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An Annotated Bibliography of Saxophone Works by Taiwanese Composers

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AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SAXOPHONE WORKS BY TAIWANESE
COMPOSERS

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Music Performance

School of Music

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2015

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Song-Che Chang and Hui-Ching Huang, for their love, encouragement, and support of my endeavors and dreams.

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I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Clifford Leaman for his wisdom and guidance during my doctoral study, and endless energy in assisting my research project; to the other committee members, Dr. Michael Harley, Dr. Jennifer Parker-Harley, and Dr. Greg Stuart for their comments and critiques. I would also like to thank my many mentors, friends, and composers for their generous support. This document would not have been completed without them.

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Finally, I would like to offer my deepest thanks to my family. I would never have made it this far without your love and support.

ABSTRACT

Saxophone works by Taiwanese composers are, as yet, rarely researched nor introduced to the Western saxophone community. The purpose of this research paper is to create an annotated bibliography of works by prominent Taiwanese composers as a practical resource for pedagogues, researchers, and performers. Each work is introduced with background information, compositional ideas, performance length, a performance guide, and level of difficulty. In addition, a short biography and contact information for each composer is also included. It is the author's goal to increase the exposure of these important contemporary works to the wider saxophone community, so that there will be more interest in and performances of saxophone works by contemporary Taiwanese composers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to create a bibliography of classical saxophone compositions by Taiwanese composers to encourage more performances of, and research about these works in the future. The idea of using the saxophone as a classical instrument is relatively new and still in development in Taiwan, when compared with the traditions in Europe, North America, and even other countries in Asia like Japan. The earliest saxophonists who are academically trained at the graduate level only date from around 1995, and those saxophonists completed their academic training abroad. The first Taiwanese saxophone programs at the university level did not begin until after 1995. Within the last two decades, however, most of the music departments in major Taiwanese universities have created saxophone programs. Many saxophonists (either teachers in the universities or freelance players) are starting to work closely with active composers for new saxophone compositions, and as a result the community of saxophonists and composers of saxophone music has become more prolific than ever before.

The materials that will be presented in this bibliography are mainly classical saxophone works in any instrumentation. This includes pieces for saxophone solo, duet, trio, quartet, and large saxophone ensemble; and works with other instruments and/or electronics. Orchestral or large wind ensemble works that have saxophone parts will be excluded, as the focus of this research is on the instrument itself. A short biography of

every composer will be presented to show his or her educational background and stylistic influences. In the entry of each composition, basic information about the work (title, year of composition, duration, and instrumentation), a brief stylistic analysis, historical background, (particularly discussing the work's relationship to Taiwanese culture, if any), and performance guide will also be included. Entries will cover both performance and educational aspects of the works, such as the level of difficulty of the extended saxophone techniques used in each work. This allows teachers to find an appropriate work to improve students' facility on a specific extended technique.

To focus on only classical saxophone compositions, the first criterion for selecting the composers in this study was to identify active composers who are employed by universities. In order to collect more works, the criteria were then adjusted to include composers who are active and well-known to musicians but not employed by the university system. These include freelance composers, and current doctoral students. Since the purpose of this research project is to create a comprehensive bibliography of the repertoire, works by composers outside academia will be included in the future research, though none have been included in this document.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ultimate purpose of this research is to create a comprehensive list of classical saxophone works by Taiwanese composers. These works must be closely associated with either a classical saxophone performer or an educational institution. Hence, tracking these two aspects will offer a clearer time frame for when these early classical saxophone works appeared. The earliest appearance of the saxophone in Taiwan can be dated to the Westernization that occurred when it was under Japanese rule, during the period from 1895 to 1945. Later in the 1960s, jazz music from the United States also had a great impact on the popularization of the saxophone in Taiwan¹. In the 1980s, the saxophone appeared as a center character in “nakasi” – a style of Japanese-influenced popular music that was often played in restaurants, drinking bars, and nightclubs, and which could involve a variety of combinations of Western (keyboard, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, etc.) and Japanese traditional instruments in a small band. The music they played, which mainly served as entertainment, included popular songs from Japan, Taiwan, other western countries (mostly the United States), and even traditional folksongs from these regions, but no classical music. This type of band also branched into many other areas,

¹ Ming-Che Chen, *A Study of Saxophone Industrial History and Transformation Analysis in Houli, Taiwan* (New Taipei City, Taiwan: Huafan University, 2011), 42-46.

performing for various kinds of celebrations in society, including weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies.

However, academia was not one of the areas that welcomed the classical saxophone until late 1990s. Though the instrument had appeared in many areas of Taiwan's society for many years, especially military and school bands, the saxophone was not considered a "serious" instrument like other western instruments until relatively recently. This situation began to gradually change after the first three Taiwanese saxophonists, Shyen Lee, Chia-Hsiu Tsai, and Ching-Shyan Yen, returned to Taiwan with their academic training having been completed in Europe and the United States. The very first college-level saxophone program in Taiwan was started in 1995 at the Tunghai University, and included only one student that year. Within a few short years after 1995 many saxophone programs in universities such as Taipei National University of the Arts, National Taiwan University of Arts, Fu Jen Catholic University, Soochow University (in Taipei, Taiwan), National Taiwan Normal University, Shih Chien University, National Taipei University of Education, and National University of Tainan, were established. Most of the current professional saxophonists after this first generation graduated from these universities. Within the past two decades, the number of universities that created saxophone programs has increased more than tenfold, with almost all major music department/schools now included. This growing number of academic institutions as well as professional performers is increasing the opportunities for collaboration between saxophonists and composers in academia.

Composers in academia currently have more opportunities to become familiar with the instrument and to work with professional saxophonists. One important question

to ask is whether or not any Taiwanese composers wrote music for saxophone *before* the first three players from Taiwan who studied abroad returned to their home country in the mid-1990s. Based on my experience collecting works from Taiwanese composers and saxophonists to date, no such early saxophone works exist; however, further research into this issue needs to be done by interviewing both composers and saxophonists.

From the saxophonists' vantage point, commissioning new works is becoming increasingly important. At some level this is related to their experience studying abroad, as the emphasis on commissioning new music among European and American saxophonists is deeply entrenched. As a result, the number of compositions by Taiwanese composers has grown to such a substantial size that it cannot be disregarded.

Unfortunately, even though the number of Taiwanese saxophone works is increasing as more composers and players contribute new pieces, these works still seem relatively unknown and not considered to be in the mainstream of the modern saxophone repertoire. They are separated and isolated in different places. During the process of collecting works from the saxophonists, the author found that each player typically only knows the pieces that they commissioned or performed (or at most, they might be aware of other composers that have written works for saxophone, without knowing the details of the pieces such as title or instrumentation). The communication between players with each other and with the composers is lost. It is hard to imagine that one single work will become popular if only one, or few, performer knows about the work. Hence, a catalog that includes major works is crucial both to performers and researchers in the future, and will allow many more people to have easier access to this music. Furthermore, not a single composer represented in this study had their music subjected to research or

analysis. This document is the first research into the Taiwanese saxophone repertoire, and should serve as a significant resource for future studies.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Since the saxophone is one of the most widely-used instruments in various music genres, the first significant step in narrowing this research was to set a filter to concentrate the area of the works. Currently many jazz and popular players in Taiwan are prolific composers, but they are not included in this research in order to narrow the focus to classical saxophone music. The criteria used to choose the composers included restricted the search to those who are clearly involved in the classical music field. These composers include composition teachers in universities, freelance composers, and doctoral students in major universities. Even though doctoral students still have the chance to change their careers, it requires a certain level of seriousness in the craft of composing, once they decided to involve themselves in a DMA program. In this case, the quality of their works would still be worthy of study and performances in the professional world.

The materials in each annotated entry will include information such as a short biography of the composer, background information on the piece (both musically and culturally if any), a brief stylistic analysis, performance practice notes, and any educational issues to be considered. The biography, background information and stylistic analysis will offer a general idea of the musical parameters of each piece. The

performance and educational information will give the reader a resource to add a specific piece to their concert repertoire and to their teaching.

