

Yellow Millet Dream  
for String Quartet

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master of Arts  
degree in Music (Composition) in the  
Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2024

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Dedicated to my father, Dianguo Xu  
my mother, Liqun Zhang  
and to my husband, Hongwei Cai

## ABSTRACT

"Yellow Millet Dream" is a classic fable in Chinese Taoist culture. Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Immortals of Taoism, falls into a deep sleep while waiting for his yellow millet to simmer. In his dream, he experiences a range of life's highs and lows, from the pinnacle of officialdom to the depths of despair, only to awaken and realize it was all an illusion. While the yellow millet has yet to fully cook.

The music begins with pizzicato, imitating the sporadic raindrops of a gloomy day. As Lü enters his dream, the rhythm transforms from simple to intricate, and the pitch shifts from serene clarity to complexity and ambiguity. The composition ends with an unresolved melodic line, symbolizing the philosophical thinking: Is our perceived reality genuine, or just a figment of our imagination? And if our current experience is indeed a dream, would we choose to awaken? Would you feel lost if the dream ended?

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

"Yellow Millet Dream" is a classic fable in Chinese Taoist culture. Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Immortals of Taoism, falls into a deep sleep while waiting for his yellow millet to simmer. In his dream, he experiences a range of life's highs and lows, from the pinnacle of officialdom to the depths of despair, only to awaken and realize it was all an illusion. While the yellow millet has yet to fully cook.

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# Yellow Millet Dream

## String Quartet No.2

Qing Xu

♩ = ca. 66

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

ST

SP

ST

SP

ST

pizz.

pp

pppp

pizz.

pp

f

pizz.

pp

f

ST

SP

ST

SP

f

f

Violin 1 (Vln. 1): Treble clef. Measures 1-4: Rest. Measures 5-8: Sixteenth-note triplet arpeggios. Dynamics: *pp* (measures 5-6), *f* (measures 7-8).

Violin 2 (Vln. 2): Treble clef. Measures 1-8: Triplet eighth notes. Dynamics: *pp* (measures 1-4), *f* (measures 5-8).

Viola (Vla.): Alto clef. Measures 1-8: Sustained notes with tremolos. Measure 5 includes a slur over measures 5-6.

Violoncello (Vc.): Treble clef. Measures 1-8: Triplet eighth notes. Dynamics: *f* (measures 1-7), *pp* (measure 8).

Violin 1 (Vln. 1): Treble clef. Measures 9-12: Triplet eighth notes. Dynamics: *pp* (measures 9-10). Measures 11-12: *arco ricochet* sixteenth-note tremolos. Dynamics: *sf* (measures 11-12).

Violin 2 (Vln. 2): Treble clef. Measures 9-12: Triplet eighth notes. Dynamics: *pp* (measures 9-10). Measures 11-12: *arco ricochet* sixteenth-note tremolos. Dynamics: *sf* (measures 11-12).

Viola (Vla.): Alto clef. Measures 9-12: Sustained notes with tremolos.

Violoncello (Vc.): Treble clef. Measures 9-12: Triplet eighth notes.

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts, Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.) parts, measures 1 through 4.

**Violin 1 (Vln. 1):** Measures 1-4 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 1 is marked *fp*. Measure 2 is marked *fp*. Measure 3 is marked *pizz.* and *p*. Measure 4 is marked *arco ricochet* and *fp*.

**Violin 2 (Vln. 2):** Measures 1-4 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 1 is marked *fp*. Measure 2 is marked *pizz.* and *pp*. Measure 3 is marked *f*. Measure 4 is marked *f*.

**Viola (Vla.):** Measures 1-4 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 1 is marked *ST* and *pppp*. Measure 2 is marked *SP*. Measure 3 is marked *arco ricochet*. Measure 4 is marked *arco ricochet*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** Measures 1-4 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 1 is marked *mp*. Measure 2 is marked *mp*. Measure 3 is marked *mp*. Measure 4 is marked *mp*.

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts, Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.) parts, measures 5 through 8.

**Violin 1 (Vln. 1):** Measures 5-8 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 5 is marked *fp*. Measure 6 is marked *fp*. Measure 7 is marked *fp*. Measure 8 is marked *fp*.

**Violin 2 (Vln. 2):** Measures 5-8 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 5 is marked *fp*. Measure 6 is marked *arco ricochet* and *fp*. Measure 7 is marked *fp*. Measure 8 is marked *fp*.

**Viola (Vla.):** Measures 5-8 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 5 is marked *arco ricochet*. Measure 6 is marked *arco ricochet*. Measure 7 is marked *arco ricochet*. Measure 8 is marked *arco ricochet*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** Measures 5-8 feature a series of sixteenth-note runs. Measure 5 is marked *pp*. Measure 6 is marked *pp*. Measure 7 is marked *pp*. Measure 8 is marked *pp*.



4

4

Vln. 1

*sfp* *pp* *simile*

Vln. 2

*pizz.* *pp* *f*

Vla.

*pizz.* *pp* *f*

Vc.

*p* *f* *arco* *ppp*

Vln. 1

*pizz.* *p* *ppp*

Vln. 2

*p* *ppp*

Vla.

*p* *ppp*

Vc.

*sfp* *simile*

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts. The Violin 1 part features a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings *p*, *ppp*, and *p*. The Violin 2 part features a similar melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings *p*, *ppp*, and *p*. The Viola (Vla.) part features a melodic line with dynamic markings *p*, *ppp*, and *p*. The Violoncello (Vc.) part features a bass line with dynamic markings *p*, *ppp*, and *p*.

