





## Music

The Chinese developed a sophisticated understanding of the musical quality of timbre during the Song Dynasty. *Timbre* is the particular quality of sound each instrument makes. The Chinese discovered that the timbre of string instruments could be changed depending on how the strings were touched. Strings could be plucked, brushed, hit, scraped, or rubbed to produce different sounds. The Chinese composed music on the *Qin*, a long, wooden board with strings. The song you hear, “Parting at Yang Kwan,” is performed on a seven-string Qin. The song commemorates the parting between Wang Wei, the celebrated poet of the Tang Dynasty, and the poet’s friends at a gate leading out of the Kansu province. Listen as the timbre, or quality of the sound, changes in different parts of the song. While many cultures understood the idea of timbre at this time, the Chinese developed the idea as a complex musical practice and art form.