LIMITATIONS

The first limitation is the resources. Since this research is the first to cover the growing list of Taiwanese saxophone compositions, only primary resources such as interviews with composers and score study were used for this paper. Secondary resources on this topic do not yet exist, as nothing has been written about these composers or their saxophone music. The databases that have been searched include WorldCat, JSTOR, and ProQuest showing that no previous study has considered this or any similar topic. Other secondary resources in the National Library at Taiwan need to be considered as a possible source while searching for other earlier saxophone works, even though they are mostly focused on the history of saxophone manufacturing in Taiwan.

The final limitation of this study regards works that are in the process of being composed and premiered. Works that are expected to be completed in the near future are not included. This research will be limited to works completed by the year 2014. Any new works completed after 2014 will need to be discussed in future research.

CHAPTER 4

COMPOSERS AND WORKS

Chao, Tai-Kuang

As an emerging composer and flutist of the new generation of musicians, Tai-Kuang Chao received his Bachelor in performance and composition from Soochow University in Taipei, Taiwan, Master of Music degree in composition from Roosevelt University, and is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition and Theory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His primary teachers include Erin Gee, Reynold Tharp, Erik Lund, Kyong Mee Choi, Stacy Garrop, Ching-Wen Chao, Christopher Roberts and Wan-Chen Huang. Chao refers himself as a sonic painter, using different timbres in music as paintbrushes to create images for the audience. In addition, he interacts actively with other types of fine arts to produce multimedia productions, including dance, lighting design, and costume design.

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Chao, Tai-Kuang

Chant XI - Lustrousness

Duration: 10 minutes 30 seconds

Year of Composition: 2012

Instrumentation: solo alto/ baritone saxophone

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign by Po-Fang Chang, 2013

Commission: Po-Fang Chang

Performance guide and Commentary:

Chant XI – Lustrousness is one of the works within the larger series of works for solo instruments, *Chant*. This single-movement work contains two sections. The first half features the alto saxophone and the second half, the baritone saxophone. Chao uses the melody of a cheering song from one of the aboriginal Taiwanese people, Tayal, as the main element in this work. The melody is developed into several identical musical figures; and these figures intertwine, as he mentions in the program notes, into an amalgamation of different representations of lustrousness.² These melodic figures have a strong contrasting texture, and Chao enhances the contrasting texture by applying sudden changes between radically different dynamics and musical figures. The first section has a more energetic and floating texture, alternating among three figures: a flickering small group of staccato notes, legato runs, and a repeating pitch. The beginning of baritone saxophone section introduces a new figure with multiphonics, where the original melody is quoted most clearly. Then the composer re-introduces the elements in the first half and ends the piece with a virtuosic section of quintuplet sixteenth-note runs.

² Tai-Kuang Chao, *Chant XI – Lustrousness* (Published by author, 2013).

From a pedagogical perspective, the technical demands in this piece are very challenging. Chao uses many extended techniques, including slap tonguing, multiphonics, glissandi, and double-tonguing in the piece. However, the main difficulty does not come from the variety of techniques used, but in the way he applies those techniques. For example, the performer is required to alternate between slap and regular tonguing in a fast tempo, and isolated single notes from multiphonics, slurring back and forth. In addition, the irregular groupings of the articulations in the fast sixteenth-note sections are a huge challenge to perform. This piece would be most appropriate for a graduate student because of these difficulties.

The premiere of this work included an improvisatory dancer. Also Chao indicates in the program that the piece could be performed with amplification and reverberation. When this piece is performed with a dancer, it requires the amplified sound with reverberation to give the dancer more elements from which to base the choreography. If the piece is performed without a dancer, the decision should be based only on the acoustic environment of the performance space.

Chen, Shih-Hui

Award-winning composer and scholar Shih-Hui Chen has received numerous accolades from institutions in both the United States and Taiwan, including the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy in Rome, the National Endowment for the Arts, National Taiwan University and Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica. Chen's music displays a proficient use of Western musical language and an awareness of

Chinese/Taiwanese culture, and the balance between these two aspects is well presented in many of Chen's compositions.

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Chen, Shih-Hui *Plum Blossoms*

Duration: 7 minutes

Year of Composition: 2004

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and piano

Publisher: Radnofsky Couper Editions

Premiere: Premiered by many saxophonists around the world at approximately the same time³

Commission: World-Wide Concurrent Premieres & Commissions Fund, Inc.

Dedication: Kenneth Radnofsky

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is based on a famous Nanguan melody, *Plum Blossoms*, which can be dated back to the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). Nanguan is a classical Chinese music that

³ Shih-Hui Chen, "Plum Blossoms for Alto Saxophone and Piano," *Shih-Hui Chen*, <http://www.trigonmusic.com/TrigonMusicPress/sheplumblossoms.html> (accessed August 12, 2015)

originated from the southern part of China (such as Fujian Province) and which became popular in Taiwan due to the large-scale immigration from the southern China. The original melody serves as the basis of this single-movement piece; it starts in fragments and gradually develops into the complete melody toward the end of the piece. Other influences from Nanguan music can also be seen in this piece. Gestures from Nanguan music such as the accelerating repeated pitch (usually in string instruments like *pipa* or the three-stringed lute - *sanxian*), and the timbral trill (in wind instrument like the vertical flute – *xiao*) are presented frequently through out the entire piece. The melodic phrases generally stay within a close interval without huge jumps, which is another characteristic of classical Nanguan music. This compositional style not only retains the classical Chinese style but also clearly represents the place of plum blossoms in Chinese culture – the symbolism of virtue, the ethereal elegance, and the subtle fragrance. From a pedagogical perspective, learning this work would be an excellent experience for a student to begin developing an understanding of classical Chinese music. It is well written in the language of Western music but retains many elements of Chinese classical music. It is an excellent opportunity for a student to expand his/her musical experience in both styles.

For further information on Nanguan, please visit TNUA School of Music Department of Traditional Music at <http://trd-music.tnua.edu.tw/en/intro/c.html>.

Chen, Shih-Hui

Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossoms

Duration: 15 minutes

Year of Composition: 2012

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and piano

Publisher: Radnofsky Couper Editions

Premiere: By Kenneth Radnofsky, 2012

Commission: World-Wide Concurrent Premieres & Commissions Fund, Inc.

Dedication: Kenneth Radnofsky

Performance guide and Commentary:

Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossoms is an expansion of the previous work, *Plum Blossoms*, which Chen composed in 2004. The composer added the last two movements in *Fantasia* to the single-movement work *Plum Blossoms*, creating a large-scale work based on the same traditional melody. The second movement is a fast, scherzo-like movement with the title *Ten Thousand Blooms*, capturing the thriving and flourishing scene of thousands of plum blossoms. The third movement, titled *Plum Blossoms*, is a slow and lyrical movement that introduces the melody in the original Nanguan music. The Chinese title 釀雪爭春 is also one of five sections in the original Nanguan music that uses repeated same pitch and ethereal lyricism. Similar to the first movement (see *Plum Blossoms*), Chen uses gestures from Nanguan music in both the second and third movement, including repeated notes and glissandi. From a technical perspective, this two-movement expansion only increases the difficulty of this work slightly. The main challenge is still to capture the style of classical Chinese music and the concept behind the music. In addition to this work, Chen has another work titled *Fantasia*

on the Theme of Plum Blossoms (for string quartet in 2007 and an adoption for string orchestra in 2011) that uses similar thematic and stylistic materials. It can be an excellent resource to research the stylistic and musical issues found in this work.

Chen, Shih-Hui *Twice Removed*

Duration: 8 minutes

Year of Composition: 2000

Instrumentation: solo alto saxophone

Publisher: Radnofsky Couper Editions

Premiere: By Kenneth Radnofsky, 2000

Commission: Longy School of Music

Performance guide and Commentary:

Chen states in her program note that the source of this solo work is from another work she composed for a documentary of modern China, *Once Removed*.⁴ The work does not have rigid sections; instead the music continuously transforms from one idea to another. Although Chinese musical elements appear occasionally in the piece, the overall acoustic remains atonal. Phrases are abstract, long, and often with no clear cadence. This writing style definitely offers the performer a large amount of freedom to interpret the

⁴ Shih-Hui Chen, "Twice Removed," *Shih-Hui Chen*, <http://www.trigonmusic.com/TrigonMusicPress/shctwiceremoved.html> (accessed August 13, 2015).

piece in his/her own way; hence it is a good work to challenge one's musicianship rather than technique.

