

THE JOAN SUTHERLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE



PRESENTS

Shy Like Blushing Flowers— **Create NSW Development**



Leading Australian & Hong Kong Musicians
With Experimental Film, Composition & Sound Design
In a Contemporary Re-envisioning of Chinese opera



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the Joan

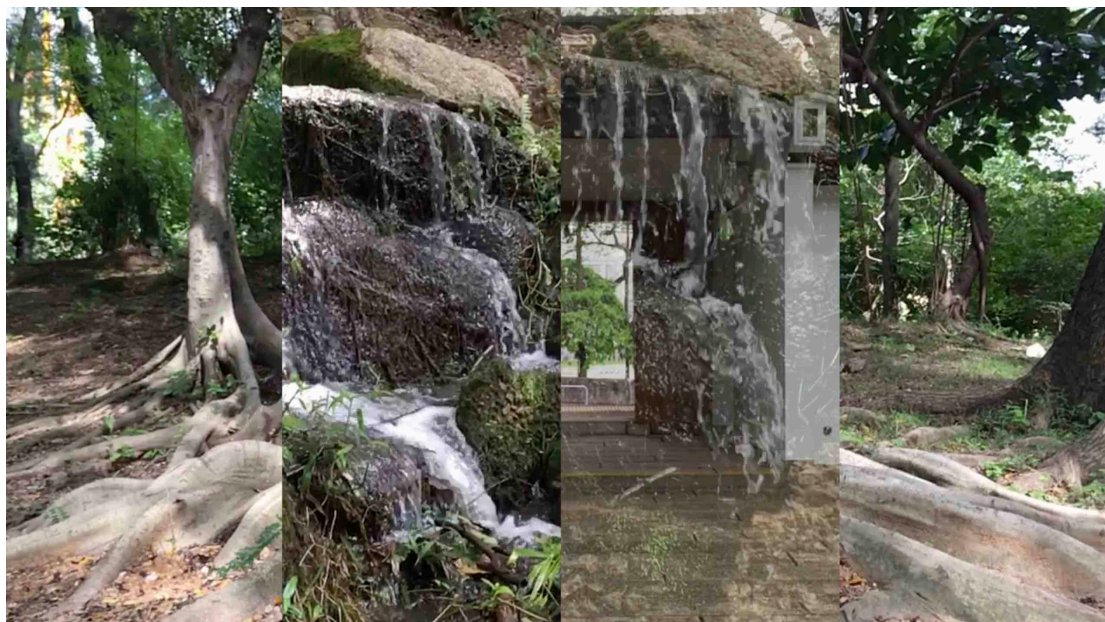
Shy like Blushing Flowers Music-Theatre Project
The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Q Theatre in Penrith
3-4pm on 11 October 2017



“His discerning blend of East and West creates an intriguing, kaleidoscopic sonic world, one that carries a strong emotional impact...” (The Music Trust, Australia)

“something spaciouly Asian but with an effectively communicative vocabulary of Western new music...Crossman is a real force” (GappleGate Classical-Modern Music Review, USA)

INTERCULTURAL MUSIC-THEATRE



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***Shy Like Blushing Flowers—* Create NSW Development**

The CreateNSW Development of *Shy like Blushing Flowers* at
The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Q Theatre in Penrith
3-4pm on 11 October 2017

CONCEPTUALIZATION

This music-theatre work—*Shy Like Blushing Flowers*—is a collaboration between Australian artists Bruce Crossman (composer/musical director), Simon Killalea (video artist), Ian Stevenson (sound diffusion/design) with performers Anna Fraser (mezzo-soprano), Claire Edwardes (percussion) and international collaborator Linda Yim (piano) from the renowned Hong Kong New Music Ensemble (HKNME). The springboard for this work is the text of Tang Xianzu's Chinese opera "Peony Pavillion," with hints of the Judeo-Biblical text "Song of Songs" and Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra". From distinctively diverse cultures, these works appeared at both juxtapositional and similar times (1598 and 1606 respectively) and correlate thematically, exploring love permitted to exist as dream merged with reality, and the subsequent temporal/spatial separation of lovers (human and spiritual) and connection to Daoist "dao" and Christian "spirit." The central protagonists from these classical works, the vivacious unmarried female and high status queen, are reinterpreted as a single persona in an intercultural fusion of gritty tension with poetic lushness, bringing about a deepening mutual understanding of Australian/Chinese cultures towards a contemporary Asian-Pacific artistic identity. Its multicultural nature aims to directly synergize English and Mandarin sounds as both a form of communication and as delicate and vigorous sound patterns within a Confucian living-colour aesthetic in music-theatre.

