

MAXIMILIANO AMICI

TO THE
FLEETING
WATER SAY

35 MUSICAL HEXAGRAMS

AFTER THE I CHING

YUN TANG, VIOLIN

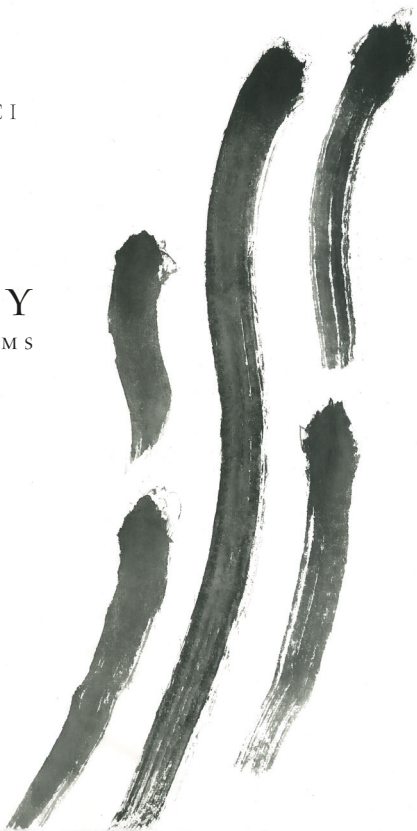
PEIYAO GUO, CELLO

YAXIN DANG, FLUTE

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PREFACE

To the Fleeting Water Say is directly inspired by the *I Ching*. I composed music for 35 hexagrams, with the exploration of change as a guiding principle. Artistically, I engaged with the *I-Ching* as a book of wisdom rather than as one of divination: I made no use of chance. The title itself holds a double reference: to *The Analects* (9.17), where Confucius compares the course of things to a river in ceaseless flow, and to the final line of the last sonnet of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonette an Orpheus*, which it directly quotes.

While I sonically evoke broken and unbroken lines as longer and shorter streams of sound, I do not directly map hexagram structures onto scales or rhythms. The *I Ching*'s deeper influence emerges instead in the work's structure and compositional process. For each trigram—the basic unit from which each hexagram is formed, combining an upper and a lower trigram—I developed motives and musical structures: small collections of pitches and rhythms that serve as generative seeds. These initial materials are not yet tied to a fixed expressive character. I first composed eight pieces based on hexagrams formed by doubling a single trigram, allowing these seeds to unfold into complete short works. The remaining pieces arise from combining trigram-specific materials according to their position within each hexagram. The symbolic images of the hexagrams then shape the expressive character of each piece, emerging from the interaction between the two constituent trigrams. The first eight tracks, based on doubled trigrams, present the core musical ideas from which the others derive. The remaining pieces may be heard in any order; their sequencing here simply aims to create variety of character and instrumentation. Here follow a brief summary of the images that inspired me for each hexagram.

LISTENING GUIDE

1. ☰ **The Creative** 乾 (qián): Unrestrained energy; light; time, as basis for the motion of energy; the constant creative action of yang, of the Deity in relation to the universe.

2. ☷ **The Receptive** 坤 (kūn): Dark, yielding, receptive primal power of yin. It is the complement of The Creative and thus represents space against time. The Receptive is activated by *The Creative* and brings its impulses to birth.

29. ☵ **The Abysmal (water)** 坎 (kǎn): Water, coming from above and pervading the earth through streams and rivers, gives birth to all life. Water fills all vacuums, and in its turbulent flows in ravines, presents an element of danger.

30. ☲ **The Clinging (fire)** 離 (lí): Fire has no definite form, but clings to the burning object. In the same way, one has to find something to cling onto, in order to shine. It's an image of perseverance and clarity of mind.

51. ☳ **The Arousing (shock, thunder)** 震 (zhèn): This hexagram offers an image of great, terrifying shock. For those who suffer such shock, resistance is pointless; it is necessary to

retreat, keeping still until composure is restored.

52. ☶ **Keeping Still, Mountain** 艮 (gèn): Mountains are a symbol of rest. Immobility and perfect rest bring forgetfulness of the otherwise restless ego, allowing people to turn to the outside world.

57. ☴ **The Gentle (the penetrating, wind)** 巽 (xùn): The wind that disperses clouds, leaving clear skies, is a gentle force. Nonetheless, its ceaseless perseverance (through movement) in time makes it a very powerful and penetrating element.

58. ☱ **The Joyous, Lake** 兌 (duì): The image of calm lakes brings joy. Joy is conceived as a firm, self-restrained, truthful, yet gentle state of mind. Lakes, like knowledge, replenish each other in turn.

6. ☵ **Conflict** 訟 (sòng): Water below tends to seep further, while heaven above tends to move higher. These diverging directions generate conflict, which can be solved only by meeting halfway.

11. ☳ **Peace** 泰 (tài): The influences of The Receptive and the Creative, of light and darkness, are balanced and in harmony; therefore, all living things are in harmony and can prosper.