Cheng, Chien-Wen

Chien-Wen Cheng received his Doctor of Musical Art in Music Composition from the University of North Texas, where he studied with Andrew May, Cindy McTee, Phil Winsor, and Joseph Butch Rovin. Currently, Cheng serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Interaction Design at the National Taipei University of Technology, and is adjunct professor in composition at the Taipei University of Education. Cheng is very active in composing both acoustic and computer music, along with a specific focus on music with interactive media. His compositions demonstrate his interest in using an interactive program with acoustic instruments to capture and imitate other non-musical ideas, such as rural and urban sounds, dreams, poetry, scenes, memories, and philosophical and religious concepts. These images, scenes, and concepts behind his compositions are extremely significant resources for preparing his works and communicating with the audience.

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Cheng, Chien-Wen

Dancing Leaves of Autumn

Duration: 6 minutes

Year of Composition: 2004 / revised in 2005

Instrumentation: soprano saxophone and piano

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: University of North Texas, 2004

Performance guide and Commentary:

The images behind this work are scenes at the University of North Texas campus where the falling leaves from a tree dance in the wind. According to the program notes, Cheng also mentions that the scenes involve some saxophone students practicing jazz tunes outside, weaving the tunes with the dance of the falling leaves.⁵ The irregular motions of the leaves moving with the wind are depicted in the piece with the highly complicated rhythm between the saxophone and piano, which portrays the unpredictable tracks of the leaves and also creates an improvisatory texture. Even though the composer does mention specifically that jazz tunes occurred in the scenes, this work does not carry a jazzy texture. The improvisatory texture comes from the nature of the wind, of the falling leaves, and of the music occurring simultaneously with them. The entire piece should be a continuous scene; the leaves and wind will pause occasionally but never actually stop. The performer should have this image in mind to connect different sections seamlessly and smoothly. Also because it is based on the dancing leaves, one has to avoid

⁵ Chien-Wen Cheng, “Dancing of Autumn Leaves for Soprano Saxophone and Piano,” *Chien-Wen Cheng’s Music*, August 24, 2010, <http://cw-cheng.blogspot.com/2010/08/dancing-of-autumn-leaves-for-soprano.html> (accessed April 21, 2015).

creating an over-powerful texture. The dancing leaves might become chaotic at times but should not be too heavy. The two main difficulties in this piece are the rhythmic complexity and the variety of the articulations. The performer must capture both aspects to successfully bring these scenes to life.

Cheng, Chien-Wen *Dancing Leaves of Autumn*

Duration: 10 minutes

Year of Composition: 2004 / revised in 2005

Instrumentation: alto saxophone, soprano saxophone and piano (trio)

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: University of North Texas, 2005

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is a revised three-movement version of the previous *Dancing Leaves of Autumn* for soprano saxophone and piano. First two movements are added to the previous single movement work and turn the piece into a three-movement trio work for alto and soprano saxophones, and piano. As the composer notes in his program, the image behind the first movement is a feeling he has while watching the falling leaves that reminds him of the fleeting nature of pleasurable events in life.⁶ The second movement is a portrait of the rapid passing of time that humans cannot catch. This feeling is created by the rhythm

⁶ Chien-Wen Cheng, *Dancing Leaves of Autumn* (Taipei, Taiwan: published by author, 2005).

between the saxophones and the piano, which is irregularly complex but which stays within a continuous sextuplet figure.

Cheng, Chien-Wen *Moth and Flame*

Duration: 9 minutes 30 seconds

Year of Composition: 2007 / revised for soprano saxophone in 2012

Instrumentation: soprano saxophone and Max/MSP

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Augustana College, Illinois, U.S.A. by Randall Hall, 2013

Commission: Randall Hall (saxophone version)

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is based on the ironic and miserable relationship between the moth and the flame, in which the moth is attracted by the light of the fire but is burned in the flames. Cheng indicates in the program that the saxophone part represents the moth and the interactive computer represents the flame.⁷ The piece gives this vivid image through the differing interaction between the saxophone and computer. It also captures the shadow of the moth as reflected by the light through the delicate texture in the piece. Many extended techniques are applied with very clear and specific notations: breath tone,

⁷ Chien-Wen Cheng, "Chien-Wen Cheng's Music: Music," *Chien-Wen Cheng's Music*, <http://cw-cheng.blogspot.com/p/music.html> (accessed April 24, 2015).

mixture of breath and normal tone, glissando, growling, slap tonguing, multiphonics, and various amounts of vibrato. Especially in the first half of the piece, Cheng applies those techniques in a very complicated way; the difficulty comes mainly from the combination of two or more techniques, for example a glissando or growling during the timbre change from breath sound to normal (or vice versa). Another difficult aspect of the piece that also relates to the extended techniques is to use those techniques to capture the proper imagery. In 2009, Cheng revised the piece creating a version for flute and Max/MSP. The naturally light timbre of the flute suits the image of the flying moth very well. As a saxophonist, one should be aware that the timbre of the soprano saxophone, especially with the many extended techniques (e.g. growling and flutter tonguing), could easily turn wildly heavy. The challenge actually comes from being delicate but still keeping the density of all those sounds to capture the image of a moth.

Cheng, Chien-Wen *Wind Sketch*

Duration: 9 minutes

Year of Composition: 2005 / revised in 2007

Instrumentation: soprano saxophone and Max/MSP

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: SEAMUS National Conference, 2006

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is based on the state of mind of the composer while he was listening to sounds created by the wind. He describes his state of mind as similar to a meditation, or Zen, where only the image of wind and his mind react to each other without anything else happening simultaneously. In other words, it is a status without pain, without noises from the real world, without all the thinking, but only a pure and simple reflection (from his mind) to the wind. According to the composer, the soprano saxophone is the image of the sound of the wind, and the interactive effects in the Max/MSP indicate the sounds that are carried by the wind and also the reflection in the listener's mind. The difficulty of interpreting this work does not come from the technical aspects nor the extended techniques, but from the interaction between the soprano saxophone's timbre and the computer-generated effects. Cheng has notated on the score very clearly which effects will be triggered by each pedal. In this case, the performer will have a brief idea about the sound effects he/she will hear after each pedal. However, the result might be slightly (or dramatically) different due to the equipment settings, the acoustic environment and other variable reasons. Hence the interpretation relies heavily on the performer's reaction to the sound in live performance, which is a presentation of the mental status in the original compositional idea. From a technical perspective, the only two extended techniques that applied in the work are flutter tonguing and growling; they are not used in an extremely difficult way, but it still could be challenging to blend well into the texture. Overall, this work requires a mature level of musical thinking and ensemble technique to be able to interact with the computer sounds, which in most of the cases will vary from one performance to another.

Hsu, Ya-Ming

"Mr. Hsu's music contains a character which you have never heard in the other compositions- the poetic content, the unusual orchestration, and his unique taste of voice...He is a gifted composer and you will never forget his music..." – Singapore Newspaper

As one of the representative composers in Taiwan, Ya-Ming Hsu has received numerous awards, including the Golden Melody Award - the highest music award in Taiwan. His compositions have been performed worldwide including at venues in Europe, North America, and Asia. Hsu is particularly famous for the unique manner in which he combines the poetry with his music (especially vocal music and songs), and for applying Eastern philosophical concepts into his music to produce unique colors and sounds. Hsu received his Doctor of Musical Arts from Boston University, where he studied composition with Lukas Foss and Theodore Antonious. Hsu currently teaches composition in Chinese Culture University and National Taipei Normal University in Taipei, Taiwan. He is also a member of ISCM, Asian Composer's League, the board member of Taiwan Association of Arts and Humanity, and Taiwan Classical Music Society.

