

# STARING WEI JIE TO DEATH (2017)

PARA ORCHESTRA

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(1987-)**

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**Tōru Takemitsu Composition Award: First  
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## Biography

Paulo Brito is a Brazilian-American composer and pianist. First-Prize Winner of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award (Japan)—awarded by world-renowned composer Unsuk Chin, Brito has been featured at international venues including the Royaumont Festival's "Voix Nouvelles" Academy, Shanghai Conservatory New Music Week, and University of Toronto New Music Festival. His music has been performed by prominent artists including conductor Jean-Philippe Wurtz and the Ensemble Linéa (France), Japanese Noh singer Ryoko Aoki, conductor Yoichi Sugiyama and the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Brito's music draws upon influences ranging from Western opera to East Asian music drama, reflecting his cross-cultural interest in multidisciplinary performance and in creating experimental, integrative pieces that dramatize the concert setting. Brito has studied with eminent composers including Toshio Hosokawa, Anthony Cheung and Christos Hatzis. Currently completing his doctorate at the University of Toronto, he previously studied comparative literature at the University of Chicago (M.A. 2016) and Classics at Columbia University (B.A. 2013).

## Abstract

*Staring Wei Jie to Death* uses the notion of evocation to give musical form to a peculiar story from ancient China. Wei Jie is a historical figure who served as a court official under the Jin dynasty during the late 3rd to early 4th centuries C.E. The Book of Jin relates that he was legendary even in his own time for his astonishing physical beauty, and that it proved to be the cause of his death. For when the Jin empire was threatened by barbarian invaders invaders, Wei Jie fled south, to the city known today as Nanjing; there, people were so eager to catch a glimpse of his unearthly beauty that a crowd gathered to see him arrive. But Wei Jie, frail in health, could not withstand the force of their collective gaze, and thus, the story goes, he was stared to death. Rather than narrating events in a linear or programmatic fashion, *Staring Wei Jie to Death* instead takes certain aural “cues” from the ancient text and calls upon the orchestra to evoke the textual narrative by giving sound to key elements associated with it. Each of the work’s four sections is constructed around one of these elements, moving from sonically “concrete” to “abstract”: the ringing of jade in “The Man of Jade” (jade being a Chinese metaphor for beauty), the din of battle in “Great Chaos under Heaven,” the remote splendor of “Ancient Nanjing,” and finally, the consuming power of the gaze in “Staring Wei Jie to Death.”

PAULO BRITO

看 杀 卫 珣

[Kan Sha Wei Jie]

STARING WEI JIE TO DEATH

SYMPHONIC EVOCATION

BASED ON AN EPISODE FROM CHINESE ANTIQUITY

*FOR ORCHESTRA*

2017

## Background

The story of Wei Jie (286-312 C.E.), though extant in several ancient Chinese sources, comes primarily from the Book of Jin, the annals of the Jin dynasty (265-410 C.E.). Wei Jie came from a prominent family of the ruling class, and himself served as an official at the imperial court. In his time, he was renowned for his oratory and rhetorical skill, but the source of his posthumous fame is rather different – his physical beauty, and the way it is supposed, according to the chronicle, to have caused his death. For while he was still a young man, China was thrown into turmoil by an invasion of barbarians. As the invaders moved in on the imperial capital, Wei Jie fled with his family southward, seeking the relative safety of the city known today as Nanjing. By the time he arrived there, word of his unearthly beauty had spread, so that all the townspeople had gathered to see him. Wei Jie, frail of health since childhood, did not have the strength to withstand the gaze of so many eyes upon him at once; thus, the legend goes, he was stared to death.

## Instrumentation

2 Flutes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling piccolo)  
 2 Oboes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling cor anglais)  
 2 Clarinets (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling bass clarinet)  
 2 Bassoons (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling contrabassoon)

2 Horns  
 2 Trumpets in C  
 2 Trombones

Timpani

Percussion – 3 players:

- Triangle, Snare drum, Glockenspiel
- Tubular bells, Xylophone
- Bass drum, Vibraphone

Celesta  
 Harp  
 Piano

8 First violins  
 8 Second violins  
 6 Violas  
 4 Cellos  
 2 Contrabasses

## Indications

- The score is “in C”: all instruments sound at the written pitch, except: piccolo, xylophone and celesta sound an octave higher, contrabassoon and contrabasses sound an octave lower (glockenspiel sounds two octaves higher).
- Accidentals are valid for a single pitch for the duration of the measure, and are maintained when tied over to the next measure (occasionally an accidental is repeated within the measure to avoid any ambiguity).
- The indication *con sord.* in the brass parts always means the straight mute.
- String sections always divide evenly (unless specifically indicated otherwise).
- Four-string contrabasses with a C-extension capable of tuning the open fourth string to the pitches between the low C and E are required.
- The four movements of the work are to be played continuously.
- Total performance time is approximately 10 minutes.