25. ☳ **Innocence (the unexpected)** 無妄 (wú wàng): The rolls of thunder are below the sky, under its influence. In the same way, women and men, below the sky, have received a good instinct from heaven, which guides their actions in a natural state of innocence, which should be maintained to avoid misfortune.

34. ☳ **The Power of the Great** 大壯 (dà zhuàng): The movement of thunder's electrical shock is in harmony with that of heaven. There is also a dimension of danger, created by the sudden release of energy and the resulting potential disharmony.

22. ☲ **Grace** 賁 (bì): The light of fire flares up from the depths of the earth, illuminating the mountain. Beauty can emerge in full, but, as decoration, it is only a stage in a broader development. At the highest stage, all adornment is cast away, and form can fully reveal content, being simply fit to it.

33. ☶ **Retreat** 遯 (dùn): The mountain in the

lower trigram tends toward the sky in the upper part, which nonetheless keeps receding further, so that the light of the creative force remains out of the reach of the ascending dark forces. Withdrawal is a sign of strength.

23. ☳ **Splitting Apart** 剝 (bō): The broken lines (yin) are exerting a destructive force over the upper unbroken line (yang), about to exit the hexagram. Only when the negative cycle is concluded can more propitious times return.

40. ☳ **Deliverance** 解 (xiè): Thunder and rain set in, clearing the air and bringing deliverance.

14. ☲ **Possession in Great Measure** 大有 (dà yǒu): The combination of heaven and fire symbolizes the unification of strength and clarity. Thanks to the fire shining in the sky, everything becomes visible and thus manifest.

12. ☲ **Standstill [Stagnation]** 否 (pǐ): The trigrams of heaven above and earth below drift in contrasting directions; heaven ascends, the earth sinks further and further. The powers are not in relation and the elements are in disharmony.

38. ☲ **Opposition** 睽 (kuí): The hexagram combines the image of fire, which burns upward-

ly, with the lake, a body of water which percolates downwards. The opposition is generated by their growing distance. While opposition can be seen as an obstruction, when considered a polar moment of a process, can bring out differentiation and individuality.

32. ䷶ **Duration** 恆 (héng): The blows of wind and the rumbles of thunder are paired phenomena. The hexagram shows a gentle figure, since wind is at its foundation. Wind and thunder generate movement, and therefore duration, which takes place within immutable laws.

43. ䷺ **Break-through (resoluteness)** 夬 (guài): The lake evaporates into heaven, thus creating the conditions for a burst of energy after a long period of accumulated tension: a breakthrough. It is a dangerous moment that requires resolution.

35. ䷢ **Progress** 晉 (jìn): The hexagram describes the sun rising over the earth, as an image of rapid progress and increasing clarity.

59. ䷺ **Dispersion (dissolution)** 涣 (huàn): The wind is here blowing over the water and dispersing it into mist. This image suggests that the dissolution of the rigidity of the self and of

our own desires can be achieved through gentleness.

5. ䷄ **Waiting (nourishment)** 需 (xū): Water above the sky takes the form of clouds that give rain to refresh and nourish all creatures and provide humankind with the resources to live. But rain is unpredictable; we need to wait for it to come. Waiting is a moment of preparation, therefore a sign of strength.

4. ䷿ **Youthful Folly** 蒙 (méng): A spring at the base of a mountain offers a metaphor for the raw inexperience of youth. Carelessness and folly are not evil in youth, as young people take things playfully, but they must be overcome with discipline and inner strength during maturity.

13. ䷔ **Fellowship with Men** 同人 (tóng rén): The flame, in the trigram below, blazes up toward the sky in the trigram above, generating the idea of unity and fellowship. Fellowship leads to order through structured diversity.

8. ䷇ **Holding Together [Union]** 比 (bǐ): Water flowing on the earth's surface recalls the idea of the sea, where rivers converge and are held together.

39. ䷧ **Obstruction** 蹇 (jiǎn): The hexagram forms the image of a water formation in a mountain, which forms obstruction, inaccessibility. We can extricate ourselves from such difficulty by means of immobility, that is to say introspection and character building.

9. ䷧ **The Taming Power of the Small** 小畜 (xiǎo xù): Wind is blowing through the sky. Perseverant, gentle determination can resolve dangerous situations through the accumulation of small effects.

17. ䷐ **Following** 隨 (suí): The hexagram evokes the image of thunder in the middle of a lake. During autumn, the electricity withdraws into the earth, thus no longer generating further motion. Following here means adaptation to a dark, quiet time of rest.

16. ䷲ **Enthusiasm** 豫 (yù): The hexagram describes resounding thunder over the earth, like a refreshing spring thunderstorm. In the same way, music can be refreshing, allowing the easing of tension and the expression of enthusiasm in song and dance.

61. ䷺ **Inner Truth** 中孚 (zhōng fú): The wind, blowing over the surface of the lake, ruffles its

surface. Thus, in the crisps of the water we can see manifest effects of invisible forces.

