SOUNDS OF INK

Luo Qi and 30 Years of Calligraphyism

水墨的声音

洛齐与书法主义30年

Edited by Adriana Iezzi

(意) 阿德丽亚娜·叶星 著

Bologna
University Press

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阿德里亚娜 • 叶星

意大利博洛尼亚大学中国语言文化教授和欧洲研究委员会（ERC）项目"WRITE——中国书法新形式：当代文化镜像"(GA. 949645)"首席研究员。当代书法展览主特策划，如"书写《神曲》：三种书法传统在埃及交汇"（2017年）、"墨乐"（2018年）、"洛齐：写乐"（2019年）和"水墨的音乐"（2023年）。三部书法主义著作的作者（《一个书法主义者洛齐》、《墨乐 • 米兰》和《洛齐写乐 • 博洛尼亚》），并发表过多篇关于中国当代书法的学术论文，同时参与合著了关于中国涂鸦艺术的专著（《中国涂鸦艺术》）。

书法主义文献丛书
洛 齐 主编

CALLIGRAPHYISM: A SERIES OF BOOKS
Edited by Luo Qi

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This publication is part of the “WRITE - New Forms of Calligraphy in China: A Contemporary Culture Mirror” project, funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation funding programme (Grant agreement n. 949645). It reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Research Council cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

该出版物是作为写入WRITE 项目的一部分创建。该项目得到了欧洲研究委员会（ERC ）欧盟“地平线2020”研究和创新计划的资助（资助协议编号 949645 ）。本出版物仅反映作者的观点，欧洲研究委员会（ERC）不对任何使用其中所载信息的行为负责。

NEW FORMS OF CALLIGRAPHY IN CHINA:
A CONTEMPORARY CULTURE MIRROR

The illustrations were selected by the editor of the volume, together with the artist Luo Qi and in collaboration and agreement with the authors.

本卷插图由主编与艺术家洛齐共同遴选，并经与作者协商及达成共识。

Special thanks to the artist Luo Qi and the International Museum and Library of Music.

特别鸣谢艺术家洛齐及国际音乐博物馆与图书馆。

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Fondazione Bologna University Press
Via Saragozza 10, 40123 Bologna
tel. (+39) 051 232 882

www.buponline.com
e-mail: info@buponline.com

ISBN: 979-12-5477-758-9
ISBN online: 979-12-5477-759-6
DOI 10.30682/9791254777596

Back cover image: Luo Qi and Silvio Ferragina, “Sound MAP” (2023), 2 scrolls, ink on paper, ca. 1200×70 cm (each), stairwell of the entrance of the International Museum and Library of Music, Bologna
洛齐与塞尔维奥 · 菲拉吉纳，“声音地图”， 两卷， 纸本水墨 ，1200×70厘米（每个）， 2023年， 博洛尼亚国际音乐博物馆与图书馆入口楼梯间

First edition: February 2026

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水墨的声音：书写的音乐与精神的颂歌

洛齐 / 文

“水墨的声音”是一个在严格意义上对书法与音乐之间的关系的研究性展览，我很清楚这是一项非常重要、不同寻常且充满激情的工作。文字、书法、水墨、音乐、诗歌在中国文化中是一个整体，在讨论和研究相互关系的时候，我首先要强调它们之间的联系，这是中国艺术的重要特征。

事实上，在过去，大多数的情况是以书法的表演与音乐的演奏相结合的方式呈现彼此的联系。我认为，这仅仅是一个表演的关系，一直以来，对这个领域的展示没有新的成果。在研究母语艺术的时候，今天需要更深入和更新的角度，如通过书写的历史、转述、符号的表达获得更多的思考，获得更多研究学者和读者的感受，从而理解和丰富这个领域的研究。文化与艺术牵连到历史的时候，需要非常具体的材料。2018 年开始，我与博洛尼亚大学阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星教授合作，在博洛尼亚大学图书馆和米兰布雷拉图书馆就书法与音乐举行了两次重要的展览，另一次是在博洛尼亚大学弗利分校的讲座。出版了两本重要目录，以及与之相关联的 15 本“书法主义文献”。这些文

