

*On Two Tang Dynasty Poems (2015)*  
*And the Fallen Petals*  
*The Zitherist*

Kam Kee Yong

*And the Fallen Petals*: An enchanted world is revealed in the music that paints Meng Haoran's poem. Like a spell that slowly permeates one's soul, the dreaminess of this world is felt in every nuance and phrase. The wind rustling through the trees has brought down from them countless petals that have scattered all around. There is a sadness that hangs in the air as the many petals lie on the ground. The composer paints each line of the poem much like a Schubert song. Melodies in the piano and violin parts are often entwined and are in constant conversation except for a short piano solo where one is reminded of the birds that fly from branch to branch. The harmonies in the music are full of nostalgia and even in the very sparse textures of the piece, they convey much melancholy in their simplicity.

*The Zitherist*: Written by poet Li Duan, this work describes a court scene where many dignitaries gathered at a banquet presided over by the Military Chief Commander Zhou Yu of the Wu Kingdom. The young commander was not only handsome but also a very critical music expert. Many beautiful women from near and far yearned to be close to him and the zitherist at the banquet was no exception. Craving his attention, she carelessly placed her fingers on the instrument and selectively plucked the wrong strings to create discord. Here, the composer has portrayed the sanctity and grandeur of the court scene by using his own personal imagination and musical color.

This work was originally written for violin and piano. The composer revised and arranged it for the Verdehr Trio. These two works were especially requested and commissioned by Bessie Lee of Singapore in memory of her late parents, Lee Swee Cheng and Elsie Lee. They both loved golf and opera, and Elsie was also particularly fond of blossoming trees."

—Kam Kee Yong

The world premiere of *On Two Tang Dynasty Poems* was on March 15, 2015 at Forum Cultural Guanajuato, Musica de Camara, Auditorio Mateo Herrera, Leon, Mexico. It is the last piece commissioned for the Verdehr Trio and was included on the last program they performed.

Kam Kee Yong (born 1938, Penang, Malaysia) is a Singaporean violinist, composer, conductor, artist, and educator. He showed a precocious talent for art at the young age of five, and he began playing the violin at ten with instruction from his father, a school teacher and jazz clarinetist. He developed an enthusiasm for both music and art—playing the violin, painting, and attempting his hand at composition.

In 1960, Kee Yong enrolled in the Royal Academy of Music in London where he studied violin with Fredrick Grinke and Molly Mack, chamber music with Watson Forbes, and composition with Alan Bush. During his five years of study, he learned to bring together Western instrumentation and inspiration from his own Oriental background, i.e., its emotions and its numerous tales of love and war, while managing to retain the unique qualities of each. To him, music and art are also inseparable as his music is nourished by the color of his art and his art enriched by the sound of his music.

Upon returning to Singapore, Kee Yong founded and directed the Singapura String Orchestra, a mostly student orchestra, and in 1981 he started The People's Association Children's String Orchestra. After moving to Canada in 1989, he directed the Avant Garde School of Children's Art and Music in Toronto for ten years.

Kee Yong's works have been performed by the Tokk Ensemble of Tokyo, Korea's Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and chamber groups from the United Kingdom, United States, Belgium, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Throughout his life, Kee Yong has stayed committed to a performing career as violinist, organizing annual solo and chamber performances. In 1984, he was awarded the Singapore Cultural Medallion for his valuable contributions to music. Kee Yong is an Associate with honors of the Royal Academy of Music in both violin performance and composition.

Additional information is available at [www.kamkeeyong.com](http://www.kamkeeyong.com).