

Cheong Li
Alone With the Moon
and the Shadow
for Juice (vocal trio)

2012

Programme Notes

This piece is inspired by Li Po's poem, *Drinking Alone Under the Moon*. The poet is drinking alone with the moon and his shadow as his only companions. As he gets drunk, he invites them to drink and dance together. In this short piece of music theatre, the three singers take turns to be the poet, the moon and the shadow.

Notes for Performers

Three singers take turns to be the poet, the moon or the shadow.

1. The Poet

The poet is the person who initiates. Sing melodiously and elaborately.

- a. Experiment with any vowels: a, e, i, o, u, ü; single syllables: pa, bo, me, ku, lü and diphthongs: dou, mae, neo, quo, etc. Try changing the vowel by gradually changing the lip shape or the position of the tongue. Or try to speak a chain of fast changing syllables like a tongue twister.
- b. Use different intervals. Sing a melody that is smooth and moves stepwise, or sing a melody that leaps a lot.
- c. You can do some physical movements.
- d. When you have sung for a while, you can initiate an exchange of roles. You move towards the moon or move around the shadow to show that you want to be the next moon or the next shadow. Then the person who is the moon or the shadow take the middle position and becomes the next poet.

2. The Shadow

The shadow is the person who follows. When the poet does something, try to imitate, or act against her.

- a. Imitate the poet as closely as you can. You might be lagging behind, but follow what she does, in terms of singing and movement.
- b. Imitate, but at an interval above or below.
- c. Try to sing faster or slower than the poet. If the poet hasn't arrived at a cadence or an ending note yet, try to sing it before she does to annoy her.
- d. Later, you can start to sing something contrasting to what the poet does. For instance, if she sings legato, you sing staccato; if she sings a long note, you sing a series of short notes. You can also use your voice or your body to make some percussive sounds.
- e. Move closer to the poet when you are imitating. Move further away when you are not.

The following is a sample score as a starting point for you to experiment. You might like to learn it by heart, and then you can discard it and develop your own materials:

The musical score is written for two parts: Poet and Shadow. The Poet's part is on a treble clef staff, and the Shadow's part is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are in Pinyin.

First System:

Poet: fa → u → a gan yat wu ja - u

Shadow: fa → u → a gan yat wu ja - u

Second System:

Poet: duk joek mo seung chen goey bui yiu ming yuet

Shadow: duk joek mo seung chen goey bui yiu ming

Third System:

Poet: duk joek mo saam yen

Shadow: yuet dui ying sing saam yen

3. The Moon

You can keep silent at some times, or you can sing a long note as drone.

- You can sing a drone at a low pitch like a bass line to the poet and the shadow, or you can hold a pitch high above. It can also be the pitch with which the poet starts a phrase, or the pitch of the ending note of a phrase.
- When you are bored with singing the long drone, you can either stop singing for a while, change to another pitch, or elaborate on the drone by adding grace notes, trills and turns. Ornaments can be added at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the drone. You can also sing the drone as a succession of staccato short notes on the same pitch.

Some suggestions of how to add ornaments to the drone:

The musical score shows a single staff with a drone line. The lyrics are in Pinyin.

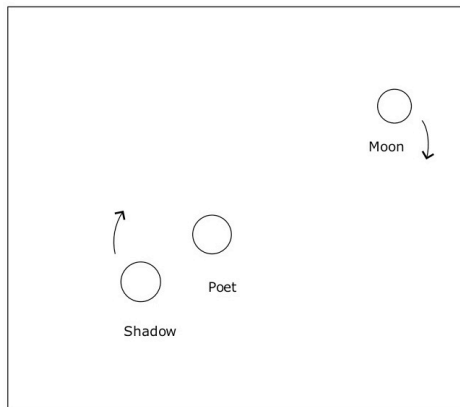
u o → u rr shi → e ta - te - ti - to - ta - te - ti - to - tu

