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# DO WE PAY FOR THE MUSIC ?

Anthropological fieldwork in China frequently involves the question of payment of informants and officials. Should musicians be paid for their performances ? And what of Chinese officials who accompany foreign scholars in their work of recording ? Are they entitled to a reward ?
On the face of it, the answers seem simple enough. It is fair to pay for musicians if payment is an accepted part of their cultural setting – if they *normally* perform for money, as is the case with professional musicians.They should be paid in accordance with their own established standards. Cultural officials who assist in fieldwork usually do not expect payment. However, it seems reasonable to offer some kind of reward if people invest an excessive amount of time or energy in co-operation; furthermore, *symbolic* rewards like photographs, tapes of recording sessions or small keepsakes are often appropriate.

These are unwritten rules of musicological fieldwork, but some Western researchers of Chinese music have ignored them. Instances are known of astronomical sums being offered to performers of local ritual opera, when the musicians were required to demonstrate certain ritual songs and dances out of season or out of their normal context. Instrumental ensembles have been 'bribed' into performing ceremonial pieces while no funerals or weddings took place. There is no harm in such performances if musicians feel confident that they stay within the limits and accepted values of their own culture and community. But musicians should not be given excessive sums of money.
Most scholars of Chinese music cannot afford to spend huge amounts of cash in fieldwork. The few who can, and who are willing to, may obstruct the field for their future colleagues. Moreover, they risk turning respected traditions into a trade. They can badly upset local conditions. Such a development is likely to affect not only our own work, but that of our Chinese colleagues as well. Their possibilities to carry out fieldwork are often more limited than ours – they have to pay most of their field-research from their own pocket.

These considerations should not deter us from realizing that Western scholars, whenever they record traditional music or collect local documents, are 'taking' something from the performers, with the obvious aim of using it for their own purposes.

A scholar publishing local manuscripts in his dissertation is displaying materials not his own property. The same holds true for sound recordings, for which performers lend us their voices or instrumental skills. This is another angle on the question of reward. Some scholarly books are commercially produced. While there may be no profits at all, the authors do receive some payment from the publisher. Recordings of folk music occasionally turn out to be genuine commercial successes.

It may be argued that making traditional cultural assets available to a Western audience is partly a form of 'foreign aid', but this aid is mostly uninvited, and it is usually the scholar who profits the most.

Solutions to such problems are normally left to the personal assessment of the fieldworker. Many scholars will inform local musicians about the aims and intended use of, for example, the sound recordings they make. If the recordings are for commercial purposes, the scholars may indeed consider offering a reward that goes some way towards accordance with both Western and local standards. For example, if the performers are a group of worshippers, they may be presented with a gift to the local temple.

There are no set rules for rewarding musicians, but it would be a great pity if traditional and ritual music became an object of trade for trade's sake. This should be recognized by China as well.
There are unfortunate tendencies among the Chinese to 'buy' and 'sell' traditional culture. If local performers ask for huge amounts of money from musicologists, it is sometimes merely to fend off curiosity or to protect musical secrets. But what to think of the recent publication of a series of video-tapes of Buddhist temple music, issued by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music ? The series of seven tapes (totalling 13 hours of recording) is offered for public sale at the price of 8,400 American dollars a set. Nobody can afford to buy them, and they are not worth the price.
It is sad that traditional religious practices which have been suppressed in China for decades and which are still eyed with deep suspicion should, at the same time, become an object of 'business' in China. Unrealistic business, in this case.

Western filmmakers of anthropological documentaries are also frequently confronted with Chinese trying to capitalize on traditional culture. In this issue of CHIME, an article by the filmmaker Jelle Nesna reveals how much is sometimes put at risk. There is little we can do – except keeping our purses closed.

# A NOTE ON CHIME NO. 4

Chime no. 4 is somewhat late in appearing, partly due to the extensive preparations already underway for issue no. 5. In the title, 'Newsletter' has been replaced by 'Journal', the latter term more aptly covering the contents of our publication. Chime no. 5, a special issue, is expected to appear in late June. It will contain most of the lectures presented at the first general Chime meeting, 29 October 1991, in Geneva, Switzerland, as well as a formal report on the activities of the Chime Foundation in its first year of existence. The third and final article in the series on contemporary Mainland Chinese composers, originally intended for inclusion in Vol. 4, has been moved to Vol. 5 in the interest of more topical variety. No Chime meeting has been planned for 1992, but steps are being taken to organize the next conference in 1993, in close co-operation with the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) in London. The theme currently under discussion for that conference is *East Asian Voices – living folk traditions in eastern Asia*. Further announcements will follow in the forthcoming issue of Chime.

YOUNG CHINA'S VOICE OF THE 1980S

# Rock Star Cui Jian

WOEI LIEN CHONG*
(Leiden University, The Netherlands)

**Every generation has a need for its own poets and bards, to sing of its dreams and disenchantments. The modern poet often appears in the ragged form of the unkempt rock star. Cui Jian, the voice of urban Chinese youth in the 1980s, is an excellent example. Considered a 'hooligan' by the authorities, he is the idol of millions in the People's Republic. A closer look at his musical achievements and a tentative analysis of his lyrics may be of help in achieving a better understanding of his popularity and present position in the Chinese rock scene. 'Rock-and-roll is anti-tradition and anti-culture. It is the ideology of modern man', says Cui Jian.**

The Chinese rock star Cui Jian is of Korean descent. He was born in 1961. At age three, his father, who was a trumpet player in a song and dance troupe, taught him how to play the trumpet. Although he never received any higher music education, he was admitted to the Beijing Song and Dance Troupe in 1981. He became a celebrity in 1985 with his song *Yi wu suo you* (I've Got Nothing), at a concert which was called 'China's first rock-and-roll event'.
In April 1987, his employer expelled him for allegedly failing to fulfil his work assignments and 'indulging' in pop music. In reality, his expulsion had something to do with the fact that he and his band had aroused the wrath of a 'veteran revolutionary' (Wang Zhen, according to rumors) in January 1987, with their rock-and-roll rendition of *Nanniwan*, a revolutionary ballad from the 1930s[1]. Having become a controversial

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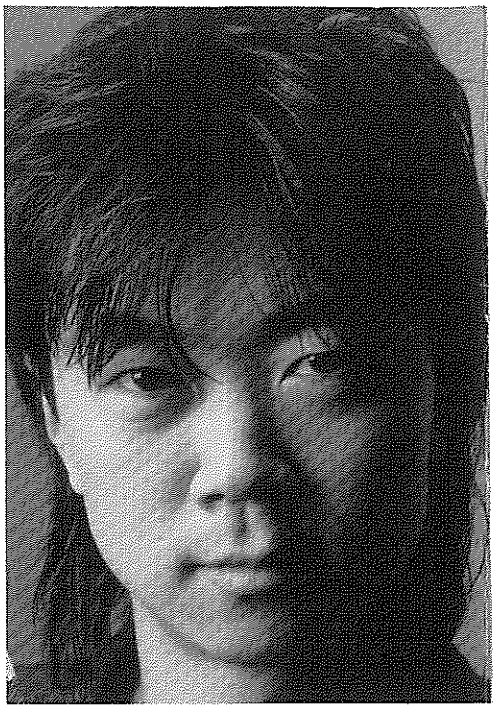
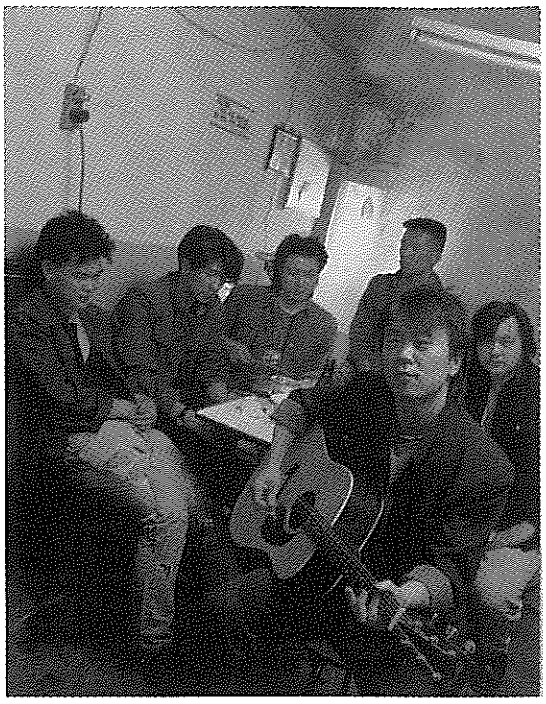
[1] This account is from 'New-Wave Rock Star: Cui Jian', in Liu Bingwen, Xiong Lei, and Tong Xiuying, 'Portraits of Ordinary Chinese', Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1990, pp. 373-380. See also Orville Schell, 'Discos and Democracy: China in the Throes of Reform', Pantheon, New York





Rock Star Cui Jian (left). A session with members of the group.

figure, no concert hall dared to book him, and he only made his come- back a year later, on 21 January 1988.[2] During the 1989 democracy movement, his hit *Yi wu suo you* was sung by the student crowds in Tiananmen Square, in protest against the government's refusal to enter into a dialogue with the demonstrators.

## THIS MAD DOG

In February 1990, Cui Jian and his band performed in Beijing at 'the greatest rock festival ever held in China'[3], and the authorities agreed to let him go on a nation-wide tour to raise funds for the 11th Asian Games, scheduled to start on 22 September. The Chinese leadership intended to use the Games to improve their international image, which had sunk to an all-time depth following the bloody June 1989 crackdown on the democracy movement.

After Cui Jian had given four concerts, however, the authorities suddenly cancelled his tour. Reportedly, a high-level party cadre in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, had threatened to take measures against Cui Jian if Beijing would not blow the whistle on 'this mad dog' (*fenggou*).[4] Moreover, it is not unlikely that the tour's organizers realized that Cui Jian's rousing music could easily lead to an explosion of the pent-up rage about the 1989 massacre among the huge crowds of young people attracted by his concerts.[5]

When a group of foreigners in Beijing invited Cui Jian to perform at an open-air

1988, p. 116. The song features on Cui Jian's latest cassette *Jiejue* (Solution). In spite of the popularity of his rendition, Cui Jian has stated that he does not like it, because he made it 'only to suit other people's taste and it is not something heart-felt'. See Liu Bingwen et al., op. cit., p. 376.

[2] China Daily, 27 February 1989, p. 5.

[3] See Tong Wei, 'Rock 'n' Roll China', in Nexus, Summer 1990, pp. 16-21.

[4] I owe this piece of information to Jeroen den Hengst.

[5] Daniel Southerland in International Herald Tribune, 4 May 1990.

concert during the week of the crackdown's second anniversary in 1991, the plan was likewise vetoed by the authorities.[6]

## 'PRODIGAL SON'

Cui Jian made his most impressive recordings in cooperation with the band ADO. His earlier work is unremarkable, and *Jiejue* (Solution), the cassette he made after he broke up with ADO, is utterly uninspired and disappointing. Before the mid-1980s, he was just one of the many sugar-voiced minstrels modelled after the glamour singers of the Hong Kong and Taiwan mainstream. This early Cui Jian can be heard on a cassette released, apparently against his wishes, on the Hong Kong and Taiwan markets, entitled 'Return of the Prodigal Son: A Collection of Early Works'.[7] Of these songs, Cui Jian prefers not to be reminded, which is understandable.

What makes them nonetheless interesting is their subject matter. Through other people's texts, Cui Jian was already discussing the major themes he was later to explore in depth: the difficulty of communicating with others (including the beloved), feeling forlorn in an incomprehensible world, the painful transition from a rural to an urban way of life, the innocence of childhood irretrievably lost - but also the sense of power and pride with which an individual can go out into the world to seek his own place under the sun.

These perennial themes, dealing with the individual's private emotions and non-political relationships with others, could not be discussed in Chinese art for many decades, until they were re-allowed in the more liberal atmosphere initiated with the reforms of 1978. Cui Jian is not the only Chinese pop singer who has daringly moved into this controversial zone, but he has been the most successful. Moreover, he has also made a number of compositions which are straightforwardly political in nature. In order to appreciate Cui Jian's achievement, we must take into consideration the general cultural atmosphere prevailing in China since 1978.

## A FEELING OF CULTURAL CRISIS

The post-1978 economic reforms have transformed both the Chinese city and the countryside, and this has been accompanied by a sudden and large-scale exposure to the achievements in Western societies. After twenty years of isolation, this caused a tremendous 'culture shock'. The Chinese realized that China had fallen behind the industrialized countries, and acute feelings of anxiety and disorientation made themselves felt. People faced a cultural void: traditional Chinese culture had almost entirely been destroyed by Communism, and Communist culture was felt to have been discredited by the havoc of the 'Cultural Revolution'.

The Communist leadership's answer to the 'culture shock' has been a 'fundamentalist' return to the soldierly values of the early decades of Chinese Communism, notably the Long March of 1934-1935, and life in the mountain base of Yan'an (Shaanxi Province) in the 1940s. The 'Yan'an Spirit' of Spartan comradeship and self-sacrifice was symbolized in the 1960s by the model-soldier Lei Feng, whose propaganda cult witnessed a rebirth in the 1980s, especially during the 1984 'Campaign Against Spriritual Pollution', and again after the June 1989 crackdown. His example was again called upon to discipline the youth whose minds, or so the authorities believed, had been led astray by ideas about individualism and consumerism, and concomitant political aspirations to freedom and democracy.[8]

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[6] International Herald Tribune, 1 June 1991.

[7] *Langzi gui: zaoqi zuopin ji*, BMG Pacific Ltd. (Hong Kong, 1989), authorized distribution in Taiwan by Rolling Stone Records (*Gunshi Changpian*), Taipei.

[8] The latest 'model hero' presented to the youth by the veteran leadership is Lai Ning, a 14-year-old boy from Sichuan Province who, in March 1988, died trying to put out a forest fire. His cult was

Pop music and politics in China: the experts discuss. A high-level meeting in Beijing, 1989.

By closing the 'Democracy Wall' in 1979, Deng Xiaoping showed that he would not countenance the propagation of democratic ideas, and he demarcated the limits of the freedom of speech by stating that no transgression would be tolerated of the 'Four Basic Principles': adherence to socialism, the leadership of the CCP, the people's democratic dictatorship, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. This, of course, meant an interdict on anything offensive to the Party leadership.

Periods of relative relaxation of political control, under relatively tolerant Party-leaders such as Hu Yaobang and his successor Zhao Ziyang, alternated with periods in which conservative leaders lashed out to defend socialist orthodoxy, both by attacks on individual writers and artists, and by large-scale campaigns: the 'Anti-Spiritual Pollution' campaign in 1984, and the 'Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization' campaign, which started in 1987 and has been intensified following the June 1989 massacre. Both Hu Yaobang's fall in early 1987, and Zhao Ziyang's eclipse in Autumn 1988, were the consequence of the fact that their general policy lines, in the eyes of the orthodox veteran leadership, were much too liberal.

In the field of art and literature, the orthodox leaders hold fast to Mao Zedong's 1942 Yan'an speeches in which he stated that 'literature and art must serve the broad masses of the people'. Deng Xiaoping recently remarked that the slogan that literature and art are subject to politics 'is no longer used', but that they are 'inseparable from politics by nature'.[9]

In spite of the immense amounts of energy spent by the authorities on keeping them on the right socialist path, CCP fundamentalism has no appeal whatsoever for China's urban youth. They have worries and aspirations of their own which the octogenarians currently in power fail to understand. The importance of Cui Jian lies in the fact that he has voiced the needs and anxieties of the 1980s with an unprecedented degree of poignancy. Understanding his songs, and the context in which they were made, is a

launched on 31 May 1989, shortly before the 4 June crackdown. See Nicholas D. Kristof in International Herald Tribune, 3 November 1990.

[9] Beijing Review, 23-29 July 1990, p. 26, citing from 'Deng Xiaoping On Literature and Art', a collection of speeches on the subject given between 1975 and 1989, edited by the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee and published by Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe.

step toward understanding more about how young Chinese react to the rapidly changing world in which they find themselves, and how they view their own position in it.
In this essay, some of Cui Jian's major themes will be discussed through a tentative analysis of his songs.[10] Apart from his political compositions, his work may seem innocuous enough to the Western ear, but in today's China, as already noted, any portrayal of the inner emotional world of the individual for its own sake is sufficient to raise political controversy, especially when sensitive subjects such as sexuality and moral independence are raised. In China, anyone who addresses these themes runs the risk of being accused, like Socrates once was, of 'corrupting the youth, and undermining the social order'.

## 'ROCK 'N' ROLL ON THE NEW LONG MARCH'

If 'Prodigal Son' is a document of Cui Jian's early romantic phase, his second album (he calls it his first, as he ignores the Hong Kong/Taiwan release of his early products) is a work of his full maturity, both as a composer and song-writer. It was named after the controversial title track: 'Rock 'n' Roll on the New Long March'.[11] Both the music and lyrics of all the songs contained in this album were written by Cui Jian himself. The texts on 'Prodigal Son' are not Cui Jian's own (most of the lyrics were written by Huang Xiaomao), and he had not yet found the techniques to create the right musical atmosphere for the themes he wanted to discuss. Although the compositions and arrangements were of reasonable quality, there was nothing really remarkable about them.
All this changed when Cui started to cooperate with ADO, an already existing four-man band including two non-Chinese musicians: the Hungarian student Balázs (bass guitar) and a solo guitarist from Madagascar known as 'Eddie'.[12] Balázs and Eddie belong to those foreigners who, in the past few years, have introduced all kinds of Western, African and Caribbean music to groups of Chinese musicians, and who have passed on their often impressive technical skills. This cultural transfer has mostly taken place in jazz cafés in Beijing, and the resulting musical ferment has been immense.

Balázs and Eddie attracted attention with their amazing skills on the electric guitar, and they introduced the music of The Pioneers, a Jamaican reggae band, to Xiao San, a percussionist, and Liu Yuan, a saxophonist.[13] The four decided to form a band and called themselves ADO.[14] Both Xiao San and Liu Yuan used to play in professional

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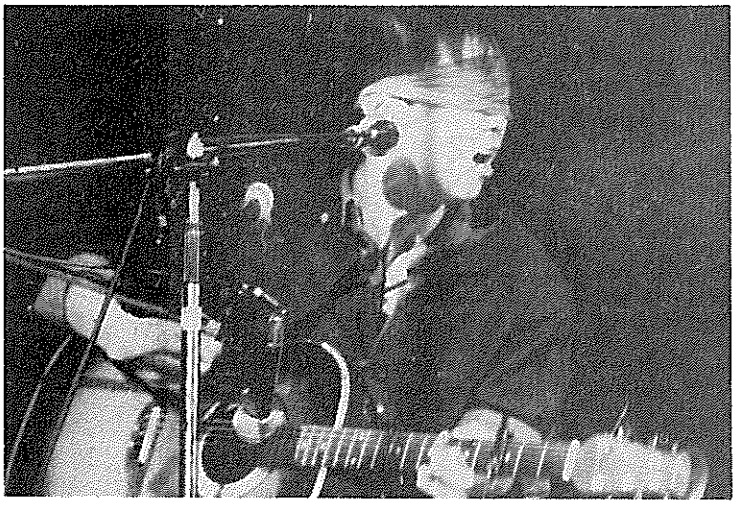
[10] Cui Jian's lyrics can of course be interpreted in many different ways. The interpretations I present here are simply examples of how one can go about interpreting his music, but there are, no doubt, many other alternatives.

[11] Released by China Tourism Sound and Video Publishing Company (*Zhongguo lüyou shengxiang chubanshe*), 1989. In the same year, another cassette was released by Hong Kong Feikang ('flying health') Company, which was identical except that the original title track was omitted. The title of this cassette is *Yiwu suoyou*.

[12] In Tong Wei's article, op. cit., their names are misspelled as 'Bryce' and 'Ade'. Their full names are listed on the 'Long March' cassette as Kassai Balázs and Randriama Pionona Eddie. The latter was reportedly an employee of the Madagascar Embassy in Beijing. See Liu Bingwen et al., op. cit., p. 373.

[13] Jeroen den Hengst comments that Xiao San ('Small Three')'s real name is Zhang Yongguang.

[14] Jeroen den Hengst reports that originally, Eddie's girlfriend, a classical pianist, was the band's keyboard player until another musician, Zhuang Biao, joined the band. According to Orville Schell, who saw them perform in Beijing in 1986, they were called The Honking Donkeys (*Dajiaolü*) at that time. See Schell, op. cit., p. 112. Stefan Landsberger reports that, after Cui Jian and ADO broke up, he witnessed an ADO concert in Beijing in Spring 1991, at which the band included an American sax player.



Cui Jian sings about a blinded PLA soldier.
A concert in Beijing, December 1988.

orchestras of traditional Chinese instruments, and they brought Chinese percussion and wind instrument techniques to the band, while Eddie contributed the rhythms and melodies of his native Madagascar.[15] Liu Yuan handles the sax as expertly as the traditional *dizi* (a bamboo flute) and *suona* (Chinese shawm).
With their help, Cui Jian found the musical techniques with the right explosive power and ebullience to go with the intense emotions of his texts. In 1987, before he broke up with ADO, he stated: 'I have some foreigners in my band and we get along well with them. They give me rock tapes and music scores that are hard to find in China. They have a wonderful understanding and mastery of rock music, and I've learned a lot from them. One of them is a great guitarist. The speed and nimbleness of his fingers are something I'll never have.'[16]

The Long March cassette also reveals the influence of Western bands like The Police and Talking Heads, whom Cui Jian admires, as he does punk and funk music. He used Tom Brown's 'funky' way of singing in his *Bushi wo bu mingbai* (It's not that my skull's so thick).[17] Combining the use of Western and Chinese instruments in his compositions, Cui Jian states, comes naturally to him, and he does not want to be uprooted from Chinese culture: 'I would not feel happy imitating an American example. I cannot disavow myself and my origin... On the one hand, I understand that Chinese look up to the West, and that they want to enjoy those things that they believe symbolize the Western living standard. On the other hand, I feel sad when I see that they are forgetting what their own worth is, and what China's worth is.'[18]

## THE IDEOLOGY OF MAN

The basic problem in Chinese culture, he has stated, is that human relationships are made unnecessarily complicated because people are discouraged from expressing themselves honestly and directly. One says different things to different people, out of

[15] From Tong Wei, op. cit.
[16] Liu Bingwen et al., op. cit., p. 378.
[17] Liu Bingwen et al., op. cit., p. 377.
[18] Cui Jian in an interview with Frénk van der Linden, in Avenue (Dutch ed.), January 1991, p. 70.

considerations of propriety and shame.[19] Rock-and-roll, in his opinion, should be a way of getting rid of this sense of shame, so that people start expressing their true feelings to one another. In this manner, they will be able to develop honest relationships, from which they can derive genuine self-respect. This is what Cui Jian wants to express in his songs.[20] 'Our real Long March', he said, 'is to learn to express ourselves directly and honestly.'[21] He finds rock-and-roll the best medium of breaking through the self-imposed inhibitions of the Chinese, because, in his own words: 'Rock-and-roll is anti-tradition and anti-culture. It is the ideology of modern man. Sometimes, it is a manifestation of the sexual drive.'[22]
Cui Jian's music is aimed at destroying psychological inhibitions of all kinds, especially those based on political myths and sexual repression. He sets out to free the individual from the coercive bonds of State and society, by dissolving the hold of official propaganda language on the individual mind.

## ANTI-HEROISM

Although many of Cui Jian's songs can be interpreted as political allusions, I know of only three which are straightforwardly political in nature. The first two are indictments against the myth of war heroism: the title track of his second album 'Rock 'n' Roll on the New Long March', and 'The Last Shot'. The third is 'Let me Have a Quiet Sleep', which can be interpreted as a plea to the Chinese authorities to end the politization of Chinese life.[23]
'Rock 'n' Roll on the New Long March' is a satire on the mythification of Mao Zedong's Long March (1934-1935), in which he, having been surrounded by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist troops, led his army to the mountain base of Yan'an in the North of Shaanxi Province. Great numbers perished along the way, and only a small minority of participants completed the 25,000 *li* (12,500 km) route. The March is presented in official Communist historiography as a heroic epic which marked the beginning of the CCP's road to victory. Before the 'Cultural Revolution', participation in the Long March used to be a guarantee of high rank and great political prestige.

Deng Xiaoping once used the term 'New Long March' for his post-1978 reform program, which was launched as a definite departure from Mao's dogmatism, collectivism and egalitarianism, but without dissociating itself from his Spartan ideals symbolized by the 'Yan'an Spirit'. Cui Jian parodies the 'new' and 'old' long march simultaneously, through the none-too-heroic protagonist of the song.
This protagonist should be viewed on two different levels: he both represents a trooper in Mao's army, and the common Chinese citizen during Deng's reforms more than forty years later. He toils and suffers numerous hardships without knowing for what purpose, and is completely in the dark about where the march is headed, although there is no lack of people offering all kinds of explanations. He strongly suspects that all these people don't know what they are talking about either.[24] But without asking any questions, he just keeps running on blindly among the cannon blasts, scared to death and wondering how many miles there are still to go on this seemingly endless road.

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[19] Cui Jian in a t.v. special by Penumbra Productions in cooperation with BBC television, broadcast in early 1991.
[20] Liu Bingwen, op. cit., p. 379.
[21] From the Penumbra/BBC t.v. special.
[22] Paraphrased from Liu Bingwen, op. cit., p. 377.
[23] It is included in the second album 'Rock 'n' Roll on the New Long March'. Music and lyrics by Cui Jian.
[24] 'A lot of folk, a lot of mouth, but they can't make clear what it is all about': *ren ye duo, zui ye duo, jiangbuqing daoli.*

Just to reassure himself, he sings the praise of Chairman Mao. The song obviously criticizes the blind obedience of both the Chinese revolutionary and the common, post-1978 Chinese citizen who looks up to the leadership to provide him with a better life. Mao's Long March, the song implies, has not led to the ideal society, and the outcome of Deng's reforms is equally uncertain. No wonder the song has enraged the socialist establishment.

'The Last Shot' (*Zuihou yiqiang*) [25] is about a soldier who is mortally wounded and hopes that the shot that felled him will be the last one fired[26]:

**The Last Shot**

A stray bullet hit me right in the chest
Suddenly the past bubbles up in my heart
Only tears, no sorrow
If this is the last shot, then I am willing to accept this utmost glory
Oh! The last shot.

Don't know how many things I have not yet said
Don't know how many pleasures I have not yet enjoyed
Don't know how many people are in the same situation
Don't know how many last shots there are

Peacefully sleeping on the warm earth
Morning dew, setting sun, the sweet smell of the flowers and the trees
Oh! All I leave behind in the world is a word

There is no mention of the Party or the motherland as in the heroic propaganda marching songs. The dying soldier knows his death will be meaningless, unless he is the last one ever to die in a war. The music quietly accompanies his sad resignation: an anonymous soldier killed by a stray bullet - no great event according to the standards of this world.

Cui Jian was asked to write the song for a t.v. play about the Chinese soldiers on the Sino-Vietnamese border, but it was rejected, as it was considered too 'pacifistic'. Cui Jian himself does not like the song either, as he has never been a soldier himself, and feels that the song is not genuine.[27] However, after the June 1989 massacre, the content of this song has, of course, become potentially explosive.

## THE FLOW OF HISTORY ITSELF: MARCO POLO BRIDGE

Cui Jian is a master of exercizing political criticism in an indirect, poetic manner. The song 'Let Me Have a Quiet Sleep: On the Restoration of Lugouqiao Bridge' is another excellent example.[28] The Lugouqiao Bridge, known among Westerners as Marco Polo

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[25] It is included in the recent collection *Jiejue*, although in a sapless version. A much better one is to be found on the cassette containing songs by various artists entitled 'The Chinese Window is Opened: Chinese New Waves Volume I' (original English title). The Chinese title is *Zhongguo xin yinyue xilie zhi yi*, produced by the Dongfang Gewutuan Luyin Gongsi and released by the Yongsheng (Eternal Sound) Yinyue Chuban Youxian Gongsi (Beijing, 1988).

