

Teaching Resources on
《Yueer Gao 月兒高 (The Moon Rises High)》
(arranged by Peng Xiuwen)
for Secondary Music Curriculum

for the Arts Education Section of the Curriculum Development Institute, the Education Bureau

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I. Musical Background and Introduction

- *Yueer Gao* 《月兒高》 is a famous traditional *Pipa Suite* **Wenqu** 大套文曲 from ancient China. Both the time and author of the composition is unknown.
- *Wenqu* is a type of traditional *pipa* piece classified by its expressive techniques and style. Characteristics include lyrical quality and emphasis in left-hand techniques. The other type, *Wuqu* 武曲, focuses on realism or narratives.
- *Yueer Gao* has multiple transmissions. Below is an overview of the development of this *pipa* solo piece and the transmission of its major scores.

Publication Year	Transmission of the Scores	No. of Sections	Details
1528 (Ming Dynasty)	<i>Gaohe Jiangdong pipapu</i> / <i>Gaohe Jiangdong Pipa Score</i> 《高和江東琵琶譜》	7 sections	The <u>earliest handwritten copy</u> has been theorised by scholars to be the earliest version. This is <u>a suite composed of seven tune titles</u> , with <u>the first section bearing the title <i>Yueer Gao</i></u> .
1814 (Qing Dynasty)	<i>Xiansuo beikao</i> 《弦索備考》 (also known as <i>Xiansuo shisantao</i> / <i>Thirteen-set of Xiansuo</i> 《弦索十三套》)	8 sections	It is a manuscript compiled by the Mongolian literati Rong Zhai 榮齋 based on the <i>Gaohe Jiangdong pipapu</i> / <i>Gaohe Jiangdong Pipa Score</i> 《高和江東琵琶譜》. It employs <i>gongchepu</i> 工尺譜 (As shown in Figure 1) and <u>preserves the original <i>qupai</i> 曲牌</u> (As shown in Table 2).
1819	<i>Hua Qiuping pipapu</i> / <i>Hua Qiuping Pipa Score</i> 《華秋萍琵琶譜》 (abbreviated as <i>Hua's Score</i> 《華氏譜》)	10 sections	<u>China's earliest printed edition</u> was compiled by Hua Qiupin 華秋萍, a <i>pipa</i> performer at the Wuxi school 無錫派. This edition uses <i>gongchepu</i> (As shown in Figure 2) and <u>changes the names of the sections into lyrical, descriptive subtitles</u> (As shown in Table 2).
1860	<i>Ju Shilin pipapu</i> / <i>Ju Shilin Pipa Score</i> 《鞠士林琵琶譜》	10 sections	There is a transmitted copy from Ju Shilin 鞠士林—the progenitor of the <i>Pudong pai</i> / Pudong school 浦東派 of <i>pipa</i> —in which the musical sections are identical to those in the <i>Hua's Score</i> 《華氏譜》.

Publication Year	Transmission of the Scores	No. of Sections	Details
1895 (Late Qing Dynasty)	<i>New Pipa Score of the Thirteen Sets from the Southern and Northern Schools</i> 《南北派十三大套琵琶新譜》	11 sections	In the printed edition compiled by Li Fangyuan 李芳園, a <i>pipa</i> musician of the <i>Pinghu pai</i> / Pinghu school 平湖派, the piece was re-titled as <i>Nishang Qu</i> 《霓裳曲》.
Published in 1980	<i>Wang Yuting pipapu / Wang Yuting Pipa Score</i> 《汪昱庭琵琶譜》 (abbreviated as <i>Wangpu / Wang's Score</i> 《汪譜》)	12 sections	The version of <i>Yueer Gao</i> printed therein <u>was arranged in 1927 by Liu Yaozhang 柳堯章—a disciple of Wang Yuting 汪昱庭—based on the <i>Hua's Score</i></u> , and it was first publicly performed that same year at a concert of the Datong Music Society 大同樂會.
Published in 1994	<i>Wei Zhongle Pipa Performance Collection</i> 《衛仲樂琵琶演奏曲集》	12 sections	<u>The widely circulated <i>Wei Zhongle Pipa Performance Score</i> 《衛仲樂琵琶演奏譜》 in modern times</u> is essentially transmitted from the lineage of Liu Yaozhang, with <u>its date of transmission unknown</u> ; later, its performance score was incorporated into the <i>Wei Zhongle Pipa Performance Collection</i> 《衛仲樂琵琶演奏曲集》.

