs to get the public feedback.

Besides this, each of my songs has a love story behind it. Audiences not only like the voice of a singer; they are interested in the real experience behind the song. Of course, the music itself is very important, however it is not enough to make the audience remember the singer. Furthermore, images can bring a sense of environmental experience that is more impressive than the stimulation from the music itself.

#### 6. Conclusion:

For me, the most difficult part of this project is the re-harmonization technic. I know it will be a long-term challenge for me in the future.

I am very happy that I achieve my objective, which was to arrange Chinese style music with Western contemporary music techniques, not changing the original feeling of the Chinese songs

I am so lucky to be here; I've learnt some new music theory that I never knew before. This may be the cultural difference between Chinese music and contemporary music. These ideas I didn't have before, make me more interested in this creating a new music style and I really want to put some innovation in the Chinese music market.

We need this kind of fusion to enrich the traditional listening sense of the

Chinese audience. I want to further investigate in this field, and make better songs for my audience.