



Shui Long, MA

Concerto for bamboo flute and orchestra

Ma Shui-long (馬水龍, 17 July 1939 – 2 May 2015) was a Taiwanese composer, whose work is known for blending Western instrumentation with Asian pentatonic melodies. He was born in Keelung, Taiwan. *The New York Times* once praised him for "letting his instruments speak in a European voice but with an Asian mind." Among his best-known works are *Rainy Harbor Sketch* and *Bamboo Flute Concerto*. He is the first Taiwanese composer to have had his work performed at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. He died at the age of 75 on May 2, 2015.

Concerto for bamboo Flute and Orchestra was commissioned by the Broadcasting Corporation of China in 1981. It premiered the same year by the Taipei Century Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nien-Fu David Liao Nianfu at Taiwan's National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. The work is composed of two continuous movements. The first movement begins with a solemn prelude for wind and string instruments, establishing the first theme which expresses the fortitude of the Han Chinese spirit. The second theme, mainly performed by the bamboo flute, is lively and fast, expressing the purity and rusticity of folk culture with an eager, optimistic attitude. As a condensed variation of the first theme, the second theme's relationship to the first is evident, and becomes the heart of the first movement. The second movement is an elegant adagio using the first theme from the first movement played on the bass strings and developing a completely new way of thinking about music for the bamboo flute. Like poetry, peaceful harmonies unhurriedly narrate the timeless magnificence of Han Chinese history and culture. The coda recapitulates the first and second themes from the first movement, but with some slight variations. In this way, the coda develops in an alternating fashion, gradually reaching the composition's crescendo.