PERFORMERS



Anna Fraser – soprano

Anna has gained an enviable reputation as a versatile soprano specialising predominantly in the interpretation of early and contemporary repertoire. Anna has been singing as a permanent member of the Song Company since 2007. She has also performed extensively with a number of Sydney's professional ensembles: most recently with Sydney Chamber Opera in their Sydney Festival productions of Dusapin's *Passion* (2016) and Finsterer's *Biographica* (2017), Pinchgut Opera with notable roles in *L'Orfeo*, *Dardanus*, *L'Ormino* and *Castor et Pollux*, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Cantillation, Ironwood, Halcyon and The Acacia Quartet.



Claire Edwardes – percussion

Claire (percussion) is an internationally renowned percussionist and artistic director of Sydney new music group, Ensemble Offspring. Career highlights include solo performances at the *Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival* and prizewinner as part of Duo Vertigo at the 2005 *International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition*. She won the 2016 *Art Music Award* for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual and was the 1999 *Young Performer of the Year*.



Linda Yim – piano

Linda is a core member of the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, one of the leading government funded arts institutions in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong New Music Ensemble (HKNME) was founded in 2008 to present contemporary music to Hong Kong audiences. It has been widely praised for its innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations with artists from different mediums. The HKNME has collaborated with organisations including Zuni Icosahedron and Guangdong Modern Dance Company.

PROGRAM NOTES

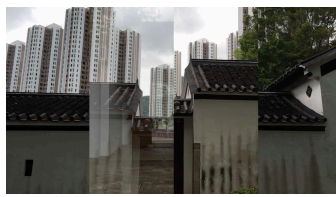
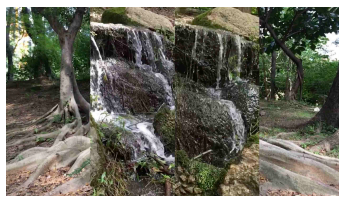
Shy Like Blushing Flowers Development:

- (1) Interlude 1: “Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love” (film);
- (2) Part 1: “Garden of Fire” (trio version; live/digital visuals);
- (3) Interlude 2: “Strange Invisible Perfume” (film)

Artists: Anna Fraser (mezzo-soprano), Claire Edwardes (percussion), Linda Yim (piano), Ian Stevenson (sound diffusion/design), Simon Killalea (video artist), Bruce Crossman (composer/ music director)

The *living colour* moment aesthetics of the Asia-Pacific and its calligraphical motion ideas applied to film are present in Crossman’s *Shy Like Blushing Flowers* music-theatre project. The development has two framing films as dream sequences—“Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love” and “Strange Invisible Perfume”—amidst which sits the live performance of “Garden of Fire.”

(1) Interlude 1: “Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love”



Film 1: Simon Killalea; Musicians: Michael Kieran Harvey (piano), Timothy Phillips (percussion); Recording: Ian Stevenson; Composition: Bruce Crossman; Text: translations Lindy Li Mark from the *Young Lovers’ Edition Peony Pavilion*, Tang Xianzu

In the first interlude, “Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love,” Killalea’s strong rooted tree images of Hong Kong with Picasso-like Cubist space of modern cityscapes, where emptiness and skyscrapers suggest intimate presence, is a reinterpretation of ancient Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu’s ‘clouding’ intimacy and sensual massive sonic bursts of sound with lingering metal delicacy of my own music. The ancient *Kunqu* tradition, following Daoist principles of the affinity of the artist with nature, suggests the erotic through the natural reverberance of spring energies and is reinterpreted by Simon Killalea as the gently pulsing presence of Hong Kong as a contemporary ‘sensual clouding’. The gentle flow of time through water becomes intimate as do the skyscraper slow movements yet they are peppered with the slow cruising humour of the passing car motion and musing.

“Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love” is inspired by the lucid English translation by Lindy Li Mark of the Chinese opera *Kunqu* classic, *Peony Pavilion*; its subtle evocation of the fragility and awakening of love found fragile and sonorous musical responses. The work awakens with fragile timbres of lingering metal responses and stopped-piano sounds gently awaken to lush Kunqu-based sonorities, before erupting to climactic jazzy extemporization-like piano sounds interwoven with Filipino Kulintang gong-chimes and soft skin-sounds of drumming patterns. After the euphoria of the climactic moments, stillness returns in transient and distilled chordal sounds as a type of breath in the structure—as if suggesting lovers’ tender moments—before erupting again to the main climax, but this time with free mobile sections that allow the players room to awaken in quasi-improvisations. Symbolic Peking opera gong sounds recalling the Chinese opera origins of the inspiration undergird the final cacophonous climax. The work closes with a return to transient metal timbres of crotales and bowed vibraphone emergences, all amidst whisperings of the *Young Lovers’ Edition Peony Pavilion* text—“fragrant rain clouds of love.”

(2) Part 1: “Garden of Fire”

For Lotte Latukefu and the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble

Shy Like Blushing Flowers
Part 1: Garden of Fire
for mezzo-soprano, percussion & piano

Bruce Crossman

Extremely Slow ♩ = 48
delicate and sudden

[gradually change mouth position with syllable sound]

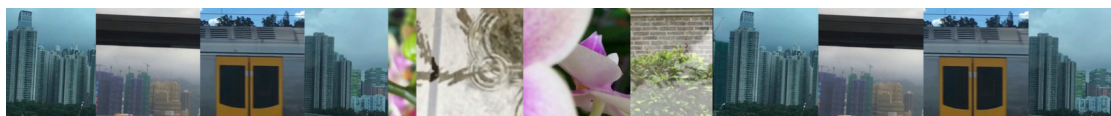
Mezzo-Soprano
Hm, hm, ah.

Percussion
Crotales arco l.v. Vibraphone V. (moist off) arco l.v. Ped.

Piano
mf [high partials] (stop string with finger 1.5cm from pin) ② gently mp [low partials] (stop string with finger 0.5cm from pin) ① gently l.v. u.c. Ped.

The Chinese opera tradition of Kunqu sparked, in a moment, the delicate transient crotales metal lingering sounds amidst wrestling interval-colour spacious splashes of ensemble amidst wriggling vocal lines in my musical score, titled “Garden of Fire.” The trio version involves soprano Anna Fraser, percussionist Claire Edwardes and pianist Linda Yim in a live performance with real-time digital visual mixing by Simon Killalea. In this stripped version, the wriggling vocal lines are laid bare, with delicate bowed vibraphone ebbing joining the dark gong-like stopped notes bedding the vocal beneath, with Killalea’s visual interpretations of the spaces through metaphorical nature and cityscape images in time-lapse filmmaking. His pulsating visual canvasses of Doonside to Penrith, Kowloon Tong towards Shatian, shimmied train movement of city life into a contemporary take on *Kunqu*.