About stage movements

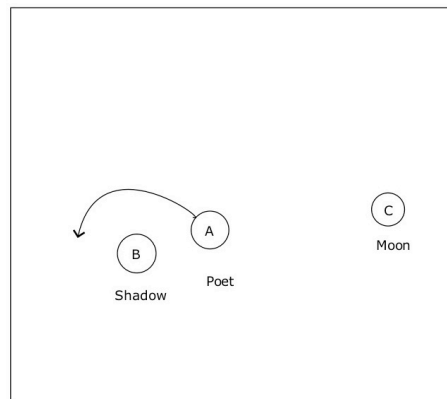
The person who stands at centre stage is the poet. The person who acts as the moon should be furthest away from the poet. The person who acts as the shadow should stand next to the poet.

The moon moves slowly around the stage. When the moon moves clockwise, the shadow also moves clockwise. If the moon moves anti-clockwise, the shadow also moves anticlockwise. The three persons should always be in a line, so that the poet is in between the moon and the shadow.

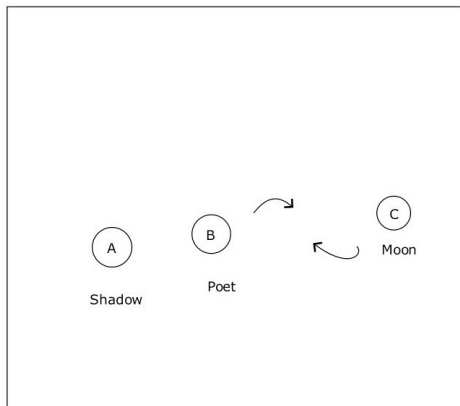
1. At first, poet is in the centre, with the shadow besides her. Moon is at the other side, a bit further away



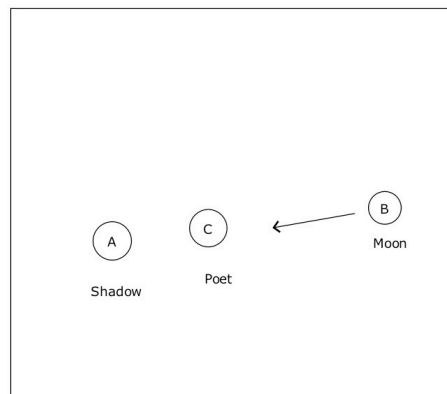
2. If the poet (A) move around to the other side of the shadow, that means the shadow (B) will be in the center, and she becomes the poet.



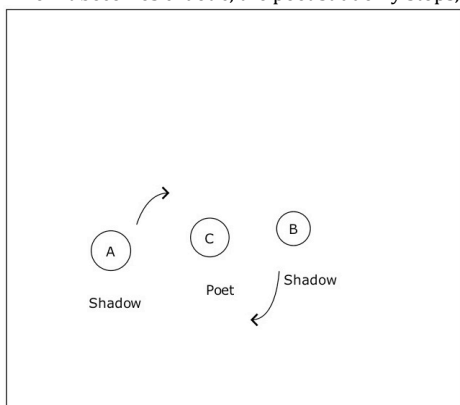
3. Now (B) is the poet. If (B) moves around to the other side of the Moon (C), (B) becomes the moon. And (C) moves to the center and becomes the poet.



4. If the moon (B) feels that the piece should end, she moves towards the poet in the center, and she becomes the 2nd shadow.



5. Near the end, the two shadows are very close to the poet and move around her quickly. Sing quickly as well. When it becomes chaotic, the poet suddenly stops, falls to the ground, and the piece ends.



The Ending of the Piece

The moon is the person who give signal to end the piece. Give the signal by starting to imitate the poet's singing and move towards him/her. That means you become the second shadow. When the other two singers notice that the moon has become another shadow, try to sing more loudly, quickly, and move faster as well, until the audience cannot recognize who is the poet, the shadow or the moon. When the situation becomes too chaotic, the poet suddenly stops and falls to the ground. The moon and the shadow stare at the drunken poet. Silence.