I

# THE MAN OF JADE

玉人

## **Etereo tintinnante** ♩ = 60

Musical score page 1, measures 1-5. The score includes parts for Flauti (2 staves), Oboi (2 staves), Triangolo, Xilofono, Vibrafono, Celesta (2 staves), Arpa (2 staves), and Piano (2 staves). Measure 1: Flauti 1 and 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 2: Oboi 1 and 2 play eighth-note patterns. Measure 3: Ottavino (Oboe) plays a melodic line. Measure 4: Xilofono and Vibrafono play eighth-note patterns. Measure 5: Celesta, Arpa, and Piano play eighth-note patterns.

Flauti

Oboi

Triangolo

Xilofono

Vibrafono

Celesta

Arpa

Piano



**2**

18

Flauti  
2

(Ottavino)

Clarinetto basso

Corno 1

Xilofono

Vibrafono

Celesta

Arpa

Piano

Violini I  
2

(sord.)  
*tr* *tr*

(sord.)  
*tr* *tr*

Violini II  
2

*f* *p* *pp*



5

**2**

**4** *a tempo*

Flauto 1      *tr* *ritenuto*      *ppp*      *pppp*

Corno inglese      *tr* *pp tranquillo*

Clarinetto 1      *tr* *ppp*      *pppp*

Fagotti      *pp tranquillo*

1      2      *pp tranquillo*

Corni      *pp tranquillo*

Vibrafono      *senza motore*      *ppp*      *pppp*

Celesta      *tr*

Arpa      *ppp*      *pppp*      *pp*

**2**

**4** *a tempo*

Violini I      *pp*      *ppp*      *pppp*

Violini II      *solo (sord.)*      *tr*

Viole      *p*

Violoncelli      *con sord.*

Contrabbassi      *con sord.*

*tutti (sord.) pizz. arco*

*tutti (sord.) arco*

*con sord.*

*con sord.*

*con sord.*

6

85 *sempre più ritenuto al fine*

Flauto 1

Oboi

Clarinetto 1

Fagotto 1

Corno 1

Vibrafono

Celesta

Arpa

Piano

Violini I

Violini II

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

## II

7

## GREAT CHAOS UNDER HEAVEN

天下大亂

**3**

**4** Vivo strepitoso, con impeto marziale  $\text{♩} = 80$

Clarinetto basso

Fagotti

Corni

Trombe

Tromboni

Timpani

Rullante

Campane

Vibrafono

Piano

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

53

Flauti 1  
Flauti 2  
Oboi 1  
Oboi 2  
Clarinetto basso  
Fagotti 1  
(muta in Controfagotto)  
Fagotti 2

Corni 1  
Corni 2  
Trombe 1  
*f marcissimo*  
Trombe 2  
*f marcissimo*

Tromboni 1  
Tromboni 2  
Timpani  
l.v.

Gran cassa  
*f*  
Rullante  
*f*  
*vel.*

Piano  
*con forza 6*  
*sf*  
*lasciar vibrare*  
*ff*  
*3*

56

Flauti 1 (muta in Ottavino)

Oboi 2 (muta in Clarinetto)

Clarinetto basso 1 ff 6

Corni 1 tr 6

Trombe 1 ff 6

Tromboni 1 con sord. 6

Timpani ff 6 vel

Rullante ff tr 6

Xilofono ff

Piano { 3 \* Leo. arco 3 \*

Violini I arco ff 3 tr 6

Violini II ff 3 tr 6

Viole ff 3

Violoncelli 1 arco ff 3 pizz.

Violoncelli 2 arco ff 3 pizz.

Violoncelli 3 arco ff 3 pizz.

