# Qin

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## 1 PROGRAM NOTES

Qin is a real-time interactive composition of approximately eight minutes in duration for two custom-made performance control interfaces, custom software created in Max, and Kyma. Qin is a special symbol in Chinese culture and literature that is associated with delicacy, elegance, confidence, power, eloquence, and longing for communication. The symbol Qin appears in literature as early as the time that the Book of Songs was collected. Qin is also a Chinese instrument. Qin has been played since ancient times, and has traditionally been favored by scholars and appeared in literature as an instrument associated with the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius. In my composition Qin, I took as inspiration the shape of the original Qin instrument and mapped some of the traditional functions on to my custom-made performance interface, replacing the traditional Qin performance techniques with newly developed techniques that draw the desired data from the controllers.

## 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In the composition Qin, the composer is striving to create new musical expression using custom-made performance interfaces. The performance control interfaces are inspired and encouraged by Chinese ancient instrument Guqin. The performance control data is created by sampling output of analog sensors, transforming the raw sensor data into MIDI data, and routing this MIDI data through a USB connection to a computer. This control data is routed to Max and Kyma where it is modified to control musical parameters in realtime. The sonic materials for the composition are drawn from recordings of different performance techniques playing the Chinese traditional instrument, the Guzheng, which is an instrumental descendent of the Guqin. Plucking, sliding fingers along strings, and tapping the body of the instrument are part of the repertoire of sounds from which I selected my source material. To augment this family of sounds, I also recorded Chinese cymbals and bamboo flutes as secondary sonic material. Through the application of a variety of sound synthesis techniques, the concept of a data- driven Guqin is invented. For listeners, both inside or outside of the Chinese culture, these sounds might function as kinds of cultural signifiers evoking extra-musical significance.

Qin is a through composed composition with three distinctive sections. The musical narratives depicted in this piece capture different facets of interaction with the instrument from producing bright, clear, and sparkling sounds, to sounds with darker sustained textures, to sounds with the clear articulation of pitch in order to produce vibrato effects, to the generation of non-pitched glitchy sounds.

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## 3 PERFORMANCE NOTES

The composer will provide the performer for Qin. The performer will be on stage, operating the controllers during performance. The controllers, computer, audio interface will be all on stage. There are four 1⁄4" TRS audio outputs from on stage to the house mixing console. The performance will require video projection (HDMI).

## 4 MEDIA LINKS

- Video: https://vimeo.com/295075865