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Hsu, Ya-Ming

Crisscross – Break through the Darkness

Duration: 12 minutes

Year of Composition: 2012

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and tape

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: World Saxophone Congress XVI at St. Andrews by William Chien, 2012

Commission: William Chien

Performance guide and Commentary:

In this work for saxophone and soundtrack, Hsu tries to capture the common experience of people fighting against the temptations of this chaotic world. The pre-designed soundtrack represents the chaotic world that interacts with the saxophone, sometimes in concordance but sometimes in distortion, which signifies the relationship between humans and the reality of life to Hsu. The work is improvisational overall, and durations are indicated above the phrases. Even though the pitch and rhythm are notated in the score, the duration does offer the performer a tremendous amount of room for free interpretation. The performer needs to have a special awareness of the variety of vibrato, and the style of repeated notes to produce a proper atmosphere. In addition, one should have in mind that this work does have a certain level of influence from the *Memories of Xiao Xiang* by Chinese composer, Lei Liang. From a pedagogical perspective, this work is easily accessible in its technical demands but requires maturity in musicianship to create the atmosphere. It is recommended that a student be at least a junior or senior undergraduate before attempting this work.

Lee, Chihchun

Award-winning composer Chihchun Chi-sun Lee received numerous honors and commissions from around the world, including the Guggenheim Fellowship, Harvard Fromm Music Fellowship, International Society for Contemporary Music, and International Alliance for Women in Music. Lee holds a DMA in composition from the University of Michigan, MM in composition from Ohio University, and BA from Soochow University in Taiwan. Her teachers include William Albright, William Bolcom, Yen Lu, Mark Phillips, Bright Sheng, Loong-Hsing Wen, and Yann-Jong Hwang. Lee's compositional style demonstrates a well-balanced combination of Western contemporary musical language and traditional Chinese/Taiwanese music. She frequently applies the combination of western and eastern instruments in her compositions and creates a concordant fusion between the two. Lee currently serves as a board member of Korea-China Art Association, and an invited professor at the Ewha Womans University at Seoul, Korea.

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Lee, Chihchun Chi-sun

ZAS!

Duration: 7 minutes

Year of Composition: 2013

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and guzheng

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: ISCM Taipei International New Music Festival by Chia-Hsiu Tsai (alto saxophone) and Juan-Reng Yeh (guzheng), Oct 12, 2013

Recording: East, West, in Pairs – 2013 ISCM-Taiwan Commissioned Works, published by ISCM-TW and funded by the National Cultural and Arts Foundation, Taiwan (ISRC: TWO311400001-TWO311400006)

Commission: International Society for Contemporary Music, Taiwan Section

Performance guide and Commentary:

This unique composition for alto saxophone and guzheng is dedicated to two musicians, Richard Scruggs (saxophone) and Haiquong Deng (guzheng). The piece is composed in the style of contemporary saxophone atonal music and uses its many extended saxophone techniques, but creates a very satisfying balance between the western saxophone and the eastern guzheng. Lee describes this work in the program note as a bridge to merge those two instruments into each other's field, and specifically associates the saxophone with the traditional French style (instead of American culture as she notes).⁸ The use of extended techniques in the saxophone part is definitely a major aspect of this successful combination. Techniques such as timbre change, quartertones, and multiphonics help to merge the color and tonality between two instruments better; and the addition of slap tonguing allows the saxophone to produce a more similar articulation to the musical language of the guzheng.

⁸ Chihchun Lee. *ZAS!* (Seoul, Korea: published by author, 2013).

From a pedagogical perspective, the complexity of rhythm, ensemble, and technical demands greatly increases the difficulty of this work. Performers will face huge challenges to produce some of the effects exactly as notated, such as slap tonguing on one note, in fast runs, or in the altissimo range. A good senior or graduate level student is recommended due to the complexity of contemporary techniques.

Lee, Feng-Hsu

Feng-Hsu Lee received his degrees in composition from the Hartt School, University of Hartford (DMA), Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester (MM), National Taiwan Normal University (MFA), and Soochow University at Taipei, Taiwan (BL, Music). His primary teachers include Larry Alan Smith, Stephen Michael Gryc, Robert Carl, David Macbride, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Carlos Sánchez-Gutiérrez, and Gordon Shi-Wen Chin. Lee is very active in composing for a variety of instrumental combinations from solo to large ensemble, especially chamber music and songs. Most of his music relates to non-musical ideas, including film, poetry, religion, landscape, and personal experience. In addition, many of his works associate with Chinese or Taiwanese cultures, including folksong, dance, religious ritual, poetry, and etc. Understanding the background for each work is a significant step for learning his music. Lee has won numerous awards around the world, and his works have been performed in many major music conferences as well.

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Lee, Feng-Hsu

Cave Railroad

Duration: 9 minutes

Year of Composition: 2011

Instrumentation: solo alto saxophone

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Bowling Green State University by Po-Fang Chang, 2012

Commission: Po-Fang Chang

Performance guide and Commentary:

Cave Railroad is based on the image of a train going through the cave. The first four notes (B - C sharp - B - A) are the beginning melody of a famous Taiwanese folksong – *Diu Diu Dong*; and Lee uses it as the main motif to create this work. In the original folksong, the text is just a simple two sentences. The first says the train goes into the cave and the second describes the sound of water dripping inside the cave. Lee also expands this image into a more detailed description. He uses the floating slow melody and the ambiguity in tonality to depict the vague and obscure image while the train runs into the darkness of the cave. This image covers most of the first slow section in the piece along with a sentimental melodic writing recalling the memory of the old trains. The next section, which he marks “With momentum”, is faster and depicts the sound from the train inside the cave. In this section, the faster tempo and the mechanical figures indicate the image, as well as the sound of the train wheel. Multiphonics are clearly marked with the instruction “like loud steam train whistles”. Near the end of the piece, there is a short

recapitulation of the first section, giving the idea that the train is departing from the cave. This piece would be a good challenge for a junior in college to obtain more experience with multiphonics. In addition, because of the non-stop writing in the second section, circular breathing is necessary and presents an additional challenge for the performer.

Lee, Feng-Hsu *Dancing Mountains*

Duration: 8 minutes

Year of Composition: 2006

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and piano

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Bach Recital Hall, Taipei, Taiwan by Chun-Yuan Cheng, 2006

Dedication: Chun-Yuan Cheng

Performance guide and Commentary:

There are two images behind this work indicated by the composer in his program note: a scene where geothermal smoke surrounds a green tree while the wind blows strongly in Datun Mountain, a volcano in northern Taiwan, and verses from a Psalm:

“You mountains, that you skipped like rams, you hills, like lamb? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the bard rock into spring of water.” Psalm 114: 6-8

The piece is in a scherzo form with the same dance-like sections in compound meter at both the beginning and end of the piece, with a sentimental and lyrical trio in the middle. The performer needs to be aware of the texture change in different sections. One has to have in mind that the geothermal smoke in a strong wind can be very brutal, such as where Lee marks “Rudely; Violently” in the scherzo sections, and in other way very moderate such as the sentimental trio section. The performer should produce a wide range of colors to interpret the piece due to the kaleidoscopic scenery changes on the Datun Mountain. From a pedagogical perspective, this work features only a small amount of flutter tonguing in the scherzo section, glissandi in the cadenza, and reaches the altissimo range occasionally. Overall it is a good work for students around the sophomore or junior year due to the challenges of those extended techniques.