[26] Lyrics by Wang Gui; vocals, music, and arrangement by Cui Jian. The English translations in this essay are all by the author. They are neither poetic nor entirely literal; their main aim is to convey the general atmosphere of the songs, to enable the reader to evaluate the interpretations offered.

[27] Liu Bingwen, op. cit., p. 376-77.

[28] According to Orville Schell, Cui Jian and his band played at a concert organized in Beijing in 1986 to raise money for the restoration of the Marco Polo Bridge. See Schell, op. cit., p. 112.

Bridge, lies to the southwest of Beijing, across the Yongding River. It was built in 1189-1192, and already known to Marco Polo, who saw it around 1276. Polo has left us an admiring description, which earned the bridge its European name.[29]

The ancient bridge is an edifice burdened with age and history. For centuries, it has been the traditional river crossing of travellers between north-central China and the country's north-east. In the modern age, a spur line was built at nearby Fengtai, crossing the river parallel with the bridge, and connecting the main Beijing-Wuhan and Beijing-Tianjin railway lines.[30] It was here that, according to the Chinese, the Japanese staged the 'Lugouqiao Incident' on 7 July 1937 around the walled town of Wanping, which lies at the eastern end of the Bridge, in order to gain control of the northern section of what was then called the Beiping-Hankou railway. The incident marked the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937- 1945.[31]
Thus, for modern Chinese historiography, the bridge is a major war monument which serves as an eternal reminder of Japanese agression. The question of whether this view is correct or not has become a subject of intense controversy, both among politicians and historians.[32]
Because of its strategic position both in Chinese geography and history, the bridge can be used to symbolize transition both in space and time: it embodies the boundary between east and west, war and peace, old and new. As one of the few remaining, silent witnesses to China's past, it symbolizes the flow of history itself. What tales this bridge could tell, if it could only speak!

In his song, Cui Jian in fact makes the bridge speak. But the venerable old witness only tells us that it is exhausted, and requests the world of humans to leave it alone. It complains that it is tired of all the noise and traffic it has endured, both in war and peace: 'I have heard enough crying and laughing, I have carried enough horse carts, bridal sedan chairs, motor cars, and guns.' It wants to retire from the world of men and their restless, incomprehensible activity, to 'listen to the sound of the waters and the birds.' It has no answers to the historian's numerous questions, and begs to be allowed, for once, to have a quiet sleep.

The bridge crosses the river from West to East: travellers to Beijing must cross it in eastern direction. The Bridge tells us that 'to the West' (where the countryside is) there is 'peace and quiet', but to the East (where Beijing lies), there is 'bustle and excitement'. The old monument obviously prefers the quiet of the countryside, where the pace of historical change is not as fast as in the city.[33]

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[29] 'Nagel's Encyclopedia-Guide: China', Nagel, Geneva 1986, p. 644. The Guide quotes Marco Polo's description from 'Marco Polo, The Description of the World', A.M. Moule and P. Pelliot, Routledge, London 1938.

[30] Dick Wilson, 'When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945', p. 13 and map on p. 17.

[31] The Japanese claimed that one of their soldiers was missing and wanted to enter Wanping in search of him. They attacked when the Chinese defenders refused them entry. From Yun-Han Li, 'The Origins of the War: Background of the Lukouchiao Incident, July 7, 1973', Chapter I in Paul K.T. Sih (Ed.), 'Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945', Exposition Press, Hicksville, New York 1977, pp. 18-21.

[32] For an account based on Japanese sources, see e.g. James B. Crowley, 'A Reconsideration of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident', in Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (May 1963), pp. 277-291. Crowley writes (p. 282) that 'although the town of Wanping was an important railway junction, there is no evidence that the Japanese intended to seize or control it', and he points to 'strong evidence that the events of July 7 were not part of a prearranged plan of aggression'.

[33] The theme of the contrast between city and countryside is very important in Cui Jian's work, vide infra.

The bridge - famous, old and worn-out - is a symbol of Chinese culture itself. It has had its fill of traffic, commerce, war, progress, and other turbulent events, and its plea to be left alone reflects the desire for peace and quiet of the ordinary Chinese. They are tired of writing history, of making war, of fulfilling, century after century, the demands which their leaders put to them for the supposed sake of the nation. One senses that the song is directed especially against the Communist Party, and the heroic, self-sacrificing roles which it forced everyone to play in what was presented as the great historical drama of Chinese politics. The Chinese of today long to be relieved of the obligation to be heroes. Like Marco Polo Bridge, they have become too exhausted to continue carrying the fate of the nation on their backs.

## A NEW SENSE OF PERSONAL PRIDE

Cui Jian has not only unmasked the military and nationalistic myths underlying the lives of the older generations, he has also offered the youth a self-esteem which is unconnected to the revolutionary heritage. The subject is handled quite differently by the early and by the mature Cui Jian. The early song 'New Tide' (*Xinchao*) [34] presents an artist who has laid down his past vexations and looks upon life, artistic creation, and other people with new confidence:

**New Tide**

Stop being depressed, stop being worried
I was born strong and stubborn
I'm no longer a puppet on a string
We embody the waves of a new era
No need for self-destruction, no need for self-ridicule
I was born with self-confidence and honor
I no longer dare to be lonesome
Let our steps be toward the bright morning

My heart was full of pain and worry
But I want you to know: that's life
In my heart is the beauty of the future
A beauty which we really cannot doubt
To be understood by others is a need
To create for others is my glory
Let us look straight at this firm reality
And awaken our pride and sense of dignity.

The song's intention is obvious, but it somehow fails to impress. Cui Jian dealt with the same theme far more successfully on his Long March album, in 'No More Concealment' (*Buzai yanshi*). Here, he totally abandons the romantic naïveté of his early years for a defiant individualism.

The music has similarly been transformed: the light-hearted optimism of 'New Tide' is toothless compared with the aggressive masculinity of 'No More Concealment', which is a proud song about someone who has been through hard times, but has survived unbroken. He has peeled off his false Red Guard-identity, and discovered - not a void - but a genuine personality of his own underneath. There is both the enormous relief of having cast off the mask of insincerity, and the robust energy of one who feels he can make it on his own[35]:

[34] Music by Zhou Xiaoming and lyrics by Huang Xiaomao.
[35] Music and lyrics by Cui Jian.

**No More Concealment**

My tears are no longer sobs
My smile is no longer play-acting
Your freedom belongs to heaven and earth
Your courage belongs to you alone
I've got no money, I've got no place,
I've only got the past
I talked a lot and thought a lot, but paid less and less attention
I'm neither pitiful nor detestable, because I'm not you
I know all about leaving things behind and running off
But I just couldn't pull myself away

My eyes won't be looking at you any longer
I'll always remember my cherished memories
My freedom also belongs to heaven and earth
My courage also belongs to no one but myself

My endurance is no longer exhaustion
My sincerity is no longer a show of tears
My strength is no longer an empty sham
My anger is no longer for the confession of past sins...

It is important to notice the way in which Cui Jian here uses words like 'endurance' (*renshou*), 'sincerity' (*zhencheng*), 'strength' (*jianqiang*), and 'anger' (*fennu*), which are all part of the political vocabulary of the 'Cultural Revolution'. For ten years, they were incessantly heard in official propaganda exhorting the individual to sacrifice himself for the sake of the motherland and the glorious goal of socialism, and to eliminate its enemies without mercy.

The individual was supposed to be entirely a product of society, without an identity, let alone a freedom, of his own. It was the Communist Party which dictated to individuals what to think, what to do, what to endure, for whom to cry, and with whom to be angry. One was constantly urged to test one's loyalty to the common cause by incessant self-examination and 'confession'. One was 'a puppet on a string', wholly subservient to the Party, which promised that the sacrifice made would be justified by the establishment of the ideal society.
After forty years of hardship, the promise has still not been fulfilled, and people have begun to realize that the system no longer has any aims but to perpetuate itself for its own sake.
But it is not easy to undo an ethos shaped by forty years of self-sacrifice, class struggle, and anti-individualism. For that, you must free concepts from their present psychological associations, and give them new meaning. This is precisely one of Cui Jian's important achievements. He has extricated concepts from the realm of propaganda slogans where they had been reduced to empty platitudes, and made them re-available for the expression of individual emotion; he has restored the language of feeling and virtue to the individual, whom official propaganda had disowned.

This attempt at the renewal of language is what has motivated much of Chinese post-Mao prose and poetry. Chinese writers and poets, including Cui Jian, have given language a new lease on life, and thereby a new lease on life to present-day Chinese. 'No More Concealment' is about someone who has outgrown his former self, but who can look back upon the past without resentment, because what he has gone through has made him stronger and more resolved. He squarely faces life on his own ('I am not you'), and does not try to 'pull himself away' from it.

In another song, Cui Jian depicts a totally different personality: someone who has chosen the path of evading every kind of responsibility. In 'False Itinerant Monk' (*Jia xing seng*), there is the cool self-sufficiency of an anonymous wanderer who refuses to get involved with people. He travels on before he is ensnared by either love or enmity:

**False Itinerant Monk**

I want to travel from south to north
And I want to travel from white to black
I want everyone to see me, without knowing who I am
If you see that I'm a bit tired, then pour me a bowl of water
If you have already fallen in love with me, then kiss me on the mouth.

I have these two feet, I have these two legs, I have these thousands of mountains and ten-thousand rivers
I want to have all there is
But I don't want to hate or have any regrets
If you want to love me, don't be afraid you will regret it
One day I will go far away
and fly as high as the sky
I don't want to stay in one place
And I don't want anyone to follow me
I want to travel from south to north
and I want to travel from white to black
I want everyone to see me, without knowing who I am

I just want to see your beauty
But I don't want to know you're suffering
I want to catch water from heaven
But not your tears
I refuse to believe that ghosts exist
And refuse to set myself against anyone
You should not want to know who I really am
Nor to see that I am empty and unreal...

Our wanderer wants no more of the conflict and violence whipped up by 'class- struggle' propaganda. He is done with the past, and does not want to trouble his conscience with it ('I do not believe that ghosts exist'). As a reaction to the time of political confrontations, he prefers to keep his relations with other people as noncommittal as possible, and therefore avoids becoming part of any community.
Proud and anonymous, he asks nothing from others, and wants others to ask nothing from him, accepting the joy of their presence without accepting the pain. But deep in his heart, he knows that he is not genuinely self-sufficient, and that he only remains aloof because he feels vulnerable. His monkhood is 'false', because he is not sustained by any genuine belief. He does not walk away from people because he can really survive on his own, but because it is the only way to avoid being hurt.

## ALONE IN THE MADDENING CROWD

Another of Cui Jian's major themes is the contrast between the city and the countryside. On 'Prodigal Son', there is a song about the coldness between city people, and how forsaken one can feel in the midst of the sea of humanity. It is called 'Why' (*Weishemma*):[36]

[36] Music by Cui Jian and lyrics by Huang Xiaomao.

**Why**

When I feel isolated and alone
I suddenly feel how many worries there are between people
When I talk to you and you ignore me
I feel the estrangement between us
Why on earth are feelings so hard to avoid,
hard to evade
Suddenly I see your face become indifferent again
Why on earth, when you have already awakened from a drunken dream
the nightmare is still before your wide-open eyes

When I stop at the end of the street
and people shuttle back and forth
Time, in the middle of the bustle, just flows past
I have abandoned nothing; I have obtained nothing
Suddenly I'm afraid of how people glance at each other
Is it that their feelings are cold,
or is it I who am at a loss
I can no longer make clear how my life
consists of loneliness hard to bear
and perplexities hard to cope with
I approach this vast sea of humanity
in search for things I can pursue.

For this song about the bewilderment and disorientation of modern urban life, Cui Jian had composed a jumpy, nervous tune, and he sang hoarser and in a lower key than in the other early songs. He had also embarked on swallowing the last syllables of every sentence, a technique which he would later, inspired by Tom Brown, bring to perfection, but which, on his most recent cassette, has degenerated into a mechanical mannerism. When listening to 'Why', one realizes that what Cui Jian was looking for was a hard rhythm, at once nervous and hot, to evoke the noise and frenzy of life in the big city. There is already an electric guitar solo and a digital mix of urban traffic noise and such, but the whole thing just doesn't seem to swing.
It was only when exposed to the experience of ADO that Cui Jian mastered all the turbulent power of Western disco- and Tom Brown funk-rhythms to express the breathless confusion of the Chinese city-dweller, in 'It's not that my skull's so thick...' (*Bushi wo bu mingbai*) [37]:

**It's not that my skull's so thick...**

In the past I didn't know what it was to have an open mind
In the past I didn't know there are a lot of strange things in the world
The present is not the future I dreamt of in the past
But the present clearly shows what the future has been all about
In the past I acted without knowing right or wrong
In the past I did not count the years passing by
Things that seemed simple once are now far over my head
In this world I suddenly feel I don't belong

In the past twenty years I learnt only to endure
No wonder the women said I did not stand firmly on the ground

[37] Jeroen den Hengst reports that the Tom Brown cassette which inspired Cui Jian in writing this song was one of 1983.

I beat myself out of my slumber
But once awake I saw that the changes in this world are real fast!

Looking down I see those highrise flats like stalks of rice and wheat
Looking ahead I see seas of people, traffic jams
I look left, right, front, back - still I can't grasp it all
[echo] This this this this that that that that
The more I look the stranger it all gets!

It's not that my skull's so thick,
but the world is changing much too quick!
It's not that my skull's so thick,
but the world is changing much too quick!

In both of the above-mentioned songs, the theme is city life, but with a different focus. In 'Why', the city is the place where one can feel abandoned and anonymous in the middle of the hubbub of the streets. This theme is new to Chinese music: in the ethos of the 1960s, the 'sea of the people' was supposed to be the individual's natural habitat. Loneliness is what awaited the individual outside the masses, but once received in the warm nest that is the people, there could be no unhappiness. It was unthinkable for an artist to base his work on the feeling of alienation, such as Cui Jian has expressed it: 'People are so different. To communicate with each other is very difficult - sometimes I even think it is impossible'.[38]

The coldness and anonymity of the crowd used to be regarded as a pathological phenomenon of Western capitalist societies, where human relationships are supposedly characterized by alienation. The idea that all forms of alienation, including the political, also exist in China, has been put forward in Chinese academic debate in the 1980s, but came under vehement attack by the authorities.[39] Nevertheless, alienation has continued to be a major theme in post-Mao literature and art, and is often dealt with on the basis of the theories of Freud and Sartre. The influence of Freud and Sartre on Chinese art in the 1980s can hardly be overestimated.[40]

In 'It's not that my ...', the main theme is the complexity of urban life itself. The person speaking finds it hard to cope with the transition from the pre-1978 egalitarian society to the rapidly changing urban environment of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, with its influx of foreign business and tourism, the millions of migrants from the countryside looking for a better life, free markets, private entrepreneurs, increased competition and ostentatious consumerism, unemployment next to fortunes amassed by windfall profits, and the accompanying insecurity and disorientation. Life in the past seemed meaningless, but so does the onslaught of modernity.[41]

The past consisted of two decades of half-unconscious animal survival, in which people blindly did as they were told ('I acted without knowing right or wrong'), and lost track of the passing of time because life remained basically the same, day in, day out. Perhaps one dreamt of a more human, more creative future, but today, looking out of the window of one's flat, one doubts whether what one sees outside is really what one has been waiting for.

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[38] Liu Bingwen, op. cit., p. 379.

[39] See David A. Kelly, 'The Emergence of Humanism: Wang Ruoshui and the Critique of Socialist Alienation', in Merle Goldman, Timothy Cheek and Carol Hamrin, 'China's Intellectuals and the State: In Search of a New Relationship', Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1987.

[40] On the influence of Freud, see Wang Ning, 'The Reception of Freudianism in Modern Chinese Literature, Parts I and II', in China Information, (Leiden University), Vol. V, No. 4 (Spring 1991), pp. 58-71, and Vol. VI, No. 1 (Summer 1991) respectively.

[41] For an account of the post 1978-changes in the Chinese urban environment as related to the reforms, see Orville Schell, op. cit.

## DIONYSIAN RELEASE: WOMEN, WINE, & AGGRESSION

There is no greater contrast between the ascetic egalitarianism of the 'Cultural Revolution' and the fervor with which the Chinese youth, in the 1980s, has set out to discover physical pleasure. Drinking alcohol, disco-dancing and pre-marital sex have become part of urban youth-culture, much to the despair of the defenders of orthodox socialist propriety.

In literature and the arts, the 1980s have seen the rise of non-political themes amidst the general reflection on the origins of the 'Cultural Revolution' catastrophe. The need for a more humanized and personal literature is reflected in the increasing popularity of writers like Zhang Xianliang[42] and Wang Anyi[43], who, in the face of great official resistance, have defended the right to discuss love and sexuality. Film director Zhang Yimou has won immense fame, both within and outside China, with his portrayal of love and passion in his films Red Sorghum (*Hong gaoliang*, 1988) and *Judou* (1990).[44]

The importance of Zhang Yimou as a filmmaker, apart from his stylistic innovations, lies in the fact that he has brought the Dionysian element to modern PRC cinema. His abovementioned films both deal with the passion between a man and a woman in the countryside. Zhang wants to show that the irrational and the physical are just as strong - or even stronger - drives in man as reason and social morality, both in love and war. Sexuality, alcohol, and aggressiveness belong as much to life as the psychological need for a respectable and harmonious existence. In contrast to CCP orthodoxy, Zhang Yimou tells us that man is not primarily a social being, but a creature of nature with irrepressible biological needs and instincts. Here, the ability of culture to mould human character finds its limits.[45]

The rise of Dionysus in Chinese art is politically controversial, not only because it goes against the prudishness inherent in both traditional Chinese and Communist mores, but also because successful political control of the mind and private life of individuals depends for a great part on the degree of suppression and manipulation of the Dionysian drives, as George Orwell described so well in his 1984. Communist soldierly asceticism, and the stringent birth control measures carried out in China, are incompatible with sexual freedom, and the Chinese authorities want to control art and literature as much as they want to control actual behavior. This goes especially for music. For 2,000 years, there has been a strong belief in Chinese philosophy that music was in need of control, because it was thought to exert a powerful influence on people's moral character, whether positive or negative. It was the responsibility of magistrates and educators to see to it that the population was exposed to music which was conducive to morality, and that "rousing", 'depraved' and 'lascivious' music was banned.

If Zhang Yimou is the Dionysus of the new PRC cinema, Cui Jian is the Dionysus of Chinese pop music. Although 'Red Sorghum' has not met with official disapproval and has even become an officially accepted model for politically non- controversial art

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[42] For an article on Zhang Xianliang's life and work, see Rint Sybesma, 'After the Tortuous Journey: Zhang Xianliang on Being a Writer in China', in China Information, (Leiden University), Vol. III, No. 4, (Spring 1989), pp. 56-71. See also Rint Sybesma, 'Zhang Xianliang's 'Half of Man is Woman': What the Chinese Critics Said', in the same issue, on pp. 72-74.

[43] For an interview with Wang Anyi and a report of a lecture she gave at Leiden University, see Alice de Jong and Anne Sytske Keyser, 'A Talk with Woman Writer Wang Anyi', in China Information, Vol. III, No. 3 (Winter 1988-1989), pp. 66-68; and W.L. Chong, 'Love and Sexuality: Themes From a Lecture by Woman Writer Wang Anyi', in the same issue, on pp. 64-65.

[44] See the Chinese Cinema Special by W.L. Chong and Anne Sytske Keyser in China Information, (Leiden University), Vol. IV, No. 4 (Spring 1990), pp. 31-70, esp. pp. 33- 34, 49, and 57.

[45] On the influence of Freud on Wang Anyi, Zhang Xianliang, and Zhang Yimou, see Wang Ning, op. cit., Part II.

films [46], Cui Jian's music was attacked in the 1980s - fully in line with Chinese tradition - for its supposedly negative influence on public morality. While in his early songs, Cui Jian is still very much the respectable, presentable ballad-singer, it is on his Long March album that he displays the uncouth exuberance which has proved so offensive to the authorities.
On 'Prodigal Son', there is a song called 'Gazing at Each Other' (*Duishi*), in which two people who have drunk wine together have lapsed into silence and can make no more contact than when they were still sober.[47] Although it can be called a drinking song (of the sad variety), and Cui Jian uses an early version of his later hoarse voice, no atmosphere of intoxication is evoked whatsoever.
His later dithyramb, 'Come back and pick up what I missed' (*Cong tou zai lai*) is totally different. Here, the drinker immerses himself in liquor to escape from hard reality, and the privilege of not having to think is celebrated to a happy reggae-rhythm[48]:

**Come back and pick up what I missed**

My feet step on the earth, and the sun stands on my head
I pretend that in the whole world there's no one but me
I press my eyes shut, lean close against the wall
I pretend that on my shoulders there is no brain at all

Don't wanna go away, don't wanna exist, don't wanna live too much
like a realist
I wanna go away, I wanna exist, after death I wanna come back
and pick up what I missed

The clouds from my ash-tray, the ocean from my glass
Have fully packed my totally emptied mind
I'm getting better in talking crap,
in keeping my mouth shut more and more
I'm getting better and better in pretending I am stupid to the core

Hard to go away, hard to exist, hard to live too much
like a realist
I wanna go away, I wanna exist, after death I wanna come back
and pick up what I missed

The theme of drunken forgetfulness is a familiar one from classical Chinese Tang poetry, which Cui Jian has re-introduced in Chinese music in a cynical, up-to-date form, using a derivative of African and Latin-American rythms.
Cui Jian's love songs are also very much in a class of their own. Although he has found a raw voice to match his new Dionysian style, he is still a master of the romantic ballad. He proves this on his second album with love songs such as 'Flower Room Woman' (*Huafang guniang*), and his famous hit 'I've got Nothing' (*Yiwu suoyou*).
'Flower Room Woman' is about a man caught in the dilemma of having to chose between staying in his lover's fragrant love-nest on the one hand, and exploring the great unknown world on the other:

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[46] Marco Müller in W.L. Chong and Anne Sytske Keyser, 'Sinologist and Film Festival Director: Marco Müller on Chinese Cinema', in China Information, Vol. IV, No. 4 (Spring 1990), p. 57.
[47] Music by Cui Jian and lyrics by Huang Xiaomao.
[48] The phrase 'pick up what I missed' was introduced by the author for the sake of rhyme in the English translation. A more accurate translation of the original Chinese would be: "I want to come back and do it all over again".

When you asked me in what direction I wanted to go
I pointed towards the ocean
When you asked me in what direction I wanted to go
I pointed towards the ocean
When you led me into your flower room
I couldn't escape your flowers' enchanting fragrance
Unwittingly I forgot - oh! - my direction
...
I feel like going back to the old place
I feel like continuing along my former path
But I realize that I can't leave you! oh - woman!

Although harmless enough to the Western ear, the song is daring in the Chinese context because it depicts an extra-marital relationship. Moreover, it is the woman who takes the initiative. She is wilful and seductive, just as the country women in Zhang Yimou's films, and Chinese moralists would probably reject her as a Jezebel.
'I've got nothing' is about the torment of unrequited love: a man is laughed at by the woman he loves because he has nothing, but he keeps pressing her to follow him. He also threatens to grab her by the hands and drag her off, even if it would reduce her to tears. Pleas and threats alternate, pierced by Liu Yuan's haunting solos on dizi and suona. The combination of love and aggressiveness is unusual in Chinese art, and undoubtedly again a source of distaste to anti-Dionysian prudes.[49]
During the 1989 pro-democracy movement, the song was used by the demonstrators to urge the government to hold a dialogue with them, and end its procrastinating manoeuvres[50]:

**I've Got Nothing**

I never stopped asking you
When will you come with me?
But you always laugh at me
Because I've got nothing.

I want to give you my aspirations
and my freedom too
But you always laugh at me
Because I've got nothing

Oh ... when will you come with me?
Oh ... when will you come with me?

The earth is turning beneath our feet
The river is flowing at our side
But you always laugh at me
Because I've got nothing.
Why do you keep laughing, why do I have to keep begging
As if in front of you, I would always have nothing

[49] The frustrated anger which Cui Jian puts into this song is, in general, not to be found in the numerous watered-down cover versions by other singers. According to Jeroen den Hengst, however, the best version he ever heard was performed by the band Mayday (led by the well-known popstar He Yong) in Tian'anmen Square on 20 May 1989.

[50] Using a love song for political purposes may seem strange to the Westerner, but the practice is traditional in China. In classical Chinese poetry, the rejected lover's complaint often symbolizes the grief of the official wronged by the ruler.

Oh ... when will you come with me?
Oh ... when will you come with me?

I'm telling you I've been waiting a long time
I'm telling you my last demand
I want to grab your hands, and then you will come with me
Then your hands will tremble, then your tears will flow
Is it possible I hear you saying You love me because I've got nothing?
Oh ... when will you come with me?
Oh ... when will you come with me?
Oh ... then you will come with me.

## CHILDHOOD AND DREAMING OF HOME

The first track on the early album 'Prodigal Son' is 'Wandering Singer' (*Liulang de geshou*).[51] The singer in question is in search for his childhood dreams, although people tell him that one's childhood can never be recaptured. He is a good-hearted romantic who regrets that there is so much estrangement and separation in the world, and who hopes that people, wherever he goes, will 'extend both hands in friendship'.
While our romantic singer wanders in search of his childhood innocence, the protagonist of the title song, 'Prodigal Son', knows that his youth is gone forever, and that he himself is responsible for having made it a bad memory. He remorsefully returns to the old village where he once broke with his parents, walking out 'with his head full of dreams', and leaving his mother and little sister behind in tears. Both music and lyrics are in the best tradition of sentimental melodrama.
Cui Jian attains quite another level in the second album, in the exquisite ballad 'Going Away' (*Chuzou*). A man awakens in the early morning, and suddenly imagines, as he seems to have done many times before, that he is walking along the old road to his old village, past the same old mountains, the same old river. It feels good to be back, but there is a strong undercurrent of worry and unresolved conflict: in the old house, there are not only his parents, but also his wife, who is his 'eternal sadness'. He is afraid that she will tell him that she loves him. He opens his eyes, and the scene has disappeared - he is alone again.
The song's theme is separation and loss. The Chinese title evokes connotations of 'leaving the parental home', but also 'running away from something'. Here, it refers in addition to the protagonist's habit of escaping from reality into daydreams about his native village. Probably, he is one of those who went to the city to earn money, but whose heart has remained in the countryside, where he has left behind his youth and his beloved.[52] Memories of the past haunt his dreams, but he wants to 'keep on walking straight ahead without looking back'; he 'cries out aloud', but he will not, cannot go back.
'Going Away' belongs in the same category as 'Why ?' and 'It's not that ...'; they are all about the transition which millions of Chinese are currently making from a rural to an urban way of life, and the accompanying feeling of uprootedness. In Cui Jian's poetry, the village is home, childhood, one's parents, the mountains and rivers which one knows as well as one's good friends, while the city is the overwhelming, the strange, the uncomfortable. In Cui Jian's songs, the city is alienation itself. Even among all of his mature work, 'Going Away' is an outstanding piece, not least for the unforgettable sax solo by Liu Yuan.
Generally speaking, dreaming about home, like happy inebriety, is also a well- known theme in classical Chinese poetry. But in post-'Cultural Revolution' China, the subject

[51] Music by Cui Jian, lyrics by Huang Xiaomao.
[52] I owe this interpretation to Anne Sytske Keyser.

is especially painful: the political struggle of the past decades set children against parents, and husbands against wives. There were few homes that remained untouched by the general upheaval. Cui Jian is seldom explicit about what drove the people in his songs apart, but in China, everyone can fill in a story of her/his own.

## THE VOICE OF THE 1980S

It is clear that young Chinese of today need other aspirations and self-definitions than those offered by official Party propaganda. The 'Spirit of Lei Feng' and the 'Glory of the Motherland' no longer suffice as moral guidelines in a society where the soldierly, egalitarian way of life has rapidly been replaced by a concern for personal wealth and upward social mobility. How to live? What choices to make ?

