YAO QI is a ZHENG performer, educator, composer, professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, doctoral tutor, director of the plucking department of the Department of Folk Music, deputy secretary-general of the Guzheng Professional Committee of the Society of Chinese Musicians and the Society of Folk Orchestral Music, deputy director of the Guzheng Professional Committee of the Shanghai Musicians' Association, council member of the Shanghai Musicians' Association, artistic director of the Zheng Orchestra of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and visiting professor of many conservatories at home and abroad. She is currently teaching in the Zither Performance Department of the Folk Music Department of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

She is one of the few zheng performers with a master's degree in composition. Her performances and compositions have won many prizes in important national competitions organised by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Propaganda, and her teaching has won many awards from the above departments, including the 'Garden Scholar', 'Outstanding Teacher', 'He Luting' Fund Prize of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and the 'He Luting' Fund Prize of Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Her teaching has won many awards from the above departments, such as 'Garden Scholar', 'Outstanding Teacher', 'He Luting' Foundation Award of Shanghai Music Academy, Guzheng Solo Course Leader and Shanghai Key Courses.