Lee, Feng-Hsu

Dragon and Lion

Duration: 17 minutes

Year of Composition: 2013

Instrumentation: saxophone (alto/baritone) and percussion

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: yet

Commission: Li-Chun Hsiao

Performance guide and Commentary:

This is a three-movement work for saxophone and percussion. The detailed instrumentation for the work is:

Alto Saxophone and Baritone Saxophone (one player)

Percussion (one player):

1 Xylophone

1 Vibraphone

3 Chinese Tom-Toms, or regular large Tom-Toms

4 Chinese Opera Gongs (different ones in high pitches)

2 Large Suspended Cymbals

4 Crotales (E1, G1, A1, B1)

5 Woodblocks

The idea of this work comes from two different traditional Chinese dances: the dragon dance and the lion dance, used in most of the celebrations like Chinese New Year and other religious festivals. The dragon dance requires multiple people (usually around ten) with each one holding a stick connected to the body of the dragon figure (the image of the dragon in Eastern culture has a long serpent-shaped body, which is different from the image common in most Western cultures). The dance involves a leader holding the head of the dragon and leading the team to mimic the flying gesture of a dragon by moving the sticks (usually in an upward-downward motion). In the first movement, Lee captures the image of this dance by using the alto saxophone as the head of the dragon, the high pitches in the percussion as the height of the body, and the long musical phrases as the length of the dragon.⁹ The third movement captures the lion dance, which is another commonly used traditional dance used in similar occasions with the dragon dance. The lion dance only requires two people in a lion costume with one holding the head and another holding the body. The dance mimics the movement of the lion and is

⁹ Feng-Hsu Lee, *Dragon and Lion*, (published by author, 2013).

frequently accompanied by a group of Chinese traditional percussion instruments. Compared to the dragon dance, the lion dance is a more vivid and energetic performance. Hence the presentation of this in the third movement involves more rhythmical figures with some of them being quoted from the traditional dance accompaniment. This work definitely keeps many elements from the traditional music, such as its pentatonic scale and the rhythmic patterns, and develops them further to make a very strong collaboration between the percussion and the saxophone. From a pedagogical perspective, this work is definitely a good work for obtaining more Eastern experiences; in a more technical way, the frequent usage of the altissimo range, both in large intervals and long melodic phrases, is a good challenge for a student who is willing to obtain better techniques in the altissimo range.

Lee, Feng-Hsu

Dream Landscapes

Duration: 20 minutes

Year of Composition: 2008

Instrumentation: saxophone quartet (SATB)

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: World Saxophone Congress XV, Bangkok, Thailand by Composition VII

Saxophone Quartet, 2008

Commission: Composition VII Saxophone Quartet

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is a seven-movement composition based on the film *Dream* (aka. *Akira Kurosawa's Dream*) by the Japanese film director, Akira Kurosawa. Lee takes seven out of the eight sequences of dreams from the movie, and uses them to compose the work; however, as Lee mentions in his program, he only uses the structure of the film and develops his interpretation of it into this composition, which he refers to as an acoustic movie.¹⁰ The seven movements in the work and their references from the original film (in brackets) are:

- I. Sunshine through the Rain (Sunshine through the Rain)
- II. Peach Blossoms Dancing (The Peach Orchard)
- III. The Blizzard (The Blizzard)
- IV. The Tunnel of Soldiers with Light Blue Faces (The Tunnel)
- V. Wheat Field with Crows (Crows)
- VI. The Weeping Demons after the Red Mountain (The Weeping Demon)
- VII. Village of the Watermills (The Village of the Watermills)

In the first movement, Lee gives the movement a bright color while occasionally displaying a quasi-pentatonic texture. The story behind the film is based on a Japanese legend that when the sun shines through the rains, it means the *kitsune* (fox) is having a wedding. In Japanese folklore, the fox is believed to be a creature with magical ability that gains more wisdom with age. The beginning of the movement presents a mysterious texture with ambiguity between each voice in both rhythm and melody; the image of

¹⁰ Feng-Hsu Lee, *Dream Landscape*, (published by author, 2008).

sunshine is introduced after each voice turns into more identical figures, especially over the staccato dissonant figure that indicates the rain dropping. *Peach Blossoms Dancing* is a dance in compound rhythm with a similar bright texture from the first movement; the flamboyant sixteenth note passages throughout the movement give it a more energetic feeling and also an image of the blooming peach flowers. *The Blizzard* features chromatic scales in different directions between each voice in all four parts, creating a very dissonant and intense texture that differs from the previous two movements. The movement is sliced into multiple small sections by grand pauses, indicating the respites during the blizzard. *The Tunnel of Soldiers with Light Blue Faces* is a mysterious march of a group of ghost soldiers. Different characters in the film are associated with identical musical figures that are clearly marked on the score; for example, the baritone saxophone features an army officer with an identical line among the other three voices, recalling the commander and his ghost soldiers in the original film. Lee dedicates *Wheat Field with Crows* as an “homage to Claude Debussy”. It relates to the sequence in the original film when a young artist walks in to an exhibition of Vincent van Gogh’s paintings. In this movement, Lee uses the music of Debussy to invoke the Impressionism of van Gogh, quoting three works from Debussy’s *Prelude for Piano* in this movement, where he marks “The First View”, “The Second View”, and “The Third View”. He also quotes the “Promenade” from the *Pictures at an Exhibition* to give the imagery of walking through the exhibition. The sixth movement, *The Weeping Demon after the Red Mountain*, is in combination of two sequences from the original film: *Mount Fuji in Red* and *The Weeping Demon*. Both sections relate to the catastrophic scene after the nuclear explosion. Lee uses many elements, such as dissonances in chromaticism, contrary-

direction chromatic scales, glissando, and growling, to portray this catastrophic scene. The last scene in the film, *Village of Watermills*, is about a young traveler who finds a beautiful village with many watermills and meets an old wise man who embraces the natural life instead of the advantages of modern technology. Also at the end of the sequence, the young traveler joins a joyful funeral that people in the village believe is the proper way to end one's life (instead of a sorrow funeral). Lee starts the movement with a dialogue between soprano saxophone as the traveler, baritone saxophone as the old wise man, and the inner voices as the flowing stream. It then turns to a section portraying the stream, followed by a funeral march with a joyful color. At the end of the funeral march, he recalls the ending of the first movement and leads back into the stream section until the end of the entire work. Overall, knowing the film definitely is a major help in understanding this work. Performers have to be aware of the connection between the visual presentation (the film) and the aural one (the piece), as the composer indicates this work is "an acoustic movie to express the actual and symbolic meanings of the film itself as well as those I may have myself created".¹¹

Lee, Feng-Hsu

Lament of Autumn Leaves

Duration: 8 minutes

Year of Composition: 2012

Instrumentation: solo alto saxophone and wind ensemble

¹¹ Feng-Hsu Lee, *Dream Landscape*, (published by author, 2008).

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: KHS Hall, New Taipei City, Taiwan by Li-Chun Hsiao and National Taiwan University Band for Alumni, 2013

Performance guide and Commentary:

This concerto for solo alto saxophone and wind ensemble is a revised version of the second movement of Lee's *Walking on the Falling Leaves and Snow*. The instrumentation of the ensemble includes: 1 piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 3 B-flat clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 1 alto saxophone, 1 tenor saxophone, 1 baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets in B flat, 4 horns in F, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 euphonium, 1 tuba, 1 double bass, timpani, a marimba, a vibraphone, 2 suspended cymbal (medium and low), and a triangle. For a performance guide and commentary, see the *Walking on the Falling Leaves and Snow* below.

Lee, Feng-Hsu

The Voice of Children

Duration: 17 minutes

Year of Composition: 2007

Instrumentation: solo baritone saxophone

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: World Saxophone Congress XV, Bangkok, Thailand by Chih-Huan Wu, 2009

Commission: Chih-Huan Wu

Performance guide and Commentary:

The Voice of Children was originally a work for solo bass clarinet in 2003. It is a four-movement work inspired by Lee's poem, *The Voice of Children*:

The smiles on children's face
reflect the bright sunshine.

Sudden thunder and lightning shock their naïve mind.
Frightened and intimidated,
they weep irresolutely and pusillanimously,
like dust in the wind.
The burden of hitching keys is
everlasting in the unchanged milieu
as if it were the shadow of solitude.

Sometimes waking up in the midst of dream,
they seemingly hear the lullaby Mother once sang
and smilingly recall the memory
of lying down peacefully in her arms.

Flapping wings, propelled by the flying machine,
are ready to take off.
With the memory of the comforting song,
they courageously fly with the wind and
make a splendid and glorious dream.