Contrabbassi 1 arco ff 3 pizz.

Violoncelli 2 arco ff 3 pizz.

Violoncelli 3 arco ff 3 pizz.

6 *poco più tranquillo, ma con minaccia*

*poco a poco incalzando*

Flauti  
Ottavino *p* *tr* *sfp* *f*  
Oboi *f marcato* 5  
Clarinetto *f marcato* 5  
Clarinetto *f marcato* 5  
Fagotti  
Controfagotto *p* *sf* *f* *marcato* 5

Trombe *f marcato* 5  
Tromboni *f marcato* 5 via sord.  
Trombone *f* via sord.  
Timpani *f con forza* 5 *vel.*  
Xilofono *f* 5  
Piano *f marcato* 5 *led.* *\*led.* 5  
**6** *poco più tranquillo, ma con minaccia* *poco a poco incalzando*

Violini I  
Violin II *p* *f*  
Violin II *sfp* *f*  
Viole *pizz.* *arco* 5  
Violoncelli *f* *(pizz.)* *arco* 5  
Contrabbassi *arco* *p* *f*  
Contrabbassi *arco* *sul pont.* *sfp* *f*



12

66

Flauti  
2

Oboi  
2 (muta in Corno inglese)

Clarinetti  
2 (muta in Clarinetto basso)

Corni  
2

Trombe  
2 ff 3

Tromboni  
2

Timpani tr. vel.

Gran cassa

Rullante ff

Xilofono ff 3

Vibrafono ff (senza pedale sempre) 3

Piano fff con furia 3 3 Ped. \* Ped. \*

Violini I arco al tallone 3 6 3

Violini II con forza tr. tr. tr. 3

Viola tr. mf

Violoncelli arco al tallone mf 3

**8**

69 Corno inglese *tr.* *mf* (muta in Oboe)

Clarinetto basso *tr.* *mf*

Fagotto 1 *mp* *p* 3

Fagotto 2 *mp* *p* 3

Corni 1 *mp*

Corni 2 *mp*

Timpani *p* 3

Campane *p* *l.v.* *l.v.*

Xilofono *ff* 3

Vibrafono *p* *col pedale* *ff l.v.*

Piano *f cresc.* 6 *ff* 3 *ped.*

**8** Viole *pizz.* *p*

Violoncelli 1 *mp* 3 *ff* 3

Violoncelli 2 *ord.* *mp* *ff* 3

Contrabbassi *pizz.* *ff* 3

73

Oboi

campana in aria  
ff stridente

Trombe

campana in aria  
ff stridente

Timpani

Rullante

Xilofono

Vibrafono

Piano

fff maestoso al fine  
Ped. ord.

Violin I

ff ord.

Violin II

ff

Viole

3 arco (ff)

Violoncelli

arco

Contrabbassi

arco

## III

ANCIENT NANJING

建鄴

**4** Maestoso ma tranquillo, quasi solenne  $\downarrow = 50$

Piano

*f* *l.v. sempre* *più f* *pp delicatissimo*

**4** Maestoso ma tranquillo, quasi solenne  $\downarrow = 50$

Violini I

*pp sul tasto sul II* *p sf pp*

Violini II

*pp* *p tr sf pp*

**84** *lasciar vibrare*

Piano

**9**

**9**

Violini II

*pp cresc. con brio sfp*

Violini I

*pp cresc. con brio sfp*

Viole

*p 3 tr*

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi



17

**10 *tempo***

Flauti  
ff  
(muto in Ottavino)

Oboi  
ff  
(muto in Corno inglese)

Clarinetti  
ff  
(muto in Clarinetto basso)

Trombe  
ff

Timpani  
ff l.v.

Xilofono  
ff

Vibrafono  
ff l.v.