One need which Cui Jian's music helped to fulfil is the redefinition of the individual. In the first place, he has contributed to the destruction of the revolutionary ethos of obedience and self-sacrifice symbolized by the Long March. In the second place, his songs point out that the individual does not need to look toward the group to provide him with ideals. He is strong enough to face life on his own, because he is born proud and free. Even if he possesses neither rank nor richess, he has his own dignity, and is fully entitled to love and respect.

But if this is true, then the problems are only just about to begin, as Cui Jian so keenly observes. If the individual does not derive his existence from the group, then the relationship with others is not given, but must be established by the individual himself. Going out into the world, he finds that most people are cool and indifferent, and that friendship and love are hard to obtain. Previously, one may have been poor and inconspicuous, but one was at least a participant in the great international socialist undertaking in which the glorious motherland stood at the center. Today, one can easily feel insignificant amid the madly milling urban crowds, as if one could vanish into thin air without anyone noticing. In China, this feeling is even more acute then elsewhere, as it originates not only from the anonymity of modern city life, but also from the disruption of society caused by the 'Cultural Revolution'.

Cui Jian has portrayed the many ways in which people react to changing realities: bewilderment, resignation, nostalgia, energetic self-confidence, a proud non- committal attitude, alcoholic release, etc. His achievement lies in the fact that he has expressed these feelings in a musical and linguistic idiom which appeals enormously to the young generation.

'Art and culture are like a lake, politics is like a boat', he said in 1990, 'I don't worry for a second about whether or not the boat is about to sink or not - I am much more fascinated by the water. The boat has to take the water into account, since that's what it floats on. Now that the people in the boat do not sufficiently love the water, they are whipping up the waves which may lead to their own doom.' [53]

The authorities made life hard for Cui Jian in 1987, cancelled his 1990 tour, and again forbade him to perform at a Beijing concert organized by foreigners in June 1991. But silencing a voice because it raises important problems does not mean that these problems simply disappear.

[53] In Frénk van der Linden, op. cit., p. 73.

CHINESE TERMINOLOGY RELATING TO SHAN'GE

# China's 'Mountain Songs'

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**Chinese scholars dinstinguish three main categories of Chinese folk song: haozi, xiaodiao, and shan'ge. Haozi are described as work songs in the rhythm of the work, xiaodiao as lyrical songs in binary rhythm, mostly sung indoors, and shan'ge as songs mostly in free rhythm, sung outdoors and performed in a loud manner. In Western literature, the notion shan'ge is sometimes literally translated as 'mountain songs', although the songs are not necessarily related to mountains. In this article, the authors discuss the specific nature of shan'ge, and attempt to describe this particular genre in some detail, mainly from the point of view of Chinese terminology. Their source material consists of several hundred shan'ge, collected from written sources or copied recordings in China, as part of a project of computerized melody analysis of Chinese folksongs at Essen University in Germany.**

Our project of computerized melody analysis of Chinese folksongs, with emphasis on folk songs of the Han Chinese, was started at the Music Department of Essen University several years ago.[1] Our data bank currently comprises more than 2,000 Chinese folk song melodies in written notation. The melodies are analysed according to twelve different criteria, with the aim of providing a better picture of tune relationships, specific song types, modal features and other issues in the field of Chinese folk song.
One of the problems we had to deal with is the categorizing of the Chinese songs, according to their genre, function and contents. *Shan'ge* 山歌 is one of three ostensibly well-defined formal categories (*haozi* 号子, *shan'ge*, *xiaodiao* 小调) in Chinese scholarly literature[2]. It is the purpose of this article to describe the nature of the *shan'ge* more accurately. Among the 1,203 Han folk songs assembled for our project, there are 352

[1] The authors wish to thank the Volkswagen Stiftung for enabling them to realize the computerized melody analysis project in Essen in cooperation with two Chinese institutions, employing three research assistants.
[2] For a different view, see Schimmelpenninck, 1990.

*shan'ge*. Among the minority folk songs in our project, there are only 15 *shan'ge*[3] but, in a separate collection from Shanxi Province, another 100 are contained. All these songs form our basic materials. The music examples in this article have been taken from our forthcoming volume *Hundert Chinesische Volkslieder* ('A Hundred Chinese Folk Songs') to be published in Germany later this year.[4]

## TERMINOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION

*Shan'ge* form a fairly widespread genre of Chinese folksong. They originated in rural and mountainous areas, which is the reason why they are sometimes referred to as *shanye zhi qu* 山野之曲 ('songs from the mountainous wilderness'). In our view, the most important aspect is that *shan'ge*, unlike *xiaodiao*, are mainly sung by peasants, and as part of the peasant repertory they are performed both in mountainous and flat areas, certainly not only in the mountains, as the name of the genre seems to suggest.They are often sung during work, while the singers are engaged in one of the following occupations: the tending of animals, the mowing of grass, the transportation of goods or the collection of firewood. But *shan'ge*-singing may also simply be a pleasant pastime: *shan'ge* are sometimes sung during a stroll in the mountains, frequently in the form of a dialogue, one singer on a mountain top answering another singer from the other side of the valley. Finally, *shan'ge* are frequently performed during traditional festivals in mountainous areas. The *Hua'er* 花儿 Festival of the Han and Hui nationalities, the *Gexu* 歌墟 Festival of the Zhuang people or the *Fanglang* 放浪 Festival of the Yao people are examples of such occasions.

In different parts of China *shan'ge* assume different musical forms, and are also given different names. For example, in Shanbei, they are referred to as *xintianyou* 信天游, in Shanxi as *shanqu* 山曲 , in Qinghai and Gansu as *hua'er*, in Mongolia as *pa shandiao* 爬山调, in Hubei as *ganwuju* 赶五句, and the Miao people call them *fei ge* 飞歌 .

In the following paragraphs, a number of characteristics of the genre will be described, perhaps in somewhat subjective terms, which can be explained by the fact that it concerns a repertory of China's rural population.

## FUNCTIONS OF SHAN'GE

With regard to the *shan'ge*, two major functional aspects can be distinguished: one is the practical use of the songs, the other concerns their expressive functions.

What are the practical functions of the genre ? With the help of *shan'ge*, singers can entertain themselves while working and they can dispel boredom and feelings of dejection. Take, for example, the song 'Our *shan'ge* are as numerous as the hairs of a cow' 我们山歌牛毛多 (no.56 in our collection), which is sung while weeding the fields. It is performed in constant interaction between a lead singer and a choir. This practice is meant to increase the enjoyment of the work and to drive away fatigue.[5]

Another practical function is that *shan'ge* may be sung over a wide plain (or from mountain to mountain) in order to communicate with each other, and to express mutual love or just feelings of friendship. One such dialogue song is *Duiniao* 对鸟 (see Ex.1, below). It is normally sung by children while playing in the fields or in the mountains. In this song, they recite the names of birds to prove their knowledge. This 'game', according to Chinese sources, exemplifies the untroubled life of the singers.

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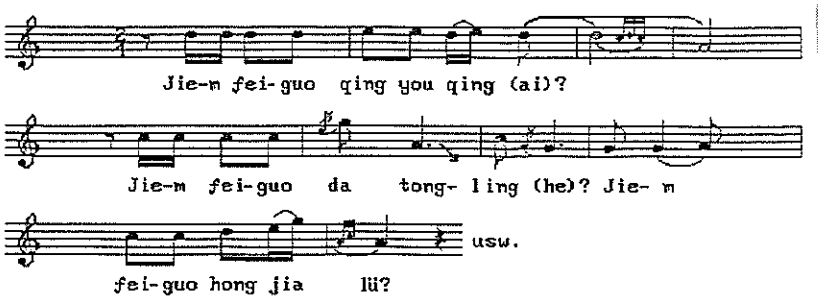
[3] Assuming the Han Chinese researchers are faultless in their use of ethnic categories.

[4] This article basically presents the theories of Professor Jiang Mingdun (Shanghai), and to some extent those of Professor Song Daneng. The authors wish to thank Ms. Huang Yongzhen of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music for her assistance in the preparing of this article, and for her many useful suggestions.

[5] However, this is not a genuine work song. Such a song would be named *haozi*.

Ex.1. *Dui niao.*




Finally, a *shan'ge* may be used to call the animals while tending. It is astonishing to see how well the animals seem to respond to such calls.
In spite of the practical functions mentioned above, which are partially related to work, *shan'ge* cannot be regarded as true work songs, if only because their form is not at all defined or even limited by a particular work situation. Compared with the genuine work songs (the *haozi*), the *shan'ge* are generally open to more musical variation and development.
With respect to expressive functions, the main incentive for the singing of a *shan'ge* is the unreserved articulation of a singer's thoughts and feelings. Compared with other Chinese folksongs, the *shan'ge* appear to be the least artificial, the most natural type of folk songs. Their characteristics are directness, warmth, openness and sincerity - all of these being attributes of the rural population. An example of sincerity can be found in *Lanhuahua* 兰花花(see Ex.7 below). In this song the courageous thoughts of a woman who has freed herself from the fetters of a feudalistic marriage are expressed in a very direct and straightforward fashion.
'The murmuring stream'小河淌水(see Ex.14) provides a different example of an expressive function of *shan'ge*: a couple of young lovers call at each other from afar in the mountains, conveying their yearning and love. Songs of this type could functionally be described as *qingge* 情歌 (love songs), but the same term can frequently be applied to that other main folk song genre, the *xiaodiao*, - just like *shan'ge*, they often function as love messages.

## VARIOUS CLASSIFICATIONS

The style and characteristics of *shan'ge* are different in different parts of China, depending on the particular region or nationality to which they belong. In the Chinese highlands, *shan'ge* are normally sung in a loud, strong, free and open fashion. The shepherds songs in the plains have been described as optimistic, even exhilarating. The *shan'ge* of the plains, especially that of Jiangnan (south of the lower course of the Yangtze) are often referred to as 'swinging, open-hearted, pretty and graceful.'
There are various methods of classification of the *shan'ge*. With respect to the music and vocal style, the *shan'ge* for solo voice can be divided into three categories: *gaoqiang* 高腔 , *pingqiang* 平腔 and *aiqiang* 矮腔 .[6] The *shan'ge* for two or more voices are classified separately.
With respect to the relationship between texts and music, *shan'ge* can be divided into *shuchangxing* 抒唱性 (lyrical songs), *yaochangxing* 谣唱性 (ballads) and *jichangxing* 急唱性 (fast songs). With respect to the location and nature of the performance, *shan'ge* can be divided into three further categories: *shubiao shan'ge* 抒表山歌(lyrical songs expressing emotions, etc.), *fangmu shan'ge* 放牧山歌(shepherd's songs) and *tianyang shan'ge* 田秧山歌(field songs).

6 Cf.Song Daneng, 1986.

In the following few paragraphs, the classification according to musical features and vocal style (*gaoqiang*, *pinqiang* and *aiqiang*) will be introduced in some detail.

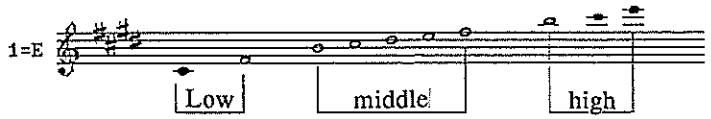
## GAOQIANG SHAN'GE

The *gaoqiang shan'ge* are loud, resonant and high-spirited, their melodies take the shape of waves. In this type of songs, the so-called *tuoqiang*[7] 拖腔 passages are longer than in the songs in the other categories. The rhythms of *gaoqiang shan'ge* are free, lofty and full of variety and change. Pauses occur repeatedly, and the phrases are also longer than in the songs of other types. Rhythmic padding syllables are common. Male performers generally sing their *gaoqiang shan'ge* in falsetto voice.

'Walking up the high mountain and looking down onto the plains' 上去高山望平川 (Ex.13, see below) is a *gaoqiang shan'ge*.This song is also commonly referred to as *hua'er* (a northern Chinese name for *shan'ge*). In this song, the singer compares his beloved with a peony, expressing his contradictory feelings about her: love and longing on the one hand, fear on the other.

The song covers a wide pitch range (see Ex.2), which can be divided into three parts:

Ex.2.

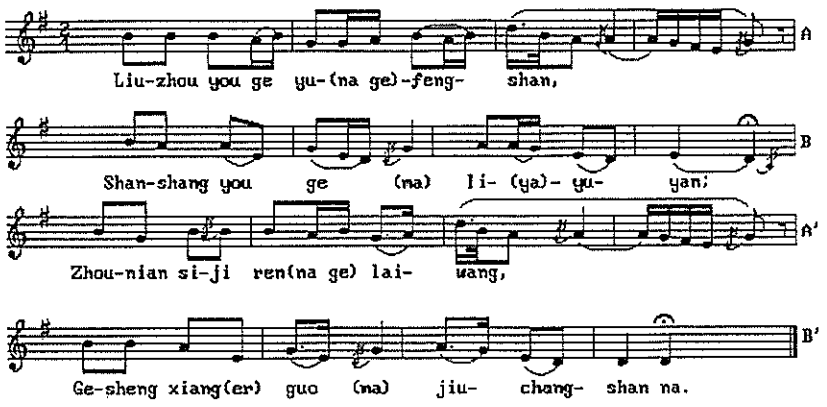



low, middle and high range. The lowest range is usually applied during the *qiqiang* 起腔 (beginning phase) of the song, while the middle range is often reserved for exclamatory and explanatory passages. The high range is always employed in recitative style and is often sung in falsetto. There are many pauses and frequent jumps. The entire song normally consists of a single period in two phrases (AB)[8]. However, between the two main phrases, there is a repetitional phrase.

## PINGQIANG SHAN'GE

*Pingqiang shan'ge* are more common than the other types.Their melodies are broad and graceful.The rhythm of a *pingqiang shan'ge* is comparatively free, and its *tuoqiang* is comparatively short. Furthermore, the tunes of this type of song are quieter than those of *gaoqiang shan'ge*. An example of a typical *pingqiang shan'ge* is shown in Ex.3: 'There is a trout-cliff in Liuzhou' 柳州有个鲤鱼岩.

Ex.3. *Liuzhou you ge Liyu-Yan.*




[7] This designates a free performance style in which some notes are prolonged. *Tuoqiang* can be inserted between two phrases, or it can be added at the end of a song.

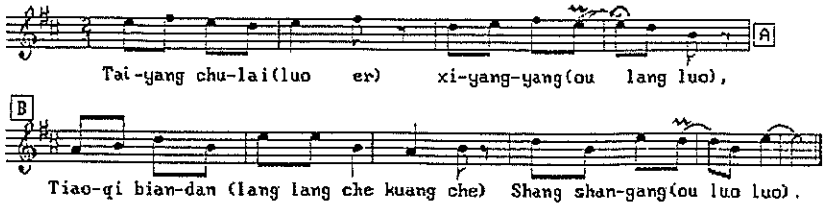
[8] *Danduanti* 单段体.

In contrast to *gaoqiang shan'ge*, this song contains fewer large intervals, its range is narrower (one octave) and there are only a few pauses. The song consists of two periods which are themselves subdivided (AB and A'B', respectively). The four phrases are of identical length.

## AIQIANG SHAN'GE

The tunes of *aiqiang shan'ge* are smooth, and very limited in range. Large intervals seldom occur.The rhythm is very regular, every note corresponding to one text syllable. The structure of the songs is neat and concentrated. *Tuoqiang* techniques are normally not applied in this type of *shan'ge*. In fact, *Aiqiang shan'ge* are usually performed in a natural voice. The features mentioned here are all applicable to the song shown in Ex.4, 'The sun is rising' 太阳出来喜洋洋.

Ex.4. *Taiyang chulai xiyangyang.*

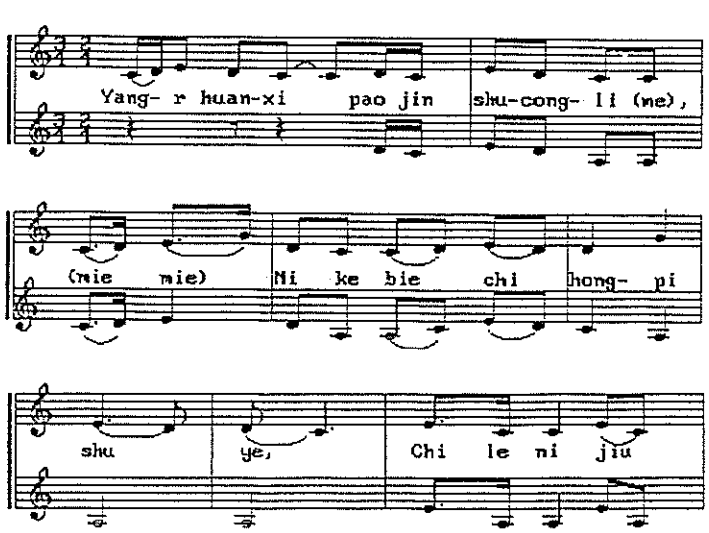


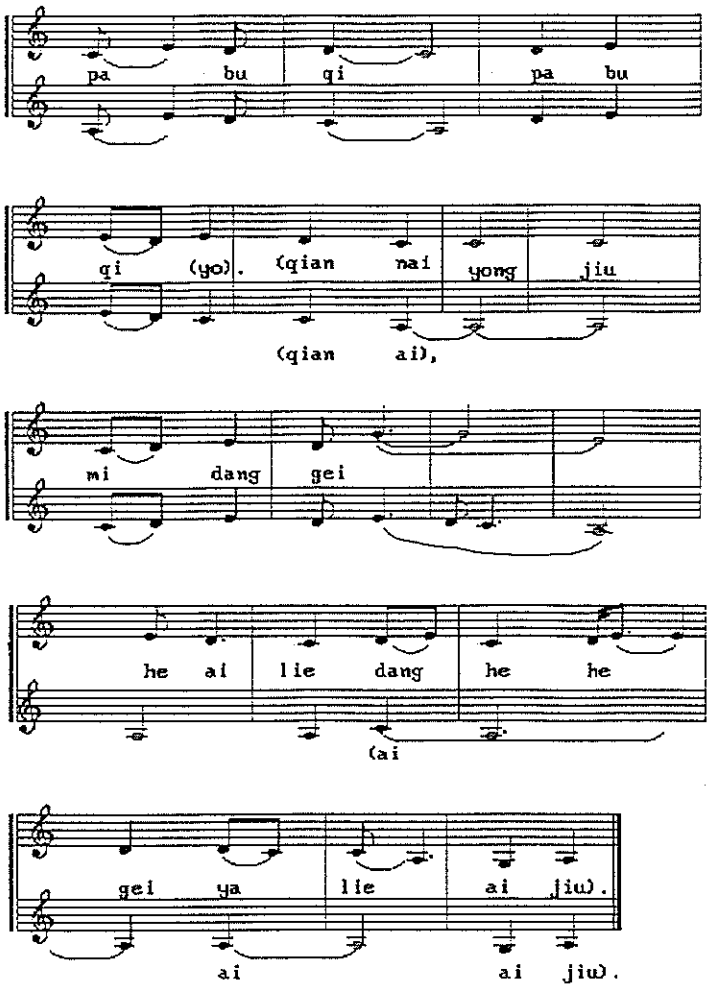

This very short song contains six different notes only, which are used for one syllable at a time. Despite the syncopation, the rhythm is perceived as regular. The song consists of a single period combining two phrases of differing length (4 and 6 bars).

## DUOSHENGBU SHAN'GE (MORE THAN ONE VOICE)

In addition to solo songs, there are numerous *shan'ge* which require two or more performers. They are called *duoshengbu shan'ge* 多声部山歌. Many examples of this type are found among the folksongs of the Zhuang, Yao, Gaoshan, Dong, Miao and She minorities in southern China. Most *duoshengbu shan'ge* are in two parts, each representing variations of the melody. The style applied in the example of a *duoshengbu shan'ge* shown below (Ex.5) can be described as *zhisheng* 支声 'complementary polyphony', with rhythmic padding syllables added. This song, 'Little goat' 羊儿欢喜, can be sung either by two people or by a larger group of singers.

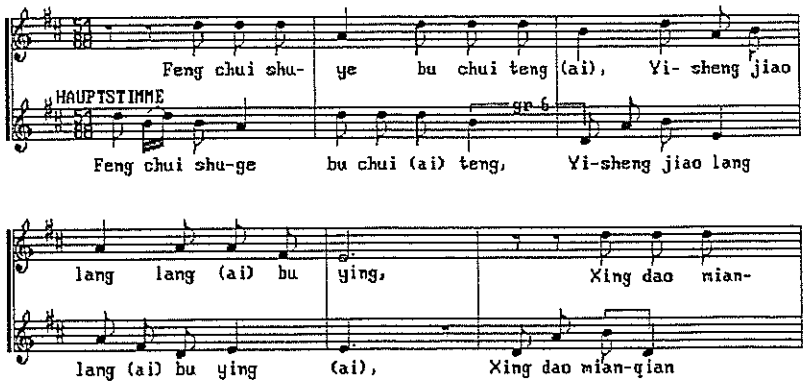
Ex.5. "Little goat".

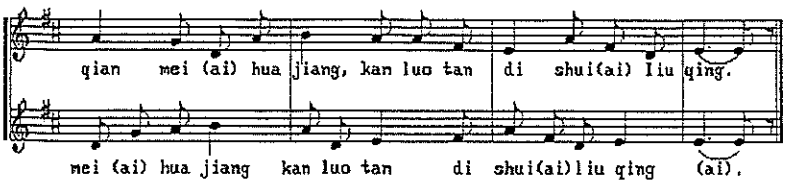





Another performance style of *duoshengbu shan'ge* is known as *mofang* 模仿, 'imitational polyphony'. Ex.6 畲族情歌, a love song of the She minority, is a case in point. Here an almost identical melody is sung in two parts, one part imitating the other. In this case, the upper part is for solo voice and the lower part for a group, but it would be acceptable to perform this song with two voices only.

Ex.6. *Shezu qingge.*



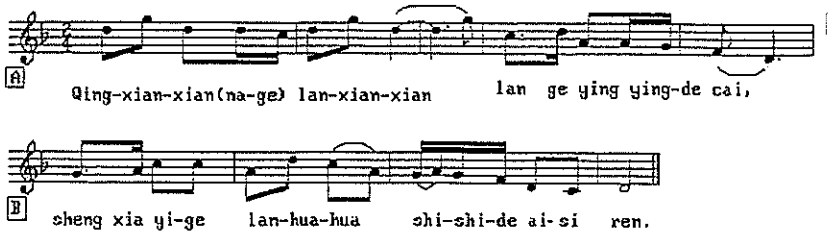



Note that the lower part actually presents the leading voice. The upper part starts a free imitation of it after two bars. The interval of a major sixth is characteristic for the folksongs of the She.

## THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF SHAN'GE

*Shan'ge* tunes usually consist of two to four phrases. The form of a two-phrase *shan'ge*, short as it may be, is often extraordinarily well-conceived, as in Ex.7, 兰花花.

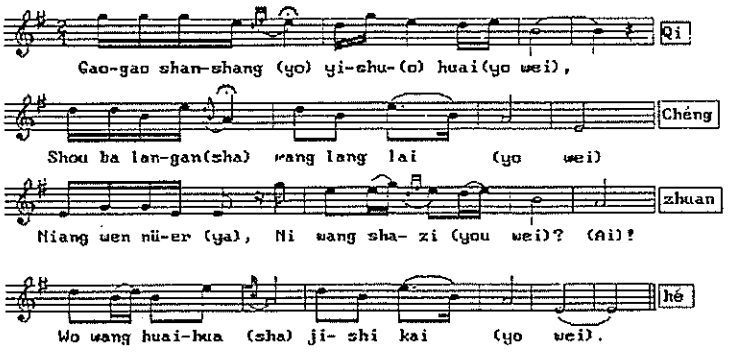
Ex.7. *Lan hua hua.*




The first phrase of this song is usually performed in an open and passionate manner, while the second phrase is sung in a more subdued way.

Four-phrase shan'ge tunes are quite common in the southern provinces of China. With regards to structure, the phrases of a four-phrase tune can often be designated (in order of their appearance) as *qi* 起 ('beginning'), *cheng* 承 ('development'), *zhuan* 转 ('turn') and *he* 合 ('end'). This form principle is demonstrated in the song 'When the *huai* are blooming' 槐花几时开 (Ex.8).

Ex.8. *Huaihua jishi kai.*



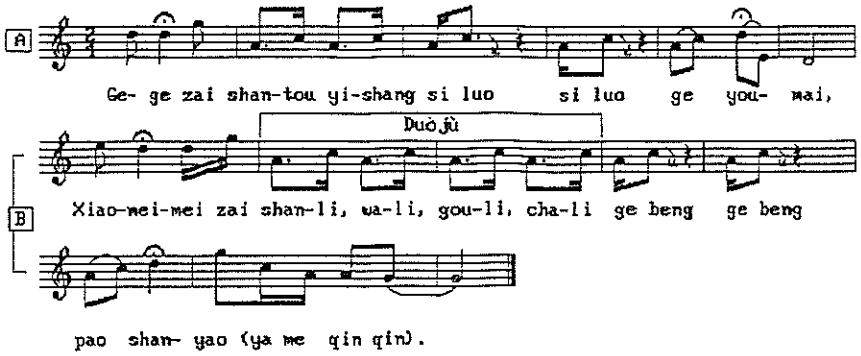

## DUOJU AND CHUANJU

Some specific structural elements of *shan'ge* need to be mentioned: *duoju* 垛句, *chuanju* 穿句, *qianqiang* 前腔 and *houqiang* 后腔. Each of these terms denotes a specific type of added phrase.

*Duoju* [9] refers to the insertion of a phrase in a faster tempo in a two- or four-phrase *shan'ge*, which results in an augmented structure. The process can be seen at work in the two-phrase song 'Mowing the oats' 割莜麦 (Ex.9).

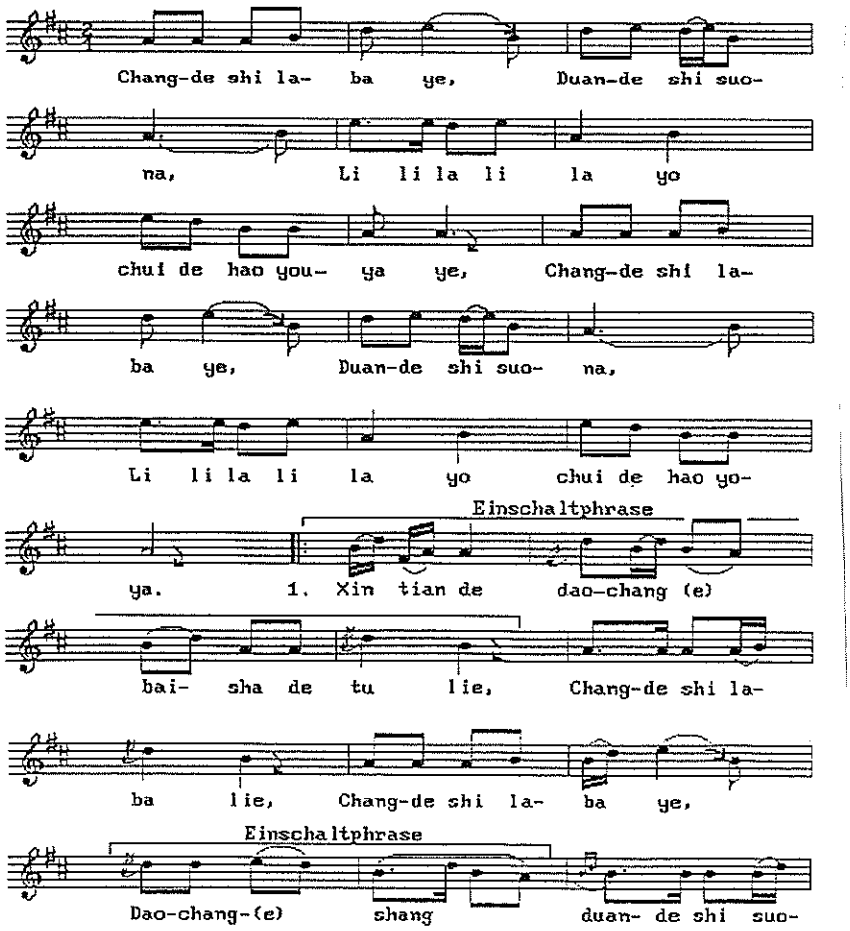
[9] *Duoju*: a repetitive phrase in more or less fixed form. Its rhythm is concise and regular.

