

Yazhi Guo (郭雅志), A Suona virtuoso

"China's Louis Armstrong" -- Boston Radio 2001

Guo graduated with distinction from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1990 and had lectured Suona at the Central Conservatory of Music for 9 years. He won many international awards including the Grand Prize at New York's International Pro Musicis Award (1998). He was named by the Ministry of Culture as one of China's most outstanding musicians, and was invited to give a solo performance with Suona and Saxophone for the heads of states during the US President Clinton's visit in Beijing in 1998. In 90's, he also recorded the original songs for over 100 films and popular TV series, and were followed by huge fans.

In 1999 Guo was appointed as the Principal Suona by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. Since then, he has performed with many orchestras around the world including Orchestra de la Suisse Switzerland, South Korea Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra, Belgium's Flanders Symphony Orchestra, Malaysia Chinese Orchestra, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, National Chinese Orchestra of Taiwan, and so on. He also actively lectured in Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and led the Hong Kong Suona Association as the first executive director. His brilliant and expressive performance with a unique style has created many opportunities in the world of modern music for Suona. He received the Hong Kong Award for Best Artist in 2012.

In 2012 at age 46, Guo farewelled the highly competitive position which was held by him as a Principal Suona for 12 years in Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. He relocated to Boston for exploring Jazz at Berklee College of Music. During studying at Berklee, he actively showcased the uniqueness of Suona at the various occasions, successfully made the traditional Suona more fashionable and popular. After graduated from Berklee with Artist Diploma in 2015, he led the Berklee Jazz band to visit China, performed in many cities, and lectured at the colleges. The fusion-style Jazz performance - Suona with the Jazz band is really an eye-opening experience and highly received by Chinese and American audience. In 2016, Guo received Thank You letters from the Mayor of Boston and the Governor of Massachusetts for the excellence in cross-cultural contribution.

Guo is not only a multi-instrumentalist, specialized in woodwind, but he also is an innovator. He invented the flexible core of Suona, a movable reed. He received the Second-Tier Scientific Progress Award from the Ministry of Culture in China. It allows the traditional Suona to undergo a significant breakthrough in its abilities to alter modes and change sounds at any time during a live performance. It makes the Suona possible to play with the Eastern as well as the Western orchestras.

Guo currently resides in Boston with his wife and two daughters.