

Jason Kao Hwang burning bridge

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Taylor Ho Bynum
Joseph Daley
Ken Filiano
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Steve Swell
Wang Guowei

innova 840

BURNING BRIDGE

JASON KAO HWANG



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Jason Kao Hwang - composer, violin
Taylor Ho Bynum - cornet/flugelhorn
Joseph Daley - tuba
Andrew Drury - drum set
Ken Filiano - string bass
Sun Li - pipa
Steve Swell - trombone
Wang Guowei - erhu

(1) Ashes, Essence (21:59)
(2) Worship, Whirling (13:35)
(3) Flery, Far Away (10:40)
(4) Inense, Inense (16:44)
(5) Ocean, O Sun (15:55)
[78:56]



Burning Bridge was composed upon a Burning Bridge. The nature of this music consumes temporal illusions while enveloping the concurrence of life and death. On this Burning Bridge, the tinder of history and culture feed flames that vibrate within the core of both instinct and identity. The fire, often ignored, has always existed, with bridges burning each moment of our ever-changing lives.

Bridges burn between the various traditions of each instrument - Chinese, Jazz and Classical - to forge a single musical voice resonant with distinct cultural overtones. With the poetic complexities inherent to this sound, this music possesses all the attributes of any human being. Burning Bridge is the experience, not the representation.

The macro conditions set by this jazz composition will cultivate many micro discoveries of sound and phrase. Both differences and commonalities between jazz and traditional Chinese musicians will be embraced as bridges burn. At first, the novelty of Chinese sounds will appear graphic, indelible and dominant. For example, when hearing a plucked unison note between the pipa and string bass, the pipa initially dominates. But as the music progresses and bridges burn, spectacle sensations diminish to a sotto voce, and a democracy of sounds emerge and flourish within a vibrant dialogue.

Burning Bridge utilizes the distinct emotional territories produced by the process of notation and improvisation. Each modality possesses a distinct energy that can be either blurred into a single flow or made distinct. The interplay of modalities also

offers a compositional dynamic between the jazz musician's personal voice and the overarching narrative. With bridges afire, the infinite permutations between improvisation and notation, the individual and collective, are architecturally sequenced to conjure a narrative landscape through which the listener will journey and imagine. While though the sonic physiology is complex, the actual living music is experienced simply.

In 2009, my mother passed away and my reflections upon her life flowed into the music. The opening motif was based upon her speech patterns for a Chinese proverb she had repeated to me many times during my childhood. Another motif is based upon the memory of a hymn we sang in the Presbyterian Church. Later, I learned that my recalled rendering was close to the hymn "Doxology." I chose to preserve my remembrance.

My first band was called Commitment, a collective quartet of the jazz loft era. In 2010, "Commitment, The Complete Recordings, 1981/1983" was released as a double-CD and LP by the Lithuanian label, No Business. This new release includes the 1983 performance of my composition, "Ocean," at the Movers Festival in Germany. For the music and the memories residing therein, I incorporated "Ocean" into the fifth and concluding movement of **Burning Bridge**.

Burning Bridge sets afire the boundaries of our aesthetic sensibilities, cultural assumptions, instrumental technique and my personal history. Burning Bridge is a meta-language that is both the vehicle and essence of this music.

— Jason Kao Hwang



Photos (above, L-R)

- Jason Kao Hwang at the Vision Festival.
- His maternal grandmother, Zhao Feizhang.
- The engagement photo of Jason's parents, Dr. Kao Hwang and Mrs. Sheila Hwang.
- His great-great-grandfather, Hwang Nan Pao, a high ranking military officer who served the Qing Dynasty during the Taiping Rebellion.

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All compositions by Jason Kao Hwang.
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Assistant Engineer: Kyle Cassel
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Dedicated in Loving Memory to my Mother, Sheila Hwang, 1918-2009