

**Dinos Constantinides**

**China I - Shanghai**  
*Songs of Departure*

LRC 130a

The Composer's Library

## China Quartet

China I - Shanghai  
China II - Beijing  
China III - Guangzhou  
China IV - Shenzhen

This cycle is meant to project the inner thoughts and impressions of the composer during his April 1990 visit to four cities in China. He was deeply moved by the kindness, hospitality, and intelligence of the people he was fortunate to meet, and also fascinated with the juxtaposition of the old and new.

"A famous American conductor-composer-violinist, Dinos Constantinides, presented to Shenzhen audiences his music [Shenzhen Symphony Concert, 1990]. ...rich in content music...warm applause burst from every corner of the hall."

-*Shenzhen Special Zone Daily*, People's Republic of China

---

## China I - Shanghai, Songs of Departure (1991)

### LRC 130a

ca. 15:00

Poetry: Li Po

1. Prelude and Separation of the River Kiang
2. Taking Leave of a Friend
3. Leave-taking near Shoku
4. The City of Choan

Like all compositions in the China Quartet cycle, *China I - Shanghai* does not employ any Chinese scales or idioms. It portrays the people from the composer's point of view. Written for soprano, bassoon, and string orchestra, the work is a setting of four poems by the great Chinese poet Li Po. It suggests the various human emotions involved when departures take place under several different circumstances. The composer's endeavor was to highlight these emotions by the use of leit motifs, word painting, contrasting thematic material, and sudden harmonic changes.

### Four Poems of Departure

*Light rain is on the light dust.  
The willows of the inn-yard  
Will be going greener and greener,  
But you, Sir, had better take wine ere your  
departure  
For you will have no friends about you  
When you come to the gates of Go.*

### Separation of the River Kiang

KO-JIN goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,  
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the  
river.  
His lone sail blots the far sky.  
And now I see only the river,  
The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

### Taking Leave of a Friend

BLUE mountains to the north of the walls,  
White river winding about them;  
Here we must make separation  
And go out through a thousand miles of  
dead  
grass.  
Mind like a floating wide cloud.  
Sunset like the parting of old acquaintances  
Who bow over their clasped hands at a  
distance.  
Our horses neigh to each other  
as we are departing.

### Leave-taking near Shoku

*"Sanso, King of Shoku, built roads"*

THEY say the roads of Sanso are steep,  
Sheer as the mountains.  
The walls rise in a man's face,  
Clouds grow out of the hill  
at his horse's bridle.  
Sweet trees are on the paved way of Shin,  
Their trunks burst through the paving,  
And freshets are bursting their ice  
in the midst of Shoku, a proud city.  
Men's fates are already set,  
There is no need of asking diviners.

### The City of Choan

THE phoenix are at play on their terrace.  
The phoenix are gone, the river flows on  
alone.  
Flowers and grass  
Cover over the dark path  
where lay the dynastic house of the Go.  
The bright cloths and bright caps of Shin  
Are now the base of old hills.  
The Three Mountains fall though the far  
heaven,  
The isle of White Heron  
splits the two streams apart.  
Now the high clouds cover the sun  
And I can not see Choan afar  
And I am sad.