

## **Skyler Baysa**

Dream of Spring Peonies is an arrangement of three Kunqu opera tunes as they appear in the tenth scene of The Peony Pavilion, in which Du Liniang experiences the beauty of a garden for the first time. The melodies were transcribed from recordings of Kunqu opera performances, so many vocal ornaments are included in this composition. The music illustrates the original text, full of vivid imagery, in addition to feelings of nostalgia and sentimentality. The piece may either be interpreted as a straight-forward setting of the opera melody, with Du Liniang falling asleep at the end, or an expression of Du Liniang fondly recalling the wonder she felt when she first truly experienced the spring. The use of the instruments in this piece mimics the sound of Chinese traditional instruments, with the Violin and Cello akin to Erhu, and the Piano being used like a Guzheng. There is also an Indonesian influence, with the fluctuating tempo which slows down and then speeds up, as well as the pizzicato textures, being inspired by Keroncong Langgam Jawa. Gong-like base notes and chords punctuating the major sections of the piece are influenced by Gamelan music.

## **Biography**

Skyler Lee Baysa (b. 2004) composer and musician living in Albany, California. He graduated from UC Berkeley with a bachelor's degree and honors in Music and Linguistics, and has been composing since he was 11. His first composition "Otatop's Variations" received an Honorable Mention from the Morton Gould Young Composer Award Competition. Skyler was the youngest composer to be commissioned for Musica of the Bay's inaugural Stay-at-Home Symposium in July 2020, and in 2024 he received the David and Diana Menn Memorial Prize in Music. His compositions have been performed by various professional musicians in the San Francisco Bay Area, including Friction Quartet and players from the SF Symphony. Skyler is influenced by all kinds of music, especially traditional and folk music of East and Southeast Asia. Currently, he wears various hats for the Berkeley New Music Ensemble and the Berkeley Chinese Music Ensemble, serving as a pianist, percussionist, arranger, composer, or vocalist. Skyler also studies both Balinese and Javanese gamelan, and in August 2024 toured with Gamelan Sari Raras under Pak Midiyanto performing night-long shadow plays. He has also studied with kumu Mahealani Uchiyama in Hawaiian chanting and dance implements, and has self-studied various singing styles, including Chinese opera and Tibetan-style singing. In his free time, Skyler enjoys photography and video editing, as well as spending time with friends.

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