献证明了我们的成果，但是我依然期待不断探索，求证新的思考和材料。感谢阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星教授，感谢博洛尼亚国家音乐博物馆。

音乐的符号

中国最早用书法(文书)的方式记录音乐。在西夏朝代,(约1038-1227 年）音乐乐谱是以汉字的方式呈现（933 年敦煌曲谱），记谱的文字都是汉字的部首或偏旁，笔画非常简约，通常被称为“半字符号”，如：一、I、七、八、匕、几、乙、厶等。这些形态的书写方式传承于汉代(公元前 99 年)的隶书(一种书法风格)。

文字书写不仅作为曲谱符号，还附加提示音乐的节奏、速度、反复、表情、调式、力度及演奏手法。它们又被称为“燕乐半字谱”与“工尺谱”(宋代 960-1279 年)。工尺谱的记谱书写方式与汉代以来的汉字书写方式完全一致，由上向下，从右而左直行。这种简单的书写方式非常规范，是成熟的书法艺术,包含了中国书法审美要求的全部规范法则。而每位书写者，因为个性、审美趣味的不同，为作品留下了不同的风格。

我在 2019 年 3 月完成了《敦煌曲谱笔记》20 件作品，包括《笔记》前的《题记》(8 件）和一部序曲，共 29 件手稿（见 1 卷）展览在葡萄牙里斯本澳门文化中心（由国际中国音乐研究中心主席艾纽 Enio Souza 先生策划主持），之后展览在意大利博洛尼亚大学图书馆。(阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星 2020b)

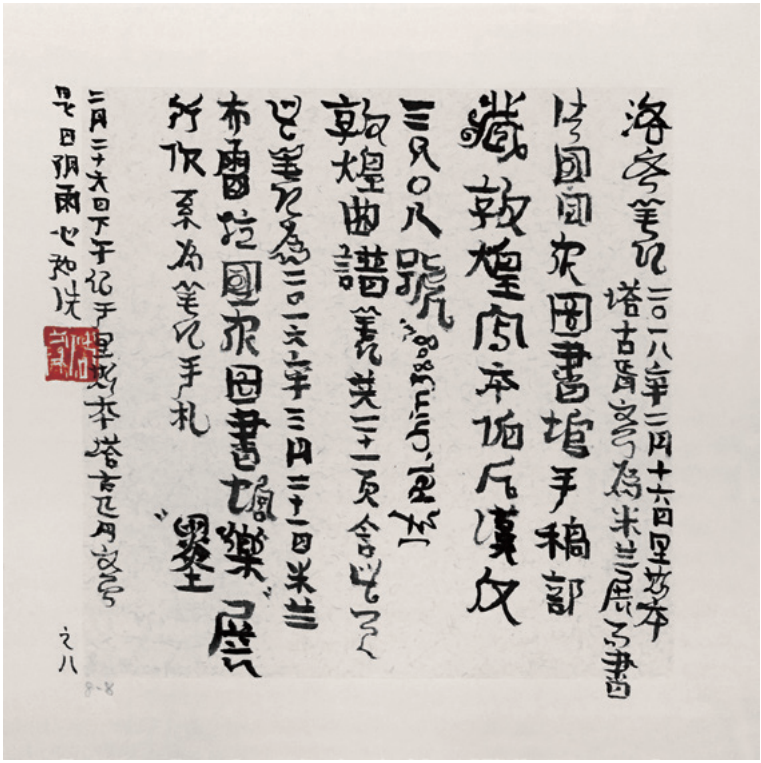
书法的“半字谱”构成了音乐的记谱法则，但这种法则，在近现代被五线谱和简谱（数字乐谱）取代，没有音乐家和书法家再运用“半字谱”进行工作。2018 年,在由阿德丽亚娜•叶星策划主持的《墨乐》展览（意大利米兰布雷拉国家图书馆玛丽亚 • 特蕾莎大厅）中，我用半字符号创作了 21 首意大利名

