

# Zhou Tian

周天

[b.1981]

## BROKEN INK

for orchestra

音詩

(2013)

- I. Hearing the Sound of the Rain and Bell  
雨霖鈴 · 寒蟬淒
- II. Watching the Tidal Bore  
望海潮 · 錢塘自古繁華
- III. The Drizzling Rain at the Plum Season  
青玉案 · 梅子黃時雨
- IV. The Mighty River Runs Eastward  
念奴嬌 · 大江東去
- V. Listening to the Land  
永遇樂 · 千古江山

Duration: ca. 32 minutes

Commissioned by the city of Hangzhou, in partnership with  
China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and  
the Princeton Symphony Orchestra

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

English Horn

Clarinet in E-flat

2 Clarinets in B-flat

2 Bassoons

Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F

3 Trumpets in C

2 Trombones

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion (4 players):

Vibraphone, Marimba, Tuned gong set, Glockenspiel,

Tubular Bells, Crotale (bowed), Tibetan singing bowls (西藏唱碗/铜钵)

Tom-toms (low, mid, high), Snare drum, Bass drum, Triangle, Mark tree,

Suspended cymbal, Crash cymbal, Chinese cymbal, Finger cymbal, Tam-tam,

Chinese temple block (low), Large Taiko drum – if unavailable, use large traditional Chinese drum (lowest possible)

Harp

Piano, Celesta (1 player)

Strings

*Performance materials & licensing*

FirstEdition.us

*Works & sound/video samples*

ZhouTianMusic.com

Programme note

The poetry and calligraphy of the Song Dynasty (960–1279) has long been a staple in the Chinese culture, and so when Hangzhou, once the capital of Southern Song — and my hometown — asked for a new piece to celebrate the city’s magnificent cultural heritage, I was beyond excited. It was like a musical homecoming.

In “Broken Ink,” an orchestral suite inspired by the poetry of the Song dynasty, I sought to capture the poetic flavor that was lost in translation. The work is a mosaic of Chinese musical traditions, conveying a sense of spiritual bliss. In addition to the standard orchestral palette, the instrumentation also includes non-classical instruments such as Tibetan singing bowls, tuned gongs, and a large Chinese bass drum.

The work contains five movements, each inspired by a particular poem as follows, with brief descriptions:

**I. Hearing the Sound of the Rain and Bell**

After “Bells Ringing in the Rain” by Liu Yong (987–1053)

*Two lovers parting in the rain, drinking quietly in front of an old pavilion and a magnificent river while the sound of bell lingers*

**II. Watching the Tidal Bore**

After “Watching the Tidal Bore” by Liu Yong

*Watching the splendid tidal bore of the Qiantang River, a drunken man hears the sound of flute and drums*

**III. The Drizzling Rain at the Plum Season**

After “Green Jade Cup” by He Zhu (1052–1125)

*Seeking love in a town full of fluffy catkins from blooming willows*

**IV. The Mighty River Runs Eastward**

After “First Ode on the Red Cliff” by Su Shi (1036–1101)

*Recalling the Battle of Red Cliff of the Three Kingdoms while boat riding on the Yangtze River*

**V. Listening to the Land**

After “Forever in Happiness (Reminiscing the bygone days)” by Xin Qiji (1140 –1207)

*Remembering heroes when the end of a dynasty is near*

“Broken Ink” was commissioned by the city of Hangzhou, in partnership with China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra.

— Zhou Tian

First performed 7 May 2017,  
at Richardson Auditorium, Princeton, New Jersey,  
by the Princeton Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by Rossen Milanov

*Winner, The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic  
Ulysses S. James Composition Competition (2017-18)*

Following a traditional spelling of Chinese-American artists, the composer’s family name is Zhou and his given name is Tian. When only the composer’s last name is listed in the program, it should be listed as “Zhou.” The full name should be listed as “Zhou Tian.”

SAMPLE PAGE

Transposed Score

# BROKEN INK

## I. Hearing the Sound of the Rain and Bell

Zhou Tian

Andante amoroso ♩ = 66

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Piccolo, Flutes (I and II), Oboes (I and II), English Horn, Clarinet (E $\flat$ ), Clarinets (B $\flat$ ) (I and II), Bassoons (I and II), Contrabassoon, Horns (F) (I-IV), Trumpets (C) (I-III), Trombones (I, II, III), Tuba, Timpani, Percussion (I-IV), Harp, and Pianoforte (Celesta). The second system includes Violin (I and II), Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass.

Key performance instructions include *p* (piano), *poco* (poco), *p cantabile*, *mp* (mezzo-piano), *div.* (divisi), and *p espress.* (piano espressivo). The Percussion part is specifically labeled "I. Tibetan Singing Bowls (In concert pitch)".

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## II. Watching the Tidal Bore

### Fanfare ♩ = 63

Flutes I II

Oboes I II

Clarinets (B $\flat$ ) I II

Bassoons I II

Horns (F) I II III IV

Trumpets (C) I-III

Trombones I II III

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion I II III IV

Piano

Violin I II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*fff sempre, sostenuto*

*fff sempre, sostenuto*

*fff sempre, sostenuto*

*fff*

*ff*

*fff*

B.D.  
Use different positions on the drum  
to create "high" and "low" sounds

Fanfare ♩ = 63

### III. The Drizzling Rain at the Plum Season

Lento, "meditation" ♩ = 44-54

Timpani

Percussion I

Percussion II

Gong (low)

*pp*

Violoncello Solo

Lento, "meditation" ♩ = 44-54

Solo

*mf espress.*

*mf*

9

Timpani

Percussion I

Percussion II

*pp*

Vc. Sol.

*mf*

(all grace notes on the beat)

17

Timpani

Percussion I

Percussion II

Tibetan Singing bowls  
(In concert pitch)

*p*

*mp*

*pp*

Vn. I

Vn. II

Va.

Vc. Sol.

*ff*

*f*

**B** Poco più mosso ♩ = 58

Solo

*mp espress.*

# IV. The Mighty River Runs Eastward

Allegro con brio ♩ = 152

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes the following parts:

- Piccolo
- Flutes
- Oboes
- English Horn
- Clarinet (E $\flat$ )
- Clarinets (B $\flat$ )
- Bassoons
- Contrabassoon
- Horns (F)
- Trumpets (C)
- Trombones
- Timpani
- Percussion (I, II, III, IV)
- Harp
- Piano

The percussion part (IV) features a Taiko Drum Solo with the instruction *f energico, ritmico*. A dynamic marking *f* is present, and a *sfz* marking is at the end of the section. The percussion part also includes the instruction *B.D.* (Bass Drum).

The second system includes the following parts:

- Violin I
- Violin II
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Contrabass

The tempo and meter are consistent with the first system: *Allegro con brio*, ♩ = 152, 2/4 time signature.



# V. Listening to the Land

Adagio affettuoso ♩ = 56

A

Piccolo

Flutes I II

Oboes I II

Clarinets (B $\flat$ ) I II

Bassoons I II

Contrabassoon

Horns (F) I II III IV

Trumpets (C) I II III

Trombones I II Bass Tuba

Timpani

Percussion I-IV

Harp

Celesta

III. Bass Drum  
*pp dolce*

Adagio affettuoso ♩ = 56

A

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*pp* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

*p* *mf* *pp* *p*

*p* *mf* *pp* *mf*

*pp* *mf espress.* *pp* *mf*

*p* *mf* *pp* *p*