Ex.9. *Ge youmai.*

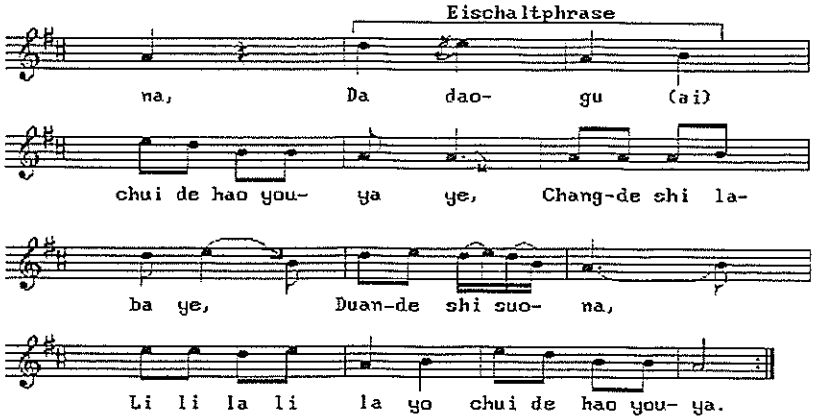



*Chuanju* refers to an intermediate phrase [10] which is inserted between the so-called 'upper' (*shangju* 上句) and 'lower' (*xiaju* 下句) phrases of a song. *Chuanju* is intended to provide a musical contrast with these phrases. The words of the *chuanju* and the other parts of the song are also rather at variance - the *chuanju* often consists of meaningless syllables. Although the song 'Labadiao' 喇叭调 (Ex.10) does not contain *shangju* and *xiaju*, it does include several intermediate phrases, which, quite exceptionally, carry part of the main text of the song.

Ex.10. *Labadiao.*



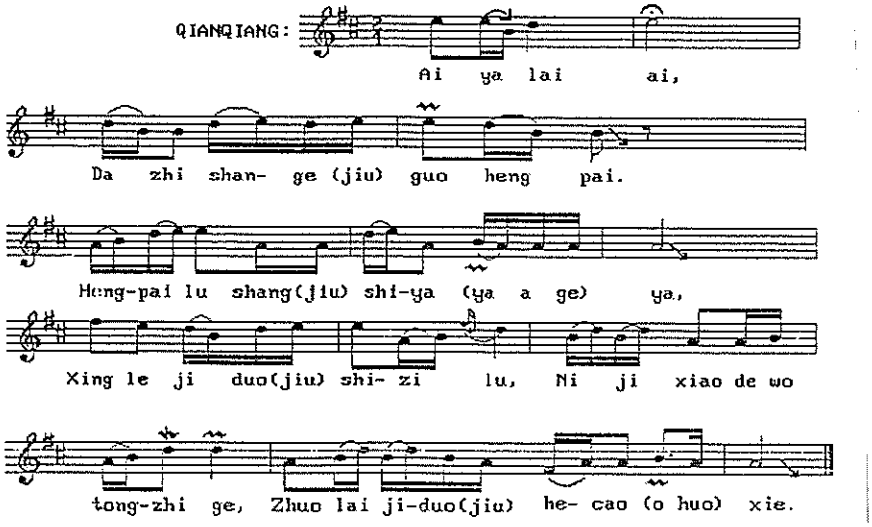

[10] *Chuanju* could also be translated as 'interlude' or 'bridge'.




## QIANQIANG AND HOUQIANG

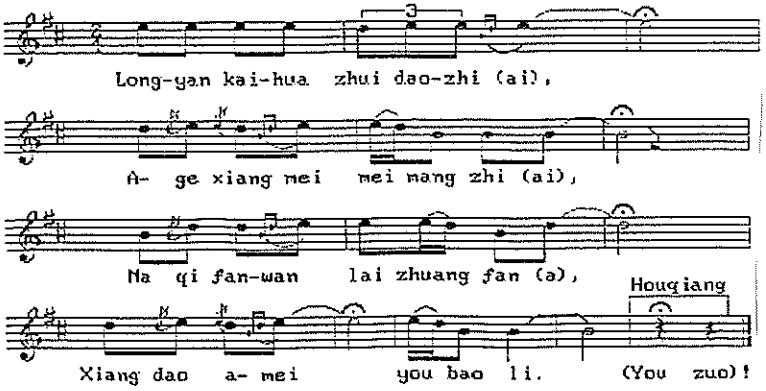
*Qianqiang* and *houqiang* are exclamations which are added to a song in order to mark either its beginning or its end. A *qianqiang* is an exclamation preceding a song, as in Ex.11, 'If you sing a mountain song, it will cross the valley' 打只山歌过横排.

Ex.11. *Da zhi shan'ge guo heng pai.*




A *houqiang* appears at the end of a song, usually as an exclamation shouted in a natural voice. See Ex.12, 'The blossoming Longyan presses down the twigs' 龙眼开花坠倒枝.

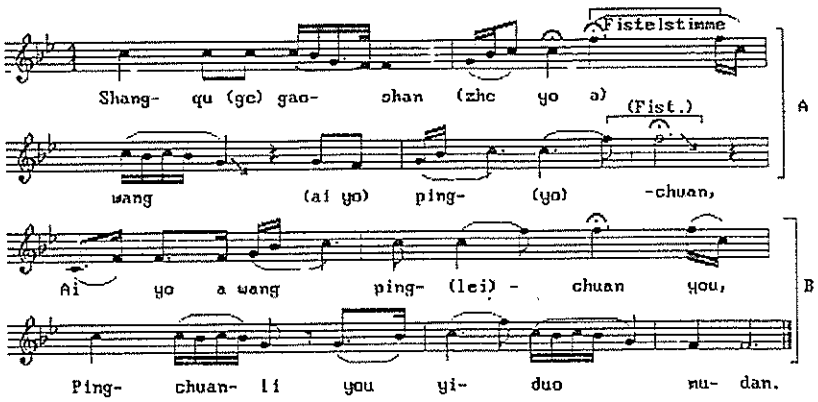
Ex.12. *Longyan kaihua zhuidao zhi.*



## VOCAL TECHNIQUES IN SHAN'GE

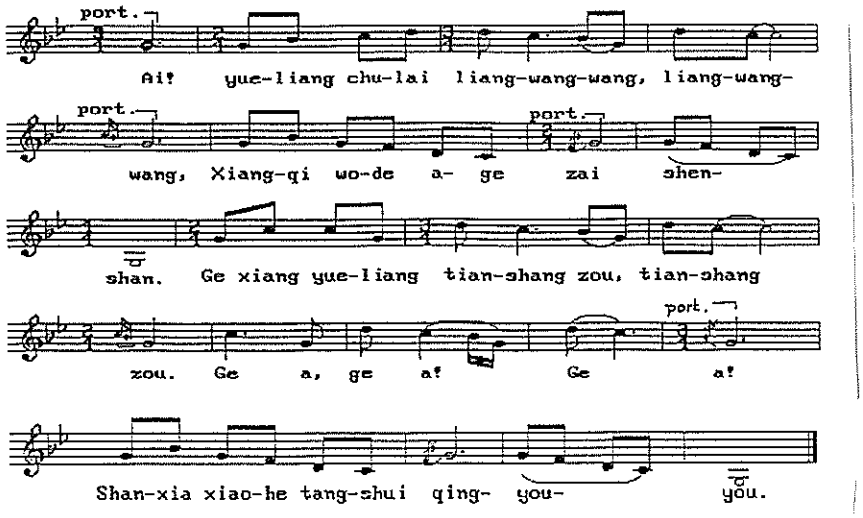
*Gaoqiang shan'ge* are usually sung in falsetto voice, with the male voice actually reaching higher than the female voice. In some *shan'ge* there are frequent shifts from the falsetto to the chest register and vice versa, resulting in sharp contrasts in pitch and timbre. A case in point is 'Walking up the high mountain and looking down onto the plains' 上去高山望平川 (Ex.13).

Ex.13. *Shangqu gaoshan wang pingchuan.*




*Pingqiang shan'ge* and *aiqiang shan'ge* are mostly sung in a natural voice.The singing is very loud and resonant, as can be seen from'The sun is rising' (Ex.4), an *aiqiang shan'ge*, and from 'The murmuring stream' 小河淌水 (Ex.14), a *pingqiang shan'ge.*

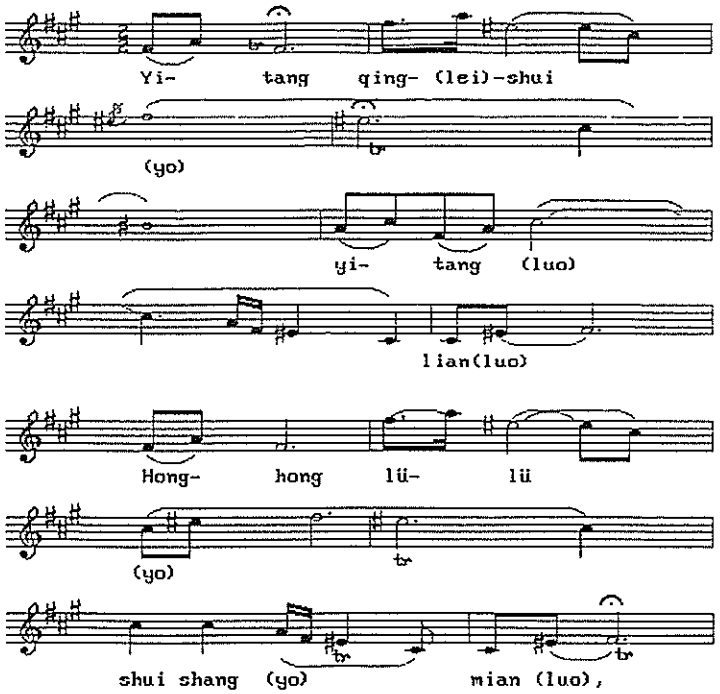
Ex.14. *Xiao He tang shui (Midu Shangge).*




Finally, some technical terms with respect to vocal technique need to be mentioned. *Runqiang* 润腔 denotes a very expressive manner of shaping a melody, particularly in prolonged notes and phrase endings.

Prolonged notes are sometimes sung in a technique called *chanyin* 颤音 (roughly corresponding to a trill) or another one *shuyin* 嗽音 (creating specific sound effects, for example like gurgling). These techniques are applied in 'The clear water of the pond and the lotus in the pond' 一塘清水一塘莲 (Ex.15). Final notes are often sung with a downward slur. See Ex.14 and Ex.11.

Ex.15. *Yitang qingshui yitang lian.*

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IN REPLY TO ZHANG'S & SCHAFFRATH'S ARTICLE

# What about the Singers?

ANTOINET SCHIMMELPENNINCK
(Leiden University , The Netherlands)

**The authors of the article on shan'ge on the preceding pages refer to their topic as a well-defined category of Chinese folk songs. But what *are* shan'ge? We are offered a random selection of songs very different in style and structure, without reference to sources or places of origin. Basically, 'shan'ge' is a generic term, covering a wide range of different types of folk songs which do not necessarily bear any relation to each other. Broad categorizations of folk song types cause a lot of confusion in China. Some of the terminology may need re-examination. Where do the terms come from? Who uses them?**

The authors of the article on *shan' ge* are to be congratulated on their computer project in Essen, which is potentially of great value in investigating Chinese folk songs. Their plan to publish a general anthology of songs is equally welcome, as a public introduction to this part of China's music culture. In their article, they give a useful impression of Chinese theoretical views on *shan' ge*, and the way in which this genre is described and discussed in China. However, while reading the article, I was also unhappy about many of its assumptions.
The major categorization of Chinese folk songs in three groups (*shan' ge, xiaodiao* and *haozi*) is a 20th century theoretical invention by Chinese musicologists. While it is very important to take account of Chinese scholarly views on the national folk song repertoire, this particular division seems to me not very helpful in achieving a better understanding of the folk song repertoire. China's folk song culture is probably too vast and too varied, musically, ethnically, and historically, to work with such general and vague distinctions. With respect to the category names and terms mentioned in the article by Zhang/Schaffrath, the most important questions to be asked are: who is using these terms, where do they actually come from, and what do they *really* mean ?

## 'VOCAL MUSIC'

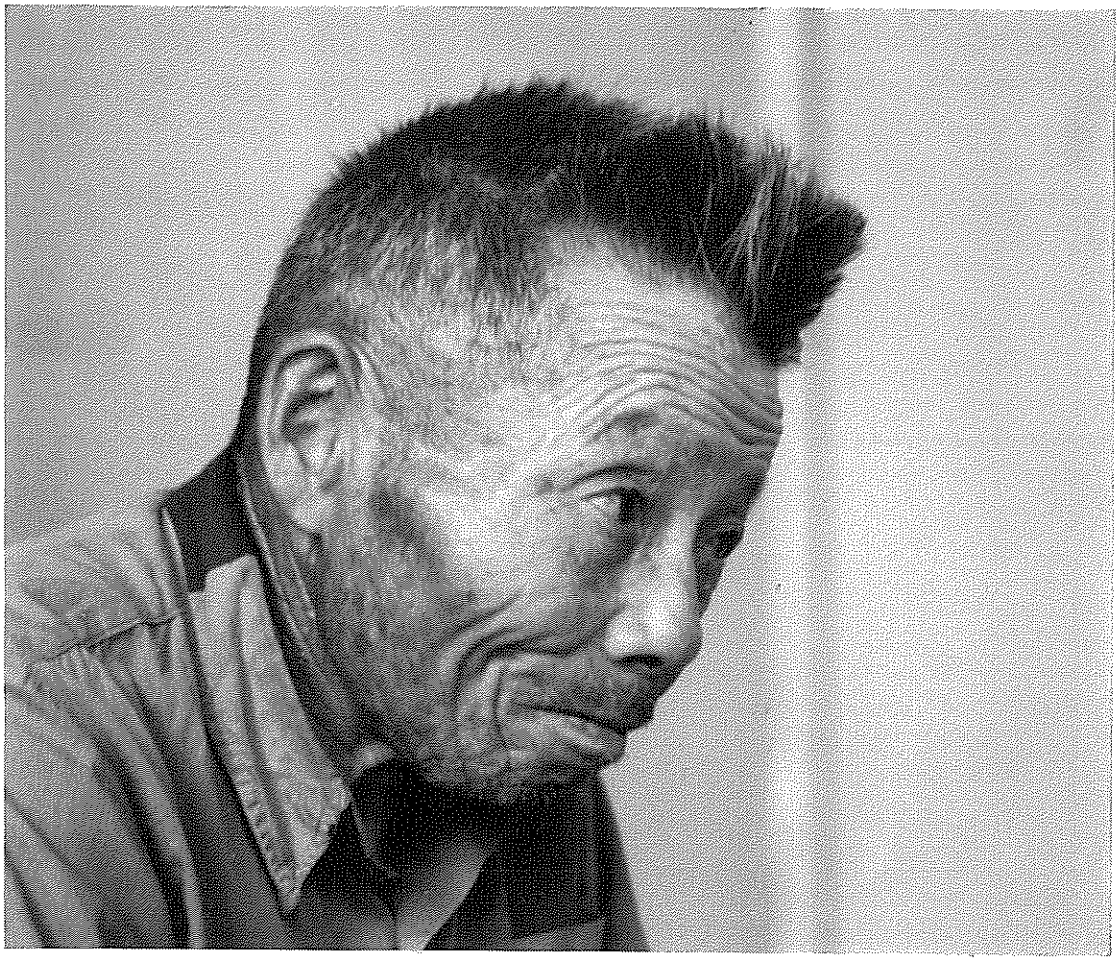
The term *shan' ge* was used in China as far back as the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907) but its original meaning is unclear. From the Ming dynasty onwards the word *shan' ge* was used by scholars and literati to denote (short) lyrical folk songs, usually about love. In southern Jiangnan, where I have collected *shan' ge* over the past five years, the word has been used for hundreds of years as a common term for peasant songs, not only short songs but also epic songs which may take several hours or days to perform.

Qian Afu (82), a singer from the Wuxi region. He is known as 'The King of *Shan'ge*'.

The flexibility of the term may be illustrated by reactions of peasants in the Shanghai district to visits from political propaganda troupes during the Cultural Revolution: 'Ah, the city people have come to sing *shan'ge*!' The propaganda troupes actually performed revolutionary songs, often to Westernized tunes. In this case, the word *shan'ge* was used simply to denote 'vocal music'.
Chinese musicologists and folk singers frequently disagree about what is a *shan'ge* and what not. Most singers of folk songs in the Chinese countryside find it difficult to verbalize about their own repertoire, but they can be firm about which songs in their repertoire represent *shan'ge* and which ones don't. But so can scholars. I have presented Professor Jiang Mingdun (Shanghai Conservatory) with a number of my own field recordings and asked him to point out which of the songs were *shan'ge*. In fact, all of them were *shan'ge*, according to the singers themselves, but Professor Jiang selected a number as 'typical *shan'ge*', and a number as '*xiaodiao*'.Who is right?

## A DIFFERENT ORIGIN ?

Rural folk singers in southern Jiangsu use the term *shan'ge* for ninety percent of their song repertoire. The vast majority of the songs are based on a very limited number of tunes, to which hundreds of different texts are sung. Most of the *shan'ge* singers I recorded use only *one* tune, to which they sing ninety percent of their texts. The remaining body of texts is sung to a much more varied repertoire of tunes which are denoted, by the singers themselves, as *xiaodiao*, and which are less popular than the



Zhao Yongming (73), a singer from Luxu (Jiangsu). He is known as 'The *Shan'ge* Cricket'.

*shan'ge*. As far as texts are concerned, there is no difference between the two categories. The music of the *xiaodiao* is at times more regular in rhythm, and is sometimes said to have been performed to instrumental accompaniment in the old days, but this is not a hard-and-fast rule. It seems, therefore, that the major distinction between the two genres lies in their origin, not in their form or structure – not at present, at least. This is the situation in one particular region in China.[1] The situation may be different in other areas. I only mention it to make clear that the term *shan'ge*, at least among the singers, has different meanings in different parts of China, and bears no simple relation to musical or functional features of the songs.
In some regions, notably among minorities, the term *shan'ge* is not used at all, but Chinese scholars apply it, all the same, to certain types of minority songs.
The article by Zhang and Schaffrath fails to make clear *whose* terms are cited. The theorists' or the singers' ? From which part in China ? We are not given any sources, nor any clues about the origin of the names of several 'subgenres' and 'techniques' listed in the article. Without this information, we have no key to a proper understanding of the songs.

[1] I discussed the 'one tune phenomenon' in detail in a paper presented at the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology in Berlin, October 1990. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Jiangsu or to China – a similar phenomenon has been signalled in folk song cultures in other parts of the world. Cf. F. Kouwenhoven & A. Schimmelpenninck – 'Chasing a Folktune in Southern Jiangsu', in: *Intercultural Music Studies* Vol.3, Institute for Comparative Music Studies, Berlin, 1992 (forthcoming).

Yuan Xiaomei (70), a *shan'ge* singer from Jiaxing (Zhejiang).

Terminology is immensely important in China. Among musicologists, the *categorization* of musical genres is considered to be one of the most important activities. In this respect, Chinese 20th century musicology presumably follows 19th century tendencies in fields like anatomy and natural history: every item should have its name, its label.
Some scholars of Chinese folk songs seem to apply terms and descriptions freely to genres and vocal techniques without a critical examination of their contents. However, a categorization of folk songs appears useful to me only if it focuses on a specific aspect of the songs: on their function, for example, or on melodic features, or performance aspects, or textual content. The categories and sub-categories introduced by Zhang and Schaffrath mostly present a mixture of these aspects, which easily results in confusion.
A task for independent scholars is to go back to the roots of the folk song repertoire, to investigate the singers' own terminology, their *local* terminology, and to determine the meaning of the local terms in the light of historical sources *and* of contemporary performances.
This is likely to result in entire dictionaries, since the number of terms available is overwhelming. Nevertheless, such detective work may lead to interesting discoveries; it may even bring to light hidden relationships between songs in different parts of the country.
I have been able to trace most of the terms introduced in Zhang's and Schaffrath's article in the publications by Song Daneng and Jiang Mingdun that are cited in the bibliography, but this does not bring us any further. Where do Song and Jiang get their

notions from ? It is hard to determine how specific some of these names and categories are. They just continue to flower and blossom and multiply in Chinese musical theory. Terms like *gaoqiang* and *pingqiang* seem to be borrowings from Chinese opera and story-singing (*quyi*) respectively, but can the vocal techniques to which these terms refer in three different genres really be compared to each other ?

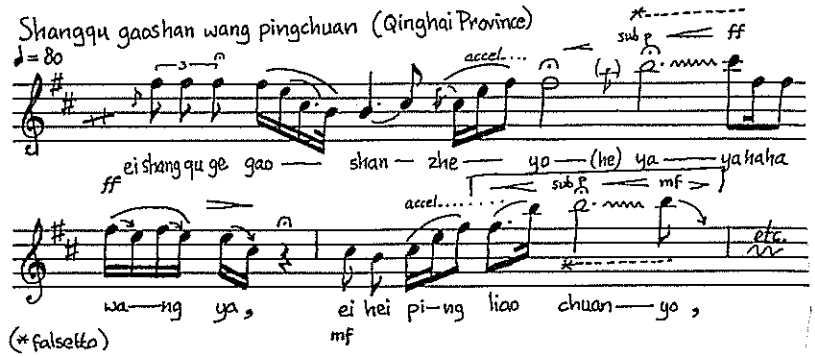
## ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

Zhang and Schaffrath describe *shan'ge* as 'the least artificial, the most natural type of Chinese folk song'. These and other qualifications (direct, open, warm, sincere) are, from a Western musicological perspective, largely meaningless, but they should not therefore be disregarded. I think one should take very seriously any terminology with respect to the aesthetics and 'moral' implications of folk songs, as expressed by either theorists or singers, no matter how 'subjective' these may seem to us. But what we need, first of all, are the Chinese terms for these qualifications, not so much their translations.

Moreover, a proper discussion of ethical and aesthetic values of different genres of folk songs, as viewed by certain groups, would require a careful examination and a separate study, rather than some quick references and brief examples, which I do not find really helpful Zhang and Schaffrath's article.

The music examples given in the article are mostly not assigned to any particular region, nor to any particular singer. While it is true that these songs may serve as models of tunes sung in certain areas, I would still have preferred 'earmarked' versions: transcriptions of dated performances by specified singers at specified locations. After all, a fair number of the transcriptions are actually based upon a single recording of a song kept and catalogued by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

It is a pity that these transcriptions appear to be *generalized* notations of the melody, in which ornamentation – or what is believed to be ornamentation – is left out. Moreover, the tunes are each represented by one musical verse only. In this way, discussions about structure, rhythm, modal and melodical features of the songs become very difficult. We lack the information necessary to draw reliable conclusions. Take a look at Ex. 13. The rhythmic notation of the song is 4/4, but the rhythm in which it is performed in reality is so free that this amounts to a totally different kind of music. Furthermore, the highest note in the song, an upward slide of a major second at the end of the long falsetto note in the first line, is missing in the transcription in Ex. 13. It may be that the singer of this particular example left it out in his performance, but it is so characteristic in other performances that we cannot judge this song properly unless we know alternative versions. For comparison, here is my own transcription of the opening sequence of this song, from an (alas) anonymous recording, kept at the Shanghai Conservatory:



## A BETTER FATE

The position of the performers should be properly understood. Many *shan' ge* singers in China regard themselves as craftsmen rather than artists. For most of them, singing is a matter of course, almost like eating and sleeping; at the same time, they are extremely proud of their skills and regard their songs as individual, personal property, no matter how much of the words and the music were inherited from others and previously shared by a whole generation. It is not unusual for a singer to speak of 'his' *shan' ge* although his neighbour may sing the same words to the same tune. Creativity does not make much sense to them, perhaps, but individuality does. The essence of their music is not so much in their tune but in their own voice, which directs the course of the melodic flow for them in a unique way, different from that of their neighbours. Therefore, in making our own transcriptions, we cannot be accurate and detailed enough. In my view, 'generalized' pictures of folk songs – be it in the form of notated examples or of noncommittal or vague descriptions – cannot help us much in recognizing the unique features of this whole repertoire. The rural 'tigers' and 'kings' of *shan' ge*, who have given us all this wonderful music, deserve a better fate!

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAURENCE PICKEN

# Bringing to life tunes of Ancient China

FRANK KOUWENHOVEN
(Leiden, The Netherlands)

**The British scholar L.E.R. Picken, now aged 82, lives in a two-storey cottage in Lower Park Street in Cambridge. His rooms are crammed with books and musical instruments, and with ceramics and other trophies from the Far East. Here, one may occasionally hear sound-recordings of Banquet Music composed during the Tang dynasty. Splendid music! Whether or not these pipes and drums would have sounded exactly the same in China more than twelve centuries ago is a matter of on-going debate. At any rate, it would be hard to find a scholar more respectful of China's historical past than Dr. Laurence Picken, the man behind these remarkable sounds. Recently, some of his reconstructions of Asian medieval music have been performed for the first time in China itself. In this interview, Picken reflects on the outcome of his recent visit to China – a visit made after an absence of 45 years. He also talks about his career as a scholar – his student years in Cambridge, his encounters with famous guqin-players in China, his adventures as a traveller, and how he changed profession at the age of 57: 'Well, you see, it's all structure!'**

Since the 1960s, Dr. Laurence Picken has acquired a large collection of musical scores descended from the Tang dynasty – some original manuscripts, but mostly copies of manuscripts originally stemming from China and surviving in Japan. These scores have been preserved in Japan over the centuries and are still regarded as a great national treasure in that country. In time, the Japanese developed a new performance tradition, faithful at first to the Chinese notations, but later developing into a Japanese art-form in its own right. It was Laurence Picken who suspected that behind the contemporary practice of *Tōgaku* lay a hidden world of Chinese music – transformed and changed almost beyond recognition.
While active as a researcher at Cambridge, he began to re-interpret and transcribe the ancient scores into Western notation. In due course, together with his music students, he recovered a rich but forgotten repertory of Chinese melodies – dance-tunes and song-tunes which, at one time, must have sounded at the Imperial Court and in the streets and teahouses of medieval cities of China. This music suddenly took coherent shape again.

Laurence Picken in his house in Cambridge.

His method was not unlike that of Sinologists such as Karlgren, Waley and Haloun in translating Chinese classical texts: in order to understand a document properly, they laid aside the accumulated interpretations of commentaries of later date, and endeavoured to determine the meaning of a text at the moment of its creation. Likewise, Picken and his pupils deliberately ignored the living tradition and performance-practice of Japanese Tōgaku today, taking the earliest manuscripts found in Japan for what they originally were – a treasure-house of Chinese music.
In the 1970s, they brought the sounds of the Tang court back to life – not in China, but in Cambridge, playing them on a mixture of Western and Chinese instruments. Picken remembers this period as one of the most exciting in his life. Working at the scores, in what he calls an 'atmosphere of heady euphoria', he realized that he and his students were recovering more than just part of the Tang repertory. Picken argued it was probably early medieval music from all over Central and Eastern Asia that was being deciphered. After all, the court of the Tang had been a centre of international culture, where musicians from Indo-China, Korea, Bokhara, Kashgar, Samarkand, Turfan and other regions were maintained. Indeed, many of the tunes in Picken's collection appear to be of foreign, non-Chinese provenance, and for that reason may, in fact, sound slightly 'Western' to Chinese musicians of today.