歌笔记和 12 件大型（立轴）歌剧的演绎作品（阿德丽亚娜•叶星 2020a）。《墨乐》的三组作品，虽然同样是用半字书法演绎音乐，但是呈现的形式和视觉效果是不同的。《墨乐－歌剧笔记》像室内乐，《写乐 • 无声之歌》（半字母透明胶片作品）像协奏曲，彩色的立轴《写乐》更像是变奏组曲。

以上三组作品 2023 年 10 月分为 4 个部分，展览在意大利博洛尼亚国家音乐博物馆，主题为《水墨的声音》（博洛尼亚国家音乐博物馆的 2 号厅及博物馆展厅内）。

音乐的书写

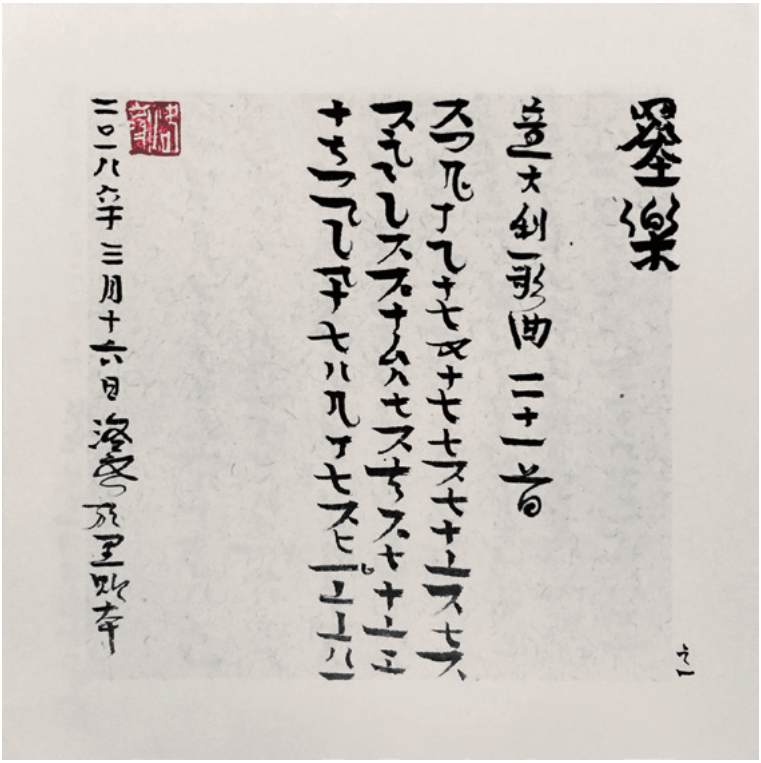
在书法的审美要求中，最完美的境界是以音乐的韵律法则来规范书写。用音乐的流畅性、节奏感来比拟书写过程中快慢、停顿与速度的自然性，以及线条曲直、长短、粗细、密集与疏散，空间的分布变化。书写从开始到结束的不可逆转性如同演奏一首曲目，从引子、展开、主旋律、回旋，到尾声结束一样。书法的神来之笔，也是同样的理路，线条与符号的回旋、顿促、强弱变化如高山流水，需要在瞬间中再现。书法的一次性书写，像没有声音的音乐艺术。“大音希声”，是音乐的最高境界，被誉为“禅境”，无音的书法同样是书法艺术的灵魂。特别在行书和草书中，把握书写的节奏变化，抽象的审美感就像音乐的乐感一样。学习书法和学习音乐一样，需要长期的生理机能的训练。完成一件书法作品也许只需要一到三分钟，但是它需要付出的时间是十几年和几十年。像音乐家，台上 10 分钟，台下 10 年功。演奏家每天要练习名家曲目，书法家也需要每天临写古代大师的书法作品，才能培养出良好的书写手感、即时性的审美能力、书写过程中的准确判断，使得作品在短时间中，在限定的纸张空间里得到完美的体现。而且每一次的表达都是不同的，这种不同和变化是随机的决断的结果，要达到每次的