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts. The Violin 1 part features a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings *sfp* and *sfp*. The Violin 2 part features a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*. The Viola (Vla.) part features a melodic line with dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*. The Violoncello (Vc.) part features a bass line with dynamic markings *mp*, *sfp*, *pppp*, *p*, *sfp*, and *pppp*. The Vc. part also includes performance instructions: *pizz.*, *arco ricochet*, *non vibr.*, *SP molto vibr.*, and *arco ricochet*.

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) staves. Vln. 1 starts with *pizz.* and *pp*, then *sfp* with *arco* and *ricochet*. Vln. 2 starts with *arco.*, then *pizz.*. Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) staves. Vla. starts with *pp*. Vc. starts with *pp*, then *sfp* with *pizz.*

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) staves. Vln. 1 continues with *sfp* and *ppp*. Vln. 2 continues with *pizz.* and *arco.*. Vla. and Vc. staves. Vla. continues with *pizz.* and *arco.*. Vc. continues with *pizz.* and *arco.*. Dynamics include *ppp*, *p*, and *sfp*.



SP

Vln. 1

*fpp* *ff*

Vln. 2

*ff*

Vla.

*ff* *ff*

Vc.

*ff*

Vln. 1

*ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

Vln. 2

*ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *ppp*

Vla.

*p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

Vc.

*p* *ff* *p* *ff*

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts, starting with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The Vln. 1 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Vln. 2 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts are also shown. The music features dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *ppp* (pianississimo). The Vln. 1 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Vln. 2 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts are also shown. The music features dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *ppp* (pianississimo).

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts, continuing the music. The Vln. 1 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Vln. 2 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts are also shown. The music features dynamic markings: *ff* (fortissimo), *p* (piano), and *ppp* (pianississimo). The Vln. 1 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Vln. 2 part includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts are also shown. The music features dynamic markings: *ff* (fortissimo), *p* (piano), and *ppp* (pianississimo).

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp*

*ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f*

*f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f*

*f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *f*

♩ = ca. 100

11

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.



First system of musical notation, measures 1 through 6. The staves are labeled Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The first measure of each staff is marked *ff* (fortissimo). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Second system of musical notation, measures 7 through 12. The staves are labeled Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The notation continues with various musical symbols and dynamic markings.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

First system of musical notation for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line. Above each staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "ord.".

**Vln. 1:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *pp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure).

**Vln. 2:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *pp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure).

**Vla.:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *pp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure).

**Vc.:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *pp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure).

Second system of musical notation for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line. Above each staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "SP" or "ord.".

**Vln. 1:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *ffp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure). Above the staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "SP".

**Vln. 2:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *ffp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure). Above the staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "SP".

**Vla.:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *ffp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure). Above the staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "SP".

**Vc.:** First measure has a half note G4. Second measure has a half note G4. Dynamics: *ffp* (first measure), *ff* (second measure). Above the staff is a wavy line with a trill symbol (tr) and an arrow pointing to "SP".

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$

Vln. 1 *ord.* *pp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *p* *ff* *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *ord.* *pp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *p* *ff* *pp* *f*

Vla. *ord.* *pp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *p* *ff* *pp* *f*

Vc. *ord.* *pp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *p* *ff* *pp* *f* *pp*

Vln. 1 *ppp* *ff* *pp* *arco.*

Vln. 2 *ppp* *ff* *pp* *arco.*

Vla. *pp* *ff* *pp* *arco.*

Vc. *ff* *pp* *arco.*

Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Violoncello (Vc.) score. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is in 5/4 time, and the second system is in 3/4 time. The instruments are Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**Violins 1 & 2:** The first system is in 5/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instruments are marked *arco.* and *pizz.*.

**Viola:** The first system is in 5/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *arco.* and *pizz.*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** The first system is in 5/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *arco.* and *pizz.*.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 44$

Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Violoncello (Vc.) score. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is in 3/4 time, and the second system is in 3/4 time. The instruments are Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**Violins 1 & 2:** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instruments are marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Viola:** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

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**Viola:** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Violins 1 & 2:** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instruments are marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Viola:** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

**Violoncello (Vc.):** The first system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The second system is in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the first measure. The instrument is marked *pp*, *f*, and *pp*.

Vln. 1 *mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
 Vln. 2 *mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
 Vla. *mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
 Vc. *mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
*f<sup>+</sup> (pizz.)*

Vln. 1 *n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*pp < f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
*ppp*  
 Vln. 2 *n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*pp < f > pp*  
*< f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
*pp*  
 Vla. *n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*pp < f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
*pp*  
 Vc. *n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord. mVib. SP n.v. ord.*  
*pp < f > pp*  
*< f > pp < f > pp*  
*4:3*  
*f<sup>+</sup> (pizz.)*  
 flaut. *6*  
*f*  
 arco *pp*  
 pizz. *f*

flaut.

6

6

6

arco

ppp

5:6

pp

7:6

pp

7:6

pp

arco

pp

pizz.

4:3

f

flaut.

Vln. 1

6

6

6:4

6:4

6:4

6:4

*f*

arco

*pp*

*f*

*ppp*

Vln. 2

*> pp*

5:6

*pp < f > pp*

Vla.

7:6

*pp*

*pp < f > pp*

Vc.

pizz.

7:6

+

+

+

arco

*pp*

pizz.

5:6

+

+

+

arco

*pp*

*pp < f > pp*

n.v. ord.

mVib. n.v. ord.

SP

n.v. ord.

mVib. n.v. ord.

SP

n.v. ord.

mVib. n.v. ord.

SP

n.v. ord.

mVib. n.v. ord.

SP





Vln. 1

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Continue repeating until it fades away naturally

Vln. 2

*>p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Continue repeating until it fades away naturally

Vla.

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Continue repeating until it fades away naturally

Vc.

*>p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Continue repeating until it fades away naturally