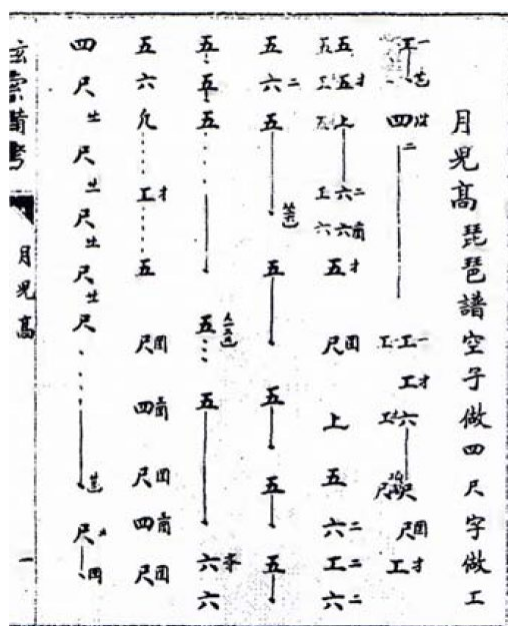
Table 1: The Development History of the *Pipa Solo Piece Yueer Gao* and the Transmission of Its Major Scores

Figure 1: *Xiansuo beikao—Yueer Gao gongchepu*
(first section *Yueer Gao*)

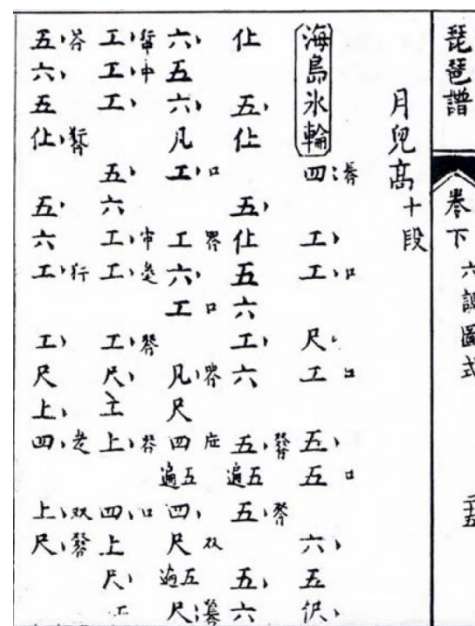


Figure 2: *Hua's Score—Yueer Gao gongchepu*
(first section *Haidao Binglun* 海島冰輪)

Other Renditions:

- In 1961, the representative piece of *Zhejiang zhengyue / Zhejiang zheng music* 浙江箏樂 *Yueer Gao*, was also derived from the *Hua's Score*, and arranged from Wei Zhongle's *pipa* score by Wang Xunzhi 王巽之.
- After the founding of the People's Republic of China, composer and conductor Peng Xiuwen 彭修文 arranged it in 1960 into a Traditional Chinese Orchestral version, condensing the original work into nine sections.
- Below is the **musical introduction written by Peng Xiuwen in the score publication in 1963:**

Yueer Gao is a piece that depicts the scenery of the moonlight. It poetically portrays the picturesque scene of the moon rising from the sea and setting behind the western mountains under which a variety of enchanted views is observed. There are both surging mighty rivers and delicate trickling streams, tranquil courtyards as well as vast boundless fields, desolate riverbanks and cityscapes with overlapping pagodas and balconies. All of which are located under a clear cerulean blue sky studded with countless stars, the moon resolutely traverses the galaxy. People are in awe of the sublime beauty of nature and the majestic grandeur of the motherland's mountains and rivers!

II. The Origins of the Modern Chinese Orchestra¹

- The history of modern large-scale Chinese instrumental ensembles can be traced to the period following the “May Fourth New Culture Movement” 「五四新文化運動」. In 1920, Zheng Jinwen 鄭覲文 established the “Datong Music Society” 「大同樂會」 in Shanghai, which started with the twelve-line full score of *Chunjiang Huayueye* 《春江花月夜》 (Spring River, Flower Moon Night), arranged by Liu Yaozhang in 1925, and gradually built up a large orchestra.
- In 1953, Peng Xiuwen was invited to celebrate the establishment of the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra 中國廣播民族樂團, and served as its conductor and composer. Over his forty-year leadership of the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra, Peng actively promoted the symphonic transformation of Chinese orchestras and profoundly influenced the development of contemporary Chinese music for

¹ “Modern” here denotes how the large-scale Chinese instrumental ensemble was built on the Western symphony-orchestra model, an approach that, beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, marked a “modernising” change from traditional regional ensembles. In Chinese mainland, it is called 民族(管弦)樂團, which is translated as “Traditional (Chinese) Orchestra”, “National Orchestra”, “(Chinese) Folk Orchestra”, among other translations, while in Hong Kong it is often referred as “Chinese Orchestra” (中樂團).

orchestration as well as adaptation and composition. He was the first to establish the Traditional Chinese Orchestra (民族管弦樂團)'s basic structure, in which bowed strings, plucked instruments, wind instruments and percussion are incorporated. Regarding the percussion section, western instruments, such as the timpani, xylophone, and glockenspiel, were introduced. In tandem with the integration in orchestration, Peng actively advocated and promoted instrumental reforms for further expansion of pitch range, increase in volume and improvement of timbre. Instruments were able to transpose freely under his proactive structural reforms.

