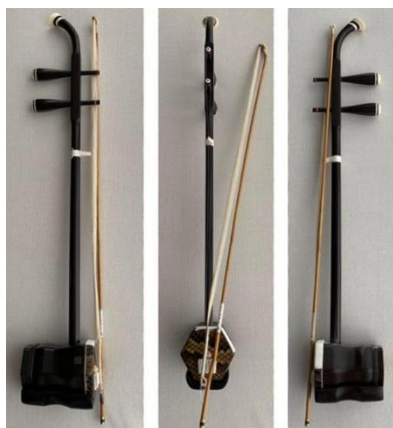


## The Rivers Awards International Composition Competition (RACC)

### Designated Traditional Chinese Instruments Introduction

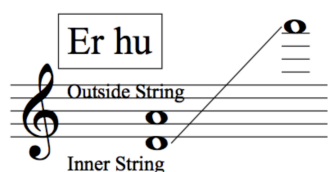
#### Erhu 二胡



The *erhu* from different angles



Lu Yiwen 陆轶文 demonstrating the *erhu*

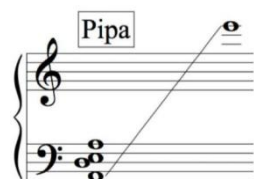


The *erhu* has two strings, an inner string and an outer string, with the bow placed between them. It is almost always tuned to a fifth (D4–A4). In *erhu* notation, the treble clef is used at concert pitch.

#### Pipa 琵琶



The *pipa* and artificial finger nails (RH)



Shu Yin 舒银 demonstrating the *pipa*

The *pipa*'s strings are usually tuned to A2–D3–E3–A3. When playing the *pipa*, the performer always wears artificial fingernails. In *pipa* notation, the staff is written at concert pitch.

## Bamboo Flutes (*Dizi* 笛子 and *Xiao* 箫)



Top to bottom: *Bangdi* 梆笛 in G, *Qudi* 曲笛 in D, *Xindi* 新笛 in G, *Xiao* 箫 in G



Wang Junkan 王俊侃 demonstrating the *dizi*



Wang Junkan 王俊侃 demonstrating the *xiao*

The image shows musical notation for three types of bamboo flutes. On the left, there are two staves. The top staff is for 'Bang Di' and shows three notes: F Key Bang Di (F), G Key Bang Di (G), and A Key Bang Di (A). The bottom staff is for 'Qu Di' and shows four notes: B $\flat$  Key Qu Di (B $\flat$ ), C Key Qu Di (C), and D Key Qu Di (D). On the right, there is one staff for 'Xin Di' showing three notes: F Key Xin Di (F), G Key Xin Di (G), and A Key Xin Di (A). All notes are written on a treble clef staff.

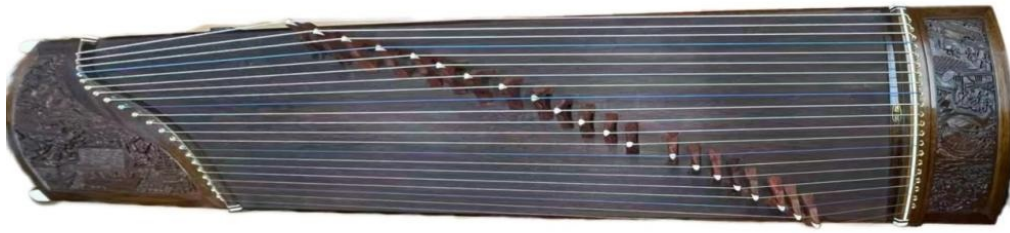
The *dizi* is a traditional Chinese transverse flute, usually made of bamboo. It has six finger holes, one embouchure hole, and one membrane hole. The membrane has a major effect on the sound the *dizi* produces. Among the many types of Chinese flute, the *qudi* and *bangdi* are the two principal types. To meet the demands of different music, professional players usually own a set of *dizi* in different sizes and keys, among which the *bangdi* in G and the *qudi* in D are the most commonly used. *Dizi* notation uses the octave-transposing convention for treble clef, sounding one octave higher than written.

The *xindi*, that is, a flute without a membrane hole, has a lower sound. Although it is similar to the *dizi*, its tone is heavier and louder. The most typical example is the *xindi* in G, which has the same range as the *xiao*. In *xindi* notation, the treble clef is used at concert pitch. In practice, the *xindi* is sometimes replaced by other instruments of a similar range, such as the *dadi* 大笛.

The image shows musical notation for two keys of the Xiao. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef. The first note is labeled 'F Key Xiao' and the second note is labeled 'G Key Xiao'. Both notes are written on a treble clef staff.

The *xiao* is a Chinese end-blown flute. It is usually made of bamboo. More traditional *xiao* have six finger holes, no membrane hole, and are relatively small in size. Today, the most commonly used pitch for the *xiao* is G. In *xiao* notation, the treble clef is used at concert pitch.

## Guzheng 古筝



The *guzheng* pictured from above



Artificial fingernails



He Qianqian 何芊倩 demonstrating the *guzheng*

The *guzheng* (also simply called *zheng*) originated during the Warring States period. Because it was initially popular in the Qin region, it came to be known as the “*Qinzheng*.” Its number of strings has evolved over time: during the Tang and Song dynasties it had thirteen strings, in the modern period this increased to sixteen, and today the twenty-one-string model is the most commonly used.

In terms of tuning, traditional *guzheng* works are mostly arranged according to the pentatonic scale, giving them a simple and elegant tone color. To give each work its own distinctive character, modern composers often design artificial tunings for *guzheng* compositions according to the expressive needs of the music. This approach breaks beyond the framework of the traditional pentatonic scale, giving modern *guzheng* works a unique and varied character.



Traditional tuning

## Sheng 笙 (37-reed sheng)



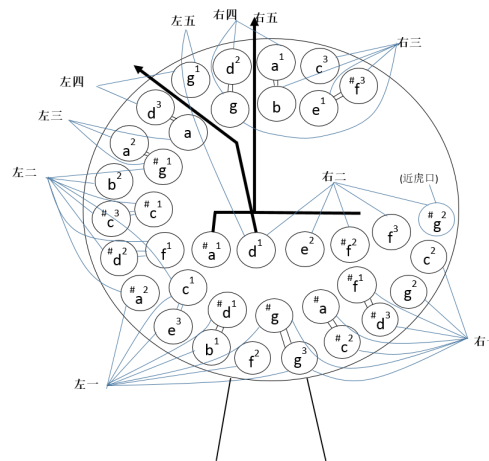
The *sheng* pictured from the side



Hua Yifei 华逸飞 demonstrating the *sheng*

The *sheng* is the world's earliest free-reed instrument, originating in China more than 3,000 years ago. The 37-reed *sheng* is a modernized version developed on the basis of the traditional instrument's tone color and form. It consists of 37 bamboo pipes of varying lengths, also called *miaoguan*, inserted into a round copper wind chamber. A reed is fitted at the end of each pipe, and sound can be produced both by blowing and by inhaling, giving it a clear tone, controllable volume, and stable intonation. Its range is from G3 to G6.

The 37-reed *sheng* uses both finger holes on the pipes and additional keys, allowing the performer to control chords flexibly. It has a wide range, covering a complete chromatic scale across three octaves, and offers strong modulation capabilities. Its notation is generally written in treble clef, sounding at concert pitch.



37-reed *sheng* fingering chart

37's discant chromatic sheng (shanghai)

