



# **The Guzheng Playing Guidebook of “Rushi” Piece at Lanzhou No.1 Middle School, Gansu Province, The People’s Republic of China**

Xu Hanjuan\*

Pranote Meeson

\* Master’s degree students Faculty  
of Music Bangkok Thonburi University

meesonp@hotmail.com

phone number 0817508565

Received : August 20, 2024

Revised : September 25, 2024

Accepted : November 7 , 2024

---

\* Corresponding author

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study Guzheng playing techniques for the “Rushi” piece; and 2) to construct a Guzheng guidebook for the “Rushi” piece. This research employed a quantitative approach, and the main research instruments were interview forms and the developed guidebook. After interviewing and communicating with three experts, the concept of producing an effective practice guidebook for the Guzheng piece “Rushi” became clear. The revised instruction book offers the following benefits for Guzheng learners: 1. increased focus on technical practice, including vibrato, up and down glissando, left-hand techniques, and right-hand techniques; and 2. improved quality of Guzheng teaching. Therefore, this instructional guidebook is highly suitable and effective for Guzheng learners.

### Keywords :

Guzheng, Rushi piece, Guzheng guidebook, Technique practice

## ● INTRODUCTION

The Guzheng is a traditional Chinese musical instrument with a long history of several thousand years. It is one of the most important national musical instruments in People's Republic of China's history, and its earliest appearance can be traced back to the Warring States period more than 2,000 years ago (Huang Xiaoman;1999). In the course of its development over the millennium, the Guzheng has continuously integrated different musical and cultural elements from different regions and formed different styles and schools in the course of its development, including the Henan zheng school, the Shaanxi zheng school and the Shandong zheng school (Li Wenjie,2014). Nowadays, in the process of development and creation, Guzheng pieces are more and more bold to break the boundaries of tradition and borrow many excellent western composition techniques. As a result, the subsequent Guzheng compositions not only retain the excellent traditional Chinese music culture, but also have western concerto composing techniques. As a result, the modern Guzheng works are not only challenging and difficult to perform, but also bring out the unique flavor and accent of Guzheng music (Zhong Xiaofang,2018).

It is in this trend that this Guzheng piece “Ru Shi” was born. The Guzheng concerto “Rushi” is a purely instrumental concerto work composed and adapted by young Guzheng player Ms. Su Chang and commissioned by composer Ms. Wang Danhong and is based on the background music composed by (Cui Yingying, 2009).

Wang Danhong for the movie “Liu Rushi”, which was released on March 8, 2012. I was deeply impressed by this work during my performance. The work demonstrates the composer’s exquisite and personal compositional technique. The composer perfectly combines the Guzheng with the orchestra and the piano concerto. The performance of the work gives the performer a very wide space to play and at the same time gives the listener a very rich acoustic tension. The work is performed with the delicacy and refinement of the traditional Guzheng and the emotional outburst of the modern Guzheng piece, bringing out the modern compositional style of the Guzheng concerto (Li Manting,2018). The author chose to perform this piece in a graduate student concert. During my daily study, I found that only by analyzing this piece more deeply could I better combine it with my performance and grasp the expressive tension of the music. The researcher believes that the analysis of this kind of Guzheng concerto will be helpful for the future study and for the mastery of the style and technique.

### ● Purpose of the study

1. To study Guzheng playing technique on “Rushi” piece;
2. To construct guidebook for Guzheng playing technique on “Rushi” piece.

### ● Research Questions

1. How to learn most of the Guzheng playing skills by practicing Guzheng songs “Rushi”?
2. How to improve students’ musicianship by learning the Guzheng piece “Rushi”?

### ● Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research method.

### ● Research procedure

Interviews : Interviews with experts included the following. “Advantages of Rushi”, Performance Techniques, Acting methods, Training content, Practice gains.

### ● Scope of the Study

1. Scope of place:  
Lanzhou No. 1 Middle School, Gansu Province, People’s Republic of People’s Republ
2. Key informant 3 Key informants are three experts.  
The criteria for three experts are 1) to be experts in Guzheng performance; 2) to have graduated from a famous music college or art college; 3) to have no less than 10 years of experience in Guzheng. performance and teaching

The three experts were as follows:

1. Fang Linlin, Xi’ an conservatory of Music 12 Years of Guzheng teaching experience

2. Meng, Shenyang Conservatory of Music, 14 Years of Guzheng teaching experience

3. Li Xiuyu, Shenyang Conservatory of Music 18 Years of Guzheng teaching experience

## ● **Definitions of Specific Terminology**

### **Guzheng :**

Guzheng also known as Han zheng and Qin zheng, is an ancient folk instrument, of the Han people and is popular throughout People’s Republic of China After. thousands of years of development, it has formed four major schools, namely Hakka zheng, Chaozhou zheng, Shandong zheng and Henan zhen.