III. A Brief Introduction to Peng Xiuwen's Arrangement Background

- The renowned composer and conductor Peng Xiuwen (1931–1996) is one of the founding figures of the Traditional Chinese Orchestra.
- Peng Xiuwen's creative hallmark lies in blending adaptation with his own creative expression. Among his repertoire, which consists of hundreds of works, two thirds of which are adaptations based on original tunes. He once remarked, "Some musicians have claimed that this piece [referring to his work] is more of an original composition than an arrangement; I believe it's difficult to distinguish between the two". The infuse of personal imagination attributes to his remark.
- During work adaptation, Peng Xiuwen added creative components to the originals' harmony, structure and orchestration. By employing transplantation, adaptation, and compositional techniques, he encompassed a variety of genres and ensemble formats, such as suites, set pieces, concertos, symphonic poems, and symphonies.
- **"Using the ancient for modern purposes" and "adapting the foreign for Chinese use"** 「古為今用」、「洋為中用」 are the primary hallmarks of Peng Xiuwen's adaptations.
- Regarding the adaptation of traditional pieces, Peng's versions of *Jiangjunling* 《將軍令》 (General's Command) (1954), *Chunjiang Huayueye* 《春江花月夜》 (Spring River, Flower Moon Night) (1959), and *Yueer Gao* 《月兒高》 (The Moon Rises High) (1960) involve meticulous orchestration based on original compositions, facilitating the preservation of traditional charm while maintaining the benefits of large ensemble performance.
- As a practitioner incorporating music cultural exchange between East and West, he adapted over thirty world music classics, for example, Bizet's *Carmen Suite* (1981), Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

(1983), and Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* (1986) —for Traditional Chinese orchestra, thereby fully demonstrating the ensemble's broad inclusiveness and rich expressiveness.

IV. A Comparison between Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version and the *Pipa* Solo Version (Wei Zhongle's Performance Version)

- The *Hua's Score* modified the original *qupai* into lyrical and picturesque subtitles, **making the music more poetic**. Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version was also adapted from *Yueer Gao* of the *Hua's Score* and his version highly resembles the twelve-section *pipa* performance score written by Wei Zhongle.
- The table below displays the section divisions of *Yueer Gao*, along with the original titles of the musical forms from *Xiansuo beikao* for reference.

<i>Yueer Gao</i> from <i>Xiansuo beikao</i> (1814)	<i>Yueer Gao</i> from <i>Hua's Score</i> (1819)	<i>Yueer Gao</i> from <i>pipa</i> performance score written by Wei Zhongle (date of transmission unknown)	<i>Yueer Gao</i> from Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version (1860)
I. Yueer Gao 月兒高 (The Moon Rises High) II. Guizhi Xiang 桂枝香 (Fragrance of Cinnamon Twig) III. Jiesan Xing 解三醒 (Revision, Reflection, and Retrospection) IV. Yutai Du 玉胎肚 (Emerald Foetus) V. Jinluo Suo 金絡索 (Golden Choker) VI. Baixu 白序 (The White Hole) VII. Hongxiu Xie 紅繡鞋	I. Haidao Binglun 海島冰輪 (Island's Wheel of Ice) II. Haijiao Chouchu 海嶠躊躇 (Striding across Coastal Mountains) III. Yinchang Tucai 銀蟾吐彩 (Silver Toad Spits Iridescence) IV. Sue Ni'er 素娥旖旎 (Gracious Lunar Maiden) V. Haopo Dangkong 皓魄當空 (Physique of Power Overhead) VI. Qionglou Yipian 瓊樓一片 (Mansion of Magnificence) VII. Yinhe Hengdu 銀河橫渡 (Traversing the Galaxy) VIII. Yuyu Qianceng 玉宇千層	I. <u>Haidao Binglun</u> 海島冰輪 (Island's Wheel of Ice) II. <u>Jianglou Wangyue</u> 江樓望月 (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda) III. <u>Haijiao Chouchu</u> 海嶠躊躇 (Striding across Coastal Mountains) IV. <u>Yinchang Tucai</u> 銀蟾吐彩 (Silver Toad Spits Iridescence) V. <u>Fenglu Mantian</u> 風露滿天 (Gusts and Dew Smear the Sky) VI. <u>Sue Ni'er</u> 素娥旖旎 (Gracious Lunar Maiden) VII. <u>Haopo Dangkong</u> 皓魄當空 (Physique of Power Overhead) VIII. <u>Qionglou Yipian</u> 瓊樓一片	I. Haidao Binglun 海島冰輪 (Island's Wheel of Ice) II. Jianglou Wangyue 江樓望月 (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda) III. Haijiao Chouchu 海嶠躊躇 (Striding across Coastal Mountains) IV. Yinchang Tucai 銀蟾吐彩 (Silver Toad Spits Iridescence) V. Fenglu Mantian 風露滿天 (Gusts and Dew Smear the Sky) VI. Sue Ni'er 素娥旖旎 (Gracious Lunar Maiden) VII. Haopo Dangkong 皓魄當空 (Physique of Power Overhead) VIII. Yinhe Hengdu