53. ䷖ **Development (gradual progress)** 漸 (jiàn): The hexagram shows the image of a tree on a mountain, as a metaphor for development. Since wind is the upper trigram, development will be gradual but penetrating, like the incessant work of moral development.

62. ䷲ **Preponderance of the Small** 小過 (xiǎo guò): A mountain thunder seems nearer, more immediate and audible than a thunder on a vast plain. Wise people are conscious of their smallness and focus on their duties without looking to great successes and benefits, but to incremental advances.

24. ䷗ **Return (the turning point)** 復 (fù): The concept of a turning point is embodied in the emergence of a new unbroken line at the bottom of the figure. The season of darkness and decay has passed, giving way to renewal.

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COMPOSER



MAXIMILIANO AMICI (1980) earned his master's degree in music composition at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome under the guidance of Luciano Pelosi. He later specialized at the Hochschule für Musik in Basel with Erik Oña. He completed his studies with a Ph.D. in music composition at Duke University in September 2021, under the supervision of Stephen Jaffe. The Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale RAI recorded his orchestral piece *Flowing* under the baton of Yoichi Sugiyama in 2014. The composition was broadcast on the national radio channel Rai3. His music has since been performed internationally and recorded by several prominent chamber groups, such as the Ciompi Quartet, Imani Winds, JACK Quartet, Parco della Musica Contemporanea Ensemble, and Ensemble Phoenix Basel, among others. In April 2025, DaVinci Recordings released his first monographic recording, a CD dedicated to his piano music, performed by the Italian pianist Igor Cognolato. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music and Composition at Duke Kunshan University. In the summer of 2025, he served as a faculty member at the Veneto Art and Music Summit. His music is published by DoNeMus, Curci, and Ars Spoletium.

ARTISTS

YUN TANG (唐韵) serves as a violin faculty at the Middle School Affiliated to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She earned her Doctoral degree from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and her Master's degree from Salzburg Mozarteum University. As a solo and chamber music musician, she has performed at international stages such as Shanghai MISA Festival, Salzburger Festspiele Austria, Gstaad Menuhin Festival Switzerland and more.

PEIYAO GUO (郭配堯) currently serves as a cello faculty at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He is also a cello faculty member of the Tianjin Juilliard School Pre-College. He held Associate Principal Cello position in Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra from 2018-2020. Guo holds bachelor and master degrees from the Royal Academy of Music and the New England Conservatory; he received his doctorate at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

YAXIN DANG (党雅馨) is currently a second-year graduate student at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, studying with Professor Ma Yong. She won the first prize in the youth category of the 2020 Paris Opera Music Competition and 2022 Canada Quebec Music Competition. In 2023, She won second place in the Basel flute competition in Switzerland. In 2024, She was admitted to the Asian Youth Orchestra and toured Asia as principal flute.

YUE XIA (夏悦) serves as chamber music teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Visiting Teacher at the Conservatoire Royal de Mons. He is National Class-III Performer. He earned his bachelor's degree in clarinet performance from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and completed master's degrees in clarinet performance at the Conservatoire Royal de Mons as well as in clarinet performance and chamber music at the École Normale de Musique de Paris.

SIYUE YANG (杨思越) is a Collaborative Piano Teacher and PhD candidate in Composition Theory at Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She holds a master's in Solfeggio from SHCM, a bachelor's in composition from Wuhan Conservatory of Music, and a Piano Performance diploma from WHCM Affiliated Middle School. Her music has been performed by Guiyang Symphony Orchestra, received awards and have been published. She has edited and translated books and performed with world-renowned musicians.

JIRAN NIU (钮吉然) currently serves as a Music Lecturer at Duke Kunshan University. He previously served as Assistant Conductor of Wuxi Chinese Orchestra and a percussionist of Wuxi Symphony Orchestra. In percussion performance, he won the Gold Award at the 5th Taipei International Percussion Competition. During the 2016–2017, he joined Asian Youth Orchestra, embarking on concert tours worldwide.

JENSEN HORN-SIN LAM (蓝汉成), is Professor of Viola and Chamber Music, Artistic Director of International Chamber Music Centre Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Honorary Professor of Royal Danish Academy Of Music. Lam obtained his Magister Artium with “Einstimmige Auszeichnung” from University of Performing Arts in Vienna MDW, was awarded the Honorary Prize by Austrian Federal Ministry for Science “Würdigungspreise des Bundesministeriums für Wissenschaft und Forschung”, former Viola Principal of Radio Symphony Orchestra Spain RTVE, founding member of Trio Modus, Artistic Director of Ensemble Cantus and Ensemble Les Amis Shanghai.



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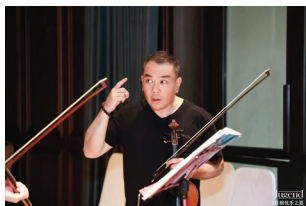
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