

Poetry and Musical Organization in JIA Guoping's
The Wind Sounds in the Sky (2002)

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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, “Poetry & Musical Organization in JIA Guoping’s *The Wind Sounds in the Sky* (2002)” by Yi-Cheng Daniel Wu. This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv095wu>

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Abstract for
Poetry and Musical Organization in JIA Guoping's
The Wind Sounds in the Sky (2002)

by Yi-Cheng Daniel Wu, *SMT-V9.5*

Instrumental music is often inspired by other art forms, such as poetry or painting; but what might a specifically Chinese manifestation of this practice sound like? JIA Guoping (b. 1963) presents one example in *The Wind Sounds in the Sky* (2002). This work participates in the tradition of instrumental works based on poetic texts. However, JIA provides a unique twist on this practice: he grounds his work on the orthography of a written Chinese script. He organizes the rhythmic structure according to strings of integers—which indicate durations—derived from the poem *September* (1986) written by the Chinese poet Haizi. My analysis focuses on Movement I.

The durational segment in each instrument is generated by one of the two numerical parameters derived from Haizi's poem: 1) the number of Chinese characters in each verse; and 2) the number of strokes to write each Chinese character. The music unfolds an intricate texture woven by different layers of durational strings. The juxtaposition of these simultaneous strings not only articulates the structure of the bipartite form, but also musically engages with the sense of the eternal and rearward motion depicted in the poem. Examining how JIA integrates rhythms and forms sheds much light not only on the possible ways that instrumental works can interact with poetry, but also on methods by post-tonal practice that can be realized in a manner specifically Chinese in nature.

Short Keyword List

JIA Guoping, contemporary music ensemble, durational organization, post-tonal music, text-music interpretation, Chinese music

Extensive Keyword List

The Wind Sounds in the Sky, contemporary Chinese composer, Chinese stroke counts, rhythmic structure, Haizi's *September*, Chinese poetry after the Culture Revolution, Haizi, musical hermeneutics, musical form, Chinese free reed instrument *sheng*, Chinese musical ensemble, East

and West influences in contemporary Chinese compositions, Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra, Chen Chih-Sheng (conductor).

About the Author

Yi-Cheng Daniel Wu completed his Ph.D. (2012) in Music Theory at the University at Buffalo. His research interests focus on the topics of musical form, hermeneutics, musical contour, and pitch orthography in 20th- and 21st-century music. He taught at Wesleyan University (Middletown CT, USA), where he served as the Visiting Assistant Professor of Music. He is currently the Associate Professor of Music Theory at Soochow University School of Music (Suzhou, China). His articles appear in *Indiana Theory Review* (2013), *Music Analysis* (2017 and 2022), *Musicology Australia* (2016), *Music Theory Spectrum* (2019), *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* (2017), *Studia Musicologica* (2018), and *Perspectives of New Music* (2022).

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Discography and Filmography

Live Performance

Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra. "JIA Guoping: *The Wind Sounds in the Sky*, conducted by Chen Chih-Sheng." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syLokIJxymw>.

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