敦煌曲谱题记之八　33 × 33cm　洛齐　2019
Luo Qi, “Preface about the Dunhuang Musical Notation System, n.8”, ink on paper, 33×33cm, 2019

书写都能实现整体的视觉力量与细节的完美，每个符号或字之间空间与结构富有变化且和谐，这实际上是非常非常困难的工作。水墨画也相同。每一次绘画的过程中都会出现不相同的，意想不到的变化，要在绘画中随时做出判断，但又不能影响绘画的流畅。

中国书法的审美法则是视觉艺术的最高法则之一，如果水墨画家不能很好的练习书法，从书法的美学中获得感受和能力，他就不可能成为杰出的艺术家。书法拥有非常抽象而严格的美



墨乐——无声之歌之一　33 × 33cm　洛齐　2019
Luo Qi, “The Music of Ink - Silent Melodies n.1”, ink on paper, 33×33cm, 2019

学原则，水墨画的每一个动作：点、线、墨块，都是按照书法的法则来规定的。如画树枝的线条，毛竹、花卉和石块的结构空间是否完美，都取决于艺术家的书法能力。

另外一个非常特殊的原因是中国绘画的纸张（宣纸）。宣纸的材质为毛笔留下的痕迹提出了特殊要求，如果没有长时间对纸张性质的熟悉和了解，就不可能完成良好的笔墨质量（书法与水墨绘画无法像油画般在麻布上反复修改）。“书画同源”指出，书法与绘画在审美的要求和笔墨的运用上拥有共同的规

律性，而书法的要求更高，难度更大（如《敦煌笔记题记》、《写乐·无声之歌册页》和《兰亭集序》石上书法）。

声音的图像

书法不仅是抽象的线条艺术，它还包含了文字的寓意。在世界范围，只有中国还保留使用了象形文字。不同的书写方式，不同的符号形态，也表达不同声音。其中最有代表性的字或词组如：福、寿、喜、长乐、千秋万岁、南无阿弥陀佛等，一个字甚至有上百种书写方式，成为一百种符号。汉字的每一个笔画都包含了文化的含义，象征了某一个具体的事物：如“一”，代表了事物的开始，也代表了“天”。我从 1996 年开始就“福”字进行了不同形态和符号的创作。

2014 将梵文《大般若波罗蜜多经》中颂词如南无阿弥陀佛、福、禄（洛）、寿等与印度梵文《八千颂歌》的文字进行了交错混合，组建了新的作品和新的符号形态。作品不仅是视觉的语言，也成就了词语的声音。梵语“阿弥陀佛”是不断重复的语调，就如印度梵文的《八千颂歌》的文字，文字本身是没有含义的，是一个个被连续复制的符号，这些连续复制的符号代表了颂歌的声音，书写的无限循环象征了颂歌（声音）的不断持续。

2023 年我为《水墨的声音》展览创作了 8 件新的符号作品（展览在博洛尼亚国家音乐博物馆 3 号厅及大厅公共空间）。这些作品是音乐的符号，是绘画的图像，也是新水墨的声音，是书法、音乐、诗歌与图像的最新汇合。这些新符号被悬挂在博洛尼亚音乐博物馆的公共空间中，因为自然风的推动作用，“图像”在空中飘动。

结语

我在世界各地的工作、创作 30 余年，深深感到“书法”