The voice of children is the joyful smile of the sunshine.¹²

The first movement is entitled, "Chasing in the Wind." The entire movement stays within a highly chromatic and pointillistic texture, including many large intervallic jumps between the normal and altissimo range. Lee also uses many contemporary techniques, such as glissandi, growling, and sudden dynamic changes. All of these elements capture the irresolute and pusillanimous weeping that he mentioned in his poem. The second

¹² Feng-Hsu Lee, *The Voice of Children*, (published by author, 2007).

movement, “Solitude” is inspired by latchkey kids. Lee uses figures alternating between different registers, creating two separated and non-related lines, to capture the state of being alone and helpless that these latchkey teenagers encounter. In addition, the sudden dynamic changes and gestures between groups of grace notes and sustained pitches also gives feelings of isolation and detachment that represent the state of solitude. The movement ends with a section that similes weeping by asking the performer to sing a fixed pitch (with glissando) simultaneously while playing. The third movement, “Lullaby,” is a slower and more lyrical movement. Lee uses melodies from a famous tune, called *Taiwanese Lullaby* by Quan-Sheng Lu, as the outline of the floating sixteenth runs. However, they are not identical and the overall musical language remains highly chromatic. The last movement, “Making a Dream,” carries more energy and momentum and reflects the flying machine that Lee writes about in the last stanza in the poem. Additionally, elements from previous movements appear in this movement, particularly the melodies of the lullabies (where Lee marks M. Pr. – blow more pressure into the instrument – as emphasis to the melodies) which reflect the image in the poem of the children chasing a dream from their memories.

From a pedagogical perspective, this work is a very challenging one. Lee uses a great deal of flutter tonguing, glissandi (in both directions), altissimo, and a section of singing while playing. The frequent large jumps into the altissimo range throughout the entire piece could be especially difficult for a baritone saxophone player. A high level of technical expertise on the baritone saxophone is mandatory for performing this work.

Lee, Feng-Hsu

Walking on the Falling Leaves and Snow

Duration: 12 minutes

Year of Composition: 2011

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and piano

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: yet

Commission: Chih-Huan Wu

Performance guide and Commentary:

The idea of this work is based on a severe snowstorm that struck the northeast coast of United States in October 2011. The rare snowstorm in the fall caused more than three million people to live without electricity and hot water in the freezing temperatures for weeks. Lee, as one of the witnesses of the event, considers this snowstorm as it strengthens his sentimental feelings in the fall. This piece consists two movements: a fast first movement titled “Autumn Snow”, and a slow second one titled “Autumn Leaves”. In the first movement, Lee indicates in his program note that the piano part depicts the weather and the saxophone depicts the witness to this unbelievable scene.¹³ The first movement is in A-B-A form; the saxophone part in the A section is given rhythmical flexibility while the piano stays in strict tempo to indicate the frustrated witnesses in this tragedy. The same frustrated feeling also continues in the B section by blurring the melody in the large intervallic jumps. The second movement is a lament with a sorrowful

¹³ Feng-Hsu Lee, *Walking on the Falling Leaves and Snow*, (published by author, 2011).

texture that spans the entire movement. The image behind this movement is the devastation of the red leaves in the fall covered by the snow, and which are eventually buried on the ground into a muddy and freezing mess. The melody is a kind of moaning to this unpredictable devastation of the beautiful scenes in the fall.

From a pedagogical perspective, extended techniques are occasionally applied only in the first movement (slap tonguing, flutter tonguing, growling, and glissando). The most difficult aspect of the entire work is the altissimo: huge jumps between altissimo and normal range occur in the first movement, and the climax of the second movement. This requires at least a very decent technique in the altissimo range to start working on this work. This work requires a good junior in college level to perform it well.

Li, Yuan-Chen

Emerging Taiwanese composer, Yuan-Chen Li, arrived on the contemporary music scene in her early career with a unique compositional style. Her works show a high degree of awareness of Chinese traditional arts, literature, religion, and philosophy. This style is represented in her orchestrations, compositional techniques, and her choices of instrumentation, especially in her unique combinations of Western and Chinese instruments. Li's works have received awards and performances around the world, including from the Asian Composers' League, IMANI Winds Chamber Music Festival (New York), New Music New Haven at Yale School of Music, Soundbridges: New Music from Taiwan (Berlin), and the Thailand International Saxophone Conference. Li received a Ph. D. in music composition from the University of Chicago, the Artist

Diploma from the Yale University, and the M.F.A. and B.F.A. from Taipei National University of the Arts. Her primary teachers include Marta Ptaszynska, Shulamit Ran, Tsung-Hsien Yang, and Chung-Kun Hung in composition, as well as other classes with conductor Cliff Colnot, musicologist Martha Feldman, and theorist Lawrence Zbikowsky.

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Li, Yuan-Chen *Spell (aka. Ling)*

Duration: 6 minutes 30 seconds

Year of Composition: 2009 / revised in 2011

Instrumentation: solo alto saxophone

Publisher: self-published

Commission: Chun-Hao Ku

Performance guide and Commentary:

The *Spell (aka. Ling)* is based on an inspiration by a Taoist tradition in Taiwan - Chi Ji (起占). Chi Ji is a ritual that creates a connection between people and spirits through the Taoist priest. In the ritual the priest will transform himself into a body full of spirits – in other words, not himself anymore – and answer questions from the people. In most of the cases, the presentations of the ritual are with wildness, madness, and even self-mutilation in some of the most intense cases. This work successfully captures the

gradually growing process from the gentle and spiritual stage at the beginning of the ritual to the wild and crazy final stage. The extended techniques (slap tonguing, quartertone, glissandi, flutter tonguing, and multiphonics) applied in the work demonstrate the unusual movements in the ritual, which increase in intensity toward the end of the piece. The slap tonguing at the end of phrases in the beginning of the piece demonstrate the common movements in the ritual with the priest nodding his/her head, which will grow into a wilder movements in the later part of the ritual. The expression marks are very clearly marked in detail, including the use of vibrato, texture changes, tempo changes, and dynamic contrasts. The performer needs to keep in mind that the contrasts between these physical expressions should grow bigger and bigger as the piece progresses, in order to capture the wildness of the later stages of the ritual. From a pedagogical perspective, controlling extended techniques at a mature level is required to perform this piece properly. For example, the performer must be able to produce rapid alternation between slap tonguing and regular tonguing, flutter tonguing followed by a slap tongue, and progressing from senza vibrato to a wide embouchure-induced pitch bending. Overall, this work can be a good challenge for higher-level undergraduate students or graduate students to manipulate the extended techniques.

Lin, Yi-Cheng

Emerging Taiwanese composer Yi-Cheng Lin received her Doctor of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 2008, when she was 26 years old, and started her teaching job as an assistant professor immediately afterward.

Her primary teachers at UW-Madison include Laura Schwerdinger and, Stephen Dembski. She also studied with Ladislav Kubik at the Czech-American Summer Music Institute in 2010.

Before 2009, Lin's musical style was about the fusion of traditional Eastern and contemporary Western music. After 2009, she was inspired by ideas of Dadaism from modern art, and gradually became enthusiastic about the combination of electronic music and science. As a result, she began to pursue knowledge about classical mechanics, quantum mechanics, electrical science, mathematics, and computer programming language including JavaScript, and Python. Her new work *Journey into World of Dimensions* (2014) for solo saxophone, piano, and electronic music echoes concepts about the parallel universe of quantum physics.

Lin plays piano, percussion instruments, Qin (Chinese seven string zither), and Japanese Tsugaru Shamisen. She currently teaches composition at the Fu Jen Catholic University and a course on "Film Music Appreciation" at the Center for General Education at the National Taipei University.

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Lin, Yi-Cheng

Dialogue of Time

Duration: 10 minutes

Year of Composition: 2011

Instrumentation: alto saxophone, sound track, and one improvising instrument

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Institute of Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra by Chun-Hao Ku, 2012.

Commission: Chun-Hao Ku

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work contains three primary elements: the sound track (pre-recorded sound and music), the alto saxophone, and an improvising instrument of any choice. These three figures represent different points in time: the past (sound track), the present (saxophone), and the future (improvising part). During the performance, saxophonist is asked to interact alternately with the fixed sound track (the unchangeable past), the improvising part (the unpredictable future), and even with him/herself. For Lin, this is similar to the way that one's brain works, sometimes dealing with the memory, sometimes the future, and sometimes focusing on the present. Thus, the result of every single performance of the piece would be different. Even though most of the saxophone part is fixed, there are three sections that Lin indicates in the score to improvise, marked "with the future instrument", "as a passage sounds like coda", and "with the background." From a technical and pedagogical perspective, this work is not terribly difficult but definitely requires an open mind to successfully navigate its experimental aspects.