Some of Picken's transcriptions were performed, under the direction of the Musicologist Professor Chen Yingshi, at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1988; but it was in in October 1990 that a major performance by Chinese musicians in Mainland China took place, at the same Conservatory. The local audience reacted

enthusiastically to the performance, and Picken was warmly acclaimed in various Chinese music journals.
However, do all Chinese now believe that *this* was how their music really sounded in the Tang era ? Not necessarily. There is controversy in China about the work of Picken and his students, largely due to the ignorance of the extent of the Japanese sources. The views of Picken and his group have also been criticized in Japan, where *Tōgaku*, as performed in practice, has always been regarded as a faithfully preserved image of the Chinese tradition. These controversies have at times lent a sense of drama to the 'Tang Music Project'. Nevertheless, the work of Picken and his students marked the beginning of an important era of studies of Chinese music. And the project continues to yield results.

## BACH IN SHANGHAI

At present, aged 82, Laurence Picken is hardly the prototype of a retired scholar. It is fifteen years since he ceased teaching; his students have left one by one, pursuing careers in other parts of the world; but Picken continues work on his project, with a gusto and energy that are typical of him. The sixth fascicle of his internationally acclaimed series *Music from the Tang Court* is currently underway. He calculates that publication of the remainder of the repetory will require another twenty volumes. Picken may not be able to accomplish that task, but he simply continues.

Dr. Picken is a plump little man, still remarkably young in appearance. He formulates his sentences thoughtfully, frequently pausing to recall a name or a title. He complains that his memory is now failing, but he needs very few words to express his ideas clearly. Occasionally, he jumps up to fetch a manuscript, or to sing a line from a Tang song, in order to make a point. Occasionally, there will be a hint of anger, when he remembers a mistake, or some unjustified criticism. 'It is really staggering that it should be the Chinese rather than the Japanese who recognize what I have done', he exclaims at one point during our conversation.
Most of the time, he talks with quiet enthusiasm about his ideas and future plans, demonstrating a truly admirable energy. 'My new field of inquiry is the ancient music of Japan', he says. 'What was the condition of Japanese music before musicians from Korea began to arrive in the second and third centuries, and before there was any influence from Sui or Tang China ?' His smile indicates he already believes he knows the answer.

We are seated in his small living room, close to a magnificent, single-manual, late 18th century organ, a gift from a neighbour in Jesus Lane. Picken is particularly fond of playing Bach on it. The organ literally disappears into the ceiling, through a hole that had to be made when the instrument was moved in. There is no telephone in his house.

Enjoying our English tea, we listen to a few seconds of a sound-recording of banquet-ceremonial Tang music, actually an item played recently in the Shanghai concert. 'Listen to this! In length, the piece is comparable to a Brandenburg Concerto!' Unfortunately, his small cassette-player breaks down, and we can listen no further. A little while later, Picken again uses his own voice to sing a ritual melody of the Tang.
'So beautiful..! One can't imagine a more astonishingly accurate correspondence between word-sense and musical movement than you get here. For example, where the text draws attention to the fluttering of birds that finally come to rest on the oaks, there is the most delicious musical uncertainty of movement, which is finally resolved when the tune comes to rest on what we would call the dominant.'
He starts singing again: '*Pianpian zhe zhui, zai fei zai xia, ji yu bao xu...*', and quietly waves his arms to illustrate the wing-action of a hovering bird.
'Isn't it extraordinary ? Really, a striking musical illustration of a movement, and so

Picken playing the guqin in 1986.

astonishing to be able to do that with a one-note-to-one-character melody. The Chinese seem unaware of this sort of quality preserved in some of their ancient songs.'[1]
For Picken, Tang music is an actuality rather than history. He is quick to share that enthusiasm with others. 'The music of Tang and Song is really no less worthy of our interest and admiration than is any other aspect of the cultural life of those times', he says. The material is there, ready to be brought to life by younger scholars and musicians.

## ON THE TRAM CAR

Laurence Ernest Rowland Picken was born in Nottingham on 16 July 1909 as the son of a garage manager. 'My mother was of Welsh descent. All her family had the sort of minor musical gift that the Welsh tend to have, and it came out in me. I began to play the piano at four, taught by an aunt; but nobody in the family thought that music was an appropriate career for a male, and of course, musicology did not then exist.'
The fascination that the Far East holds for him goes back to early childhood.
'To some extent it was my mother's singing of songs from the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *The Mikado*. I remember, when I was about ten years old, dressing up in old garments of my mother's and pretending I was Japanese.'
However, a musical future was unthinkable. Somewhat unexpectedly, Picken became a natural scientist. 'I used to travel to school every morning on the tramcar, and on that same tramcar travelled the master in charge of biology. I became absolutely infatuated with the subject, and decided to abandon the humanities.'
In 1928, he went to Cambridge to study natural sciences. 'The nose of the superior

[1] He refers here to the songs for the *Shi* preserved by Zhu Xi.

public school in the city was seriously put out of joint by this little upstart from a secondary school getting an open major scholarship to Trinity College - it was unheard of!'

## A LANGUAGE GENIUS FROM NAZI GERMANY

At Cambridge, Picken retained his interest in Asian cultures. In his spare time, he began to study Chinese. He got hold of his first book with Chinese characters – a manual for consular officials. A Chinese research-student[2] read to him parts of the *Shijing*, the famous anthology of Chinese song-texts. It was the first spoken Chinese he heard.

'I was already aware of the references to musical instruments in those ancient song-texts. I asked the Chinese student whether he knew of any book on Chinese instruments or on Chinese music. He wrote to China, and in due course I received a little book, *Zhongyue xunyuan*. It was of immense value to me.'

But there was hardly time for Picken to study Chinese, let alone Chinese music. The courses he read in Natural Sciences were very demanding. Later, at the beginning of the Second World War, he was directed, as a scientist, to the post of lay-officer in charge of the Eastern Regional Blood Transfusion Laboratory. His task was to prepare filtered, sterile, human serum for transfusions forcasualties.

In the meantime, neither his interest in Asia nor his love of music diminished. The war brought to England many refugees from Nazi Germany, among them German Jewish booksellers. Picken bought from them precious 18th century works on music theory[3], including what he recognized as first printed quotations from the works of J.S. Bach. In fact, the first musical essay he published dealt with Bach.

One refugee from Germany was the Sinologist Gustave Haloun, a distinguished scholar who came to Cambridge as Professor of Chinese on the recommendation of Arthur Waley. He was to exert a profound influence on Picken's further career.

'Haloun was a real language genius. He knew Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and during the First World War had been required to have a speaking knowledge of all the languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I studied with him for eight weeks in 1944, in a course that he called 'elementary grammar'. In fact, it amounted to a broad course in Chinese culture, including a smattering of epigraphy, classical Chinese (*Mengzi* in particular), Simon and Kalgren on ancient phonetics – everything. Even the national minorities and their languages did not escape his attention. Only two students participated in this extraordinary course, the other being a young Polish woman, a refugee. We used to sit on one side of the table, with Haloun on the other; but he lectured as if there were a hundred of us.'

Haloun was very demanding. For example, he expected his pupils to be able to use Chinese dictionaries in any European language. Picken: 'By the time I went to China, I was able to read substantial parts of inscriptions on bronzes, which made a deep but quite unjustified impression on my Chinese hosts.'

## CHINA RIDDEN BY WAR

In the year when Laurence Picken studied with Haloun, and before travelling to China, he became a Research Fellow of Jesus College; and it was as a zoologist that he first went to China. He travelled there as a member of a British Council Scientific Mission. It was in the autumn of 1944, in the final days of British colonialism. The Second World War was entering its closing stages when it was decided to send a small group

[2] Later Professor Feng Depei.

[3] Works by Mattheson, Kirnberger, Marburg, now kept at Cambridge University.

Laurence E. R. Picken was born in Nottingham on 16 July 1909. As a scholar, he pursued equally meritorious careers in zoology and musicology. At Cambridge, he studied natural sciences as a scholar of Trinity College, where he earned two doctorates, in 1935 and 1952. He became a Research Fellow of Jesus College in 1944, and worked as Director of Studies in Natural Sciences (Biology), and later as Tutor *in loco parentis*, from 1946 to 1966. During this period he was Assistant Director of Research in Zoology in the University. In 1959, he was Walker Ames Visiting Professor of Zoology at the University of Washington, Seattle. The year after, his major biological study *The Organization of Cells and Other Organisms*, was published by the Clarendon Press.

He has always taken a strong interest in Asian music, and it was stimulated particularly in 1944-45 when, as a member of a British Council Scientific Mission to China, he met many Chinese musicians and scholars, and studied the Chinese zither *guqin*. In the 1950s, after the communists rose to power in China, Picken turned his attention to another part of Asia. In Turkey, he studied the psaltery *kanun* and the long lute *saz* during long vacations in 1952 and 1961. He returned to Turkey many times, eventually publishing *Folk Musical Instruments of Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 1975), the most comprehensive study of that topic. In 1962, he became editor of the *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*. Publications in the zoological field continued until 1966; but in that year his university post of Assistant Director of Research was transferred from Zoology to Oriental Studies, in which Faculty he directed graduate research courses in ethnic musics until his retirement in 1976.

In connection with his teaching of graduate students, a research project on Tang music was launched. It was financed by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In 1977, the series *Musica Asiatica*, conceived as an occasional, periodical publication, was started under his supervision. His Tang Music Project resulted in *Music from the Tang Court*, an important series of transcriptions of Japanese manuscript-sources of the 'Tang Music' (*Tōgaku*) repertory of the Japanese court, in Western notation, with critical attention to sources and detailed structural analysis. This series has become a classic. Work on it continues today, volumes 2 to 5 having been published by Cambridge University Press.

Picken's particular areas of musical research are China, Japan and Turkey, but he has also directed his attention to other parts of the Asian world, including Central Asia, South-East Asia and Korea. His writings, which focus, in particular, on historical and organological aspects of Asian music, have established high standards in historical musicology, while laying the groundwork for Western research in the history of Chinese music.

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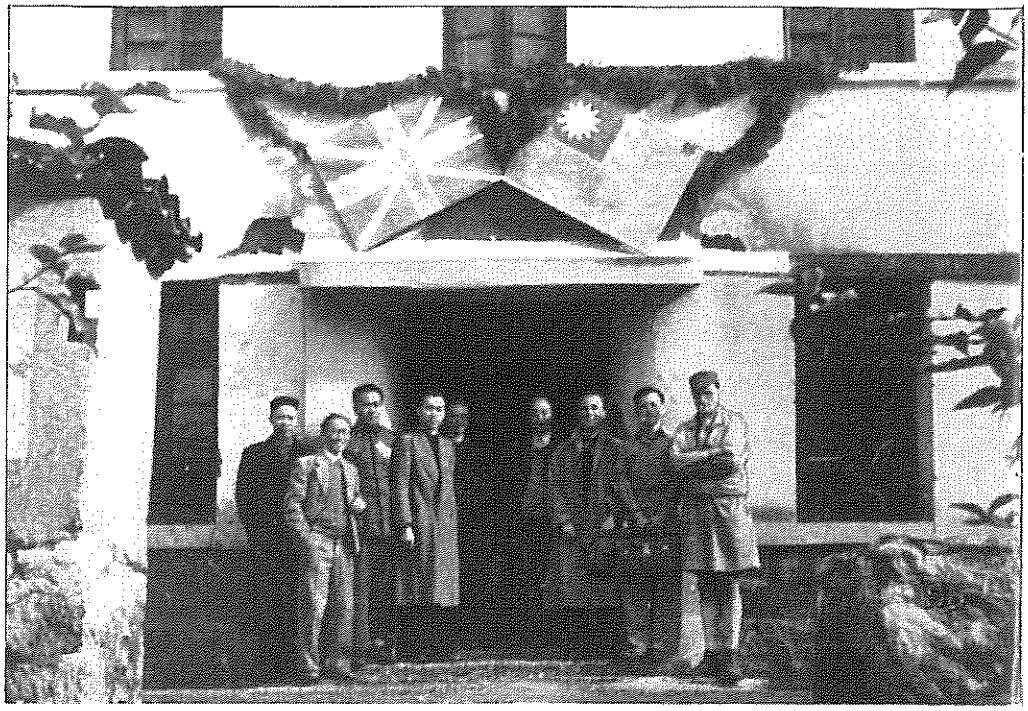
Seal in Han style, carved by Robert van Gulik for Laurence Picken in 1945. Picken's Chinese name is Bi Keng 畢鏗. *Bi* means 'complete', 'finished', 'ended'; *Keng* is a word imitating the sound of bronze idiophones, and so a reference to musical interests.



Members of the Sino-British Mission and local researchers in Pingyi, Yunnan, 1945. Picken is 3rd from the right (in mackintosh).

of British scholars to the Far East. Their task, in the words of the leader of the Mission Joseph Needham, was 'to renew and extend the cultural and scientific bonds between the British and Chinese peoples'. These bonds had been broken at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. The British scholars were originally required to give scholarly lectures, but things took a different turn once the mission arrived in China.
Picken: 'I went as a general biologist, visiting institutions and giving talks on subjects such as "twinning in domestic animals". Needham had been sent there as a distinguished biochemist. But he discovered that, in wartime, the Chinese primarily needed simple equipment for the teaching of elementary physics and chemistry, things such as pipettes, balances, chemicals. The simplest equipment was often lacking. Supplies were purchased in Calcutta and flown to China by the RAF.'

At that time, China was a country drained of resources by war and heavy inflation. Millions lived in extreme poverty and misery. University staff and students were often accommodated in buildings of lath and plaster. They had been forced to evacuate their universities, and transfer both manpower and equipment, from eastern and northern China, occupied by the Japanese, to the remote highlands of the south-west. The trek to the interior, over hundreds of miles of wild country, with pathetically inadequate means of transport, had been an extraordinary achievement.

The commander of the Chinese armed forces, Chiang Kai-Shek, had established his new headquarters in the city of Chongqing. Not surprisingly, the city was incessantly bombed by the Japanese; but the Chinese were extremely persevering and resourceful, and continued education and scientific research, even under these difficult circumstances.
Faced by shortages of every kind, they demonstrated great inventiveness. When microscope slides could not be had, windowpanes, broken by air raids, were cut up, and unobtainable coverslips were replaced by mica.
By the time Picken reached Chongqing, the bombing had ceased. There was no longer

Picken's arrival in China in 1944: a car accident on the Burma road.

imminent danger in the region, except at one moment, when the Japanese reached a point about 200 km from the city. Needham and his group planned for evacuation, but the moment of tension passed.

## A CAR ACCIDENT ON THE BURMA ROAD

Picken relates how he travelled to China, and was immediately involved in all kinds of adventures.

'In September, 1944, I went by boat to Port Said, then flew via Karachi to Calcutta, where I stayed a fortnight, and then on to Kunming. I was met at the airport by Joseph Needham and his wife, and some Chinese colleagues. These were a driver, called Kuang Wei, a mechanic, and a young biochemist, Cao Tianqin, who became a good friend.'

'The Mission had a small truck, transferred from the RAF to the British Council, and Joseph loved driving it himself. That same evening, we set off, up the Burma road on our way to Chongqing, with Needham driving. At one point, there was a stationary truck on the left-hand side of the road. It moved out, just as we were about to pass. So we moved out as well, and came too near the soft shoulder of the road. Our truck turned upside down. Mrs. Needham and I sat in the back of the truck. Fortunately, we fell onto the enormous drums of alcohol – our fuel – instead of them falling on us...'

'It was unthinkable that we should abandon the truck, now upside down with its wheels in the air, in a paddy-field, but the driver and mechanic were afraid of being left to guard it. However, our companion Cao Tianqin spoke Chinese with the most beautiful Beijing accent, and it was argued that bandits or villagers would have second thoughts about ransacking the truck if faced by a gentleman speaking the beautiful Chinese of the Capital. So he stayed with them, and we got a lift on a bus to the next lodging-house. All night, while they were lying on the soaking-wet canvas cover, Cao

Tianqin told the driver and the mechanic episodes from the famous Chinese tale "Monkey", until they went asleep. The nearby Americans pulled us out of the field next day.'

## A FIRST MEETING WITH GUQIN PLAYERS

Picken soon felt at home among colleagues and new friends in the British Council House. 'It was the first occasion in history that Chinese and British colleagues lived and worked together as equals. All the staff "lived in", and a very warm relationship existed between us. Had bandits attacked our truck on the road, I am sure our Chinese colleagues would have risked their lives in our defence.'

The Needhams were aware of Picken's interested in music. So too was Robert van Gulik, the Dutch Sinologist and (much later) writer of Chinese detective-stories, who, at that time, was Counsellor in the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Chongqing.

'The very evening I arrived in Chongqing, Van Gulik and his wife had arranged a dinner-party for a number of Chinese musicians, the Needhams and myself. Liang Tsai-Ping, Zha Fuxi and Xu Yuanbai were all present...'

Picken was immediately captivated by the music of the seven-stringed Chinese zither. 'There was no music like it! I bought a qin, made under the supervision of Xu Yuanbai, and began to take lessons. I played guqin every day. In England, I had always enjoyed a daily ration of Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues; I felt it no loss practising guqin instead. Playing it improved my sense of pitch and extended greatly my conception of music - of sound, form and structure.'

He was made a member of the *Chongqing qinshe*, an established circle of local qin-players. He participated in a weekend with Van Gulik at the old-style home of Xu Yuanbai in the Sichuan countryside.

'We played when we liked. We ate when we were hungry... Old gentlemen with very long fingernails were among the players. They couldn't use their nails to pluck the strings, so they played with continuous glissando, moving their nails on the qin surface all the time. It sounded like giant cockroaches seeking hiding. Xu Yuanbai had an excellent fingering technique, but his playing did not have the extraordinary intensity of that of Zha Fuxi, who played as if he were creating the work for the first time, always listening intently to what the instrument was saying.'

When Picken was due to go to Chengdu, in January 1944, Robert van Gulik suggested that he visit Mr. Pei Tiexia, a wealthy, traditional scholar who was famous among qin players as the owner of a pair of ancient zithers of great beauty. They were made by a distinguished local family of instrument-makers from the Tang dynasty, named *Lei*, and the instruments were called *Dalei* ('Big Thunder') and *Xiaolei* ('Small Thunder').

'Van Gulik had written a letter of introduction for me, and in due course, along with Cao Tianqin, we set off. The back of the truck was filled with qin lovers. Mr. Pei lived in a large, traditional extended-family house in the Sichuan countryside, outside Chengdu. He was a bird-like old man, very frail. After I had played a guqin piece for him, *Yangguan san die*, he left the room and returned carrying two zithers. With his wide sleeves, and holding these two instruments, he looked like Moses with the Tablets of Stone! I played *Pu'an zhou* on *Xiaolei*, perhaps his most beautiful qin. Its harmonics sounded like bells, and the surface of the instrument was covered with a network of fine lines, only to be seen on thousand-year-old zithers. Beautiful! You could see the network, but not feel it with your fingers. Later, we sat in silence, facing a moongate, with a view of trees in the rain... At times I wish I had been able to stay with him, as his pupil, but I had to go back to Cambridge.'

Later, Picken heard from one of Pei's relatives that Pei, after being harassed by

officials, had committed suicide. In his testament he ordained that his two Tang zithers be burned together with him.

## THE MOMENT THE MUSIC LEAVES THE EARTH

While telling stories of his experiences in China, Picken at times reveals something of his convictions as a music historian.

'In visiting Pei Tiexia, Robert van Gulik used me as a sort of emissary. He had confided to me a score of the guqin piece *Zhuang Zhou meng die*, and he wished me to ask old Mr. Pei to add metrical signs. The copy had been written by Van Gulik himself in his splendid *kaishu*. After several months I received a letter from Pei, enclosing Robert's manuscript. He said he was sorry he couldn't do it, because he had never learned this piece from his teacher.'

'I think this is a very important story. Fifty years ago nobody would have dreamed of attempting to play or interpret a piece not learned from a teacher. True enough, there were different qin schools with different interpretations of pieces in the common repertory, but performers only played pieces orally transmitted to them by their teachers. At present there seems to be a tendency among certain players to feel themselves free almost to 're-compose' pieces. From the point of view of the qin tradition, I think this is total nonsense, and very wicked nonsense indeed. Of course we should attempt to play pieces that we have not heard played before, but in my opinion it is quite wrong to raise that to "part of the art". In fact, there is a very simple and rational way of approaching the problems of rhythmic interpretation of unfamiliar scores, as I discovered years ago when I was preparing chapters for *The New Oxford History of Music*.'

Picken is unhappy in many ways about modern tendencies in guqin music. 'The most destructive thing is that the Chinese have taken to simply omitting phrase marks when reprinting qin scores. I think it *so* inimical to the tradition to remove the sole articulatory signs...'

He is also worried by the ever faster speed of performance. 'Recent performances of *Xiao Xiang shui yun* are much too fast. I doubt that modern performers know the subject associated with each section of the piece in the 1425 printing of the score. In particular, passages in harmonics are played far too quickly. Van Gulik used to say of such passages: "The moment where the music leaves the earth!".'

## CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN

Picken took gramophone records with him to China, at a time when European classical music was almost unknown in China, outside major cities.

'I had with me the Purcell fantasias, as well as Holst's *Hymn of Jesus*, and the Bliss *Piano Concerto*. I played the latter two one night in the courtyard of a temple in Xizhou, Yunnan. The temple was in secular use, and most of the audience were university staff or students. The interesting thing was the wartime appetite of the Chinese for such music, and their total absorption. You could have heard a pin drop.'

Picken found that gifted Chinese musicians had no notion of the Western distinction between art music and popular music. 'I was saddened when a pupil of Xu Yuanbai, a fine young musician, wishing to demonstrate his acquaintance with Western music, began to sing "Oh, Rosemary, I love you".'

Picken's memories at times have a romantic ring about them. In January 1945 he climbed Emei Shan, the famous solitary peak in Sichuan, in the company of Chinese friends and the future art-historian, Professor Michael Sullivan.

'I played guqin in monasteries on our way. I remember the incomparable alpine flora, the bluest blue of the sky when we reached the summit, and the Jialing River, far, far

down below. I remember, too, the extraordinary noise of the chatter of toothless old women on pilgrimage, by night in the monasteries. By day, descending from the summit, they recited "*Daifo hui jia, dai fuo hui jia!*" – "Bearing the Buddha, I return home!" One Chinese in our company, carrying my qin, would then cheekily respond: "*A mitofo qing cai luobo* " – "Amitofo... Cabbage and turnip!".'

## TURKISH FIDDLES

In 1945, Laurence Picken returned to Cambridge, and four years later, China became a Communist republic. Did he never wish to return ?

'Impossible, I had no resources, and I didn't want to return to a country where I couldn't move about freely. Travelling would have been possible only on a sort of Intourist basis.'

Instead, he turned his attention to Turkey.

In 1951, a British friend in Istanbul invited him for a holiday visit. 'My first interest was in classical Turkish music, and I thought, by taking up the *kanun*, I would learn something of a musical tradition still modal and essentially non-harmonic, like the music of China. I also knew that, with the exception of the free-reed mouth-organ *sheng*, most musical instruments in contemporary China today had originally come from Central Asia. I thought it would be rewarding to look at Turkish music. But later the idiosyncrasies of Turkish folk instruments and their music, the real folk music, became a passion.'

'One evening, sitting in a garden on the hillside above Trebizond, there came from a loudspeaker the sound of a fiddle. I had never heard anything like it, and I couldn't begin to think how it was done. It was a richly harmonic music, polyphonic even, performed at breakneck speed, and achieving a continuity of sound only possible by a very high frequency of change in the direction of bowing. The following year, travelling along the southern coast of the Black Sea, between the mouth of the Bosphorus and Rize, I heard the same fiddle again. I was in second class; the fiddler - evidently a sailor - in third class. I leaned on a rail, listening. After a while, he noticed me and, by gestures, invited me down. I made draft transcriptions of some of the tunes he sang; but I could make nothing of his high-speed fiddling. Listening, one became breathless, experiencing something like a perpetually unresolved syncopation!'

## 'GO TO THE CHILDREN'

In 1952, Picken returned to Turkey, this time with a small, clockwork-driven recorder, and devoted his energies to the recording of the distinctive musics of the fiddle, the *Karadeniz kemençesi*, used only on the Black Sea coast, and the double-chanter, droneless bagpipe of the mountains of the eastern watershed, *tulum*.

From 1955 onwards, he collected instruments systematically, in preparation for a book on Turkish folk instruments, not completed and published until twenty years later.

A particular feature of Picken's work has been his concern for sound-producing toys, made by children, seeing these as miniaturized versions of archaic, religious instruments, once in adult use. In regard to these, he says: 'If you really want to know how such toys are made and used, you must go to the children. They can at times supply important information.'

After 1966, Picken did not return to Turkey. 'I realized it would be fatal to go there again, because I would only find more instruments, more materials, and the book would never be finished. It was finished, however, in 1975; and within a week or so the type had been melted down, so that a second edition became impossible.'

In his investigation of musical instruments, his knowledge of natural science stood him in good stead. For instance, he was the first to identify the material used in making

reeds for Turkish shawms. 'Nobody knew what it was, until I got a Turkish musician to go to the reed-beds and get me specimen of flowers, roots and samples of the stem at different diameters and ages. The Herbarium at Kew identified the reed, and determined the species and sub-species of the genus *Phragmites* used. The necessary property of this material is that it can be constricted without buckling, so that the reed is attached to the metal staple by an air-tight ligature.'

## IT'S ALL STRUCTURE

During all these years, Picken continued his career as a respected zoologist in Cambridge. In 1960, his massive volume *'The Organization of Cells and Other Organisms'* was published and recognized at that time as a standard work in the field.
Then, at the height of his scientific career, Laurence Picken changed profession. At the age of 57, he was appointed Assistant Director of Research in Oriental Music in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. It was only possible through an extraordinary gesture on the part of the retiring Professor of Zoology: 'He simply gave my post to the Faculty of Oriental Studies. Quite miraculously, people soon began to ask whether they could become my pupils in ethnic musical studies.'

Picken does not look upon his shift from zoology to musicology as a disjunction in the course of his life. 'You see, it's all structure. As a zoologist I am interested in structure. As a musicologist I retain that interest. It is the fundamental reason why I never wanted to call myself an *ethno*musicologist, because I feel that ethnomusicologists show too little interest in the structure of music itself.'

He opens his book on the organization of cells, and turns to the last page. It bears a quotation from the *Guanzi* , in the distinguished calligraphy of his Chinese friend Cao Tianqin. The passage eulogizes structure as the integrating element in all things. From now on, Picken would turn to the music of China's golden era, the Tang dynasty (AD 618-960), and its structure.

## IN SEARCH OF A LOST REPERTORY

As early as 1945, a Chinese scholar (Yin Falu) had presented Picken with a copy of a small collection of ancient Chinese lute pieces, now dated as being from the tenth century. This unique manuscript came from the famous cave-library found near Dunhuang, in China's remote west. It seems to be the only surviving manuscript of music from the Tang, or somewhat later, in China.

Picken, referring to current performance practice in China, remarks: 'Chinese musicians, playing a popular repertory, habitually make little use of notated scores. They mostly play from memory. It was probably also true for musicians of the Tang. They simply had no need for scores, so nothing was handed down to later periods.'

During the Tang, the Chinese court was the venue of music traditions from many foreign, non-Chinese peoples. In the succeeding Song dynasty, the cosmopolitan cultural openness of the Tang period was exterminated. The leaders in the Song were determined to make a clean sweep of foreign influences, and to eradicate all traces of the importation of foreign music, dancers and musicians once active in the court entertainments of the Tang. Any scores of Tang music are likely to have been destroyed, because the music and the dances were not *Chinese.*
This, at least, is Picken's explanation of what happened in China. But how was it that such notations reached Japan, and indeed, so many of them ? He began this enquiry in the mid-1950s, and gradually arrived at many new insights. However, a full understanding of the process has yet to be obtained.