是中国艺术的母语，如果脱离了母语，我就失去了意义，中国的艺术山水、花鸟，抽象笔墨都崇尚自然，它的美学依据都来自“书法”中的自然诗性，今天的展览“水墨的声音”是“诗的声音、书写的声音、图像的声音”的汇集，这些视觉的书写，传达了中国艺术的精神声音。我用 30 年的创作和研究再现我的“书法主义”，主编了 15 卷“书法主义文献”、50 卷“西园雅集”（书法主义文献馆馆刊）。

再次感谢所有参加国际会议的教授们，特别要感谢音乐博物馆馆长，杰妮 • 塞维诺和阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星教授为实现“水墨的声音”的展览和国际会议所付出的巨大努力，展览的呈现是令人惊叹的，感谢阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星的工作，她用了 3 年的时间筹划、思考和工作、我为能得到阿德丽亚娜 • 叶星的合作和支持，感到无限的荣幸，我要再次表达对她的感谢。

在此，我也要感谢阿德丽亚娜•叶星教授的团队，大乐（丹尼尔）、马尔塔和马尔蒂娜的协助。

感谢书法家塞尔维奥 • 费拉吉纳、钢琴家朱西 • 卡鲁索、作曲家张真真、舞蹈家艾格尼斯 • 加布里埃利，精彩的书法、音乐和舞蹈表演。

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Sounds of Ink:
The Musicality of Writing and the Ode to Spirituality

By Luo Qi
Translated by Daniele Caccin

"Sound of Ink" (*Shuimo de shengyin* 水墨的声音) is a research exhibition that seeks to explore, in a rigorous manner, the relationship between calligraphy and music. I am fully aware that this is a very important, unique, and deeply passionate endeavor. In Chinese culture, writing, calligraphy, ink painting, music, and poetry are intrinsically connected as one. When discussing and studying their relationship, it is essential to first emphasize this intrinsic connection, which represents a fundamental characteristic of Chinese art.

In the past, this connection mainly appeared in calligraphic performances accompanied by music, but it remained a performative interaction without generating advancements in this field. Today, when studying the art of my mother tongue, the Chinese language, we need a deeper and more innovative perspective – one that explores the history of writing, narration, and symbolic expression. We should also draw insights from researchers and readers to enrich our comprehension and

investigation. When culture and art engage with history, specific and well-researched materials are essential. Starting in 2018, I collaborated with Professor Adriana Iezzi from the University of Bologna to organize two major exhibitions on calligraphy and music, held at the Bologna University Library and at the Braidense National Library in Milan. Additionally, I delivered a lecture at the University of Bologna in Forlì. As a result, two significant catalogues were published, along with a series of 15 monographies titled "*Calligraphyism. A Series of Books*", which were directly related to these exhibitions. These publications have documented our achievements, yet I remain eager to continue exploring new ideas, perspectives, and materials. My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Adriana Iezzi and the International Museum of Library of Music of Bologna.

Symbols of Music

China was among the earliest to use calligraphy (writing) to record music. During the Western Xia Dynasty (circa 1038-1227) musical notation was recorded using Chinese characters. The 'Dunhuang musical notation system' (*Dunhuang qupu* 敦煌曲谱 ; dating to 933 CE) is an example of this method. This system represented musical notes using the so-called 'Half-character Symbols' (*banzi fuhao* 半字符号), which consisted entirely of radicals and components of Chinese characters. These symbols were composed of highly simple strokes, such as horizontal stroke (*heng* 一), and vertical stroke (*shu* 丨), along with other characters that contained relatively few strokes, such as *qi* 七 ('seven'), *ba* 八 ('eight'), *bi* 匕 ('spoon'), *ji* 几 ('few'), *yi* 乙 ('second'), *si* 厶 ('private'), etc. These symbols inherited their shapes from clerical script (*lishu* 隶书), a Chinese calligraphic style that has been in use since the Han Dynasty (99 BCE).