(The Red Embroidered Shoes)	(Layers of Jade Palaces) IX. <i>Changguang Jiongjiong</i> 蟾光炯炯 (The Shining Toad) X. <i>Yutu Xichen</i> 玉兔西沉 (The Western Setting of the Jade Rabbit)	(Mansion of Magnificence) IX. <u><i>Yinhe Hengdu</i></u> 銀河橫渡 (Traversing the Galaxy) X. <u><i>Yuyu Qianceng</i></u> 玉宇千層 (Layers of Jade Palaces) XI. <i>Changguang Jiongjiong</i> 蟾光炯炯 (The Shining Toad) XII. <i>Yutu Xichen</i> 玉兔西沉 (The Western Setting of the Jade Rabbit)	銀河橫渡 (Traversing the Galaxy) IX. <i>Yuyu Qianceng</i> 玉宇千層 (Layers of Jade Palaces)
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Table 2: Paragraph divisions of *Yueer Gao*

- The table below displays the structure of Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao*. The piece is divided into four parts based on tempo, duration, and other aspects: *Qi* 起 (Beginning), *Cheng* 承 (Development), *Zhuan* 轉 (Transition), and *He* 合 (Conclusion).

Part	Section	Tempo Markings	Duration
Beginning 起	I. <i>Haidao Binglun</i> 海島冰輪 (Island's Wheel of Ice)	<i>Largo</i> 深遠 (Profound) (including tempo variations such as starting fast then gradually slowing 快起漸慢, or starting slow then gradually accelerating 慢起漸快)	ca. 6.5'
	II. <i>Jianglou Wangyue</i> 江樓望月 (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda)	<i>Adagio con grazioso</i>	
	III. <i>Haijiao Chouchu</i> 海嶠躊躇 (Striding across Coastal Mountains)	<i>Adagio</i> 感情洋溢、略有激動 (Emotionally rich and slightly agitated) – <i>Lento</i>	
Development 承	IV. <i>Yinchang Tucai</i> 銀蟾吐彩 (Silver Toad Spits Iridescence)	<i>Agitato tempo rubato</i>	ca. 3'

	V. <i>Fenglu Mantian</i> 風露滿天 (Gusts and Dew Smear the Sky)	<i>piu mosso</i> – 慢起漸快 (starting slow then gradually accelerating)	
	VI. <i>Sue Ni'er</i> 素娥旖旎 (Gracious Lunar Maiden)	<i>Appassionato con forza</i>	
Part	Section	Tempo Markings	Duration
Transition 轉	VII. <i>Haopo Dangkong</i> 皓魄當空 (Physique of Power Overhead)	<i>Andante grazioso</i> 清麗 (Elegant and clear)	ca. 1'
	VIII. <i>Yinhe Hengdu</i> 銀河橫渡 (Traversing the Galaxy)		
Conclusion 合	IX. <i>Yuyu Qianceng</i> 玉宇千層 (Layers of Jade Palaces)	Grace – <i>piu mosso</i> – <i>stretto</i> – <i>meno mosso</i> – <i>allargando</i>	ca. 3'

Total Duration ca. 13.5'

Table 3: Structure of Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao*

- Below is the instrumentation for the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version:

