

Nostalgia

Sibei “Betty” Wang Guzheng Recital

May 18, 2021 at 6:00pm

Gadameiren (1956)

A Mongol nationality folk song

Hu-guang Xin(1933-2011)

Rearranged by Chenglong Zhou (b.1946)

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Alexander Levinson, Cello

Resonance of Sixty-eight Measures

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Yixin Wang, Guzheng

Shandong Traditional Music

Lotus Emerging out of Water (4 C.E.)

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Scores inherited by Jiuxiang Luo (1902-1978)

Teochew-style zheng music

The Dawn of Spring Among Snow Mountains (1981)

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Shang-e Fan (b.1942)

Galsang Daggi (b.1939)

Marriage and Falling into the Courtyard of Princess Chen Xingyuan

Revised by Dong-fu Cao (1898-1970)

(1953~)

Collected by Yong-an Cao (1948~), Bian Li

He’nan zheng music

I. *The Marriage of Princess Xing-yuan Chen*

II. *Falling into the Courtyard*

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

The Riverbank of the Ili

Gong-liang Cheng(1940-2015)

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Petra Elek, Percussion

Night Rain Aside Windows made of Banana leaves (4 C.E.)

Hakka-style zheng music

Scores inherited by Jiuxiang Luo

Scores collected by Zhaoyuan Shi (1932~)

Sibei “Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Battling With the Typhoon (1965)

Changyuan Wang (1946~)

Sibei ”Betty” Wang, Guzheng

Program Notes

Gadameiren is a long narrative folk song of the Mongol nationality in Mainland China. In the 1920s, a hero named Gada (“meiren” is his low-ranked official position in a palace of a prince),

from the Zhelimu tribe of the Eastern Mongolia area, leads a rebellion towards the lords of the feudal society and the reactionary warlords.

Resonance of Sixty-eight Measures is an ensemble piece traditionally presented by a quartet with *guzheng*, *yangqin*, *pipa*, and *ruyi gou* in a cyclic form with sixty-eight measures. According to zheng Maestro Zicheng Gao, this number blended the idea of the Eight Diagrams (八卦 Ba'gua) into the composition of traditional Chinese zheng music. In the music, there are eight phrases in total, each referring to a specific Eight Diagram sign (heaven, marsh, fire, thunder, wind, water, mountain, ground); the fifth phrase has four additional measures which indicate the four seasons.

Lotus Emerging out of Water is one of the most famous among Teochew-style zheng pieces. Through Zhong Zhou Ancient tone, this piece provides an explicit description of the noble quality of the lotus: “striking out from the ooze but not contaminated by it, touched by the water but not demonized by it,” which usually was a reference to people who have praiseworthy characters. Aside from the slow, elegant melody, left-hand techniques including vibrato and portamento help to visualize the character of a beautiful lotus.

The Dawn of Spring among Snow Mountains is a zheng solo co-composed by Shang-e Fan and Gesangdaji in 1981. With the depiction of the beautiful Spring view of the Tibetan plateau, this piece demonstrates the love of the Tibetan people towards their dear home and the expectation of good fortune.

The Marriage of Princess Xing-yuan Chen, also known as *Marriage*, in short, is a story that came from a traditional He'nan Opera — *Er'du (Revitalized) Plum Blossom*. It is usually performed together with *Falling into the Courtyard of Princess Chen Xingyuan*. It is one of the representative repertoires of the Henan Bantou tunes. The story tells of the minister of the

Official department, Ri-sheng Chen's daughter, Xing-yuan Chen, who was trapped in the conspiracy of a villain officer called Qi Lu and was forced to marry one of the Northern tributary leaders ruled by the Tang Empire. This piece demonstrates Xing-yuan's anger and resentment on her way to the tributary through the use of He'nan regional techniques like moving finger-shaking, minor vibrato with the accent falling and then slowly rising. The music of *Marriage* emphasizes the sadness and resentment of the daughter, with a deep, passionate melody and sentimental moods. It is paced slowly, which indicates sorrow, laden with grief as if she was weeping and complaining. The piece has had a great impact on other He'nan zheng music.