### **Rushi :**

The Guzheng” Concerto Rushi was originally composed by Ms. Wang Danhong “ and later invited by young performer Su Chang as the theme song of the movie “Liu Rushi which was adapted from “Liu,”Rushis other biography” by Chinese scholar ‘ Chen Yinke. The main character of the film, LiuRushiis the subject of the song, which, tells the story of his literati mentality in the context of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, where he is in a youthful house but cares about family and national affairs, as well as those choices, struggles and sorrows of love, hate and life and death. While exploring and displaying the traditional charm of the Guzheng, Rush explores the sedimentation of traditional culture in the mind and shows the pure and pure world of the mind.

### ● Conceptual framework

To study the production of “Rushi” technique guidebook for Guzheng music.

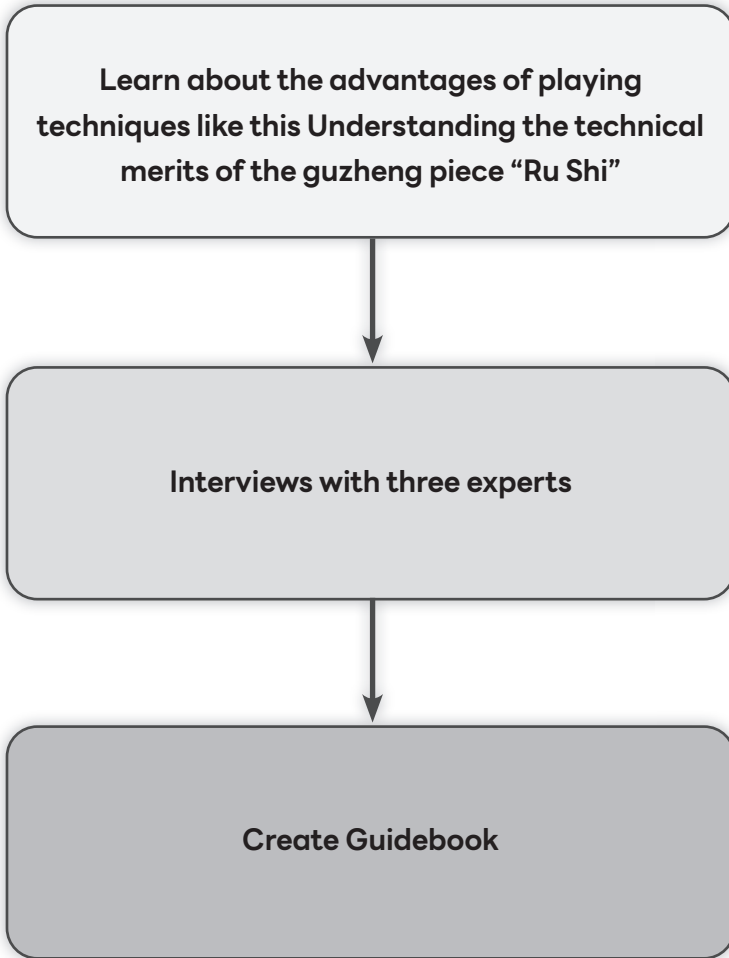


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

## ● Research Findings

### Structure of Guzheng

The structure of the Guzheng consists of the top panel, goose pillar, strings, front back yakuza, side panel, sound outlet, bottom, yakuza, string pegs, tuning box, foot panel and string piercing hole. The shape is rectangular wooden speaker, and the string frame “zhengzhu” (i.e., the wild goose column) can be moved freely, and one string is arranged in a pentatonic scale.

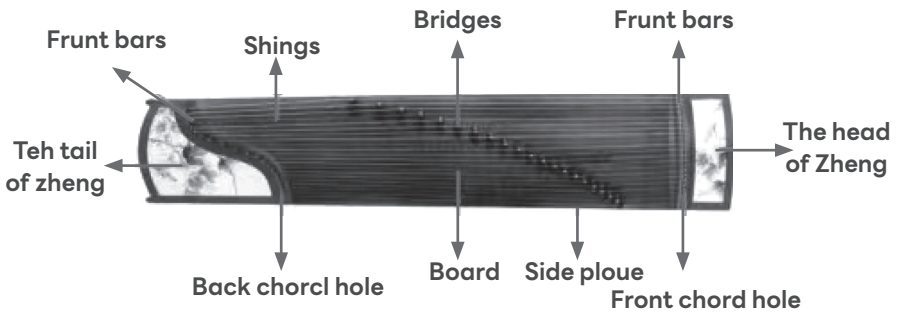


Figure 1: Guzheng structure

Source: <https://image.baidu.com>

Top Plate Base Plate Guzheng Head Guzheng Edge Guzheng Tail. Guzheng is a plucked instrument with many strings and columns. Its shape is similar to that of a long box, with a slight protrusion in the middle and a flat or nearly flat base plate. The head of the Guzheng has the feet of the guzheng that fall in steps. The strings of the Guzheng are placed on the panel of the wooden box. Under each string, the yard is placed; the yard can be moved