Winds	Plucked Strings	Percussion	Bowed Strings
➤ Long-membrane flute 長膜笛 (Qudi 曲笛) ➤ Xiao 簫 ➤ Soprano sheng 高音笙 ➤ Alto sheng 中音笙 ➤ Alto guan 中音管 ➤ Bass guan 低音管	➤ Yangqin 揚琴 ➤ Pipa 琵琶 ➤ Zhongruan 中阮 ➤ Sanxian 三弦 ➤ Daruan 大阮 ➤ Zheng 箏	➤ Bells 鈴 ➤ Bangzi 梆子 ➤ Dabo 大鈸 ➤ Bass gong 低音鑼 ➤ Datanggu 大堂鼓 ➤ Bianzhong 編鐘	➤ Erhu 二胡 ➤ Zhonghu 中胡 ➤ Gehu 革胡 ➤ Damatouqin 大馬頭琴 (use the <u>cello</u> or <i>gehu</i> 革胡 in modern performances) ➤ Dimatouqin 低馬頭琴 (use the <u>double bass</u> or <i>bass gehu</i> 低音革胡 in modern performances)

Table 4: Instrumentation of Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao*

- The following outlines the content of each section, providing a rough comparison between the “Peng Xiuwen Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version” and the “Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version” for ease of study and discussion.
- The notation example for the Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version originates in the *jianpu* found on the Jianpu Zhi Jia's website
 - The score example for the Peng Xiuwen Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version originates in the full score found on the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra's website

Section I. *Haidao Binglun* (Island's Wheel of Ice)

- The first section serves as an introduction with *sanban* 散版. It begins with a *lunzou* 輪奏—played with dynamic variations—to render a freely elongated “sixth note” (i.e. the tonic 主音 of the *yu diaoshi* 羽調式, refer to the red box in Score Sample 1). This passage portrays the gradual rising of the moon behind an island in the East Sea, immersing listeners into a hazy, ever-changing realm.
- In the title, the term *Binglun* (Wheel of Ice) refers to the full moon as a traditional metaphor, sharing the similar circular outlook.

1=C (6 2 3 6 弦) 卫仲乐演奏谱

【一】海岛冰轮

lunzou played with
dynamics variations

Score Sample 1: Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version of Yueer Gao I. *Haidao Binglun*

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

In the first section of the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version, key aspects regarding tempo, dynamics and harmony have been emphasised:

- Tempo: In the adaptation, the tempo is “extremely slow” (marked with *Largo* $\theta = 28$) to consolidate the depiction of the moon slowly rising behind an island in the East Sea.
- Dynamics and Harmony: Fluctuating dynamic changes are introduced—most notably, at the first beat of the fourth measure a “*sfp*” is added (refer to the blue box in Score Sample 2) to emphasise the dominant seventh chord in Western functional harmony; thereby intensifying the dramatic moment when the moon suddenly leaps from the sea. In addition, a continuous “A” note (that is, a pedal note in Western music) is incorporated in the bass, evoking the sensation of the moon’s gradual ascent.

(一) 海島冰輪

Largo ♩ = 28 深遠

Dominant seventh chord 5

Score Sample 2: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao* I. *Haidao Binglun* (bars 1-4)

Section II. *Jianglou Wangyue* (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda),
Section III. *Haijiao Chouchu* (Striding over Sea Mountains)

- Section II *Jianglou Wangyue* (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda), depicts the mood of the moon gazers, experiencing a feeling of pleasure and content when witnessing the moonrise. The following Section III *Haijiao Chouchu* (Striding over Sea Mountains) portrays the moon, after rising from the sea, lingering in the night sky, in which the moon is particularly enchanting and gorgeous.
- The melody of Section III is identical to the opening phrase of Section II (refer to the red boxes in Score Samples 3 and 4). The melody centres around the “third note” (comparable to the dominant in a minor key), upon which a prolonged, subtle oscillation is executed, creating a sense of hesitation.

【二】江楼望月 ♩ = 54 Identical opening phrase of Section II and III

Score Sample 3: Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version of Yueer Gao II. *Jianglou Wangyue* (beginning)

【三】海峽跨曙 ♩ = 72 Identical opening phrase of Section II and III

Score Sample 4: Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version of Yueer Gao III. *Haijiao Chouchu* (beginning)

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

In the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version, Sections II and III emphasise several key elements including instrumentation, dynamic changes, and the use of percussion:

- Instrumentation: In Section II, the primary solo instrument is the *(dong)xiao* (洞箫), supported by the *guzheng* employing an ornamental *jiahua* technique² (refer to the Score Sample 5). This accompaniment preserves the elegant and delicate style of the Ancient Tune.

² *Jiahau*, a common Chinese instrumental technique used to embellish tonal centre of the melody.