Characters not only served as a musical notation system but also worked as descriptive notation including indicators for musical elements such as rhythm, speed, repetition, mode, dynamics, and performance techniques. These notation systems were known as *yanle banzipu* (燕乐半字谱)[1] and *gongchipu* (工尺谱) dating from the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The *gongchipu* notation system followed the traditional Chinese writing style that had been in use since the Han dynasty, with characters arranged from top to bottom and from right to left. This simple yet highly standardized method represents a refined form of calligraphy, adhering to the aesthetic principles and conventions of Chinese calligraphy. Furthermore, each writer, influenced by his unique personality and aesthetic taste, developed a distinct style in his work.

In March 2019, I completed 20 works entitled "Notes on Dunhuang Musical Notation System" (*Dunhuang qupu biji* 敦煌曲谱笔记), along with an introductory piece and other 8 works that represent a "Preface" (*tiji* 提记) to these notes, for a total of 29 manuscripts. These works were shown at Macau Cultural Center in Lisbon, Portugal, in an exhibition curated and hosted by Mr. Enio Souza, Chairman of the International Chinese Music Research Center. Subsequently, another exhibition was held at the Bologna University Library, Italy (Iezzi 2020b).

The calligraphic 'half-character musical notation' constituted

1. *Yanle banzipu* (燕乐半字谱) is a musical notations system that adopts the "half-character symbols" of Yanle 燕乐 , which refers to the system of twenty-eight modes of court banquet music. This system is also known by the alternative name *suzipu* 俗字谱 (folk-characters notations system). (Translator's note)

a system of musical notation, but in modern times, these notation rules have been replaced by the Western five-line notation and the numbered musical notation system. Today, no musicians or calligraphers use the 'half-character notation' in their work.

In 2018, at the exhibition "The Music of Ink – Milan" (held in the Maria Teresa Hall of the Braidense National Library in Milan), curated by Adriana Iezzi, I composed 21 transcriptions of famous Italian songs using the half-character system, along with 12 large-scale vertical scrolls interpreting famous operas (Iezzi 2020a). Although all three series of artworks in "The Music of Ink" (*Mo yue* 墨乐) employ half-character calligraphy to represent music, their presentation formats and visual effects differ: the 21 transcriptions of the Italian songs resemble chamber music, the transparent sheets with semi-alphabetical signs evoke a solo piece, and the colourful vertical scrolls are more similar to a suite.

In October 2023, these three series were divided into four sections and exhibited at the International Museum of Music in Bologna, Italy, under the same theme "Sounds of Ink" (*Shuimo de shengyin* 水墨的声音), with installations displayed in Room 2 of the temporary exhibition area of the museum and in the museum's rooms.

The Writing of Music

Among the aesthetic principles of calligraphy, the highest ideal is to regulate writing through the rhythmic laws of music. The fluidity and rhythm of music parallel the natural variations in speed, pauses, and movements in the writing process, as well

1 号展厅　洛齐　八千颂歌　2017
Luo Qi, "Ode of Eight Thousand Verses"(2017), Room 1 of the Museum Gallery

as the curvature, length, thickness, density and spacing of lines, along with their spatial distribution and transformations. The irreversible nature of writing, from beginning to end, resembles the performance of a musical piece, progressing from the introduction, through development, main melody, variations and elaborations, to the concluding coda. The same principle applies to the spontaneous strokes of calligraphy: the rotations, sudden accelerations, and shifts in intensity of lines and symbols evoke the grandeur of towering mountains and flowing waters, all of which must be expressed in an instant. Calligraphy, as a form of one-time execution, is akin to the art of music without sound. "*The greatest sound is barely heard*"[2] represents the highest state of music and is known as the 'state of transcendence' (*chan jing* 禅境). Similarly, invisible calligraphy embodies the very soul of the art. This is particularly evident in running script (*xingshu* 行书) and cursive script (*caoshu* 草书), where mastering the rhythm of writing creates an abstract aesthetic sense that mirrors the musicality of music itself. Learning calligraphy, like learning music, requires long-term training in physiological functions. While it may only take one to three minutes to complete a calligraphic work, the preparation involves decades of practice. Similar to a musician, who performs for ten minutes on stage but has spent ten years in preparation off-stage, performers must practice famous repertoire daily. Calligraphers must also replicate the works of ancient masters every day to cultivate a good writing feel, an immediate aesthetic sense, and accurate judgment in the writing process, enabling the works to be completed