Arpa  
ff l.v. l.v. l.v. p

Piano  
ff pesante, sonore 3 secco 3 ped. \*  
pesante, sonore 3 secco 3 ped. \*

**10 *tempo***

Violini II  
ff

Viole  
ff arco sf pizz. arco 3 tr.\*\*\* p

Violoncelli  
ff

Contrabbassi  
ff

(muta in Clarinetto)

11

**Clarinetto basso** *sfp*

**Timpani** *ff con forza poco vel.* *poco decresc.* *f*

**Xilofono** *ff con forza* *poco decresc.* *f*

**Vibrafono** *ff con forza senza pedale* *poco decresc.* *f col pedale, molto vibrato*

**Arpa** *l.v.* *l.v.*

**Piano** *fff potente* *8va* *8va*

**Violini I** *f* *ff* *poco decresc.* *f* *pizz.*

**Violini II** *pp* *cresc. molto* *ff* *dim. molto* *pp*

**Viole** *sfpp* *cresc. molto* *ff* *dim. molto* *pp*

**Violoncelli** *arco* *f* *ff* *poco decresc.* *f* *sul pont.*

**Contrabbassi** *ff con forza* *poco decresc.* *f* *arco*

19

96

Flauti 1  
Flauti 2  
(muta in Flauto)  
Ottavino  
Flauto

Clarinetti 1  
Clarinetto 2  
f

Fagotti 1  
Fagotti 2  
f

Glockenspiel  
*f non troppo*

Xilofono  
*f non troppo*

Vibrafono  
*non troppo f == p*

Arpa  
*p*

Piano  
*poco meno forte*  
*l.v.*

Violini I 1  
Violini I 2  
*poco meno forte*  
*arco sul pont.*  
*pizz.*

Violini II 1  
Violini II 2  
*f non troppo*  
*pizz.*

Viole  
*f non troppo*  
*(sul pont.)*

Violoncelli 1  
Violoncelli 2  
*poco meno forte*  
*(sul pont.)*  
*poco meno forte*

Contrabbassi  
*suono reale*

98

Flauti 1  
Flauti 2 (muta in Ottavino)

Clarinetti 1  
Clarinetto basso (muta in Clar. basso)

Timpani

Vibrafono dolce l.v.

Celesta pp

Arpa pp dolce

Piano pp sostenuto

Violini I arco sul II tr. 3 12

Violoncelli pp 3

101

Flauti  
Ottavino  
*p pp* — *mf pp*

Oboi  
Corno inglese  
*p dolce* — *pp*

Clarinetto basso  
(ord.)  
*ppp p* — *mf pp*

Fagotti  
*p dolce* — *pp*

Timpani  
*trill*  
*ppp p* — *mf pp*

Celesta  
*p mf pp*

Arpa  
*ppp p secco mf pp secco*

Piano  
*pp*

Violini II  
sul tasto al fine  
sul IV  
*pp*

Viole  
sul tasto al fine  
sul III  
*pppp*

Violoncelli  
solo pizz.  
con sord.  
*pp*

Contrabbassi  
pizz.  
con sord.  
*pp*

## IV

22

## STARING WEI JIE TO DEATH

看殺衛玠

**Misterioso, con fragilità ♩ = 72**

Flauti 1, 2, Oboi 1, 2, Vibrafono, Celesta, Arpa

(muta in Ottavino) (muta in Corno inglese)

**Misterioso, con fragilità ♩ = 72**

Violini I, 2, Viole, Violoncelli

col legno, tratto, ord., col legno battuto, ord., pizz., arco, con sord.

**108**

Flauti 1, 2, Vibrafono, Celesta, Arpa, Piano

Ottavino, (muta in Flauto)

Piano: f, sf, Ped.

Violini I, 2, Viole

solo, solo con sord., tutti, (tutti), mf

sola via sord.

9  
13 8  $\downarrow = 58$  tranquillo

**Flauti**

**Oboi**

**Corno inglese**

**Clarinetto basso**

**Fagotti**

**Corni**

**Timpani**

**Vibrafono**

**Violini I**

**Violini II**

**Viole**

**Violoncelli**

**Contrabbassi**

**7**

**8**

116

Oboi (Cor. ingl.) (p)

Fagotti (p)

Corni (p) +

Vibrafono (p) vel. vel. vel. tutte velare le altre note colle dita

Arpa (p) vel. vel. vel.

Piano f (non arp.) gliss. tasti bianchi sff gliss. tasti neri



122

**15**

**4** = 63 molto con mistero ma anche dolcezza

Timpani  
Glockenspiel  
Xilofono  
Vibrafono  
Celesta  
Arpa  
Piano

129 (tr).....