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Score Sample 5: The ornamental *jiahua* technique in Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao II. Jianglou Wangyue

- Imitative techniques: Peng Xiuwen also incorporated the Western technique of imitation. In Section II, imitation is executed using a lower perfect fifth interval (refer to the red arrow in Score Sample 6). While in Section III, it is performed using a lower perfect octave interval (refer to the red arrow in Score Sample 7). Harmonically, Section III features a parallel fifth-based harmony accompanying the melody (refer to the blue box in Score Sample 7).

Score Sample 6: The counterpoint in Peng's Chinese version of *Yueer Gao*
II. *Jianglou Wangyue*

Score Sample 7: The counterpoint in Peng's Chinese orchestral version of *Yueer Gao*
III. *Haijiao Chouchu*

- Dynamics: In terms of dynamics, Peng Xiuwen chose to use "**p**" (*piano*) in Section II (refer to the Score Sample 6) and "**mf**" (*mezzo-forte*) in Section III (refer to the Score Sample 7), thereby enhancing the atmospheric contrast between the two sections.
- Percussion: For the use of percussion, Section II employs a set of small bells, which offers an elegant and gentle quality, whereas Section III further adds a *datangu* and *bangzi*, intensifying the fervour during the repetition of the melody.

Section IV. *Yinchang Tucai* (Silver Toad Spitting Iridescence)

- Using the intricate and brilliant tonal colour produced by the rapid *pipa* passages, the score portrays the moon's richer and more enchanting radiance after rising.
- The *Yinchang* (Silver Toad) in the title is a mythological symbol of the moon.

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

For the fourth section of the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version, the main points focus on orchestration and accompaniment:

- Orchestration: Peng Xiuwen deliberately arranged a sudden, passionately surging *pipa* solo immediately following the previous ensemble passage. The tension contrast between the ensemble and the solo highlights the moment when the moon finally breaks free from behind the mountain peaks and ascends gracefully.
- Accompaniment: A rolling passage on the *datangu* is added beneath the *pipa* solo (refer to the green box in Score Sample 8) to intensify the atmosphere, and a *guzheng* glissando is included at the end of the phrase (refer to the blue box in Score Sample 8).

The musical score for Section IV. *Yinchang Tucai* (bars 62-68) is presented in a multi-staff format. The first staff, labeled '琵琶' (Pipa), contains the main melody, which is highlighted by a red box and the text 'Main melody at pipa solo'. The second staff, labeled '中阮' (Zhongruan), and the third staff, labeled '三弦' (Sanchuan), are empty. The fourth staff, labeled '大阮' (Daru), is also empty. The fifth staff, labeled '箏' (Guzheng), features a glissando at the end of the phrase, highlighted by a blue box and the text 'Glissando on guzheng at the end of the phrase'. The sixth staff, labeled '大鼓' (Dagu), contains a rolling passage, highlighted by a green box and the text 'A rolling passage on the datangu is added beneath'. The seventh staff, labeled '梆子' (Bangzi), is empty. The eighth staff, labeled '大堂鼓' (Datanggu), contains a rolling passage, highlighted by a green box and the text 'A rolling passage on the datangu is added beneath'. The score is in 2/4 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and glissandos.

Score Sample 8: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao* IV. *Yinchang Tucai*
(bars 62-68)

Section V. *Fenglu Mantian* (Gusts and Dew Smear the Sky)

- The piece, played at a relatively fast tempo and with strong dynamics, evokes the deep, silent night when everything in nature is hushed, engendering an overwhelming presence.

Section VI. *Sue Ni'er* (Gracious Lunar Maiden)

- Immediately following the previous section, this segment's melody becomes lively and vivid, gradually becoming more animated—similar to an exuberant dance scene performed by dancers wearing swirling sleeves and walking in graceful steps.
- In the title, the word *Ni'er* refers to a graceful and charming demeanour.

【六】素娥弄曉 ♪ = 114

Score Sample 9: Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version of *Yueer Gao* VI. *Sue Ni'er* (opening)

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

For the sixth section of the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version, the main aspects include tempo markings, rhythmic design, and dynamic treatment:

- Tempo: The marking “*Appassionato con forza*” is added so that performers clearly understand that this section should be played passionately and forcefully.
- Phrasing: The first half of the music phrase (for example, bars 132–133) and the second half (for example, bars 134–135) employ different layers of instrumentation and dynamics (refer to the red box in Score Sample 10a), vividly illustrating *Chang'e's* 嫦娥 graceful charm.
- Rhythmic Design: The rhythms executed by the *zhonghu* (refer to the blue box in Score Sample 10b) and the *gehu* (refer to the purple box in Score Sample 10b) echo one another, further supported by the varied timbres and rhythms of the Chinese *datanggu* (refer to the green box in Score Sample 10b; note that the traditional *gujing* 鼓經 is another method of notation that corresponds to that of the staff score), which imbues the music with greater vitality. Moreover, the introduction of broken chords using sixteenth notes (refer to the orange box in Score Sample 10a) also enhances the cheerful mood.