2. The phrase "*The greatest sound is barely heard*" or "The most intense note is faint" (*da yin xi sheng* 大音希声) originates from Chapter 41 of the *The Book of the Dao and Its Virtue* (*Dao De Jing* 道德经). (Translator's Note)

in a short time within the limited space of the paper. Each expression is unique, and these differences and changes are the result of spontaneous decisions made in response to the situation. Achieving visual coherence and detail perfection in each piece, where the space and structure between each symbol or character are varied yet harmonious, is actually an incredibly difficult task. The same goes for ink painting. Different and unexpected changes will occur every time during the painting process. You need to make judgments at any time without affecting the smoothness of the painting.

The aesthetic principles of Chinese calligraphy are among the highest in visual arts. If an ink painter cannot master calligraphy well and absorb the aesthetic sensibilities and techniques it provides, they will not be able to become an exceptional artist. Calligraphy embodies abstract yet strict aesthetic rules. Every movement in ink painting, whether a dot, a line, or an ink wash, is governed by the principles of calligraphy. The perfection of tree branch lines, the spatial structure of specific types of bamboos, flowers, and stones all depend on the calligrapher's skill.

Another very special reason is the Xuan paper (*xuanzhi* 宣纸 , commonly known as rice paper) used for Chinese paintings. The material properties of Xuan paper impose specific requirements on the marks left by the brush. Without long-term familiarity and understanding of these properties, it is impossible to achieve high-quality brushwork and ink effects. Unlike oil painting, calligraphy and ink paintings cannot be repeatedly modified. The Chinese saying, "calligraphy and painting share a common origin" (*shu hua tong yuan* 书 画

同 源) indicates that both disciplines follow common rules in terms of aesthetic principles and the use of brushes and ink. However, calligraphy demands higher standards and is more challenging, as evidenced by works such as "Notes on Dunhuang Musical Notation System" (*Dunhuang qupu biji* 敦煌曲谱笔记), "Preface to the Dunhuang Musical Notation System" (*Duhuang qupu tiji* 敦煌曲谱题记), "Writing Music: Silent Melodies (Album Pages)" (*Xie yue – wu sheng zhi ge ceye* 写乐 • 无声之歌册页) and the inscribed rocks containing phrases from the "Orchid Pavilion Preface" (*Lanting xu* 兰亭序), created in 2019 for the exhibition "Luo Qi Writing Music" held in Bologna[3] and later reused during the exhibition's inaugural performance.

Sound Images

Calligraphy is not only an art of abstract lines; it also carries the connotations of words. Among the world's writing systems, only China still employs a picto-ideographic script. Different writing techniques and variations in symbol forms express different sounds. Among the most representative characters or phrases are those denoting 'good fortune' (*fu* 福), 'longevity' (*shou* 寿), 'happiness' (*xi* 喜), 'permanent happiness' (*chang le* 长乐), 'eternal life' (*qian qiu wan sui* 千秋万岁), and the recitation of Amitābha Buddha's the name (*namu Emituofo* 南无阿弥陀佛), etc. In fact, a single character can be rendered in hundreds of different ways, transforming it into a multitude of symbols. Each stroke of a Chinese character carries inherent cultural significance, symbolizing a specific concept or entity. For example, a vertical line (一) represents the beginning of

3. For this exhibition, see the catalogue: Iezzi 2020.

all things and also signifies ‘sky’. Since 1996, I have been exploring various forms and symbolic interpretations of the character for ‘good fortune’ (*fu* 福).

