Shui Mo Ensemble – Programme/running order

Gallery 1

Torrent (湍流)* — Yingying Wen (2025)

Map of the Nebula* — Zhihong Guo (2025)

First floor

Improvisation — George Owen (2025)

Qinqiang Theme Rhapsody — Zhao Zhenxiao
arr. Lu Rirong

Gallery 1

Ballads for Solo Koto, Vol. 3 "Summer" — Minoru Miki (1969/1990)

No. 4, Under the White Wind (白い風の下で)

No. 5, A Squall (雨ざんざん)

*= premiere Shui Mo: PENG Cheng 彭程 (*èrhú*)• HE Shuiqingqing 何,水清清 (*gūzhēng*)• George Owen (cello)• Michael Ellison (cond.)

Ensemble Shui Mo is a brand new group of dynamic young players, dedicated to commissioning and performing new repertoires of contemporary music mixing traditional East Asian and Western instruments. 'Shui mo' 水墨 (in Mandarin—Sumi-e 墨 絵 in Japanese, Sumak in Korean, Shu-mo in Cantonese) refers to water colour art. Shui Mo ensemble is in residence at the University of Bristol https://www.shuimo.org.uk/

Torrent 湍流 was composed for Guzheng, Erhu and Cello. Its musical idea is inspired by natural torrents in the high mountains, expressing imagination and passion for exploring. It is also about pursuing nature and life. Torrent, without you I'm no more than a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal... Musically, the guzheng tuning combines a harmonic series based on the pentatonic system and balances chords in chromatic opposition. The musical language is vivid, with a focus on sound. Inspired both by torrents in life, and those in Rinko Kawauchi's exhibition, my music here is like her work: poetic in conception, depicting ordinary moments of life. - *Yingying Wen 温颖颖*

Map of The Nebula is a contemporary mixed trio composed for Guzheng, Erhu, and Cello. The piece was inspired by a photo taken by Rinko Kawauchi. The photo features three distinct layers of colour, creating striking visual contrast. The dark background sets the tone for the whole photo, which symbolizes the depth and mystery of the universe. In this darkness, there are scattered stars, sometimes faint and sometimes bright, adding a flickering vitality to the silence. The most striking thing is the red line

that covers this static background. These irregular lines seem to move freely on the canvas, with their trajectories swirling and interlaced, symbolizing vitality and contrasting with the static darkness and starlight. The combination of darkness, starlight and red lines forms a visually distinct photo. Building on this visual inspiration, I tried to explore more possibilities of sound through new playing techniques. For the Guzheng, I incorporated some playing techniques inspired by string and percussion instruments to make this traditional Chinese instrument show a new expressiveness. In the Erhu and Cello parts, I used extreme pitch ranges and the technique of alternating harmonics and natural tones to enrich the timbre and enhance the tension of the piece. Throughout the composition, the three instruments vividly depict the twinkling of stars and the movement of red lines through the combination of points and lines, and the contrast between the virtual and the real. I tried to capture the deep emotional tension behind the photo through this sound language and delicately convey the dynamics and depth of visual art through musical forms. – *Zhihong Guo* 郭志鸿

Qinqiang Theme Rhapsody

is a Chinese Èrhu solo piece, composed by Zhao Zhenxiao and arranged by Lu Rirong. It is inspired by Qinqiang, a traditional opera from northwest China, known for its bold, passionate singing style. The music blends the expressive techniques of Èrhu with the dramatic essence of Qinqiang, creating a powerful and emotional soundscape.
We hope you enjoy this unique fusion of Chinese opera and instrumental music! - *Cheng Peng* 彭程

Ballads for Solo Koto, Vol. 3 "Summer"

Ballads for Koto Solo is a collection of works for koto by Japanese composer Minoru Miki (1930-2011), composed between 1969 and 1990 (performed here on Guzheng – the Chinese equivalent to the Japanese koto). The complete series is divided into four volumes, each representing a season: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
Under the White Wind (白い風の下で) and A Squall (雨ざんざん) are the fourth and fifth pieces from Summer and are typically performed as a pair. Miki composed a short atonal passage in free time to link the two pieces seamlessly. Under the White Wind is inspired by the gentle summer breeze over Kailua Beach in Hawaii. A Squall depicts the soft drizzle of rain on a foggy summer night in Tokyo. This performance presents an excerpt from both works. – *He Shuiqingqing* 何水清清