## A PAGE OF 'TŌGAKU'

One day in 1953, Laurence Picken found himself looking at a photograph of a page of ancient Japanese music, in an article by Eta Harich-Schneider. It was a page of *Tōgaku*, and it showed mouth-organ and lute tablatures of a single piece. The linear geometry of the notation looked familiar, it looked 'Chinese'. Picken soon began to think he was indeed looking at a melody borrowed from China.

As performed in Japan today, *Tōgaku* does not sound like Chinese music at all. But what Picken was looking at did not appear to be a notation of *Tōgaku* as heard in performance. Transcribed, the melody had a distinctly different character, more 'Chinese' than any of the *Tōgaku* pieces as performed today. And there were other differences. In contemporary *Togaku* performances, the mouth-organ plays sequences of chords, but this score showed the mouth-organ playing a single line only, a melody.

Excited by this observation, Picken began to transcribe all the mouth-organ versions of *Tōgaku* pieces he could lay his hands on. He was haunted by the possibility of finding genuine survivals from the Tang Chinese tradition, and travelled to Japan in 1972 in search of the earliest surviving dateable manuscripts.

Three decades after his first encounter with a score of Tang music, Picken and his pupils were able to present, in transcription, a substantial part of the lost repertory of court music of the Tang, and to describe how and why it had been transferred to Japan.

## TWO OUNCES OF GOLD DUST

Early Japanese missions to China were overwhelmed by the panache of Chinese culture in the Tang, and by the efficiency of its governmental institutions. During the seventh century in particular a number of missions acquired knowledge of all aspects of Tang society.

As late as 838, a Japanese mission to China included a distinguished Japanese musician: Fujiwara no Sadatoshi. Chinese musicians taught him, and music-scribes made scores for him. The biography of Fujiwara no Sadatoshi actually mentions a gift of two ounces of gold dust to the Chinese lute master Liu Erlang.

Picken: 'Clearly, a purchase was made and the scores received were presumably ordered by the Japanese. They amounted to at least 120 titles of pieces, mostly dance-tunes, some texted. A proportion of the pieces were full ballet-suites, individually choreographed, individually costumed.'

The court music of the Tang was being played at the Japanese court, by musicians from Korea and China, long before Sadatoshi's journey, says Picken. It was the interest of literate amateurs at the Japanese court and in the great Buddhist monasteries that determined the need for written scores. Picken believes that the titles of pieces were at times misinterpreted by the Japanese, so that popular tunes of the drinking houses of Chang'an in China were not recognized as such in Japan. Misunderstandings of this kind facilitated the gradual transformation of performance of the music in its new environment.

## WAVES OF KOKONOR

By faithfully copying the Tang manuscripts, Japanese scribes passed on the *written* tradition of the Tang pieces in Japan. The accuracy of these scribes is illustrated by a sound-recording, made in Jesus College in 1970, of a performance of a piece called 'Waves of Kokonor'. The piece was played on Western instruments. The full score was assembled from versions in manuscripts of different dates. One flute version dated from 966, another was from 1287. There was a double-reed-pipe score from the 17th century, a mouth-organ score from the 13th century, and zither and lute versions from the 12th century. Picken: 'The fact that all of these versions can be played together demonstrates the continuity of the written tradition.'

However, the actual performance of Tang music in Japan underwent major changes. These are illustrated by another recording of the same piece, made in 1970. Picken plays a keyed harmonica, along with an original recording by Japanese court musicians. He plays only the melodic line of the mouth-organ manuscript version, not the cluster chords that are customary in contemporary Japanese performances. The tune emerges in a very slow and incoherent fashion, at the pace of the Japanese performance. For some time, fading out the original recording, one hears Picken playing it solo, just the notes written in the mouth-organ score. Then, an oboe picks up a single bar of the tune, but somewhat faster. Finally, the ensemble plays the melody at a speed suitable for a lively dance. By speeding up the tempo, the notes of the mouth-organ suddenly result in a coherent tune, in music of a very distinctive character.
The recording experiment was undertaken to demonstrate the effects of retardation in Tang music as played in Japan: 'In the course of centuries, the real Tang tunes have become inaudible', Picken observes. 'In present *Tōgaku*, they are played 8 to 16 times more slowly than in the original performances. This retardation has robbed the original tunes of their musical coherence.'

## RETARDATION

There may be several reasons why, in the Japanese performance-tradition of *Togaku*, increased ornamentation was linked, over the centuries, with a slowing down of the speed of performance.
In the first fascicle of *Music from the Tang Court*, Picken writes: 'It is perhaps axiomatic that music which is greatly venerated, and which belongs to another musical world, separated from us either by age or by distance, always tends to be performed more and more slowly.' He then points to the plainsong tradition of Western medieval music, which underwent a similar retardation in later centuries, with the rise of multi-part music. He adds that perhaps only the invention of the metronome saved the European repertory of classical music from performances at an *adagissimo* pace.
Picken believes that the tradition of teaching Tang music *orally* facilitated retardation. 'There is a sort of parallel to this in other fields of Japanese musical tradition. A *bunraku* or a *kabuki* troupe will have scores, but mainly for use as a record for reference. The performance-tradition is orally transmitted.'
As a consequence, the music of *Tōgaku* gradually acquired a life of its own. 'Waves of Kokonor' has changed from a fast to a very slow piece, so far as the original tune is concerned.
Picken: 'That original tune has a noticeably quasi-*estampie* or *basse danse*-like character. It also has a striking rhythmic drive, and a symmetrical, almost classically Western form – quite unlike present-day *Tōgaku*, but also unlike many present-day Chinese tunes.'

And what of Japanese musicologists ? Why did *they* not discover the discrepancies between performance-practice and written sources in *Tōgaku* ?
Picken: 'Japanese scholars have always honoured and valued the early documents of the *Tōgaku* tradition for their antiquarian and historical interest, rather than for their musical value. They respected the efforts of the court musicians to preserve rigidly the tradition of performance, so that it is for them inconceivable that changes in performance-practice have occurred, even over a period of a thousand years.'

One interesting event further supported Picken's conclusion that *Tōgaku* was played much faster in ancient times. In July 1977, on his sixtieth birthday, his students recreated an entire programme of Japanese court music as originally performed in 1147 in Japan. Without the customary repeats, the programme lasted three hours. If played at today's speeds, the performance would have lasted between 48 and 96 hours – scarcely a plausible length for a concert.

## MEMBERS OF A GOOD POP GROUP

The music of Japanese *Tōgaku* gradually lost speed, but it changed in other respects as well. Over the centuries, the flute and reedpipe scores show increasing ornamentation of the melodic line, encouraged by the slowing down in tempo. Since the sounds of the plucked strings are evanescent, zither and lute became subordinate, eventually supplying only a chordal accompaniment to the readily sustained melodies of flute and reed-pipe. The dominance of the reed-pipe was further enhanced by increasing the number of reed-pipe players in the *Tōgaku* ensemble. In addition to all these changes, a process of modal modification occurred. Many of the original tunes, as notated in the scores, are pentatonic, hexatonic or heptatonic, in Chinese modes. But since these original tunes - though still, and invariably, present in the texture – have become inaudible, flute and reed-pipe have reverted to the characteristic hemitonic, pentatonic modality, so characteristic of Japanese folk song and of traditional Japanese art-music, today.

When Picken first began to examine, for a single piece, the manuscript scores for the five different melodic instruments of the typical *Tōgaku* ensemble, he found that each score was an independent version of the same melody, a version appropriate to the mechanics and register of the particular instrument for which it was intended.
'You see, they are not *parts*. They were never designed in relation to each other. They are versions. And by themselves, each one of them, as originals copied from the Tang, is a piece complete in itself. In performance, all that needed to be added, perhaps, was a clapper to give added rhythmic life. Historical sources reveal that the music was often played by very small ensembles of two or three instruments only, one instrument to each version.'

In Japan, the slowing down of *Tōgaku* eventually robbed lute, zither, and mouth-organ versions of their melodic character. The music became a form of accompanied monody, with flute and reed-pipe playing *the* melody. Picken believes that, in Tang performances, each instrument played a more independent role, resulting in the sort of mild heterophony characteristic of traditional Chinese ensemble performances. An experiment in Taiwan in 1972, with local musicians playing some of his transcribed tunes, confirmed Picken's imagined notion of the likely balance between instruments in such an ensemble.
At the recent concert of Tang music in Shanghai, with ensembles of up to twenty musicians, justified and collated versions of the various transcribed scores had been prepared by Picken's colleague, Professor Noël Nickson.
'It was necessary for this to be done, otherwise clashes between the instruments were such as could not be tolerated', Picken says.

He goes on to emphasize that performers in ancient China would not have played from scores at all, certainly not in the case of the more popular items in their repertory. 'I think the relationship between the members of any given ensemble, in the Banquet Music, was like that between members of a good pop group today. They were just very, very skilled in playing together, able to respond to a musical lead in a matter of a fraction of a millisecond.'

## REGIONAL FOLK

It remains a strange fact that only one manuscript of early music survives in China. This manuscript, the *Dunhuang Pipapu*, a collection of 25 lute pieces, contrasts markedly with the hundreds of guqin scores handed down from the 13th century onwards. To what extent can Picken be sure that the Tang music repertory which he and his students traced in *Tōgaku* really presents a nationwide, Chinese tradition ? Is it not actually a very local Chinese one ?

'It was a wonderful time...'

Picken: 'The lute repertory of the *Dunhuang Pipapu* was not part of the Banquet Music, the entertainment music of the Tang court, but it does include versions of pieces from non-Chinese states. In a sense, the Banquet Music which we transcribed in *Music of the Tang Court* presents a very local repertory, but I am confident that everything played at the court had gone through a filter of Chinese musical acceptance. Undoubtedly, material was reaching the court that might properly be described as "regional folk". I am convinced that some of the most attractive pieces, like the ones associated with drinking, would never have reached Japan, had the Japanese understood the nature of the material. But it suffered a numinous transformation at the hands of the receivers. Drinking songs and comic dances may take on aspects of figures of universal human suffering, for example.'

Evidently, part of the Banquet Music originated in folk music, played in teahouses and elsewhere – unlike qin-music, which was not a popular repertory, but belonged to the domain of a scholarly elite.

The Entertainment Music was not high-brow, but ranged in style from superior 'pop' downwards. A banquet might begin with several impressive ballet-suites, but after the wine cups had been replenished several times, the performance would probably move to shorter, livelier items, and in the early hours of the morning, topless dancers from Cambodia may sometimes have appeared.

Picken: 'Some of the very short Tang tunes could still to this day be Chinese folk songs. Take the *Wine Puppet music*, for example, or that marvellous little tune from the *Kalavinka suite*, with its beautiful cuckoo-like imitations.'

Is it possible that, at some stage, tunes from ceremonial music of the Chinese

countryside today may be linked with items from the Tang court repertory of twelve centuries ago ?
'Yes, it is certainly possible, and not just in China. A tune like *Qinghaibo* feels to me so much like a modern Turkish folk tune that I am not at all surprised to learn that it was a piece to which the poet Li Bai, who was probably at least in part of Turkish descent, wanted to dance.'

## FAITHFUL SCRIBES

Picken's *Music from the Tang Court* includes transcriptions from manuscripts that are post-Tang in date. Does this indicate that some of the music may date from later dynasties ?
Picken: 'Japanese sources are in some cases of late Song and even Yuan date, in Chinese terms, but these are merely dates of copying of earlier manuscript sources. After 838 the Japanese did not send another embassy to China for almost three centuries.'

Picken stresses that the Japanese manuscript copies of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries provide an accurate picture of primary musical materials of a much earlier date. 'Working with all these series of earlier and later manuscripts, one is profoundly impressed by the faithfulness with which the Japanese scribes operated. The greatest care was displayed by Fujiwara no Moronaga and those who assisted him in the editing of the first great compilations, *Jinchi-yōroku* and *Sango-yōroku*, approximately 1172. And this accuracy is reflected in later copies. It is a manuscript tradition quite as faithful as that of the monks who copied the plainsong repertories in the West. Their faithfulness gives us great confidence.'[4]

'From the titles – preserved in Chinese sources – of items in the *Tōgaku* repertory, it is plain that a majority were items played at the Tang court in the seventh century. This century is generally acknowledged, by Japanese scholars, to be that in which the borrowing of aspects of Tang administration, for example, occurred most intensively. Regarding historical sources, it is quite clear that the bulk of the musical information in, say, the first three volumes of *Jiu Tangshu*, cannot be later than 755 – certainly not much later. And I attach great importance to the very compressed, but enormously valuable, summary of Banquet Music and other court practices in the *Da Tang liudian*, not later than 752, which is mainly concerned with what music-and-dance pieces – *daqu* – were being performed in the time of the Xuanzong Emperor.'

While the work of Picken and his pupils has been acclaimed by many, it has also been criticized: 'Only by those', says Picken, 'who do not read with care and who make, perhaps unconsciously, crypto-hypotheses that have no justification.'

One critic was the German musicologist Heinz-Dieter Reese. He suggested the series on Tang court music might better have been called 'Music from the Heian court', (the Japanese court in the Heian period).
Picken: 'But that implies that the Heian musicians were in a position to make stylistic changes in what they received from the Tang. In the sixth fascicle of the series, I hope to show that the style of ancient Japanese instrumental music was, properly speaking, an archaic style, the splendid virtues of which did not include such elaborate melodic structures as are to be found in the *Tōgaku* pieces. All the genres of sophisticated Japanese melody known today appear one or two centuries after the receipt of musics from Korea and Tang.'

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[4] The Tokyo Palace Library copy of the lute manuscript *Sango-yōroku* is a copy, made in 1328, of a copy made in 1208 of the original of ca. 1172.

## FANTASTIC MUSICAL ORGANIZATION

Picken is enthusiastic about the architectural splendour of the larger Tang pieces. These are often structured in an astonishing way.

'Take for example the suite *The Emperor Destroys the Military Formations*. As Noël Nickson showed in his analysis, every single phrase found in the fast movement of this suite occurs somewhere or other in the slow Prelude. This is fantastic musical organization, and it is quite similar to that of Western plainsong.'

He refers to the patchwork-like nature of medieval plainsong, with its vocabulary of small, melodic phrases which could be varied and strung together in all sorts of ways, and assembled to form an infinite variety of structures.

'The Tang repertory was constructed in a similar way – an immensely important discovery on the part of Noël Nickson. The music of the Tang was emerging in East Asia while the repertory of plainsong was being developed in Europe. Both seem to reflect a primal, universal way in which musical thought develops.' Picken admits that he rejects out of hand the current ethnomusicological view that there is no such thing as evolution in music.

'As Noël Nickson and I read the Tang scores, our minds work as they would in reading Western music. To that extent, we observe a kind of universality in the processes of development of the musical material. Nickson has shown that it isn't only the extended Tang pieces that are developed in this way; the same process is at work in much shorter constructions as well. The development tends to be *formulaic* - that is a convenient term for it. And the principle of formulaic structure is now gradually being accepted in regard to other genres of Chinese music, notably in *Chaozhou Nanguan* [a regional classical music tradition, Ed.]. I'm sure it will only be a matter of time before people begin to look at other Chinese vocal dramatic forms for the same thing to be revealed.'

He adds: 'It is evident that Zhu Xi's tunes for the *Shi* – at least of Tang date – are formulaic; and Baishi Daoren's description of how he composed a song could well imply the use of formulae.'

## PICKEN'S STUDENTS

Picken could never have undertaken the Tang project without the assistance of his students. By the time they began to arrive, in the autumn of 1972, he had built up in Cambridge a unique collection of copies of the earliest dated *Tōgaku* sources, which needed detailed study.

Rembrandt Wolpert undertook the study of the earliest lute manuscripts. Allan Marett began the study of the oldest surviving flute score. Jonathan Condit focused his attention on Korean court music, bearing in mind the findings of Dr. Picken. He too was soon playing *Tōgaku* scores, on a Korean zither.[5] Likewise, Rembrandt Wolpert was trying to bring ancient lute-scores back to life on a Chinese lute.[6] Elizabeth Markham, who joined the group in 1975, focused her study on a genre of Japanese court songs, *Saibara*, and played zither scores of both *Tōgaku* and *Saibara* repertories. Senior researchers who co-operated in the project were Professor Mitani Yōko (Sagami Women's University, Japan) and Professor Noël J. Nickson (University of Queensland, Australia).

'It was a wonderful time, a wonderful time...', Picken recalls. 'For the *first* time reading the manuscripts, playing from the manuscript scores! It was really intoxicating. And of course the *Saibara* songs, too, were a marvelous musical experience, with Elizabeth and Rembrandt playing the zither and lute versions, and

[5] In this case, *sō-no-koto Tōgaku*. Marett played the music on *kayagŭm*.

[6] A century old *Nanguan pibe*.

Mitani Yōko-*san* singing the texts simply, unaffectedly. Most beautiful! Mitani found the Heian versions more attractive than the enormously retarded, *shomyo*-like, contemporary versions.'

There was not always euphoria among the group. Picken, a strong personality, had taken under his wing a number of younger, equally firm-minded personalities. There was some rivalry during the project, even at one point a struggle-meeting in which Picken was criticized by his students. Nevertheless, it is the atmosphere of happy excitement which prevails in his memory of this period. He is full of praise for the work of his pupils. Especially the work on *Saibara*, the Japanese court songs, pleased him enormously. He talks indignantly and with contempt about a destructive Japanese review, 'expressed in the most vulgar Japanese', in which the work was criticized. 'Its principal attack was based on an entirely mistaken assumption. And they did not dare to attack me, they only attacked one of my students!'

## AMAZED

Commenting on the Tang project as a whole, Picken remarks: 'I think our work is important for the history of music in general. There is no secular equivalent in Europe to the musical sources that we have been studying in Japan.'
In the late 1970s, Picken's students left him one by one to pursue their own careers. Wolpert, Markham and Marett have continued to participate in the work of transcription; and in recent years Stephen Jones (London) has assisted in the work on Chinese historical sources. Until her sad death, Mitani Yōko-*san* gave great help in the translation of Heian and Kamakura historical texts. More recently, Dr. Nobuko Ishii (Edinburgh) has also given help in this area.
Since retirement, Picken has continued to work on the Tang scores, in close collaboration, on analytical matters, with Noël Nickson. He says he is amazed that contemporary Japanese researchers have hardly taken up the topics and issues of his research, but he has no time to feel discouraged. His interest in ancient Japan is increasing, and part of his future inquiries will be focused on Japanese music in remote antiquity.

## CHINA REVISITED

For Picken the music historian, looking ahead may well mean looking further back in history. During his recent visit to China, he was confronted by his own private past. By invitation of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, he revisited a country not seen for forty-five years. He was away from home for several months, visiting Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Australia as well. What were his first impressions of China, after so many years ?
Picken: 'It was unrecognizable. Everyone on the street in Shanghai was well-dressed; there was an extraordinary abundance of eating-houses... At the same time, I noticed the dilapidation of buildings, plaster coming off walls, mirrors broken in bathrooms, etcetera. I remember having seen poverty in wartime Chongqing, but not such dilapidation.'
'At the Shanghai Conservatory, I was staying in what I think was called the "experts building". It was spotlessly clean. The food was simple and sufficient. For me, it was really an extreme pleasure to be there. People were most kind to me. My pupil in Taipei had written Professor Chen Yingshi about my age and the attention I needed. So, each time I went down the stairs there was somebody ready to give me a supporting arm. I rather liked it.'

In Shanghai, Picken met with a dear friend, the biochemist Professor Cao Tianqin, whom he had got acquainted with during his first visit to China in 1944. Cao, badly

treated during the Cultural Revolution, had undergone catastrophic mental deterioration. 'I went to see him with his wife; I am not sure that he recognized me but I sang him the last line of the poem *Youyou lu ming*: "Wherewith, in banquetting, to delight the hearts of my honoured guests..." He burst out laughing, and it was said to have been the first time he had laughed for several months.'

## MEETING CONFUCIUS' KIN IN TAIWAN

Picken's stay in Taipei in September 1990 was a direct consequence of the invitation from Shanghai and the suggestion that he should lecture in Chinese. Thanks to the hospitality of a former pupil, Mrs. Liu Fengxue, Professor of Dance at the National Taiwan Academy of Arts, he was able to spend several weeks improving his spoken Chinese and enjoying, once more, being in a Chinese environment.

Picken regrets that Dr. Liu's work on Chinese ritual and ceremonial dance – covering the period from the second millenium BC to AD 1300 – remains unpublished.[7] Through Dr. Liu, Picken was able, with the collaboration of some youthful helpers, to improve his Chinese. He had prepared a lecture on Tang music, which was now converted from what Picken calls 'baby Chinese' to tolerable, though simple, *putonghua* (standard Chinese). After delivering the lecture twice in Taipei, Picken felt confident when it came to lecturing in Shanghai.[8]

'A great occasion for me was when, as one of six guests of the Mayor of Taipei, Mr. Huang Dazhou, at the 2470th celebration of the Annual Sacrifice for Confucius, I shook hands with the only male descendant of the 77th generation, and was presented with a bronze statuette of the Saint, "for services to Chinese culture".'

It was also in Taipei that Picken met, for the first time since that first evening in Chongqing in 1944, Liang Tsai-Ping, father of Professor Liang Mingyue. (Both Liang Tsai-Ping and his son are well-known musicians and musicologists.)

## A MODERN TANG ORCHESTRA

Laurence Picken and Noël Nickson were invited by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to prepare a concert of reconstructions of Tang music. Noël Nickson was to conduct a Conservatory ensemble in a performance of the principle item, the suite *The Emperor Destroys the Military Formations*.[9] Nickson had tried, on three occasions, to get Japanese musicians to perform the Tang scores on comparable Japanese instruments; but they couldn't manage it, having forgotten the original, Chinese techniques. Now, it was the turn of the Chinese.

The ensemble consisted of up to twenty people, playing lutes, zithers, mouth-organs, flutes, reed-pipes and a variety of percussion. The musicians were members of the staff, belonging to the Shanghai Group of the *Zhongguo guyuetuan* (Chinese Ancient Music Ensemble), and students.

'It was a really grand occasion, a concert worthy, in intention, of the court banquets of the Tang. The instruments, made at the famous factory in Suzhou, were faithful copies of Tang instruments preserved in Nara, Japan. Beautiful, exquisite workmanship! They were loaned to the Conservatory. It was frightening to see the casual way in which the musicians handled the loaned instruments, especially those precious mouth-

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[7] In regard to Dr. Liu's work, Picken remarks: 'It deserves to be known that she has transcribed the earliest Japanese dance score, of the suite *The Emperor Destroys the Military Formations* into 'Labanotation', in parallel with Noël Nickson's single-stave notation of the melodic line, based on the earliest instrumental sources.'

[8] The lecture was presented once in the complex of the National Concert Hall, and once at *Shifan Daxue*.

[9] For other items, the conductor was Mr. Xia Feiyun.

organs. In Shanghai, you cannot any longer find mouth-organs with bamboo pipes, only with metal pipes...'
Picken recalls one 'unfailingly staunch supporter' who was present at all the rehearsals: Mr. Zhu Xincheng. 'He was absolutely wonderful. He would say repeatedly: 'If you are not satisfied, say so immediately, and we will do whatever we can to meet your wishes.' It was at my request that antique copper trumpets, *laba*, were added to the ensemble in the final piece in the programme. They supplied harmonic drones. These trumpets are normally used in wedding and funeral processions, and this was probably the first time they had been used in a concert hall. The musicians couldn't properly play them, they had not even been shown how to hold them, but they did their best - it was a marvellous noise down below the rest of the wind and percussion ensemble. Horns used in the Tang were actually wooden, not brass or copper, but I felt no shame in using a Ming equivalent.'

## AT THE REHEARSALS

'It was to be regretted that no appropriate flutes of the Tang type were available. *Xiao* (vertically played bamboo flutes) were not up to the job, so we had to use *dizi*, horizontal flutes with kazoo membranes. But their sound was far too strident.'
'In general, Noël Nickson and I were painfully aware of the inadequacies of the final performance. The time for rehearsals was too short. But we realized, for the first time, that we must in future be bolder in simplifying string versions before we can expect to have people play them at the appropriate speed. As it was, the lute players never managed to add fingered mordents. We must further simplify the string versions, in the light of the mouth-organ scores. The mouth-organ remains our bedrock, because its intonation is invariant and, in general, it is minimally decorated, and the scores are in the mode specified in the Chinese sources.'

'Noël Nickson had difficulty in holding the ensemble together. Of course, Chinese traditional ensembles are unaccustomed to having a conductor. Normally, you have a "leader", and that's it. But there was no member of the ensemble who knew our *pièce de résistance* well enough to lead, and – my word! – it took a great deal of emphatic gesture on Noël's part to prevent the winds from running away with the tempo.'
'Tempi agreed upon during regearsal were frequently changed by the players during the performance. They would suddenly play a fast piece too slow. They seemed to have the feeling that if you play ancient music, it must be played slowly.'
Some performers had a greater difficulty in reading staff notations than was anticipated, and some never seemed to rehearse. 'They were still reading in the final concert', says Picken.
He adds that he was impressed by the achievements of the students in the ensemble.

## A SET OF GESTURES

'Of course, it was marvellous to hear the Tang pieces played on replicas of Tang instruments by Chinese musicians. That was what we had wanted to hear above all else.' The centrepiece of the concert was the suite *The Emperor Destroys the Formations*, already mentioned. The programme also included several drinking tunes.
'We would have liked to include real Tang secular songs, but we do not as yet have enough Tang melodies for which the words are known with certainty. From the *Shijing*[10] we had *Youyou lu ming*, as sung by a host welcoming guests; and we had a group of young women singing Confucius' favourite nuptial song: "Guard! cry ospreys on islets in the river". This song reflects the restlessness of the lord who is about to marry the beautiful maiden whom the young women are escorting.'

[10] The 'Book of Songs', a classical collection of song texts (Ed.).

During the Shanghai Concert: Chinese composer He Luding, Noël Nickson and Laurence Picken.

In addition there were a number of songs and instrumental pieces from the Song dynasty. 'With singers in China now, it is very difficult to persuade a woman to sing like... well, like a girl on a farm might sing', Picken remarks. 'Instead, they adopt a forced voice with a hard edge to it, and they can't get away from a set of facial and hand gestures that at times make them look like tarts. I must say that we had a very good tenor voice among our soloists. Neither he nor the girls really understood, of course, the classical texts they were singing. There was this one beautiful little farewell song, by Jiang Kui of the Song dynasty, just four lines... *You zheng shi chun gui*, "and so spring ends". On one occasion, the girl who sang did so in a completely natural voice. The effect was ravishing. But she couldn't bring herself to sing it that way in public, alas!'

'In the final part of the concert, we performed the two movements of a lion dance of the Song, for which I invented percussion parts. Someone commented afterwards that the tempi weren't fast enough. Privately I thought: one couldn't possibly take it any faster. What would the lion be doing at such a speed ?'

## A JOLLY GOOD CONCERT

Preceding the concert, Picken gave a one-hour lecture on Tang and Song music, to an audience of Chinese students and teachers.[11] He had never before prepared and delivered an extended paper in Chinese, but it went well. 'All around, people were taking notes', he recalls.

'While working with me in Cambridge, Professor Chen Yingshi had become interested in my simple arrangements of Tang tunes, made by adding Chinese-style percussion, and mouth-organ-like fifth and octave parallels, and drones. To my great consternation

[11] It was entitled 'Music bequeathed by Tang and Song' (*Tang Song yi yin*).

After the concert in Shanghai: Noël Nickson and Laurence Picken are flanked by Sang Tong and He Luding, former heads of the Shanghai Conservatory. Standing in the last row, 8th from the left, is Professor Chen Yingshi.

he fell in love with them. I thought I had committed the worst ever act of cultural corruption of all time. The arrangements had been made to let people hear the tunes, four years before I had access to authentic scores for instruments other than the mouth-organ.'