“Garden of Fire” takes its point of departure from the sensuality of Tang Xianzu’s *Peony Pavillion* poetry through lucid translations from Lindy Li Mark and Mandarin romanisations by Milky Shan Man Cheung as well as the structured sense of revelatory space from the Chinese Gardens in Sydney. The music explores the poetry’s static sense of understated erotic tensions that suddenly strike the senses through nature allusions through inside-the-note vocalizations and operatic vibrato through the mezzo-soprano line, and accentuates the colours through drawing on both traditional Chinese and extended European instrumental techniques in the ensemble. The living colour aesthetic from Chinese Confucian thought that underpins the vocal line, is extended through the Chinese opera percussion sensitivity to sliding gong timbres and resonances as well as prepared string vibrations on piano. The structure of the work is composed of flanking distilled sections of colour transformations at the beginning and end of the piece around static colours which gain propelling motion to a form multi-sonority climax, with elements of Peking Opera pitch and percussive freedom and free-jazz intrusions and pulsations. The timelessness of a free section presents the “shyness” after the climactic and dissolves back into an emergent colour labyrinth where distilled colour wrestles with jazzy ruptures, before subsiding to the distillations of colour. The macrocosmic idea is flow between differing sections of a Chinese Garden around the dream-like states of the *Peony* poetry through dreams of distilled, climactic, free and wrestling emotions as the sensuality dream portion of the larger sequences of the music-theatre work.



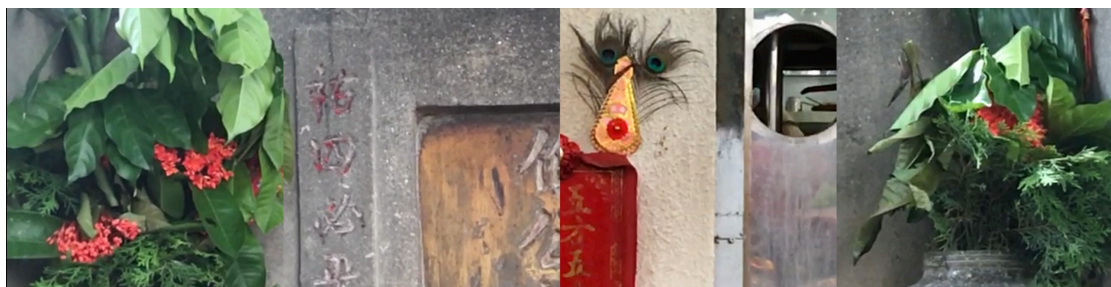
(3) Interlude 2: “Strange Invisible Perfume”



Film 2: Simon Killalea; Musicians: Chiu Tanching (guzheng), Claire Edwardes (percussion); Recording: Ian Stevenson & David Rapicano; Composition: Bruce Crossman; Text: translations Lindy Li Mark from the *Young Lovers' Edition Peony Pavilion*, Tang Xianzu; Romanisations of the Chinese script by Jocelyn Chey of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Act 5, scene 2, lines 275-280 and Act 2, scene 2, lines 220-225 (Enobarbus) and *Song of Songs*, chapter 5, verses 5-6.

In the second interlude dream sequence of the music-theatre work’s “Strange Invisible Perfume,” the music merges the sensuality of Shakespeare’s alluring Cleopatra with Tang’s “Dou de ri xia yan zhi yu shang xian,” amidst the Judeo-Biblical tradition’s transcendent sensuality of “I arose to open for my lover” from the *Song of Songs*. Killalea’s Sydney and Hong Kong shot Cubist interplays will interpret the music as a dream film sequence within *Shy like Blushing Flowers*. In my score for “Strange Invisible Perfume,” the Peking Opera gongs’ sudden demarcations and quivering mallets on crotales, linger like fragrant perfume over the wriggling *guzheng* tones and sharply articulated bell-clear harmonics.