In 2014, I interwove the Sanskrit chants from the "Large Perfection of Wisdom Sutra" (Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra in Sanskrit; *Dabore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波罗蜜多经 in Chinese), featuring phrases such as Amitābha Buddha (*namu Emituofo* 南无阿弥陀佛), ‘good fortune’ (*fu* 福), ‘prosperity’ (*lu* 禄 ; also substituted by my family name *Luo* 洛 which is semi-homophonous) and ‘longevity’ (*shou* 寿), with the Indian Sanskrit "Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in 8,000 Lines" (*Baqian song ge* 八千颂歌). In doing so, I formed new works and symbolic forms, which are not only a visual language, but also a representation of the sound of words. The linguistic signs themselves carry no inherent meaning; rather, symbols, such as those meaning ‘Amitābha’, are continuously repeated and reiterated, creating a visual and musical rhythm. These endlessly reproduced symbols or the infinite cycle of writing symbolize the perpetual continuity of the sounds inherent in chanting sutras and Buddhist litanies.[4]

In 2023, I created eight new sign-based works for the “Sounds of Ink” (*Shuimo de shengyin* 水墨的声音) exhibition, exhibited in the public cloister of the International Museum of Music in Bologna and in Room 3 of the temporary exhibition area. These works function as symbols of music, visual images, and the new voice of ink—a contemporary convergence of

4. See the series “Sound of Ink – Silent Melodies” (*Mo yue – wu sheng zhi ge* 墨乐・无声之歌), exhibited in Bologna in 2019, and in the Room 1 of the exhibition at the International Museum and Library of Music in Bologna in 2023.

calligraphy, music, poetry, and imagery. Suspended in the public space of the museum, the "Images" (*tuxiang* 图像) float gracefully in the air, carried by natural breezes.

Conclusion

I have been working and creating artworks around the world for over 30 years, and I deeply believe that 'calligraphy' is the foundational language of all Chinese arts. Without it, I would lose its meaning. Chinese arts, whether in landscapes paintings (*shanshui* 山　水), flowers and birds paintings, or abstract brushworks, all sublimate nature. The aesthetics principles of these arts are all rooted in the natural poetry found within 'calligraphy'. The current exhibition "Sounds of Ink" brings together "the sounds of poetry, writing, and images". These visual writings convey the spiritual essence of Chinese art. Through 30 years of creation and research, I have manifested my "calligraphyism", editing 15 volumes of the series "Calligraphyism. A Series of Books"(*Shufazhuyi wenxian congshu* 书法主义文献丛书) and 50 issues of "The Western Garden Gathering, Archival Journal of the Calligraphyism"(*Xiyuan Yaji* 西园雅集).

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to all the professors who participated in the International Conference "Chinese Calligraphy and Music: Meeting of Voices". I especially want to thank the Director of the Museum of Music, Jenny Servino, and Professor Adriana Iezzi for their tremendous efforts in realizing the exhibition "Sound of Ink" and the International Conference. The presentation of the exhibition is truly remarkable, and I am deeply grateful to Adriana Iezzi for her work. She spent three years planning, thinking, and

阿德丽亚娜·叶星与洛齐在博洛尼亚大学图书馆　2019
Adriana Iezzi and Luo Qi at the Bologna University Library, 2019

working on this, and I feel incredibly honored to have had the opportunity to collaborate with her and receive her support. I would like to express my thanks to her once again. I also want to thank Professor Adriana Iezzi's team, including Daniele Caccin, Marta R. Bisceglia, and Martina Merenda for their assistance. A heartfelt thanks to calligrapher Silvio Ferragina, pianist Giusy Caruso, composer Zhang Zhenzhen, and dancer Agnese Gabrielli for their performance "Sound MAP" integrating calligraphy, music, and dance.

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3 号展厅　洛齐 声音的图像　2023
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