Tung, Chao-Ming

Chao-Ming Tung is highly interested in experiencing new combinations of traditional musical elements with modern media technologies. His works and

compositional style usually involve a fusion between different cultures, time periods, and art forms. Tung has composed music for solo, chamber, orchestra, opera, and music theater. In addition, he also collaborates closely with other artists as a co-founder of the tranArt NCTU, a group that utilizes multiple types of art. Tung received the artist diploma (Aufbaustudium) in composition from the Folkwang Hochschule für Musik Essen. His primary teachers include Johannes Fritsh, Nicolaus A. Huber, Mauricio Kagel, and Nan-Zhang Qian. Tung currently teaches composition at the Institute of Music, National Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

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Tung, Chao-Ming *Message from Dreams*

Duration: 13 minutes

Year of Composition: 2010

Instrumentation: alto saxophone and interactive computer sound

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: National Chiao Tung University Arts Center at Hsinchu, Taiwan by Tong Yang, 2010.

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is a re-arrangement of Tung's two other works, *Dreaming of Butterfly* for *ruan* (a Chinese traditional plucked string instrument) and *Message from Three*

Continents for soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, and piano. Tung intends to demonstrate the use of new media and techniques in a traditional concert, with traditional instruments that have the potential to create a new type of aesthetic in acoustics, and time. In his *Message from Dreams*, Tung uses many kinds of delay and reverberation, capturing the saxophone solo that portrays receiving messages from a dream. In the saxophone part, Tung uses many extended techniques, including different types of tonguing (slap, flutter, and double), air sounds, glissandi, and multiphonics, to produce a colorful acoustical environment in the performance. Overall the performance is somewhat improvisatory due to the freedom that Tung leaves to the performer's interpretation, and the final outcome definitely varies from one venue to another due to the differing acoustical effects in various performance spaces. From a pedagogical perspective, this is a great exercise for students to explore experimental music; it requires an experienced control of all these techniques to produce the colorful texture successfully, hence a senior or graduate level is recommended.

Tung, Chao-Ming *Message from Three Continents*

Duration: 4 minutes

Year of Composition: 2009

Instrumentation: soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, and piano

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: World Saxophone Congress XV at Bangkok, Thailand by Shyen Lee and Tong Yang, 2009

Performance guide and Commentary:

This piece shows Tung's awareness and experience with the effects of the saxophone's extended techniques. It starts with using different techniques (air sounds, slap tonguing, and complex rhythms) on a single pitch in both saxophone parts, then gradually develops the texture into a more chaotic but colorful dialogue within all three parts, and finally ends with a texture similar to the beginning section. From a pedagogical perspective, the difficulty in this short trio comes from not only the technical requirements, but also from assembling the ensemble due to its highly complicated rhythmic devices.

Tung, Chao-Ming *Cetus*

Duration: 10 minutes

Year of Composition: 2009

Instrumentation: alto saxophone, bass clarinet, oboe, and computer-generated sound

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Recital Hall at National Performing Arts Center by Wan-Chen Hsieh (oboe), Chia-Hsiu Tsai (alto sax), Ching-Chun Lin (bass clarinet), and Chao-Ming Tung (electronics), 2009

Commission: Chiao Da Chamber Ensemble

Performance guide and Commentary:

This chamber work is written for five timbres: alto saxophone, bass clarinet, oboe, and a two-channel computer-generated sound. The Chinese title 天鈞 (t'ien kou) does not literally mean *Cetus* in the constellation that refers to the sea monster in Greek mythology; instead, it is a star in a Chinese constellation belonging to the Black Tortoise of the North that is in a shape of hook. Tung describes in his program note that the similarity these two constellations have in their mythology is one of the reasons that he chose this title; and also it was a response to the concert title, *A FISHY Movement Musicaux*, where this work was premiered.¹⁴ The acoustical result of this mixed-chamber work is very colorful, with each instrument and the sound track presenting a distinguishable difference in texture with others, yet simultaneously producing a balanced fusion into an entirety. From a pedagogical perspective, Tung's music usually requires a clear idea of interaction between players (or the computer sounds) due to its manner of composition and the interactive source involved. This work is recommended for at least a senior or graduate level student to avoid frustrations between the technical and ensemble aspects.

¹⁴ Chao-Ming Tung, *Cetus*, (Hsinchu, Taiwan: published by author, 2009).

Yen, Ming-Hsiu

Taiwanese composer and pianist Ming-Hsiu Yen received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition, Master of Music in composition and piano performance from the University of Michigan, and Bachelor of Music in composition and piano performance with the distinguished honor of being awarded the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. As one of the most active Taiwanese musicians in her generation, Yen has collaborated with major orchestras, wind ensembles, chamber groups, and soloists in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; and her works have been frequently performed in major musical events around the world. Yen currently serves as the Assistant Professor of Composition and Theory at the Taipei National University of Arts in Taiwan.

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Yen, Ming-Hsiu

Chinatown

Duration: 7 minutes

Year of Composition: 2008

Instrumentation: Yangqun, pipa, percussion and saxophone quartet

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Settlement Music School, Philadelphia, PA by PRISM Quartet and Music From China, 2009

Commission: PRISM Quartet and Music From China

Performance guide and Commentary:

Chinatown was written for a unique instrumentation – saxophone quartet, percussion, and two Chinese traditional instruments, *yangqin* and *pipa*. This three-movement work is based on three different themes and emotions from memories of the composer that she experienced while visiting various Chinatowns across the United States.¹⁵ The first movement, “Strangers,” is described by Yen as a scene where a Westerner walks into a Chinatown; and he feels confused as he is surrounded by all kinds of foreign elements: the language, words, and symbols. There are certain musical elements that the composer uses to produce these feelings. Certainly the two Chinese instruments give the work a foreign flavor, but they do not dominate this movement; the highly chromatic and unexpected leaps in the saxophone quartet part give the main sense of the confused man. The second movement, “Footprints,” sounds much more like traditional Chinese music. The focus shifts from the saxophone quartet (in the first movement) to *yangqin* and *pipa* in this movement. The image that composer had in mind is that of an old Chinese lady sitting at sunset, and recalling her half-century of living in the United States. *Yangqin* and *pipa* parts play a cadenza-like duet through the entire movement; and the saxophone quartet joins occasionally with a short melody, giving the

¹⁵ Ming-Hsiu Yen, “Chinatown for yangqin, pipa, percussion, saxophone quartet,” *Minh-Hsiu Yen*, <http://www.minghsiuyen.com/comp/chinatown/chinatown.html> (accessed June 18, 2015).

movement a peaceful, meditative, and, as the composer's note indicates, nostalgic feeling. The last movement, "Festival" is a cheerful celebration. For the first time in the entire work, all the instruments are used simultaneously to create a festive sound, which the composer mentioned, indicates an encounter of different cultures. From a pedagogical perspective, the only two extended techniques applied in the piece are glissando and an occasional slap tongue. It is not extremely difficult technically; a good undergraduate junior in college could perform this piece well.

Yen, Ming-Hsiu

Concerto for Saxophone and Wind Ensemble

Duration: 11 minutes

Year of Composition: 2014

Instrumentation: Alto saxophone and wind ensemble

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: National Concert Hall, Taipei, Taiwan by Chih-Huan Wu and Dunshan Symphonic Wind Orchestra, 2015

Commission: Chih-Huan Wu

Performance guide and Commentary:

Instrumentation for the wind ensemble includes: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 7 clarinets, 2 bass clarinets, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, bass saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 tenor trombones, bass trombone, 2

euphoniums, 2 tubas, percussion I (timpani), percussion II (marimba, xylophone), percussion 3 (vibraphone), and percussion IV (suspended cymbal, maracas, slapstick). This concerto was commissioned by Taiwanese saxophonist, Chih-Huan Wu, and performed in two concerts at the Dunshan Symphonic Wind Orchestra Taiwan Tour Concerts. The concerto is in a single movement but can be heard in three sections; the linear development within these three sections is the main idea of the piece. As the composer writes in her program note: time means to her the like tide, bringing something forward and taking it away; what passes never comes back, and what remains becomes different after transformations.¹⁶ The first section begins by suggesting a tidal background with arpeggios in the percussion (marimba) and repeated notes in the woodwinds. The saxophone solo gradually introduces the theme and leads the instruments in the background to a climax. In the next section, vibraphone continues with a similar texture to the beginning of the piece, which represents the paradox of the main idea. The solo in this section presents a new rhythmical theme, and the ensemble gradually joins the rhythmical texture. The last section begins with a melody in the low register of the alto saxophone (solo) along with the low brass that brings a calm feeling to the listener. Then the piece transforms into a rhythmical, highly syncopated texture with a conversation between the soloist and the ensemble toward the end. From a technical perspective, extended techniques other than altissimo are not frequently used; growling happens only in few places in the piece; but the altissimo demands require a high level of

¹⁶ Ming-Hsiu Yen, *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble*, (Taipei, Taiwan: published by author, 2014).

skill due to the extreme register and the rapid passages. Overall, this piece perhaps suits for a good senior or graduate level student.