The reactions of the audience to the concert in Shanghai were very positive. 'Some playing was inaccurate, and this led to unwelcome clashes, but especially the shorter pieces, the drinking songs, Xuanzong's Birthday March and the Song instrumental pieces, were well received. The students found the music jolly good, not just interesting. The sad thing was: after the concert, everybody disappeared in minutes, we had no way of thanking anybody.'

A panel discussion, lasting two hours, took place the following day.

Picken: 'What I felt, in the light of some of the comments made, was: how little do the Chinese realize how great is the bulk of music in the Japanese sources. Many do not appreciate how solid is the foundation on which rests what has been done. When I am finished with the sixth fascicle of our series on Tang court music, I hope to compose a rejoinder, in Chinese, to the most important points in that discussion.'

'All the Chinese comments that imply our ignorance of procedures of ornamentation in the Tang overlook what ornamentation is, in fact, prescribed; they also ignore the practical difficulties: that one could not inflate the scores with *extra* ornamentation without destroying their rhythmic drive. My conscience regarding use, in the concert, of some of my arrangements originally made for the Jesus College Chinese Band in 1970 and 1971 was assuaged when a speaker in the discussion said I need have no anxiety, because they did not sound in the least "Western"; and another, too kind, said they were better than a Chinese would have made them. *That* I do not believe to be true.'

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

In the mid-1960s, the university authorities in Cambridge had generously enabled Laurence Picken to change faculties, but in 1976, he retired without promotion to a Chair, a fact which no doubt embittered him. He was not even made Reader. More

than a year before retirement, he had been elected, as an Orientalist, to the British Academy; but this was evidently ignored by the General Board of the University. His visit to East Asia and Australia in 1990 was only possible thanks to generous grants from Jesus College and from the Academy. His fieldwork in Turkey, extended over twelve years, was financed entirely from his own pocket.
However, Picken has not been lacking in general recognition of his achievements. Many colleagues have paid tribute to him in their publications. In Britain and in the United States, special collections of essays have been published in his honour. His personal energy and delight in music of almost every kind have proved infectious to many of his students and friends. His writings have now found their way to readers in many parts of the world, and as a pioneer in the study of Oriental and other non-Western musics, he will, no doubt, continue to inspire music scholars of future generations.

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REPORT ON RESEARCH & CONCERT ACTIVITIES

# Chinese Music in Australia

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**Australia is geographically close to Asia, and in recent years the Australian government has been seeking to strengthen Australian-Asian links in various matters, including culture. Partly as a result of this policy, China studies in Australia have developed rapidly and are now strong in many academic institutions. Research into Chinese music has benefited accordingly. Such research is not limited to the field of music / ethnmomusicology, being conducted as an aspect of the wider field of China studies or Asian studies. The author provides a brief survey of the current state of Australian research into Chinese music, and also looks at the activities of Chinese music performers in Australia.**

A number of Australian tertiary institutes currently have courses in Chinese music, or have staff members or students engaged in Chinese music study and research. These include the University of Queensland (Brisbane), Griffith University (Brisbane), Monash University (Melbourne), the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University (Melbourne), the University of Sidney, Macquarie University (Sydney), the School of Music at the Canberra Institute of the Arts, the University of New England, the University of Adelaide and the University of Southern Queensland (Toowoomba). The latter established an official sister institute relationship with the Wuhan Conservatory of Music in Mainland China a few years ago and the two have been exchanging music teaching staff.

## THE WORK OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARS

Scholars at these various institutions have done much worthwhile work in Chinese music. Emeritus Professor Noël Nickson, a leading Australian scholar and the University of Queensland's Foundation Professor of Music (1966-84), has been researching Chinese music for many years. He is one of six members of the University of Cambridge Tang Music Research Project directed by Dr. Laurence Picken (Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge). His particular area of research consists in making a

The Penleigh Essendon Grammar School Chinese Music Ensemble in Melbourne.

systematic and technical study of the musical language of the Tang court tradition. In October 1990 he was invited, with Dr. Picken, to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to supervise a concert of compositions of the Tang and Song dynasties. The compositions had been transcribed by members of the Cambridge Tang Music Research team and were performed in the concert by staff and students of the Shanghai Conservatory. The visit created considerable interest in the Chinese press, and the concert attracted a large audience of scholars and musicians from as far away as Beijing. This was the first time that ancient Chinese musical compositions, interpreted and transcribed by Westerners from authenticated sources held overseas, had been performed in China. Professor Nickson described the situation thus: 'There we were, two scholars from distant foreign lands so far as China is concerned, presenting part of the people's great national heritage back to its rightful owners.' The event represented a significant contribution to research into Chinese music.

Other scholars in Australia researching Chinese music include some for whom Chinese music is only one aspect of a wider range of research expertise and interest. Here I shall mention only their recent work in this field.
Professor Colin Mackerras (Griffith University) has been researching Chinese classical dramas, particularly the *jingju* and *kunqu*, and has published extensively on relevant topics. Dr. Allan J. Marret (University of Sydney) has been researching ancient Chinese sources of Japanese music and has published a few relevant articles. Professor David Holm (Macquarie University) has been researching folk dance in northern China, having done important field work in China in recent years. Dr. Alison Tokita (Monash University) has been doing comparative research into Japanese and Chinese narrative singing. She is currently doing field work in Japan.
Dr. Greg Hurworth (Monash University) has been researching Chinese music and music education, with the aim of introducing Chinese music into Western primary school curricula. He studied and did relevant field work in Taiwan.
I myself (Monash University) have been researching Chinese folk song culture and have published on relevant topics in both China and the West. I have recently been

awarded a three year Australian Postdoctoral Research Fellowship by the Australian Research Council for my project.
Until her recent death, Ms. Coralie Rockwell (University of Sydney) had been doing research for her Ph.D. thesis into the ancient Dunhuang manuscripts and transcriptions, and had made a few research trips to China. She had also done research into Chinese traditional temperamentology. The Australian scholarly community mourns the loss of this excellent and devoted ethnomusicologist.

The 1991 Spring issue of CHIME mentioned the existence of a Chinese Music Archive at Monash University. The Australian correspondent's remark that this archive can be expected to 'attract students from interstate and overseas' is misleading, because it suggests the existence of a large collection. In fact, the materials at Monash consist of only a handful of (largely commercial) tapes, books and instruments. Quite a few people in Australia have larger collections of Chinese music, which they regard as ordinary materials for personal study or general appreciation. The collection at Monash University may develop in the future, but, for the time being, it seems premature to present it as a substantial 'archive'.

## CHINESE MUSIC PERFORMANCES

In recent years the Australian policy of promoting multiculturalism and strengthening links with Asia has encouraged and improved the performance of Chinese music in this country. A large number of young Chinese musicians have come here for various reasons, and have played an important and active part in relevant activities. Many are graduates from leading conservatories in China and their performing standard is equal to China's national professional level. The best of them include Dong Qiuming (who plays the *dizi* and is from Shanghai), Hu Weigang (*suona*, Beijing), Feng Zhihao (*erhu*, Beijing), Hu Lei (*yangqin*, Beijing), Wang Zhengting (*sheng*, Shanghai), Chen Wenjie (*ruan* and *pipa*, Sichuan), Li Li (*zheng*, Sichuan), Chai Changning (*dizi*, Beijing), Deng Wei (*pipa*, Beijing) and Shen Pangeng (*erhu*, Nanjing).

The Chinese musicians currently resident in Australia have formed quite a few Chinese music ensembles here. Three such ensembles have reached a particularly high performing standard. They are The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble (Melbourne), headed by Wang Zhengting; the *Jiu ge* Chinese Music Ensemble (Sydney), headed by Feng Zhihao; and the *Huanghe* Chinese Music Ensemble (Sydney), headed by Chai Changning. The activities of such Chinese musicians have become an essential part of mainstream Chinese music performance in Australia.

## AUSTRALIAN CHINESE MUSIC ENSEMBLE

The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble is perhaps the most active and successful of all the Chinese music groups in Australia today. Established in Melbourne in December 1988, it has given more than two hundred performances in various venues and situations, such as concert halls, international and local arts festivals, broadcasting programmes, museums, city squares, universities and schools. It has given concerts interstate and is currently organizing a nation-wide tour for 1992. The ensemble has recently been awarded a grant by the Australian Arts Council for its concerts.

In the meantime, some Sydney based Chinese musicians, supported by the Chinese community, are planning to establish an arts centre. The project is under the direction of Mr. Feng Zhihao, a former *erhu* teacher of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and is planned to involve as many Chinese artists in Australia as possible. Their performances will be for general Australian audiences, and not limited to the Chinese community.

The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble *Chunjiang huayue ye*: Julian Yu (*erhu*), Dong Qiuming (*xiao*), Wang Zhengting (*sheng*) Chen Wenjie (*pipa*) and Li Li (*zheng*).

In September 1991, some of the top Chinese musicians from Sydney and Melbourne were invited to participate in the 1991 Melbourne International Festival. Their performances were greatly appreciated by the audience. In late November 1991, these musicians will again gather in Melbourne, to participate in a music and dance concert organised and directed by Mr. Carillo Gantner, who is Artistic Director of the Playbox Theatre Centre of Monash University, and a former Australian Cultural Attache in Beijing. This concert is being sponsored by the Australia-China Council (an Australian government council under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), with the purpose of helping Chinese performing artists currently resident in Australia to gain recognition in the performing arts community and in the general society. A documentary video film for TV broadcasting is to be made of this concert, including interviews with the Chinese artists.

## THE QUEENSLAND ORCHESTRA

Another Chinese music group, independent of the above-mentioned ensembles, is the Queensland Conservatorium of Music Chinese Orchestra. Comprising students of the Conservatorium, it is the oldest of the Chinese music groups currently existing in Australia. It was established in 1980 under the direction of Dr. Dale Craig, then lecturer at the Conservatorium, and has since rehearsed and performed regularly. Its membership changes every year as students graduate and leave, and new ones join. However, it maintains a relatively stable number of members, currently thirteen, and a good performing standard. Since 1984 the Queensland Conservatorium Chinese Orchestra has been directed (except in 1986 and 1987) by Mr. Deng Wei, formerly a professional *pipa* musician with the orchestra of the Oriental Song and Dance Troupe in Beijing. (Deng Wei is now also doing parttime Ph.D. research into Chinese music in the Department of Music at the University of New England.) Following the Queensland Conservatorium's recent merger with Griffith University in Brisbane, the Chinese Orchestra continues to be active in rehearsing and performing.

During 1987 the Directorship of the Queensland Conservatorium Chinese Orchestra was temporary taken up by Mr. Julian Yu, another recent migrant from China. Until

1985, Mr. Yu had studied and taught at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. His study and work in Australia has won him recognition as a contemporary composer. He has won prizes in fifteen international and Australian composition competitions, including the 56th Japan Music Concourse (1987), the Koussevitzky Tanglewood Composition Prize (1988), and the 35th Premio Musicale Citta di Trieste (1988). His works have been published by Universal Edition, London. His most recent prize was the $A 45,000 Inaugural Paul Lowin Award (1991). (The competition for the Paul Lowing Award runs every six years in Austria and every three years in Australia.) As well as pursuing his career as a composer, Julian Yu teaches parttime in the Department of Music at La Trobe University and participates actively in the performance of Chinese music.

In recent years a number of musicians and groups from China have been invited to perform in Australia. They have included ensembles of the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, artists from the Tianjin Narrative Singing Troupe, artists from the Suzhou Pingtan Troupe, musicians from the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, and the Nanguan performing group from Taiwan. Their performances have further stimulated the appreciation of Chinese music in Australia.

## CHINESE MUSIC IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Following the current trend of promoting multiculturalism and applying ethnomusicological approaches in music education, some Australian scholars, educators, musicians and tertiary students have begun introducing Chinese music into Australian school curricula and applying Chinese methods in Australian school music education. The above-mentioned musicians from China have made contributions in these areas. School visits, with demonstrations and talks about Chinese music have become part of the activities of these musicians and their ensembles. The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble has given performances particularly for school students in Melbourne, and is now organizing a larger scale school tour. In Queensland, Mr. Deng Wei and Ms. Li Lingzi, former singer with the Central Opera Theatre in Beijing, have been doing school tours since 1989. Entitled 'Oriental Odyssey', their programme of school visits includes demonstrations and talks about Chinese music. It has been sponsored by the Queensland Arts Council as one of their ongoing educational programmes. The Oriental Odyssey tour has been run for up to twenty weeks per year in Queensland schools and has been well received.

Another educational project, entitled 'Chinese music for Secondary Schools', has been under way since July 1990. The project is designed and directed by myself, and sponsored by the Australia-China Council. For the first ten months it was supported by and associated with Monash University; it has since been transferred to the Institute of Education at the University of Melbourne. This project aims at promoting Chinese music study and appreciation in Australian schools, and establishing relevant on-going activities in those schools. It involves offering Chinese music seminars, workshops and demonstrations in schools, introducing Chinese music to school curricula, establishing Chinese music performing groups in schools, and helping Australian schools to establish brother/sister relationships with schools in China.

One outcome of the 'Chinese Music for Secondary Schools' Project was the establishment, in February 1991, of the first Chinese music ensemble in an Australian secondary school, namely, in the Penleigh Essendon Grammar School (PEGS), Melbourne. The PEGS Chinese Music Ensemble is organized by Mr.James Wu, Head of the Chinese Department at the school, and directed by myself and a Chinese teacher in the same school, Mr.Wang Xiaoping. Another Chinese musician form Nanjing, Mr. Shen Pangeng, also participates in training the ensemble members. The ensemble has

since become independent of the Project 'Chinese Music for Secondary Schools' and is now completely funded and organized by the school itself. It now consists of eleven regular members and has already given performances in inter-school events. It is expected that the ensemble will develop and stimulate the establishment of more such school groups in Australia.

Another result of the 'Chinese Music for Secondary Schools' Project, was the formation, in early 1991, of a small Chinese music group consisting of a few members in Collingwood College, another secondary school in Melbourne. This school has since been awarded a grant from the Australia-China Council, which it has used to purchase 24 Chinese instruments, including a *sizhu* ensemble set and a small percussion ensemble set. A Chinese musical instrument learning course has started at the school. It was initiated by myself and the teaching is now being continued by Mr.Wang Zhengting. Although it involves only half a dozen students in each school term, the course is important in being the first of its kind in any Australian school. Collingwood College is now working toward establishing a full Chinese music ensemble.

## VIDEO FILM

Yet another result of the project is the production of a video film 'Introduction to Chinese Musical Instruments'. This film production, again designed and directed by myself and sponsored by the Australia-China Council, is supported by the Institute of Education at the University of Melbourne. It introduces all major Chinese musical instruments and a few popular instruments of minority ethnic groups in China. Most of the participating musicians were professional musicians in China before coming to Australia, and are graduates of China's leading conservatoriums with a performing standard at China's national professional level. The shooting of the film is now complete, and final editing should be completed by the end of 1991. Copies of the video, together with a booklet for use by teachers, will be available in early 1992 from: Media Services, Institute of Education, University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC 3052, Australia.

Given the above developments, and the Australian government's continuing policy of support for multiculturalism and Asian links, the prospects for Chinese music research and performance in Australia certainly appear bright.

# ZHEJIANG OPERA WITH AN ALL-FEMALE CAST

# Yueju

JENS FERBER & MARLIES NUTTEBAUM
(Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany)

**Much Western literature on the Chinese theatre focusses on Beijing Opera, a prominent genre with roots going back to the famous Zaju drama of the Yuan dynasty. Supported by the imperial court, Beijing opera developed from a regional into something closely resembling a national theatre form. However it is only one out of several hundred opera genres found in China today. The many regional opera forms, often less academic but equally rich in expression, certainly deserve closer study. One of the most popular of the local genres is Yueju, notable for the fact that the cast consists almost exclusively of women. Some connoisseurs prefer the (easily distinguishable) music of Yueju to that of any other type of Chinese opera. A report from Zhejiang Province, where the two authors spent several months collecting materials and attending rehearsals. It was their first stay in China.**

When we decided to collect material about *Yue* opera (*Yueju* 越剧) in China, we were taking a chance. Prior to this, we only had sparse information about this local type of opera. We knew that *Yueju* was dominated by female actors, and that it was mainly popular in Zhejiang and its neighbouring provinces, and we were aware that its music was considered to be softer and more melodic than the music of, for example, *Jingju* (Beijing opera). Towards the end of our stay we had a much clearer, though by no means complete picture.

Like so many types of regional Chinese opera, *Yueju* started as a rural, small-scale performance tradition, with only a handful of (folk) players participating in a performance, and with texts and tunes largely orally transmitted. The casts were all-female, playing both male and female roles. Partly under Communist influence, *Yue* opera was gradually transformed into an urbanized, professionalized, state-suppported theatre genre, featuring full orchestras, music scores, professional composers and a touch of socialist propaganda. Folk and urban forms continue to co-exist today and still attract enthusiastic audiences, though the average age of the opera-goers has risen considerably.
Female actors still dominate the stage, though male actors may occasionally participate in a performance. *Yue* opera is still relatively young - it reportedly began to take shape in the early years of this century. Its music and stage action are subject to ongoing change, since the cries for 'modernization' and socialist transformation of the Chinese theatre have not subsided in the People's Republic.

A fiddle-player in Huaihai Park (Shanghai) teaching children to sing *Yue* opera.

In the summer of 1990 we started off from Germany for a three month trip to China. First, we stayed three weeks in Beijing and collected some books and records. Our main concern was to visit Shanghai and Hangzhou, the latter being the capital of Zhejiang province. *Yue* opera, also called *Shaoxing* opera or, more rarely, *Shanghai* opera, originated in Zhejiang province and later came to Shanghai, where it underwent further development. In Shanghai, we stayed for five weeks at the Conservatory of Music, ideally located only a five minutes' walk from the *Yueju yuan*, the Shanghai

Institute of *Yue* Opera[1]. With the help of Professor Rembrandt Wolpert (University of Amsterdam) we were able to establish preliminary contact with Professor Chen Yingshi, a lecturer at the conservatory. Chen, himself an expert in the field of Tang dynasty music, in turn introduced us to Professor Lian Bo 连波, another conservatory scholar and a specialist in traditional Chinese opera.
It turned out to be difficult to obtain much (formal) cooperation from the Institute for *Yue* opera. We soon came to realize that in general contacts with private individuals were much easier than with organizations. True enough, the *Yue* Opera Institute provided us with information on forthcoming performances and sent us tickets on request, but the people working there seemed to be unwilling to provide us with further substantial information, in the form either of written sources or of further contacts.

During our first two weeks in Shanghai we desperately tried to get hold of music scores. Professor Lian Bo seemed to suggest that there weren't any. Indeed, in rural *Yue* opera, as in so many genres of traditional Chinese music, the performers usually depend on their ears and memory, playing fixed tunes in a set order. However the urbanized performances that we attended in Shanghai, with an orchestra comparable in size to a Western symphony orchestra, and in fact including some Western instruments, could never have taken place without the aid of written notes. There had to be scores, so we went and searched for them.

## A TELEVISED YUEJU REHEARSAL

At one stage during our Shanghai stay, Professor Lian Bo invited us to a rehearsal for a king-size performance as described above, which took place in the *Yue* Opera Institute. It was, in fact, a formal occasion, with an opera orchestra rehearsing before the cameras of a local television broadcasting company.
The musicians indeed played from written parts. They were conducted by a man sitting in front of the percussion instruments. We were grateful to Lian Bo for taking us there. He subsequently lent us some parts of the scores of this particular performance for copying. After this visit, the *Yue* Opera Institute was also prepared to let us take a look at some of the scores in its (unpublished) collection. However, we were not allowed to make notes or to copy scores. (Later, when we visited the opera school in Hangzhou, we found that the people of the Hangzhou school were normally not allowed to examine the scores of the institute in Shanghai, let alone borrow them for performance.)

Only after making friends with Zhao Xingguo 赵兴国, a scholar at the research office of the *Xiqu yuan*, the Shanghai Institute of Local Opera, did we obtain a host of valuable materials. Zhao supplied us with ample information and written documents, and introduced us to Gu Zhenxia 顾振遐, head of the research office of the Institute of *Yue* opera and himself a composer. Gu had written music for a *Yue* opera version of 'Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai'. The well-known traditional story about these two unhappy lovers has become the subject of numerous theatre plays and narrative music genres in China, including *Yueju*. Gu Zhenxia provided us with the scores of his music and allowed us to copy them. He spent much time explaining how he had composed the music, and he replied to our many questions about the notation. Since the scores were handwritten and sometimes unclear and difficult to decipher, this information was vital to our work. It turned out that the parts for Chinese traditional instruments were written

[1] The word *Yue* refers to eastern Zhejiang. The alternative names of the genre may easily cause confusion, because there are also two independent opera forms called Shaoxing opera (*Shaoju* 绍剧) and a Shanghai opera (*Huju* 沪剧) which are not identical with the *Yue* opera of Zhejiang province. Furthermore, Western readers should take care not to confuse *Yueju* from Zhejiang with *Yueju* 粤剧 (different character) of southern China. The latter genre is better known as Cantonese opera.

in Chinese number notation (*jianpu*), while the parts for Western instruments were written in Western staff notation. The full score was a combination of both, grouping the various instruments in a fashion similar to Western scores (from high-register instruments down to the lowest voices in the orchestra).

## FIELDWORK IN HANGZHOU

The last four weeks of our stay in China were spent in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province. There we concentrated on practical performance aspects of Yue opera. Three months earlier we had already established preliminary contact with the (female) director of the Zhejiang arts school, Yu Airu 於爱如.

In Hangzhou, our work was less hindered by obstacles than in Shanghai. We were allowed to attend freely all lessons on *Yue* opera given at the school, if we thought them of interest. We were able to look around in the library by ourselves, and several teachers were keen to provide us with any information we needed. Moreover we were able to make two visits to Professor Zhou Dafeng 周大风 , a local expert on the music of *Yue* opera and author of several books on the subject written in the 1960s[2]. The contact with Zhou turned out to be invaluable, though we had to cope with serious language problems, since he was speaking Ningbo dialect.

During our three months' stay in China, we achieved a much better picture of *Yue* opera but, naturally, three months were not enough for an elaborate study of the genre. For example, we had no time to visit the countryside, and mainly limited our attention to urban forms of *Yue* opera. We hope to return to China in the near future for further research. Our preliminary results have now been recorded in a master's thesis.[3] Here we confine ourselves to a brief sketch of the history and development of *Yueju*.

## THE ORIGINS OF YUE OPERA

Compared with other Chinese traditional opera genres, *Yue* opera presents a relatively young tradition, with a history of some ninety years.[4] *Yueju* is a regional genre, mainly played in Zhejiang province and in Shanghai, but quite popular in many other regions of China.

It is said to have originated in Zhejiang province, in a little settlement called Shenxian, about 90 kilometres from Hangzhou. In 1906, *Yue* opera was performed there for the first time. In its earliest stages it did not have much in common with the Yue opera of today - it was actually based on local *shuochang* (narrative singing) traditions: two or three actors were accompanied by drum and clapper (*ban* and *qu*), and the actors did not at that stage have the artistic skills typical of Chinese traditional opera. Because the accompaniment of drum and clapper made a sound like '*didu*', the first *Yue* opera troupes, who called themselves *xiaogeban* 小歌班 ('groups of little songs'), were commonly referred to as *diduban* 的笃班('*didu* groups').

The *didu* groups spread in and around the area of rural Shengxian quite rapidly. They soon found themselves performing not only little stories about rural life, but also traditional myths, legends and ancient tales, the very fabric of Chinese theatrical entertainment. From 1912 onwards, the groups were not only active in the countryside but also in middle-sized and large cities like Hangzhou, Shaoxing, Jiaxing and

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[2] By the time we visited him, he was working on a new book about *Yue* opera, which presumably will be published in 1992.

[3] M.Nuttebaum - *Die Chinesische Yue-Oper*, 1991, unpubl., library of the Department of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University, Bochum.

[4] The information contained in this paragraph and the three subsequent paragraphs is largely taken from *Zhongguo yueju* [Chinese *Yue* opera], ed. Qian Facheng, Hangzhou, 1989.

Huzhou. At first they were not very successful in urban areas. Shaoxing had already established its own local opera form - Shaoxing opera (*Shaoju*) -, and the *didu* groups actually adopted some of the melodic patterns and technical skills of *Shaoju*.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT

In 1923, the first *Yue* opera school for female actors was established in Shenxian 嵊县 [5], and in the early 1930s the first all-female casts were active in performances, replacing the male groups. Apparently, female performers were considered more successful in the genre than their male colleagues, so much so that they replaced male performers completely. There is still no entirely satisfactory explanation for this shift towards female casts, which seems to be unique for *Yueju* in Chinese traditional opera. Partly by taking in elements from other genres, Yue opera began to reach an ever wider audience, and eventually it developed into one of the most popular regional opera genres.

In Shanghai in the 1940s, in a development led by the actress Yuan Xuefen, *Yue* opera performers began to adopt the artistic skills of the sophisticated *Kun* opera (*Kunju*). They also began to apply some techniques of spoken drama (*huaju*), a genre which had been imported into China only a short while before, for example stage-lighting effects, props, scenery. At the same time, the music of *Yueju* began to adopt elements from Beijing opera. In fact, the two melodic styles most commonly used in *Yueju* today, *chediao* 尺调 and *sigongdiao* 四工调, were developed during this period on the basis of the *xipi*- and *erhuang*-styles of Beijing opera.[6]
The number of accompanying instruments used in urban *Yueju* gradually increased, and by the early 1950s, apart from the characteristic instruments such as *huqin*, *sanxian*, *liuqin*, *yangqin*, *pipa*, *dizi*, *suona*, *bangu*, *paiban*, *tanggu*, *daluo*, *xiaoluo*, *xiaobo*, also very old Chinese instruments like the *sheng* and the *zheng*, and western instruments like the violin, the cello, the double-bass, the flute, the clarinet, and later even the electric organ, came to be used in what had now grown into a full orchestra.[7]

In the 1950s and 1960s *Yue* opera eventually gained its prominent position among regional Chinese opera genres. According to the Dictionary of Chinese Music[8], more than 280 troups of *Yue* opera existed in the People's Republic before 1965.
There were still other signs of its growing importance. In 1952, the *Yue* opera *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai* won the first prize in the All-Chinese Theatre Festival for performance and script. Fan Ruijuan and Fu Quanxiang, the actresses who played the two leading parts, won the first prize for their acting. The year after, a colour TV-film was made of this opera.
Various leading actresses helped to establish a number of distinguishable musical styles of *Yue* opera. The melodious tunes and mellifluous singing styles of *Yueju* are easily

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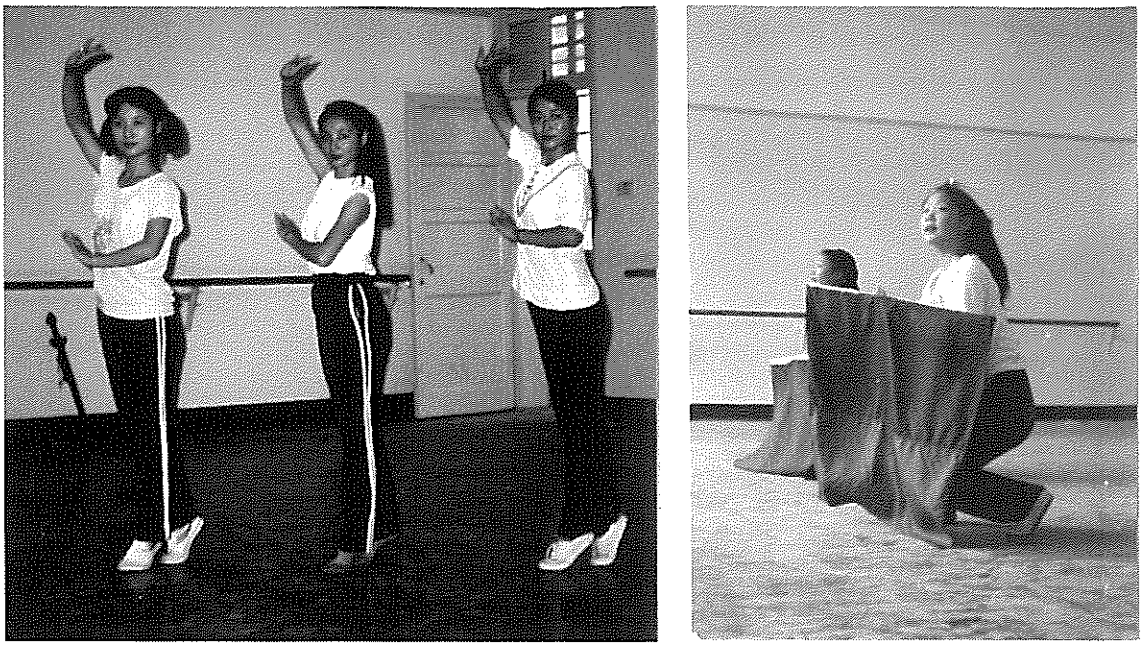
[5] Today women still dominate *Yue* opera. In August 1990, among forty performers taking part in a television competition for young opera actors in Shanghai, there were only two male participants. Male actors are mainly used in 'modern' *Yue* plays with western costumes.

