



荳藤 Oeway

for Flute and Percussion

給長笛與擊樂

Hsin-Ting SHENG

盛心亭

Hsin-Ting, SHENG : "Oeway" for Flute Solo and Percussion

"Calamus quiquesetinervius Burret" known as "'Oeway" in the Saixia language, is a woody vine plant with stems reaching over 200 meters in length. The stems are clustered, thick, approximately 3 centimeters in diameter, with distinct nodes. The stems of Calamus quiquesetinervius Burret are tough and elastic, making them suitable for crafting various furniture and handicrafts.

In the Nanzhuang Township, the Xiangtian Lake Tribe holds a sowing ceremony annually between the Qingming and Guyu seasons. During the sowing ceremony, it is strictly forbidden to harm plants, and particularly, the cutting or chopping of Calamus quiquesetinervius Burret is strictly prohibited.

The Saixia people are certainly familiar with 'Oeway (Calamus quiquesetinervius Burret), and in the chants of the Basudaai ceremony, there are several verses related to 'Oeway : "With 'Oeway as the subject, we are unaware of how we have been wronged. Despite treating you kindly, we are still harmed by your impulsiveness, leading to our downfall." Whenever the Saixia people encounter the entwined 'Oeway in the forest, they softly hum these lyrics as a reminder to interact with others harmoniously, emphasizing the importance of unity and avoiding self-centeredness that could create distance from others.

Apart from its roots, 'Oeway is covered in thorns, making it difficult for most wild animals to enter the thicket. In ancient times, our ancestors discovered that luring or driving injured or angered large animals into the dense thicket made them easy to capture. Full protective gear is necessary for those inexperienced in harvesting 'Oeway, including long pants, long-sleeved shirts, tall boots, thick gloves, and a sharp machete. Otherwise, the thorns, akin to an angry porcupine's quills, will not let you leave unscathed. Consequently, 'Oeway is also used in traditional exorcism rituals.

This composition draws on the composer Hsin-Ting SHENG's extensive experience as a bass flutist in the flute symphony orchestra. In this piece, the bass flute exploits its deep and melodious characteristics. Combining post-modern tonality with symbolic techniques and the transformation of natural elements in musical representation, the composition depicts ethereal murmurs, akin to repetitive incantations, drifting through the valleys during the Grain Rain season.

On the technical side, various special modern flute techniques are incorporated, such as playing with mixed vocal sounds, key clicks, tongue stops, breath sounds, sweeping harmonics, multiphonic playing, and microtonal techniques. These techniques contribute to creating a unique sense of detachment in the music, showcasing a greater intricacy and depth in dynamics, tone colors, and musical tension. The composition exhibits a coexistence of the musical characteristics of both Eastern and Western traditions.

In the percussion section, bamboo wind chimes, bamboo percussion instruments, and shell wind chimes are utilized to transform the sound concept of the Sai Xia tribe's hip bells. This breaks away from the constraints of Western percussion techniques, blending Eastern charm with Western techniques. In the slow section of the composition, the concept of "breathing" is employed to enhance both the aesthetic and artistic imagery of the music.

In the fast section, the music portrays the ritual dance of seeking peace and exorcism using 'Oeway. It utilizes a fixed, repetitive rhythmic cycle, spiral-like rotations, gathering, and tightening, forming a polyrhythmic and multi-layered texture, reminiscent of the captivating rules of the hip bells: once started, they cannot be stopped. The flute resonates in harmony with the sharp and thorny rhythm of the 'Oeway at this point. This interplay allows the audience to grasp the vitality of the music between movement and stillness, internalizing the collision of tradition and modernity, sound and spacetime. Ultimately, it leads to a personal understanding and experience.

1. The Song of 'Oeway in the Wind

The first movement uses the bass flute, employing the natural breathiness of the instrument and special breath sound techniques (Son eoliens), creating a sound that seems to echo from afar in the mist of deep mountains. Modern flute techniques such as "singing while playing" (Voix et son simultanement) are utilized, layering the sound with thirds and fourths, mimicking the solo followed by choral performance often found in Sai Xia tribal music. The modern techniques also include glissandos and microtonal music (Bisbigliando): tiny but rapid pitch variations in specific fingerings, depicting the subtle trembling of yellow rattan in the wind.