“Strange Invisible Perfume” explores the drifting sense of time and moment as expressions of spirit through subtle timbre graduations of the *guzheng* with muscular colour resonances of sonority and driving percussion qualities to suggest the sensualities of texts from Shakespeare, Tang Xianzu and the Judeo-Christian Song of Songs. The form the work takes is of opening and closing sections with subtle changes of tone colour from wriggling string possibilities on *guzheng* and sharp Chinese opera percussion and lingering crotales sounds as types of perfumes of sound of stirring ‘invisible perfume’ of the sensuality of Cleopatra. Inside these frames, are balanced muscular sections with the *guzheng*’s full string arpeggios and skin and metal percussion barrages to express the sensual and joyful suggestions of the Biblical ‘I arose to open for my lover’ and ‘fingers with flowing myrrh’. The ‘strange perfume’—a central image from the Shakespeare—is explored as a central section of the musical structure and expressed through trembling strings and half-spoken whispered voice amidst *guzheng* chordal resonance; these are intended as evocations of an invisible sensuality and spirit which ‘hits the sense’ in a Shakespearean bold-moment and Daoist quivering nature of ‘sun rouged blush, damp with rain’. The invisibility of sensuality expressed through the sound is caught in a Confucian-like structural order of symmetrical balance as a suggested perfume of spirit that radiates from love.



Libretto: *Shy Like Blushing Flowers*

(1) Interlude 1: “Fragrant Rain Clouds of Love”

PEONY PAVILLION

Dark silk gown (*Zao Luopao*)

Fragrant rain clouds of love
Scarcely touched by dream

Rouse me as I slumber
Cold sweat breaks in surprise

Drowsy with spring fever,
Weary from roaming,
I sleep without sensing
my bedding.

Shining sky over glorious scene,
Myriad purple and red bloom.
Like jewels set in latticed railings.
Colored clouds surrounding all.

To oversee the guarding of flowers,
Less they are scattered, by morning bees.
[Scene 3: The Interrupted Dream p.17]

(2) Part 1: “Garden of Fire”

PEONY PAVILLION

Where does love arise?
It wells up from the deep.
For love the living can die.
For love the dead can revive...
[Prologue, p.7]

Zhe yi shatian, zhe yi [This brief moment]
[Scene 3, p.16]

*I love to be beautiful:
Like the early spring that no one sees,
Like graceful fish diving deep,
Landing swan, birds in flight.
Shy like blushing flowers,
Hidden moon, and trembling blossoms.*
[Scene 3, p.12]

Zhe yi shatian [This brief moment]
[Scene 3, p.16]

Spring Fragrance, if we didn't come here,
How shall we know that springtime is like this.
So it is.

*Already, bright purple and
passion pink bloom in profusion...
But in this glorious season,
Where are sounds of joy in this garden?*
[Scene 3, 12-13]

(3) Interlude 2: “Strange Invisible Perfume”

ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA,
Give me my robe. Put on my crown. I have immortal longings in me.
Now no more the juice of Egypt’s grape shall moist this lip.

Ba wode yifu gei wo. Ti wo ba wangguan daishang. Wo xinli huaizhe yongsheng de
kewang. Aiji putao de fangniang congci yihou zai ye buhui zhanrun wode zuichun.
[Act 5, scene 2, lines 275-280]

A strange invisible perfume hits the sense.
Sanchu yigu qimiao pengbi de fangxiang.
[Act 2, scene 2, lines 220-225]

SONG OF SONGS

I arose to open for my lover. And my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with
myrrh, on the handles of the lock. I opened for my lover.

Wo qilai, yao gei wo liangren kaimen, Wode liang shou dixia moyao, wode zhitou you
moyao ye di zai mensuo shang. Wo gei wode liangren kaile men.
[Chapter 5, verses 5-6]

PEONY PAVILLION,
Such sun rouged blush, damp with rain.
Dou de ge ri xia yan zhi yu shang xian.
[Scene 3, The Interrupted Dream, p.16]

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from 2004 *Young Lovers’ Edition Peony Pavilion, Anthony and Cleopatra, and Song of Songs*

English title translations by Lindy Li Mark from the *Young Lovers’ Edition Peony Pavilion*, ‘Book
1, part 1: scene 3, The Interrupted Dream, p.16; original play by Tang Xianzu, Pai Hsien-Yung
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Romanisations of the Chinese script by Milky Shan Man Cheung of the *Young Lovers’ Edition
Peony Pavilion*, ‘Book 1 Script, part 1: scene 3, The Interrupted Dream,’ The Chinese University of
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Romanisations of the Chinese script by Jocelyn Chey of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Act 5, scene 2,
lines 275-280 and Act 2, scene 2, lines 220-225 (Enobarbus)

Romanisations of the Chinese script by Jocelyn Chey of *Song of Songs*, chapter 5, verses 5-6.