**16** **4** molto quieto

**2** **6** **5** **6** **2**

Violoncello  
Contrabbassi

Viole  
Violoncelli  
Contrabbassi

Timpani  
Celesta  
Arpa  
Piano

**16** **4** molto quieto

**2** **6** **5** **6** **2**

Viole  
Violoncello  
Contrabbassi

26

134

**17** **4** **5** **4** **4** **5** **4** **6** **4**

Flauti  
1 pp  
2 pp

Oboi  
(Corno inglese)  
1 pp  
2 pp

Clarinetti  
(Clarinetto basso)  
1 pp  
2 b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub>

Corni  
1 #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub> #<sub>2</sub>  
2 b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub>

Xilofono  
- f sf - sf - sf - sf -

Vibrafono  
- f sf secco - sf simile - sf - sf ppp col pedale

Celesta  
pp b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub> b<sub>2</sub>

Arpa  
pp presso la tavola #8 ppp (ord.) #8  
#8 #8 #8 #8 #8 #8 #8

Piano  
f sf secco sf simile sf sf

**17** **4** **5** **4** **div. con sord.** **4** **5** **4** **6**

2 soli  
pp

Violini I  
pizz.

gli altri  
div. con sord. f sf sf

2 sole  
pp

Viole  
pizz.

le altre  
solo arco con sord. f sf sf

Violoncelli  
1 solo arco con sord. #<sub>2</sub> ppp  
2 arco con sord. b<sub>2</sub> ppp suoni reali

Contrabbassi  
1 pp arco con sord. #<sub>2</sub> ppp suoni reali  
2 pp

18 **4**

139

*deciso*

27

Flauti

Ottavino (muta in Flauto)

Oboi (Corno inglese)

Clarinetti

Fagotti

Corni

Tromboni

Timpani

Celesta

Arpa

Violini I tutti unisono arco via sord. *col legno*

Violini II via sord. (ord.) *poco a poco cresc.*

Viole tutte unisono arco via sord. *poco a poco cresc.*

Violoncelli tutti via sord. *col legno*

Contrabbassi via sord. *col legno*

28

**12**  
8  $\text{♩} = 63$

Oboe 1  
Clarinetto 1  
Clarinetto 2 (Clar. basso)  
Fagotto 1  
Corni 1  
Corni 2  
Timpani (con due bacchette)  $\text{fff}$  (l.v.)  
Gran cassa  $\text{fff}$  (l.v.)  
Glockenspiel  $\text{fff}$   
Xilofono  $\text{fff}$   
Vibrafono  
Arpa  $\text{fff}$   $\text{sforzando}$   $\text{ff}$   $\text{mf}$   $\text{mp}$   
Piano  $\text{fff}$   $\text{ff}$   $\text{mf}$   
  
**19 rallentando**

Violini I  $\text{ff}$   
Violini II  $\text{ff}$  sul pont.  
Viole  $\text{ff}$  sul pont.  
Violoncelli  $\text{ff}$  ord.  
Contrabbassi  $\text{ff}$  (pizz.)  
Contrabbassi 2  $\text{ff}$  (pizz.)

145

Oboi 1: *p dim.* (Corno ingl.) *pp ppp*

Oboi 2: -

Clarinetti 1: *p dim.* (pp) *p dim.* (pp)

Clarinetti 2: -

Fagotti 1: *p dim.* *pp ppp*

Fagotti 2: -

Corni 1: *p dim.* *pp*

Corni 2: *p dim.* *pp*

Vibrafono: *p dim.* *pp l.v.*

Celesta: *molto p* *2*

Arpa: *p dim.* *pp ppp*

Violini I: -

Violini II: *ord.* *p dim.* *pp ppp*

Viola: *ord.* *tr* *pp ppp*

Contrabbassi: -

**20** *con massima debolezza*

Violini I: *ppp* *8va*

Violini II: *ppp*

Viola: *ppp*

Contrabbassi: *ppp* *arco* (*l'estensione accordata al mi-bemolle*) *arco*

148

Gran cassa      *pppp*

Triangolo

Celesta      *sempre quanto p possibile*      *morendo*

Arpa      *pppp*      *morendo*

Piano      *pppp*      *morendo*  
*una corda col pedale al fine*

Violini I      1 *perdendosi*      2 *perdendosi*

Contrabbassi      1 *perdendosi*      2 *perdendosi*

*8va solo*      *pppp morendo*      *Fine*