



Composer Lyu Qiming responds to a curtain call at a concert featuring his works. ZU ZHONGREN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Veteran composer recognized for revolutionary composition

Singing the nation’s glories has been 91-year-old musician’s lifelong quest

By CHEN NAN
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Lyu Qiming vividly remembers the day in 1965 when he was commissioned to compose the *Ode to the Red Flag*.

A young composer at the Shanghai Film Studio at the time, the then 35-year-old Lyu had risen to fame for the soundtrack he’d composed for the popular Chinese movie, *The Railway Guerrillas*, just under a decade earlier in 1956.

Ode to the Red Flag was the name chosen for the piece by well-known conductor Huang Yijun (1915-95) and was due to be premiered during the 1965 Shanghai Spring festival, China’s longest lived music festival, which was founded in 1960 and later renamed the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival.

“It was a huge and challenging task for me then. I spent months working on it,” recalled the now 91-year-old Lyu. “*Ode to the Red Flag* portrays the exciting scene when the national flag was first raised on Tian’anmen Square during the founding of the country in 1949. Many people sacrificed their lives for that to happen and the piece pays tribute to the revolutionary martyrs.”

Lyu borrowed musical elements from China’s national anthem, *March of the Volunteers*, which was composed by Nie Er, with lyrics by poet Tian Han. He also included elements of Chinese folk songs.

In May 1965, *Ode to the Red Flag*, conducted by Chen Chuanxi (1916-2012), was performed by three Shanghai-based symphony orches-



PATH TO GLORY
PROFILE

tras at the opening ceremony of the 6th Shanghai Spring festival — the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, the Shanghai Film Orchestra and the Shanghai Wind Ensemble.

The composition won wide applause at its premiere and has continued to do so ever since. *Ode to the Red Flag* has been adapted on multiple occasions and has been performed by Chinese symphony orchestras around the world, receiving a warm response from audiences of different generations.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, Lyu, who became a Party member in 1945 at age 15, was awarded the July 1 Medal, the highest honor given by the CPC Central Committee. It’s the first time that the medal is being awarded to outstanding Party members and is part of this year’s centenary celebrations.

As is *Ode to the Red Flag*. This year, the piece has been revived by a number of Chinese symphony orchestras to mark the centenary.

During a concert on April 29 at the Shangyin Opera House for the 37th Shanghai Spring International Music Festival, it was performed by the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Zhang Yi. The concert featured several of Lyu’s classic pieces.

At the end of the concert, Lyu came on stage and spoke excitedly to the audience. “My work is inspired by the country’s achieve-

ments and development, as well as by the Chinese people, who work hard to contribute to the country. I am proud that my compositions are well-received by audiences of different ages. The greatest wish of any composer is for their music to be enjoyed by as many listeners as possible, and the longevity of a piece matters most,” he said. “I am glad that *Ode to the Red Flag* is one such piece.”

Born in Wuwei county in Anhui province, Lyu had a tough childhood. He lived with his family and anti-Japanese troops at the New Fourth Army base in southern Anhui.

His father, Lyu Huisheng, who was a Party member, was arrested and killed by the Japanese in 1945 at age 43. *Ode to the Red Flag* also expresses Lyu’s love for his father.

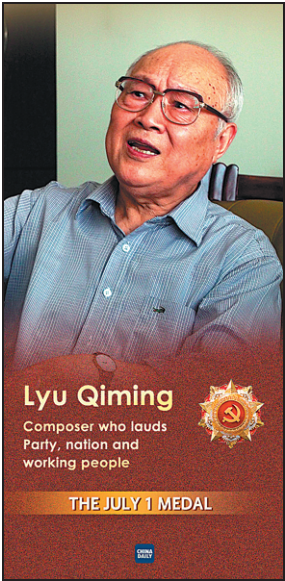
At the age 12, he met He Luting (1903-91), a musician who encouraged him to learn the violin. After joining the Party, Lyu performed in the military art troupe.

He arrived in Shanghai along with the army the day before the city was liberated on May 27, 1949, and has lived there since.

In 1949, he became a violinist at the Shanghai Film Studio, and in 1951, he started to compose.

Many of his pieces feature in movie soundtracks and are patriotic and revolutionary. Between 1959 and 1964, Lyu studied composition and conducting at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

The productive composer has written music for 200 movies and TV dramas, among them *Sentinel Under the Neon Lights* (1964), *Romance on Lushan Mountain*



(1980), and *Jiao Yulu* (1990). One of his most famous compositions is a song entitled *Playing My Beloved Pipa*, which was made famous by the 1956 movie, *The Railway Guerrillas*.

The song, which riffs on the folk songs of Shandong province, reflects the optimism and positive spirits of soldiers during a time of war.

“I’ve seen with my own eyes those lovely soldiers who, despite their struggles, were full of passion and confidence,” the composer said.

He retired in 1990, but not even that has slowed him down.

In 1997, Lyu was commissioned to compose music for the Yuhuatai Scenic Area in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, which is known for tourist attractions that preserve the stories of the revolutionary martyrs. The 60-minute composition, which is divided into 15 chapters, has been played at Yuhuatai since 1999.

When the novel coronavirus hit last year, Lyu wrote a new piece entitled *Caprice Norman Bethune in the Jin-Cha-Ji Base Area*, which was based on the soundtrack he composed for the 1965 movie about a well-known Canadian thoracic surgeon who served as a doctor for the Chinese guerrilla army during World War II. He dedicated the new composition to medical workers fighting against the pandemic worldwide.

“I wrote many pieces for movies, which enabled me to tell stories through music. Music is a great way of doing that, and a way to deliver messages directly to the heart. The stories I tell with my work are about the country and its people, which I am proud of,” he said.