Yen, Ming-Hsiu *Elegy*

Duration: 8 minutes

Year of Composition: 2005-2006

Instrumentation: saxophone quartet

Publisher: self-published

Premiere: Thalia Hall, Symphony Sapce, New York, NY by PRISM Quartet, 2006

Commission: New Sounds Music, Inc.

Performance guide and Commentary:

This work is dedicated to the composer's grandfather, who died in 2005 at the age of 85. Yen mentions in her program note that the long fight as he lay bedridden with the sickness added to her family's feeling of grief, yet at the same time caused them to wish for the relief that death would bring for her grandfather.¹⁷ The pace of the entire piece is slow moving with long phrases in each part that weaves the complex texture. The phrases at certain point have similar identities, such as rhythm, gesture, and shape/direction, which give the entire work a single and unified texture. The work generates the strong

¹⁷ Ming-Hsiu Yen, "Elegy for saxophone quartet," *Ming-Hsiu Yen*, <http://www.minghsiuyen.com/comp/elegy/elegy.html> (accessed June 20, 2015).

characteristics of grief not only the chromaticism in its melodies, but also the extended techniques that she applies in it. At the beginning of the piece, pitch bending is applied to many phrases at the end with a description “sighing”; multiphonics and microtones appear when the piece hits its climax, giving the image of her grandfather’s struggle with the illness. The technical requirements in this work are not extremely difficult, although it does require a higher level of control to produce the glissandi, multiphonics, quartertones, and the quiet dynamic. However, the real challenge in this piece comes from producing the proper texture and characteristic mood; it requires a mournful, prayer-like presence. It also requires the ability to vary the color of the saxophone widely to capture the difference between the sections depicting the family’s grief and the grandfather’s struggle against his illness. Overall from an educational perspective, it is recommend that a student be at least a junior in college to perform this work, due to its extremely wide range of color and the complexity of the texture.

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APPENDIX A

LIST BY INSTRUMENTATION

Unaccompanied Solo

Chao, Tai-Kuang	<i>Chant XI Lustrousness</i>	alto/baritone
Chen, Shih-Hui	<i>Twice Removed</i>	alto
Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Cave Railroad</i>	alto
Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>The Voice of Children</i>	baritone
Li, Yuen-Chen	<i>Spell</i>	alto

Solo with piano

Chen, Shih-Hui	<i>Fantasia on the Theme of Plum Blossoms</i>	alto/piano
Chen, Shih-Hui	<i>Plum Blossoms</i>	alto/piano
Cheng, Chien-Wen	<i>Dancing Leaves of Autumn</i>	soprano/piano
Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Dancing Mountain</i>	alto/piano
Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Walking on the Falling Leaves and Snow</i>	alto/piano

Solo with electronics

Cheng, Chien-Wen	<i>Moth and Flame</i>	soprano/MSP
Cheng, Chien-Wen	<i>Winds sketch</i>	soprano/MSP
Lin, Yi-Cheng	<i>Dialogue of Time</i>	soprano/improvisatory instrument/electronics
Hsu, Ya-Ming	<i>Crisscross – Break through the Darkness</i>	alto/electronic
Tung, Chao-Ming	<i>Messages from Dreams</i>	alto/MSP

Trio

Cheng, Chien-Wen	<i>Dancing Leaves of Autumn</i>	soprano/alto/piano
Tung, Chao-Ming	<i>Message from Three Continents</i>	soprano/tenor/piano

Quartet

Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Dream Landscape</i>	SATB
Yen, Ming-Hsiu	<i>Elegy for Saxophone Quartet</i>	SATB

Mixed Chamber

Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Dragon and Lion</i>	alto/percussion
Lee, Chihchun	<i>ZAS!</i>	alto/zheng
Tung, Chao-Ming	<i>Cetus</i>	alto/oboe/bass clarinet/electronics
Yen, Ming-Hsiu	<i>Chinatown</i>	yanggin/pipa/percussion/SATB

Concerto

Lee, Feng-Hsu	<i>Lament of Autumn Leaves</i>	alto/wind ensemble
Yen, Ming-Hsiu	<i>Saxophone Concerto</i>	alto/wind ensemble

APPENDIX B

RECITAL PROGRAMS

PO-FANG CHANG, *saxophone*
in
DOCTORAL RECITAL

Alan Rudell, *piano*

Monday, November 25, 2013
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Fantasia No. 2 in A Minor, TWV 40:3 from <i>12 Fantasias for Solo Flute</i>	Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)
Tre Pezzi (1961) I. 80-84 II. Dolce, meditativo III. 108	Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988)
Balafon (1992) from <i>Neuf Études</i> , cahier 1	Christian Lauba (b. 1952)
Distances Within Me (1979)	John Anthony Lennon (b. 1950)
Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Concert Band (1967) I. Prologue II. Ostinato III. Epilogue	Karel Husa (b. 1921)

*Mr. Chang is a student of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.*

SHELDON JOHNSON, *soprano saxophone*
GABRIEL FADALE, *soprano and tenor saxophones*
PO-FANG CHANG, *baritone saxophone*
in
GRADUATE CHAMBER RECITAL

Andrew Wassum, *alto saxophone*

Friday, April 18, 2014
6:00 PM | Recital Hall

Quartette (Allegro de Concert) (1879)	Caryl Florio (1843-1920)
Alaric I or II (1989)	Gavin Bryars (b. 1943)
Sechs Bagatellen (1953) Allegro con spirito Rubato. Lamentoso Allegro grazioso Presto ruvido Adagio. Mesto (<i>Béla Bartók in Memoriam</i>) Molto vivace. Capriccioso	György Ligeti (1923-2006)
Prodigal Child (2004)	John Fitz Rogers (b. 1963)
Tango Virtuoso (1993)	Thierry Escaich (b. 1965)

*Mr. Johnson, Mr. Fadale, and Mr. Chang
are students of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.*



presents

PO-FANG CHANG, *saxophone*
in
GRADUATE RECITAL

Tuesday, October 7, 2014
7:30 PM | Recital Hall

Jovian Images (2008)	Reginald Bain (b. 1963)
Brahma Viharas (2007)	Timothy Stulman (b. 1981)
Network Slammer (1998/2014)	Zach Browning (b. 1953)
Schrödinger's Cat (2008)	Mark Bunce (b. 1955)
PIMPIN' (2008)	Jacob ter Veldhuis (b. 1951)

*Mr. Chang is a student of Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.*



presents

PO-FANG CHANG, saxophone
in
GRADUATE RECITAL

Alan Rudell, *piano*
Claudio Olivera, *piano*

Wednesday, March 25, 2015 • 7:30 PM • Recital Hall

Sonata in E Major for Flute, BWV 1035 Johann Sebastian Bach
Adagio ma non tanto (1685-1750)
Allegro
Siciliano
Allegro assai
 Claudio Olivera, *piano*

Sonate (1971) Edison Denisov
Allegro (1929-1996)
Lento
Allegro moderato
 Alan Rudell, *piano*

Der Hölle Nachklang I (1992) Dimitri Terzakis
 (b. 1938)
 Claudio Olivera, *piano*

Breaking (2011) John Fitz Rogers
break open (b. 1963)
break with
break in
break into
break off
break down
break up
break free
break through
break away
 Claudio Olivera, *piano*

*Mr. Chang is a student of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.*