Falling into the Courtyard is a continuation of the previous story. It describes Xingyuan accidentally falling into the courtyard of Handan commander Bo-fu Zou after she attempts suicide at the Wild Goose Slope, but she covers it up with an excused worship at the Zhao Jun Temple (Zhao Jun was another noble girl assigned to marry another tributary leader before Chen). Despite the deep feeling of sorrow brought up by the melody, the changing musical tone dramatically describes the scenario of Xingyuan telling Mrs. Zou her miserable life experiences.

The Riverbank of the Ili is a pioneering guzheng piece accompanied by Xinjiang tamborine, in the Sayem music style originated by the Xinjiang Uyghur nationality. The composer arranged an identical combination of traditional Chinese instruments and Western (diatonic) music scale; such avant-garde ideas provide a Xinjiang Uyghur musical color for guzheng. This piece includes three music passages. The first passage which is in adagio/lento depicts the melodious singing and leisurely dance in the Xinjiang autonomous region. The second passage in allegretto, represents a cheerful group dancing scenario; there is only one kind of rhythmic pattern but it requires vigorous continued playing which asks the performer to achieve a high standard of endurance and trained intonation. The last passage slows in pace, imitating the long-lasting enthusiasm for the dance, and lingering songs swirling upon the Ili river. The accompaniment of the Xinjiang tamborine highlights the Xinjiang music style; such a combination not only depicts the natural scenery of the Ili Riverbank but also presents a vivid picture of the local people dancing happily with music, representing the passion of life of the local people.

Night Rain Aside Windows made of Banana leaves is one of the representative music styles originated in the Hakka Culture which is rooted in the Southeastern part of China. In the night, those traveling or residing away from home taste the helplessness of nostalgia while alone and hearing raindrops dance on the windowsill. They come closer at a moment, then quickly fade away. This piece only has thirty-four measures. Through in-depth research on Hakka zheng music, Mastro Jiuxiang Luo rearranged the melodies and cadence. Most importantly, the five repetitions of the melody make it an irreplaceable classic. In part one, the rhythm starts in a distinctly Largo style, to emphasize the “night” in the title. The second part begins with intensity, serving as an introduction to the later visiting of the heavy rain, and continuing with the stringendo and gradually condensed plucking of the strings, mimicking the formation and approach of the dark clouds. The next part mainly illustrates the rain through enhanced dynamics and accelerated speed. In the end, the portamento of the last few bars represents the raindrops dropping down from the banana leaves. The whole repertoire finishes in a peaceful atmosphere full of freshness.

Battling with the Typhoon was composed by Mastro Changyuan Wang in 1965, while she was a student at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The composition of this guzheng solo piece was inspired by her observation of the wrestling of the laborers with typhoons at the Shanghai Port Wharf with typhoons. Profiting from a newly invented technique - glissando with both hands - this piece has stood out among others and became a representative work of the 20th century and onwards. The great momentum in the melody, the vivid musical image, and the obvious comparison between the allegro and adagio successfully display the fearless spirit and braveness of the workers.

Biography

From Shenzhen in Guangdong Province, China, **Sibei “Betty” Wang** is a junior in the Bard Conservatory’s double-degree program. Her instrumental study focus is on guzheng, and her second major is art history. She began studying guzheng at the age of nine with Lijin Sha, a professor of Shenzhen University, and guzheng master Changyu-an Wang. Her current teacher is Wang Zhou of the Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM). Recent awards including the bronze medal of the amateur group at the 31st “Tong Yan Cup” International Guzheng art week and the silver medal of the middle school group at the New York City International National Music

Contest. In 2017, Sibeï was invited to participate in a performance at Alice Tully Hall to celebrate Master Changyuan Wang's 60th performance anniversary at Lincoln Center. Last summer, Sibeï performed in the Shenzhen Instrument Culture Festival.