Hainan mulls negative list to attract overseas talent to free trade port

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China’s Hainan province is considering implementing a new short negative list management model — this time for foreign work permits — in a move to attract talent from around the world to Hainan, provincial Governor Feng Fei said.

In general, China’s negative list includes industries that foreigners are not allowed to invest in.

The National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce jointly issued a negative list for Hainan’s Free Trade Port on Dec 31 that was shorter than the national version in a bid to bring greater investment opportunities for foreign investors.

Hainan is now considering another model that would focus on industries that foreigners cannot obtain work permits for, and that list would also be short, allowing international talent more job opportunities on the island.

Feng said luring professional talent, especially overseas talent, is a core issue for the construction of the Hainan FTP. “Hainan is offering visa exemptions to citizens of 59 countries. We will further improve the level of facilitation and extend the length of the visa-free stay,” Feng said at a news conference outlining the newly released law for the Hainan FTP in Beijing on June 21.

On June 1, China released a master plan to build Hainan, its southern tropical island, into a world-class free trade port by the middle of the century.

On June 10, China passed a law making institutional arrangements for the construction of the FTP at the national legislative level. The law stipulates measures promoting trade, investment and environmental protection and enables market entities, especially foreign-invested companies, to enjoy more opportunities as it features a shortened negative list.

The law also stipulates visa and work permit facilitation for international talent, aiming to gather talent from around the world to Hainan.

Feng said Hainan will ensure overseas talent have a promising platform for development and easy access to work permits. “Hainan is exploring the implementation of negative list management of work permits for overseas individuals,” the governor said.

Regarding the certification of professional qualifications, Hainan is installing a one-way ratification list system for professional qualifications, he added.

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“A serious shortage of high-caliber professional talent is the biggest challenge in developing the Hainan Free Trade Port — especially the lack of high-end industrial professionals and businesspeople who are experts on international trade rules.”

Xia Feng, executive director of the Institute for Advanced Studies of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hainan University

cially the lack of high-end industrial professionals and businesspeople who are experts on international trade rules. Hainan is in urgent need of international experts with global vision and advanced management experience,” said Xia Feng, executive director of the Institute for Advanced Studies of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hainan University.

“The introduction of a negative list for work permits for overseas talent will be an innovative practice that will attract international professionals from various fields around the world to participate in the new business formats of the Hainan FTP,” Xia said.

The island province announced in April 2018 that it would attract 1 million skilled workers to help promote local development. To accomplish that, it has adopted measures to support free housing, child education, spousal employment, medical insurance and car purchases for topnotch personnel.

Fiaz Ahmad, a Pakistani post-doctoral researcher at Hainan University, said he is fully confident in Hainan’s development due to its abundant natural resources and the burgeoning FTP construction, which has created enormous opportunities for talented foreign personnel.

Ahmad said his research into the biochemical characteristics of algae and bacteria under heavy metal stress, and the tolerance of algae and bacteria to heavy metal ions under certain conditions, can be applied in multiple areas including environmental protection, which echoes the development trends of Hainan’s science and technology sector.

Shandong launches hydrogen truck fleet to reduce carbon emissions

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Shandong province launched its first hydrogen-powered intercity vehicle network at the end of last month as 170 cold-chain and slag trucks took to the roads.

The vehicles traveled between the eastern city of Qingdao and Linyi city in the west, and are expected to help reduce the province’s overall carbon dioxide emissions by 20,000 metric tons a year, according to the operating team at the Qingdao International Academician Park.

Located in Qingdao’s Licang district, the QIAP invites high-end talent from around the world to carry out cutting-edge scientific research, including hydrogen-oriented projects and startups, and helps find commercial applications for their research.

One startup incubated at QIAP, the Qingdao Dexian New Energy Automobile Manufacturing, is involved in the manufacture of

hydrogen-powered vehicles. According to Cao Bin, the company’s general manager, their hydrogen-powered logistics vehicle has a range of up to 450 kilometers and can be filled up in five minutes. “Hydrogen-powered vehicles are quick to refuel, and their high-density energy source is suitable for long-distance transportation,” he said.

“They perform better than electric vehicles in terms of charging speed and battery life.”

In order to boost the hydrogen sector, the QIAP has established an innovation center in partnership with renowned domestic universities, including Tongji, Tsinghua, Jilin and Hunan. The aim is to build a top-notch research and development center to encourage the application of advances in science and technology.

Currently, the production of hydrogen fuel, hydrogen-powered battery systems and catalysts can be done on site.

The QIAP is poised to put 2,000 hydrogen-powered vehicles on the

road within three years in a bid to develop an e-commerce logistics network that will radiate out 600 kilometers from Linyi, and serve a population of 400 million.

The development of hydrogen-powered vehicles is being undertaken as a scientific and technological demonstration project but ultimately aims to encourage the use of hydrogen in the transportation sector and for industrial and public use.

Such a result would represent a major step toward reducing the province’s carbon dioxide emissions.

According to data, Shandong faces a challenge in that regard. It was responsible for a total of 950 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2019, the highest figure among the country’s provincial-level areas.

“Shandong is a major center for the chemical industry and already produces 2.6 million tons of hydrogen every year, mostly as a byproduct,” said Zhao Nannan, an official in charge of new and



Hydrogen-powered vehicles made by the Qingdao Dexian New Energy Automobile Manufacturing are parked at the Qingdao International Academician Park. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

renewable energy at the province’s Energy Administration. She added that the wide-scale use of hydrogen would be an advantage for the province financially.

Zhao said that Shandong has the

country’s largest photovoltaic power facility and fourth-largest wind power capacity, and accelerated efforts are being made to develop nuclear power, all activities conducive to eco-friendly

hydrogen production. The development of the hydrogen sector will help the province considerably as it reshuffles its industrial structure and seeks new avenues of growth, Zhao added.