The first half of the musical phrase

The second half of the musical phrase

132

揚琴 *f* *mp*

琵琶 *f* *mf*

中阮 *f* *mp*

三弦 *f*

大阮

箏 *f* *mf*

broken chords using sixteenth notes

Score Sample 10a: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao VI. *Sue Ni'er* (bars 132–135, plucked string section)

:(鼓用硬鼓槌演奏；譜中用「●」處打鼓心，用「X」處打鼓邊；譜下附記鼓經)

大堂鼓 *f* *mp*

編鐘

(六) 素娥旖旎
Appassionato con forza

132

二胡 I *f* *sostenuto*

二胡 II *f* *sostenuto*

中胡 *f* *sostenuto* *mp*

革胡 *f* *pizz.* *arco*

低音革胡 *f* *pizz.* *arco*

the varied timbres and rhythms of the *datanggu*

Score Sample 10b: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao VI. *Sue Ni'er* (bars 132–135, bowed string section and *datanggu* part)

**Section VII. *Haopo Dangkong* (Physique of Power Overhead),
Section VIII. *Yinhe Hengdu* (Traversing the Galaxy)**

- Section VII depicts the gradually calming and entranced mood of this imagined moon watcher, while Section VIII portrays the moon moving westward. The resonant musical phrases in Section VIII express the magnificent scenery of a fantastical sky.
- In the title, *Haopo* (Physique of Power) refers to the moon.

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

- Sections VII and VIII constitute the “Transition” part of the entire piece. In the Wei Zhongle *Pipa* Solo Version, the melody of Section VIII *Yinhe Hengdu* (Traversing the Galaxy) is somewhat similar to that of Section VII *Haopo Dangkong* (Physique of Power Overhead). Peng Xiuwen removed that segment so that the Transition part becomes more streamlined.
- The orchestration in Section VII is reminiscent of that in Section II *Jianglou Wangyue* (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda). With the exception of the *(dong)xiao*, the main melody is mainly played by plucked string instruments using an ornamental *jiahua*³ technique (refer to the Score Sample 11).

157

簫

琵琶

揚琴

箏

Score Sample 11: The *jiahua* technique in Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao VII. Haopo Dangkong (bars 157–159)

³ See note on *jiahua* on p.12

- Following Section VII, where plucked string instruments lead the performance, Section VIII is taken over by the bowed string section. This section is marked with the expression “*espressivo*” (richly emotional) and incorporates Western functional harmony. *Datanggu* is then introduced, driving the music to a strong “*f*” (refer to the Score Sample 12).

The musical score for Score Sample 12 is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff, labeled '大堂鼓' (Datanggu), is in 2/4 time and features a crescendo leading to a strong 'f' dynamic. A green box highlights this section with the text 'Datanggu driving the music to a strong "f"'. Below this, the bowed string section begins at bar 170, marked '(八) 銀河橫渡'. The strings (二胡 I, 二胡 II, 中胡, 革胡, and 低音革胡) are marked with 'p' (piano), 'espressivo', and 'cresc.' (crescendo), leading to a strong 'f' dynamic. The score is written in Western staff notation with Chinese instrument names on the left.

Score Sample12: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao VIII. Yinhe Hengdu (bars 170–171, bowed string section and *datanggu* part)

- 【十】玉字千层 ♪ = 96
- The *changlun* fingering technique
-
- 廿 2 3 - - | 2 3 - - | 5 6 - - | 5 3 2 5
- 2 3 2 3 3 2 6
- X X X
- (X)

Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

- **Tempo:** In the adaptation, Peng Xiuwen slowed the tempo down, using the “*Grave*” (seriously) marking, and employed the *guzheng* to play broken chords based on the pentatonic scale (refer to the orange box in Score Sample 14) to enhance the depiction of the majestic and exquisite lunar palace and highlight the sense of *Yuyu Qianceng* (Layers of Jade Palaces).
- **Rhythmic and Sound Design:** Following the middle-range melody on beats one and two, a bass line is added on beats three and four to provide harmonic support (refer to the blue box in Score Sample 14). Additionally, on the fourth beat, a resonant chime from the set of *bianzhong* is struck (refer to the green box in Score Sample 14), making the rhythm more varied and the orchestral sound more three-dimensional with distinct layers.