from side to side to adjust the pitch .and sound quality. There are different kinds of Guzheng and the structure of Guzheng.is different. The Guzheng is mainly composed of the top, the bottom, the side, the head, the tail, the yuezan, the code, the nails, the sound hole, and the strings of Guzheng The quality of the Guzheng depends on the quality of the materials and the production. process of each part.

### ● Basics of Guzheng Playing

The basic teaching of the Gushing’s the cornerstone of all technique good start is half of success, and teaching and learning the Gushing’s systematic and gradual process. It plays the role of a “foundation. It plays the role of a. in”. It is not only to teach learners the basic fingering of the-a “foundation” and a “lead Guzheng efficient but also to form good playing habits and to master scientific and, playing methods. Only by firmly grasping the principles of standardized, systematic and scientific practice during the initiation stage can we guide the learners more effectively in their future development at a higher level of study. Although simple: repertoire is used in the initiation stage, a standardized Guzheng teaching must be based on the three aspects of music understanding, music appreciation, and music and, performance, so that the learners’ musicality and visual ability can be cultivated their aural and psychological qualities can be exercised and improved. The rhythm, pitch, tone, intensity, and other basic elements should not be lowered because the

learner is in the beginning stage. On the contrary, the beginners should be able to clarify the basic elements of music and try to cultivate comprehensive musical qualities in order to avoid teaching out robots who only play mechanically. The Guzheng is mainly played with the right hand and the left hand, alternating between one and two hands. The right hand uses the big, index, middle and ring fingers to control the rhythm and the intensity of the notes. The left hand is used to vibrate and press the strings, with the index, middle and ring fingers on the strings and the little and big fingers up. There are three types of postures for playing the zither: vertical, pan, road and sitting, and most of the time we use the sitting posture. Sitting posture: The legs are naturally separated, the feet are one in front and one behind, the upper is naturally upright, the arms are naturally relaxed, the palms of the hands are body stretched on the cover of the zither, the head is slightly overlooked, the posture is natural and generous. The hand shape of playing the zither: When playing the zither, hand shape should be naturally relaxed, just like the natural relaxed state of the two the hands when we stand. When playing, the big fingers are slightly open and the fingers are slightly bent, showing a tiger's paw. This relaxed natural hand shape should be carried into the playing process, and is also the basic shape of the left hand for pressing and plucking the strings. The position of the suppressed strings: Rhythm is one of the characteristics of the zheng. The best position for string suppression is about 16 cm from the left side of the column, depending on the tension of the string and the

degree of stretching of the left hand. If it is too far from the post, the tension of the string will be too far from the post, the be too high and the string will be too tight to press; if it is string will be too soft and the tension of the suppressed string will be much less. Avoid stretching your left hand too far, so that the playing becomes unnatural and the suppressed strings may touch the panel and leave nail marks on the panel, which is caused by the improper position of the suppressed strings. Therefore, we should pay attention to the position of the left hand string suppression in the usual basic training, so that the left hand can be fully expressed. The strings are played in the same way: they are divided into the strings of the fingers: the fingers are naturally relaxed, the strings are played with the second joint, and then they are quickly relaxed to prepare with the finger and the index finger at for the next strings. The big handfuls are played the same time, and the sound should be the same. The small pinch is made by combining the big finger and the index finger. When playing, the two fingers should be slightly staggered to avoid the sound of nails colliding. The arpeggio is like a broken chord on the piano, sometimes with one hand, sometimes with both hands, with the fingers on the string to be played, and then plucking the string accordingly, with a smooth sound. The pizzicato, generally speaking, is played with the index finger of the left and right hand. When playing, the hands are brought together and the fingers are alternately plucked to produce the even sound of a clock ticking, keeping in mind that when playing, one cannot jump with both

hands, but must be smooth. Scraping, and flower finger is very different, the music requires the left and right hand to exchange. scraping, or scraping in the left side of the code, depending on the needs of the music.