2. Exorcism Ritual

The second movement depicts the sharp and thorny nature of the 'Oeway often used in ancient exorcism rituals. It begins with the use of instruments made from dried seeds commonly found among indigenous peoples, producing a crisp, regularly repeating rhythm like a prelude. Modern flute techniques in this section include the use of tongue-ram, where the tongue momentarily blocks the blowhole of the closed flute to create a distinctive weighty sound effect. Additionally, there's the tapping sound of pizzicato. As the sounds draw closer, the percussion section introduces metal copper bells and shell instruments, imitating the most well-known hip bells of the Sai Xia tribe, conveying a solemn and inviolable atmosphere.

The flute employs techniques such as changing the embouchure position, allowing air to burst out explosively, creating resonance. In the middle section, high and low bamboo drums intensify the aggressive repeating rhythm, and the flute melody uses the "incantation" as a compositional technique. The tribal chanting characteristic involves winding around and repeating a certain note, rapid echoes but returning to the main note, with the difficulty of techniques increasing as the pitch rises. After the flute's high-pitched scream, there's a captivating variation in percussion, incorporating vocals and flute tongue-ram. The music returns to the gradually slowing flute melody, with the final lingering sound of copper bells drifting in the air.

3. Spirit, Land, Hope

The third movement depicts the pulsating rhythm of the spirit of all things living on the land and the hope for the future. The compositional technique primarily focuses on sustained notes, cleverly incorporating variations between harmonious and dissonant intervals. The audience can feel a slow, breathing-like rhythm. Whenever dissonant intervals appear, they create a conflicting impulse that is subsequently resolved.

The movement begins with the flute playing very calm sustained notes without any fluctuations. The percussion then takes on the role of vocals, engaging in a dialogue with the flute. In the middle section, the steady and repetitive rhythm of the bamboo drum symbolizes the continuous rotation of the land. The flute uses the technique of

singing while playing (*Voix et son simultanément*), creating two vocal parts on its own. After adding percussion vocals, it becomes a three-part harmony. The flute then employs special fingerings to produce multiphonics, initially forming four parts, followed by five parts, and finally adding sweeping harmonics, creating a surprising effect of multiple parts produced by only two performers. In the later section, the expansion continues and gradually intensifies, symbolizing hope for life. Under this anticipation, the movement concludes with an endless ellipsis, representing an unwavering sense of hope.

4. Blessing Dance

The final section is a serene and auspicious blessing dance. The percussion section, centered around copper bells and shell instruments, mimics the rhythmic sounds of hip bells. The flute introduces a graceful and pure melody, creating a calm atmosphere reminiscent of a worry-free place, where all conflicts return to their origins. Towards the end, elements from the first movement reappear, with the flute adding techniques such as harmonics and whistle tones. The sound becomes transparent and ethereal, bringing the composition back to its initial starting point but now filled with abundant blessings and gratitude.

黃藤 'Oeway

(for flute and percussion)

I 風中黃藤之歌 *Le Chant d'Oeway dans le vent*

盛心亭

Hsin-Ting SHENG

♩ = 60 *Adagio Liberamente*

低音長笛

mp

Voix et son simultanément

竹鼓

竹風鈴

Vib.

6

B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

Vib. + Voix haute

Sons éoliens

10

B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

13

B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

+Voix haute

rit

Au Mouv, avance

16 B. Fl. *Bisbigiando*

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

20 B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

21 B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum *cresc.*

Bam. Wn. Ch.

22 B. Fl. *Vib.*

Bamboo Drum *(cresc.) ff*

Bam. Wn. Ch.

25

B. Fl. *Vib.* *Bisbigliando*

Bamboo Drum

Bam. Wn. Ch.

27

B. Fl. *Vib.* *Vib.* *Sons éoliens*

Bamboo Drum *mp* *p*

Bam. Wn. Ch. 砂板 *Sa. Bl.* 竹風鈴 *Bam. Wn. Ch.*

30

B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum *Sons éoliens* *dim.*

Bam. Wn. Ch.

33

B. Fl.

Bamboo Drum *rit.*

Bam. Wn. Ch.