- Conclusion: Peng Xiuwen directly connects this segment with the final phrase of *Yutu Xichen* 玉兔西沉 (The Western Setting of the Jade Rabbit) to conclude the piece. This ending phrase is exceedingly similar to the opening phrase of the entire work, creating an effect of “*Shouweihuying* 首尾呼應”. Meanwhile, the remainder of the original Section XI *Changguang Jiongjiong* (The Shining Toad) and Section XII *Yutu Xichen* has been removed, making the overall ending of the piece more concise.

broken chords on guzheng based on the pentatonic scale

Set of bianzhong struck at every fourth beat

middle-range melody on beats one and two

A bass line on beats three and four to provide harmonic support

Score Sample14: Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of
Yueer Gao X. Yuyu Qianceng (bars 188–191, plucked string section, *zheng* and *bianzhong* part)

Teaching Activity

Please watch the video of *Yueer Gao* conducted by Peng Xiuwen with the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra, or listen to the recording of Sections VII to IX of Peng Xiuwen's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao*, and then answer the questions on the worksheet.

V. Distinctive Features of Peng Xiuwen's

Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version

- Based primarily on the previously referenced Score Samples, the musical characteristics of the Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version can be summarised as follows:

Music Elements	Musical Characteristics	Reference Sections
Structure	Overall Adjustments: Slight alterations and omissions from the original work make the music more concise.	Original sections <i>Qionglou Yipian</i> (Mansion of Magnificence), <i>Changguang Jiongjiong</i> (The Shining Toad) and <i>Yutu Xichen</i> (The Western Setting of the Jade Rabbit) are deleted
Harmony	In addition to using harmonies based on the pentatonic scale 五聲音階, Peng Xiuwen also employs functional harmony from Western classical music as well as harmonies primarily based on parallel fifths.	Section III. <i>Haijiao Chouchu</i> (Striding across Coastal Mountains) and Section VIII. <i>Yinhe Hengdu</i> (Traversing the Galaxy)
Rhythmic Design	Syncopated rhythmic figures are added to enhance the driving force of the music. Arpeggiated patterns using sixteenth notes are incorporated to boost the fluidity of the music.	Section VI. <i>Sue Ni'er</i> (Gracious Lunar Maiden) Section XI. <i>Yuyu Qianceng</i> (Layers of Jade Palaces)
Instrumentation	Removed higher-register instruments such as the <i>gaohu</i> , <i>bangdi</i> , and <i>liuqin</i> from the conventional ensemble setup so that the sounds of middle-register instruments like the <i>pipa</i> , <i>dongxiao</i> , and <i>erhu</i> stand out more prominently.	Entire Piece

Orchestration, Texture, and Sound Design	Solo passages are arranged for instruments such as the <i>pipa</i> and <i>dongxiao</i> , using the <i>jiahua</i> technique to preserve the elegant and delicate style of traditional music, thereby reflecting the antique charm of Chinese folk ensembles.	Section II. <i>Jianglou Wangyue</i> (Moon Gazing on Riverside Pagoda) Section VII. <i>Haopo Dangkong</i> (Physique of Power Overhead)
	Furthermore, Peng Xiuwen also referenced Western orchestration methods by adding multi-voiced counterpoint and designing a dedicated bass section. This creates distinct layering in the instrumentation and brings a symphonic quality to Chinese orchestral music. He did not simply copy Western techniques; instead, he mastered the unique characteristics of Chinese traditional instruments, emphasising their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses, which enriches the variety of timbral changes and results in vivid, dynamic musical imagery.	Section VI. <i>Sue Ni'er</i> (Gracious Lunar Maiden) Section XI. <i>Yuyu Qianceng</i> (Layers of Jade Palaces)
Tempo and Dynamics	To enhance variation and contrast, the tempo is adjusted to “extremely slow” and dynamic fluctuations are frequently introduced, greatly increasing the musical tension.	Section I. <i>Haidao Binglun</i> (Island’s Wheel of Ice) Section XI. <i>Yuyu Qianceng</i> (Layers of Jade Palaces)

Table 5: Music features of Peng's Traditional Chinese Orchestral Version of *Yueer Gao*

VI. Conclusion

- Peng Xiuwen, inheriting China’s traditional musical culture, has devoted himself to the study and exploration of multi-voiced writing and the symphonic qualities of Chinese orchestral music. Since this orchestral work was completed in 1960, it quickly received wide acclaim from audiences. For decades, Chinese orchestras have performed it overseas and locally. Professor Zhou Wenzhong 周文中, a Chinese-American composer, once commented in writing that this is an immensely influential work of Chinese orchestral music.

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