## ● Conclusion

### Guzheng playing technique on “Rushi” piece

Through the interviews with the three experts, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) Ru Yi covers all the techniques of Guzheng playing, so one can master the Guzheng playing skills by practicing Ru Yi; (2) Besides the basic playing skills, one needs to feel the rhythm and playing speed, and the passages of Ru Yi are richly layered and played at different speeds, which is suitable for students to master the Guzheng playing at the advanced stage. (3) “Rushi” can help students master the bridge in the repertoire. The bridge plays a transitional role, which can make the piece more pleasing to the ear and can improve the students’ musical aesthetic quality.

Construction of guidebook for Guzheng playing technique on “Rushi” piece.

The preparation of this guidebook follows the principle of simplicity to difficulty. First of all, it introduces the motivation of the composition of the piece and understands the basic learning elements of the piece; secondly, it analyzes the piece and understands the composition of the piece and the content of the passage, so that students can have a deeper understanding of the

piece they are learning. Finally, the training is carried out from simple to difficult according to the technique of Guzheng playing, from the left hand technique training to the technique training of both hands.

Guide book play a crucial role in education by providing students with opportunities to reinforce their learning and develop their skills. While there are some challenges associated with their use, the benefits of practice books, particularly in terms of their effectiveness and adaptability, make them an indispensable tool in the modern education landscape. As technology continues to evolve, it is essential for educators and researchers to explore new ways to optimize the design and implementation of practice books to maximize their potential for enhancing student learning outcomes.

## ● Discussion

Currently, most Chinese Guzheng practice books are composed of multiple pieces of music, while the author's practice book has only one practice piece. In contrast, using Rushi as an entire guidebook allows students to focus more on technique, since practicing Rushi is practicing Guzheng technique. This is in line with Zhang Wang (2001), in his article on Guzheng practice of a single piece. On the contrary, with a practice book consisting of multiple pieces, students tend to practice pieces that require different techniques, so the focus of students' learning changes from technique to repertoire, which often leads to a lack of solid basic skills. Guidebooks are used not only by students, but also

by most teachers. Teachers need to prepare different lesson plans for multiple pieces, which increases their workload, while using the author’s instruction manuals to master just one piece of “Rushi” allows them to have more energy to devote to teaching, thus significantly improving the quality of teaching. This is contrary to Liu Lu’s (2014) view in the article on simultaneous training of multiple Guzheng pieces.

## ● Recommendations

### General Recommendations

This guidebook can be used by teachers and students for a long time, mainly to mastering the basic skills of help students with their basic training. After Guzheng playing, students will be able to perform other Guzheng works better. The guidebook can help the students of Lanzhou No.1 Middle School to master the basic techniques of guzheng as soon as possible, while the excerpts are also very effective for individual technique practice.

### Academic Recommendations

Researchers can choose some other repertoire to supplement their teaching. Although “Rushi” covers most of the Guzheng playing techniques, some techniques appear less frequently in the repertoire and more practice pieces are needed to supplement the teaching. Since Rushi is a guzheng concerto with other instruments added, it is not considered optimal for listening training, and students will be influenced by other instruments, so more excerpts can be excerpted for listening training.

## Reference

- Chen, L. (2015). *The Art of Guzheng Performance: A Comparative Study of Traditional and Contemporary Techniques*. Journal of Music Education, 12(3), 45-60.
- Chen, X. (2014). *The Cultural Significance of Guzheng in Chinese Music Education*. Music Education Research, 16(4), 410-423.
- Chen, Y. (2019). *The Cultural Significance of Guzheng Techniques in Chinese Music Education*. Music Education Research, 21(4), 395-408.
- Chen, Z. (2016). *The Cultural Significance of Guzheng Performance in Chinese Music Education*. Music Education Research, 18(4), 380-393.
- Li, H. (2019). *The Pedagogical Implications of "Ru Shi" in Guzheng Education*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 67(1), 72-85.
- Li, X. (2017). *The Evolution of Guzheng Education in People's Republic of China*. Chinese Music, 40(2), 88-95.
- Li, Y. (2014). *The Pedagogical Implications of Guzheng Performance in Music Education*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 62(1), 52-65.
- Li, Z. (2017). *The Pedagogical Implications of Guzheng Techniques in Music Education*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 65(1), 62-75.

- Liu, J. (2019). *The Pedagogy of Guzheng: A Historical Perspective*. Journal of Historical Research in Music Education, 40(2), 142- 158.
- Liu, X. (2018). *The Impact of Guzheng Music on Emotional Development*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 66(4), 426-440.
- Liu, Y. (2017). *The Impact of Guzheng Education on Emotional Development*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 65(4), 456-470.
- Liu, Z. (2014). *The Impact of Guzheng Performance on Emotional Development*. Journal of Research in Music Education, 62(4), 436-450.