OTHER ARTISTS

Bruce Crossman – composer/music director

Bruce Crossman's sound world embraces Asian traditional musics, free form improvisation and European influenced interval-colour sonority towards a personal Pacific identity. Peter Sculthorpe, Chou Wen-chung and Chinari Ung have influenced Crossman's Pacific-based aesthetic. Crossman's aesthetic is influenced by cross-disciplinary ideas from Chinese esthetics, Japanese aesthetics and architecture, Filipino-Australian poetry and abstract art.

Simon Killalea – filmmaker/projectionist

Simon Killalea is projectionist filmmaker who largely works in the field of rock music visuals, including with Sydney band Decoder Ring at Carriage Works and for the tour of iconic Australian band Cold Chisel, including those with an East Asian focus. He did the visuals for Bruce Crossman's Chinese opera-based project with the Campbelltown Arts Centre, titled *Gentleness-Suddenness*.

Ian Stevenson – sound design/diffusion/sound engineer

Ian Stevenson is senior lecturer in sound technologies. His research interests are in sound theory, listening, sound recording and sound installation practice. He is a member of the Digital Humanities Research Group at Western Sydney University. In addition to numerous freelance engagements he has held the following positions: Documentation Manager, Fairlight ESP, Sydney; Sound Engineer, Autograph Sound Recording, London.



Event website: <https://brucecrossman.com/teaching/events/> **Media samples:** <https://brucecrossman.com/media/>

Acknowledgements

Organising Committee

Hania Radvan, (CEO of Penrith Performing & Visual Arts, incorporating The Joan and The Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest)
James Fischer, (Director Programming, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre)
Valda Silvy, (Producer, Music, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre)
Bruce Crossman (composer, Western Sydney University)
Ian Stevenson (sound designer, Western Sydney University)
William Lane (artistic director, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble)

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Ben Turner (lighting)
Will Tredinnick (usher)
Ian Stevenson (sound)
Simon Killalea (film)
Mitchell Hart (technical logistics)
Geoff Turner (technical logistics)

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Krissie Scudds, Marketing Manager, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre

International Guest Liaison

Colleen Crossman

SHY LIKE BLUSHING FLOWERS

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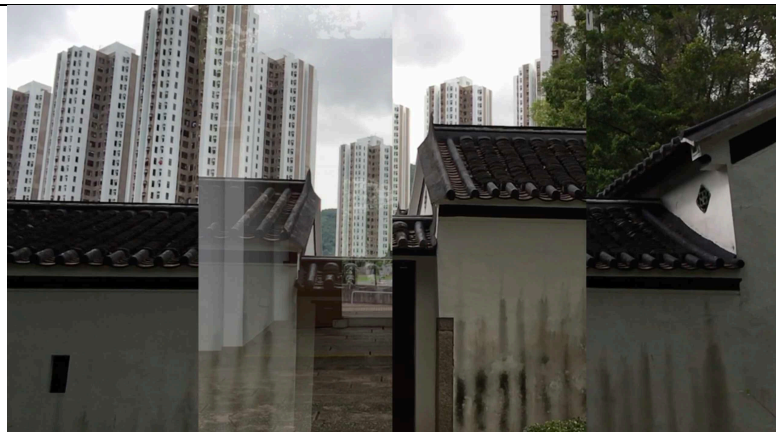
Linda Yim

Claire Edwardes is an internationally renowned percussionist and artistic director of Sydney new music group, Ensemble Offspring. She was a prizewinner as part of Duo Vertigo at the 2005 *International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition*. She won the 2016 *Art Music Award* for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual and was the 1999 *Young Performer of the Year*.

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(*Young Lovers' Edition Peony Pavilion*, Tang Xianzu,
English translation Lindy Li Mark)

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(Simon Killalea)