[6] *Xipi* and *erhuang*: these two styles are distinguished by different modes and often contrasting emotions: *erhuang* usually stands for lyrical, stable moods and is frequently applied in contemplative, lamenting or tragic scenes, while *xipi* is often connected with the more active, epic elements in Beijing opera. [Ed.].

[7] *Huqin* and *liuqin* are Chinese fiddles. The *sanxian* and *pipa* are plucked string instruments. The *yangqin* is a dulcimer, the *dizi* a vertically played bamboo flute, the *suona* a shawm. The other terms in this summing-up refer to various types of gongs and drums. The *sheng* is a Chinese mouth-organ, the *zheng* a bridged zither [Ed.]

[8] *Zhongguo yinyue cidian*, ed. Miao Tianrui, Ji Liankang and Guo Nai'an. Beijing, 1985, pp. 479-480.



*Yue* opera training at the Zhejiang Arts School.

recognizable to the connoisseur. Sometimes the music can also be recognized by the fact that the female singers who perform male parts sing in a noticeably low register. (The divisions between various role types in *Yue* opera are not as detailed and sophisticated as they are in Beijing opera, but ample attention is paid to the suitability of certain actresses for male roles, which are then specifically assigned to them).

## COMMUNIST REFORMS

In the early decades of Communism, *Yue* opera was supported by the Chinese government. It was subjected to considerable reforms, presumably because, during the Japanese occupation, the genre had already proved capable of adaptation and become a vehicle of pro-communist and pro-socialist plays, such as, for instance, *Xiang Lin sao* 祥林嫂, based on Lu Xun's short story *Zhu fu*. The reform of *Yue* opera in the 1940s, with its teamwork of playwright, composer, stage-director and actors, became a model for the reform of Chinese traditional opera in general. With government support, troups of *Yue* opera settled in remote provinces like Guangdong, Tibet and Guanxi. Their repertoire not only included traditional plays about beautiful ladies and young scholars, but also a rapidly growing number of modern 'revolutionary' plays. In the 1950s, male and female actors acted together on stage for the first time. However local audiences who came to watch these plays were less than enthusiastic about the reforms and preferred to watch the old-style plays. As a consequence, *Yue* opera troups did not only perform the 'modern' plays, but also continued to produce old-style plays, (authentic or newly written ones), albeit in politically censored versions.

## BEFORE & AFTER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In the 1950s, *Yue* opera became an export article of communist China. In 1952, during the Korean war, a *Yue* opera troupe was sent to Korea in order to perform both *Hong lou meng* ('A dream of red mansions') and *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai* for China's North Korean allies. In the summer of 1955 a large ensemble (about 70 people) was sent to East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) for a one month opera tour, and on its way back to China the troupe paid a visit to the Soviet Union. In 1959 yet another *Yue* opera troupe toured North Vietnam, and in 1960 the genre came to Hong

Kong for the first time. Finally, in 1963, a *Yue* opera troupe went to North Korea for the second time. This was the last visit of a mainland Chinese *Yue* group abroad before the Cultural Revolution interrupted its development. For ten years many genres of traditional or semi-traditional music in China were forbidden and suppressed, as the outcome of a serious political-cultural struggle which affected the entire Chinese society.

After 1976 *Yue* opera was soon restored to its old glory, and *Yueju* troupes began to visit western countries like Japan (1983), France (1986) and Singapore (1986 and 1987). In China, local audiences initially welcomed all forms of public entertainment, which had been banned for over a decade and which now returned to the stage. But soon the consequences of a ten year-long interruption of all theatrical traditions began to be visible: in the Shanghai of the 1980s *Yue* opera had become an entertainment mainly for older people. Now women in their fifties to seventies constituted the majority of theatre-goers who went to attend *Yue* opera. The average age of the performers also rose considerably. After 1976, grand old ladies of *Yue* opera, who had become famous in the 1940s and 1950s, returned to the stage: Yuan Xuefen, Fan Ruijuan, Fu Quanxiang, Wang Wenjuan, Yin Guifang, Xu Yulan, Zhang Guifeng, and others. Yue opera has become famous, in particular, for the various virtuoso styles of acting and singing created by these old actresses. These styles or *liupai*, each single one named after its creator (e.g. *Yuanpai, Fanpai, Fupai*, etc.) are still being copied at present.

In March 1990 the *Shanghai wenhua yishu bao* (Shanghai Newsletter for Culture and Arts) published a very critical article by Li Huikang 李惠康, discussing possible reasons for the diminishing popularity of Yue opera in Shanghai. Li Huikang believes that Yue opera has become an antiquated and diluted genre, and he accuses the old actresses of unwillingness to give way to the next generation and to new developments. These famous old actresses all work in Shanghai. Li believes the present situation to be much better in Zhejiang province; he praises the *Zhejiang xiaobaihua yuejutuan* ('Troupe of Hundred Little Flowers of Zhejiang') for its different approach. He considers the standard of singing and acting of this troupe to be inferior to that of the old actresses, but he stresses that the youth of the performers is an important factor. Li Huikang's article was followed by many other articles in the same journal, the *Shanghai wenhua yishu bao*, discussing the situation of *Yue* opera in Shanghai. Nearly all authors agreed with Li Huikang that it was necessary to implement reforms in order to make *Yue* opera attractive again.

## FURTHER REFORMS

Five months after Li's initial essay, from 14 to 18 August 1990, a TV-competition of young Yue opera actors (*Yueju qingnian biaoyan dianshi dasai*) took place in Shanghai. It was apparently organized by reform-minded cultural workers, since it showed *Yue* opera in a truly different vain.

There had been a biennial TV-competition of young Yue opera actors since 1984, but the previous competitions had been dominated by the styles (*liupai*) of the old actresses. This was different in the August 1990 competition, to the extent that for the first time the participating junior actors (38 actresses and 2 actors, aged between 19 and 26 years) of nineteen opera troupes were asked to demonstrate and sing a short piece which had not yet been performed by their teachers. Chen Fei, an actress from the *Shaoxing xiaobaihua yuejutuan* ('Troupe of Hundred Flowers of the City of Shaoxing'), won the first prize with a performance of a spectacular, artistic dance with long sleeves (*shuishen*) which is quite unusual in *Yue* opera. Judging from this contest, it appears that Shanghai is no longer the only centre of Yue opera: surrounding provinces are providing new impulses, and they are participating in the ongoing transformation of the genre.

MAJOR FOCUS ON CHINESE MUSIC

# 31st World Conference of the ICTM in Hong Kong

ANTOINET SCHIMMELPENNINCK
(Leiden University, The Netherlands)

**The 31st World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) was held in Hong Kong from 3 to 9 July 1991. Its major focus was Chinese music, and twenty-seven scholars from Mainland China participated in the programme – the biggest Mainland delegation so far to attend any musicology meeting abroad. It was also the first time for ICTM to focus so much attention on Chinese music at one of its world conferences. Out of the total of 85 papers presented, approximately 50 centered on China. Sub-themes were Asian ritual music and dance, and influences of Western music in Asia. More than 140 people attended the various sessions.**

The Hong Kong Conference of the ICTM was held in the prestigious Cultural Centre near the piers at the southern point of Kowloon. The Centre looks out over Hong Kong Bay, with its unmistakable pattern of skyscrapers and cloud-capped green hills. The choice of Hong Kong as the site of this conference was understandable, although the choice of the time – one of the hottest periods of the year – must have been the result of some inescapable compromise. For the lecture sessions it made no difference, however, thanks to air-conditioning.

Local arrangements for this large-scale conference were made by Tsao Pen-yeh and his colleagues at The Chinese University, with financial support from the Hong Kong government and a number of local instutions. The organization was excellent. There was a fair choice of local accommodation in different price classes, and a comfortable conference site with a programme of parallel sessions in spacious and technically well-equipped rooms. Sound and audiovisual equipment all functioned *normally*; it may sound strange, but this seems to be quite a feat for any music conference, judging from the five or six international music conferences I have attended so far. And, last but not least, there was a very attractive programme of excursions and concerts. Participants in the conference were offered a trip to the island of Macao, a visit to the Hong Kong Chinese University grounds, transport to some concerts in outer areas, performances of Cantonese opera, Nanguan, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra and a number of other activities. The papers presented at this ICTM conference were selected and arranged by a programme committee headed by Professor Bell Yung (University of Pittsburgh).

## CROSSING BORDERS

Dieter Christensen, the present Secretary General of the ICTM, laconically remarked that the organizers had taken advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime chance to arrange a conference in *three* countries: while the main part of the meeting took place in Hong Kong (British territory, so to speak), one particular session was held on the Portuguese colony of Macao, and a post-conference meeting was scheduled in Guangzhou, in Mainland China, immediately following the sessions in Hong Kong. Those who wanted to attend the entire programme were indeed required to cross several borders.

The Guangzhou meeting (11-14 July) was the outcome of an over-enthusiastic response from Mainland researchers to the call for ICTM papers. Bell Yung's team received some 130 proposals, of which only 30 were eventually included in the Hong Kong programme. It was decided to have an extra conference in Guangzhou in order for some of the other Chinese papers to be read. (The programme in Guangzhou featured a total of 47 lectures.)

Out of the 120 non-Chinese proposals, some 70 were accepted. The final result was a varied and well-balanced programme with some exciting themes, a number of genuine surprises and plenty of film, video and practical demonstrations.

Undoubtedly, the strong emphasis on Asia and China kept a fair number of American and European scholars with other interests away from Hong Kong. The Western participants in this meeting may to some extent have represented an 'in-crowd' of scholars of Chinese music, people who would have come together anyway, outside the boundaries of the ICTM, but this was the inevitable dilemma: situating the conference in the United States would have impeded the participation of more than a tiny handful of Mainland researchers, and part of the great value of this ICTM conference lay in the opportunity it offered to a considerable number of scholars from the People's Republic to participate.

## THE CHINESE FELT 'AT HOME'

If it were not for the enormous amount of money and organizational effort needed, one would wish such exchanges to take place between Chinese and Western researchers on a regular basis. The importance of contacts between scholars of different cultures was an ever-recurring motif in the conference, particularly in some of the 'key papers'. As Dieter Christensen later remarked, looking back on the meeting: 'Despite some language difficulties, our new members from China soon behaved as if they had been with the ICTM for decades.(...) This was not just another conference – it was the opening of a new phase of discourse (...) between scholars from China and from the rest of the world who have finally come to know each other.'

The Hong Kong meeting was an excellent example of a successful exchange, and the quality of the Chinese papers was, in general, very admirable. These papers were frequently read in Chinese and translated on the spot, which worked out much better than I had anticipated. The abstracts may have made a poor impression, but most of the lectures came across very favourably. Unfortunately, the poor English of some of the Chinese lecturers' summaries went into the book of abstracts without any attempt at editing.

The only obvious gap in the Hong Kong meeting was the absence of researchers from Taiwan. For reasons which I fail to understand, no Taiwanese scholars attended, nor were any Taiwanese topics included in the programme. Was this due to political reasons ? A matter of organization, perhaps ? Or were there simply no proposals from Taiwan ? Opportunities for Mainland and ROC scholars to meet are so sadly limited already.

## INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

The conference began with Professor Rulan Chao Pian's key paper and a round-table discussion, both focusing on 'insider/outsider' questions: what is the position, or what *should be* the position of a musicologist with respect to the traditional culture he or she is investigating ? To what extent does one remain an outsider, to what extent can one succeed in becoming an insider of that culture ? And what does it mean to investigate one's own culture, to be an empirical observer of one's own traditions, a real 'insider', so to speak ? Rulan Chao Pian, discussing her experiences during a recent study trip to her native home, concluded that the perspective of most researchers is usually partly that of an 'insider', partly that of an'outsider', depending on different levels of cultural involvement in local music traditions. Her view was supported by Bell Yung, who referred to his research on Cantonese opera. 'I came to Hong Kong looking like a Chinese, but my accent was Shanghainese, which again turned me into an 'outsider'.

Other participants in the round table had their own stories to illustrate this same point. Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (New University of Lisboa) was born in Cairo, the daughter of an Egyptian 'composer of Western music'. Her education was Western-oriented. Late in the 1970s, long after she had moved to Portugal, she returned to Egypt for field research on Arabian music. 'Arabian and Western music are rival categories in Egypt', she explained, 'so I was met with much suspicion, especially with the name I carried and with my Western education.' Dieter Christensen, born and raised in Germany by parents of Danish descent, and now working in the United States, briefly referred to his experiences in Oman in the Persian Gulf. Oman opened its doors to the West only some twenty years ago, and the government recently consulted Christensen about starting a national archive of traditional music. Because of his involvement, Christensen felt he was no longer a complete 'outsider' there.

## TOWARDS A GLOBAL VIEW OF MUSIC

Kwabena Nketia (University of Pittsburgh) said the 'insider-outsider' topic had never occurred to him as a problem until he went to America. 'In the United States I called my work "research into African music". In the 1950s, ethnomusicology was still in its infancy, and I didn't know that what I was doing could actually be called that.' He noticed that outsiders found it difficult to understand what he was doing. 'As a complete outsider you can never fully understand a foreign culture, certainly if "culture" is defined as "experience".' But he noticed, too, that it was sometimes Westerners who, in a foreign culture, would make people more aware of their own culture and traditional values.

With respect to the task of musicologists he remarked: 'The most important thing is that the philosophical interpretations should not be ignored. Together with the hard facts they should form our picture of the music.'
In a sense, Nketia returned to this subject when he presented his key paper on 'The Formation of Cultural Alternatives in Music'. In this paper, he argued that the only reason for a musical repertoire to survive is the aesthetic values it represents for a certain group. The scholar from 'outside' should make it his task to go and look for those values, in order to achieve a better understanding of the music in its proper context. Obviously, this would apply to all traditions, including those often unjustly considered 'not pure', because they are 'Westernized' or 'popularized'. Nketia drew attention to global processes of musical fusion and transformation, adding his own variants to the existing repertoire by performing a Japanese tune in African disguise (with syncopic hand-clapping). Scholars should take a global view of music, he pleaded.Their task should be extended from the interpretation of historical traditions – cultivated in the present but with roots in the past – to the study of the creative and cultural role of 'newer' traditions and musics not yet fully established as traditions.

## PUPPETS FROM HEAVEN

If the compilers of the programme of the ICTM meeting had considered Nketia's views carefully, they would perhaps have renamed some of the sessions. Strictly speaking, the theme 'Western Music in Asia' can only refer to performances of Beethoven or Michael Jackson, but in this case it was intended to cover the topic of Western influences in Asian music. A slip of the pen, presumably.
The sheer quantity of papers presented at the Hong Kong conference forbids a detailed discussion of all the sessions. Many of the papers will be published in full in the forthcoming ICTM yearbook, and will then be available for anyone interested.

My own 'route' along various sessions during the conference was capricious and of course determined by my own interests (folk songs and religious music). I skipped a number of sessions, which proved to be dangerous, because there were many changes in the programme on very short notice. In this way, I missed Edda Brandes' and Schu-Chi Lee's video presentation of fieldwork among minorities in Xishuangbanna – which I would love to have seen – and, later during the conference, was unexpectedly presented with a video presentation by David Holm (Macquarie University, Sydney): 'The Descent of the Gods: the *fangshe* ritual in Northern Shanxi'. His film included fascinating images of Daoist puppets sailing down from heaven (on a cable suspended from a mountain top down to the valley) as well as local worshippers passing through a lantern maze, rituals I had never seen or heard of before. Only five or six people were present at this session – it took place in Hong Kong parallel to the main session in Macao – but I think it should have been held for the general assembly.

## SHAMANISM

There were other surprises too. Wang Yingfen's presentation on 'The Mosaic Structure of Nanguan Music' opened up a fascinating new chapter in the analysis of Chinese music. (Wang Yingfen is studying at Pittsburgh University.)
Several lectures dealt with Chinese shamanistic traditions, a topic not much in the picture among Western researchers so far. One interesting paper, by Liu Guiteng (Liaoning), dealt with 'The Formation and Development of Shamanism and Manchurian Sorcerers' Dance Music.' I was reminded of an impressive video of Manchu rituals which I had been able to see at a meeting in Shanghai in 1989.
Among Mainland Chinese scholars, the presence of Pengcuo Qingrao was notable, as he was the only scholar from Tibet at the conference; his paper on 13th century Tibetan musical documentation was scheduled only at the last moment.
I found the response to John Thompson's workshop on interpreting rhythms in *guqin* music slightly disappointing. I had expected more discussion and participation by *guqin* players in the audience; as it was, only a handful of people attended this session. The subject matter, with its historical, interpretative and 'creative' aspects is so very fascinating! I hope an international conference on *guqin* music can be organized some time in the West.
The ICTM meeting included some special sessions or panels focusing on Chinese music in the Pacific region, Chinese minority music and Chinese folk songs. For some of the Chinese topics, this is definitely the first time that they have been discussed at an international meeting. Among non-Chinese themes and presentations, Ricardo Trimillos' key lecture offered many useful 'eye-openers' on musical perception and crosscultural processes in music.

## NON-INFORMATIVE

The one superfluous session, in my view, was 'Politics, Policy, and Methodology' – a confusing title, to say the least. It must have been clear in advance that Mainland contributions in this field would be non-informative and not open to any substantial

discussion. Was the session included because this is felt to be a 'compulsory' issue ? Feng Guangyu, in his talk about China's policies to protect traditional music, was unable to answer basic questions from the audience and took care not to raise any himself. Basically, in the 'insider/outsider' discussions, too, some of the essential aspects of that topic, such as its racial and political implications, were never touched upon. There may have been reasons for caution, but I felt it was a missed chance.

As for the general atmosphere during the conference: I sometimes felt like an insider, sometimes like an outsider; much depending on which session I was in, and in whose company. This ICTM meeting seemed to me markedly different in style from those of, for example, the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology: ICTM being more formal, ESEM more congenial, perhaps. I do not wish to pronounce a final judgement, as this was my first acquaintance with the ICTM.

There were many fine and lively sessions, though, and I was definitely happy to have attended. Du Yaxiong (Beijing) probably set the right tone for the whole conference when he rose to his feet at the end of the round table discussion on the first day and said: 'Oh well, what's an insider or outsider ? Please let us quickly forget about this terribly unimportant question!' Following several hours of academic debate, this remark led to a general outburst of laughter and to urgent calls for a coffee break.

FILM PROJECT ON NAXI RITUALS FAILED

# Wooo Zeee!

JELLE NESNA
(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

**'When we visit Xuan Ke to inform him that local officials have forbidden us to interview him, he replies, defiantly: "This is good news. It shows that I am an important man and that they are afraid of me." He suggests that we make a film without him, but this hardly seems an acceptable alternative. I conclude that our project has failed.'**
**In September 1991, the young Dutch cineast Jelle Nesna left with a crew for China to make a documentary film about the musician and music researcher Xuan Ke in Lijiang (Yunnan Province), a man fascinated with the shaman rituals of the Naxi people. Preparations for the project took several years. The Chinese Ministry of Culture authorized the making of the film, but local officials made it impossible for Nesna to carry out his work in Yunnan. Here he reports on his experiences.**

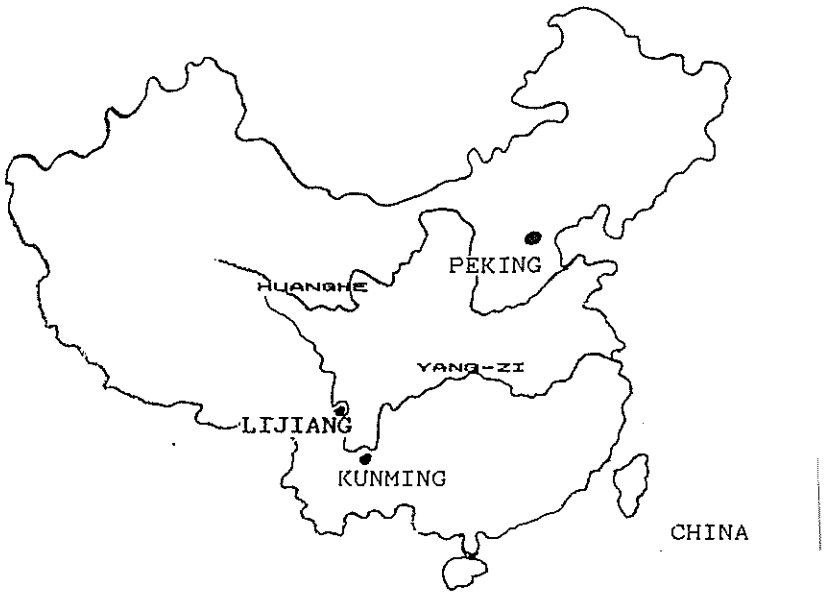
In December 1988, the travelogue writer and journalist Herbert Paulzen wrote to me from Bangkok about his visit to Yunnan Province in China. In the town of Lijiang he had encountered a musician and country schoolteacher called Xuan Ke, who had made a very deep impression on him. At my request, Paulzen provided me with more details. After having read Paulzen's letters, I wanted to make a film about Xuan Ke, and about the shamanist rituals of the Naxi people, which had played such a crucial role in the life of this remarkable man.

## A CONDUCTOR OF SCHUBERT

Xuan Ke is partly of Tibetan, partly of Naxi descent. He works as a teacher of English at two local schools in Lijiang. His main interest is in music. He loves Western classical music, Handel and Beethoven in particular. A black-and-white photograph in his home shows him conducting an orchestra in the streets of Kunming in 1949, welcoming the Communist Army with a performance of Schubert's *Marche Militaire*. However, Xuan Ke also shows deep affinity for the native music of his own people, the Naxi, an ethnic minority living in the Valley of Lijiang. He carried out fieldwork among Naxi in remote mountain villages in the region, and founded an ensemble of traditional Naxi musicians. The average age of the members of this ensemble is 80; Xuan Ke himself is 61.
His interest in Western music has caused him a lot of trouble. After 1957, he spent 21 years of his life in Chinese prisons, persecuted by the Chinese government because of

The Western Mountains and lake Dian chi near Kunming, Yunnan.

his preoccupation with 'capitalist' music. He managed to survive his long-term imprisonment only by recalling memories from his childhood, in particular a shaman song, '*Wo ze ze*', that is normally sung during funeral rituals to fend off evil spirits. Singing this song to himself, he was able to withstand seven months in a pitch-dark isolation cell. He was told that people locked up in this cell would normally turn blind or mad after some time, so he sang the song frequently to chase away thoughts of death and madness. In due course, the same Naxi song inspired him to develop a personal philosophy about what he regarded as the the pristine source of all music - human fear. Xuan Ke was released in 1978, two years after the Cultural Revolution. He published his theories on Naxi ritual music and on the relationship between music and death in local Chinese journals. I was immediately convinced that Xuan Ke's views on music and death and his fieldwork in Naxi villages in the mountains would make a splendid subject for a film.



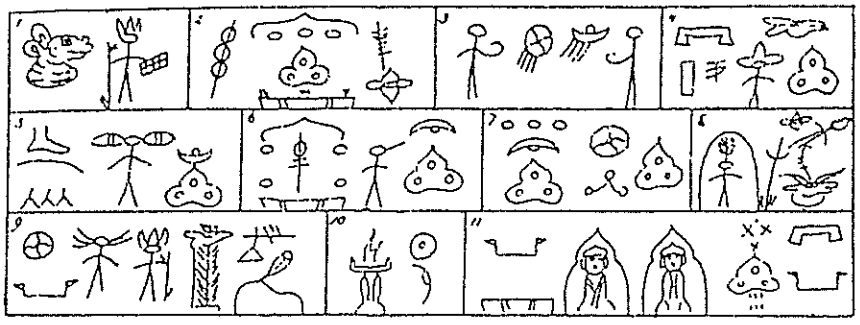

Lijiang is located in the northern part of Yunnan.

In January 1989, I began to work on a synopsis for a documentary about Naxi death rituals, with Xuan Ke as major informant. I approached the British producer-director Claire Walmsley with ideas for a possible co-production with Channel Four or the BBC. She brought me into contact with several field-producers who were to accompany me on visits to China, Wenlang Pang and Yin King-Chiu. I also approached a Dutch producer, René Scholten of 'Studio Nieuwe Gronden' in Amsterdam, who managed to raise US $ 250,000 in funds from the Dutch Ministry of Culture and from various cultural organizations. The Dutch Broadcasting Company IKON was contacted for future television screening of the film in Holland. In October 1989, I made a first, preliminary trip to Yunnan to make preparations for the project. I personally met Xuan Ke and collected local information about the Naxi.

## A MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

The Naxi live in concentrated communities below the Himalayan mountain peaks in the Valley of Lijiang. They are descendants of Tibetan nomads who, in a remote past, settled in this area in a basin of the Yangtze. For many centuries they lived in isolation because of the inaccessibility of their territory and the exclusive character of their matriarchal society. The pedigree of Naxi families was traced back through the maternal line, and children lived with the mother. The woman was the head of the family, and the property was passed to the children through the mother. Women also

The Dongba script of the Naxi people.



Musicians of the *Bai*, one of the many ethnic minority peoples living in Yunnan Province.

comprised the main labour force, respected both at home and in outdoor activities. The religious life in the villages was dominated by the rites and practices of the *Dongba*, shamanist priests.

The Naxi developed their own script of pictographic characters, in which they recorded a fascinating, rich, historical heritage of poems, legends, and religious texts. In the 18th century, the Naxi were placed under Chinese government, and Lijiang gradually lost its charisma of ancient Naxi capital.

While agriculture remained the main occupation of the Naxi people, there was a gradual increase in economic and cultural contact with neighbouring minority peoples and Han Chinese. After 1949, the Chinese government strove for the integration of the Naxi in Han-Chinese culture by carrying out land reforms, promoting industry and setting up Chinese schools and hospitals. Naxi life in remote mountain villages today retains much of its old, traditional values, including the religious practices of the Dong-ba. The Naxi are fond of singing and dancing, especially at weddings and funerals.

## A PRELIMINARY VISIT TO LIJIANG

As early as March 1989, I had collected some funds to investigate the prospects for the film and I had made my first plans for a trip to Yunnan. The journey had to be postponed, following the 'Tiananmen' events and the crackdown on the Democracy movement in China in the summer of 1989. But in October of the same year, I was finally able to visit Lijiang. I spent several weeks investigating the location, with its splendid scenery of snow-capped mountains and small Naxi settlements in the hills flanking the city, and I established contacts with local officials and researchers.

Xuan Ke was very enthusiastic about the project and willing to co-operate in every possible respect. He suggested emphasizing Naxi culture as the subject of the film, rather than the story of his personal life. In this way, the film project would be more acceptable to the Chinese authorities.

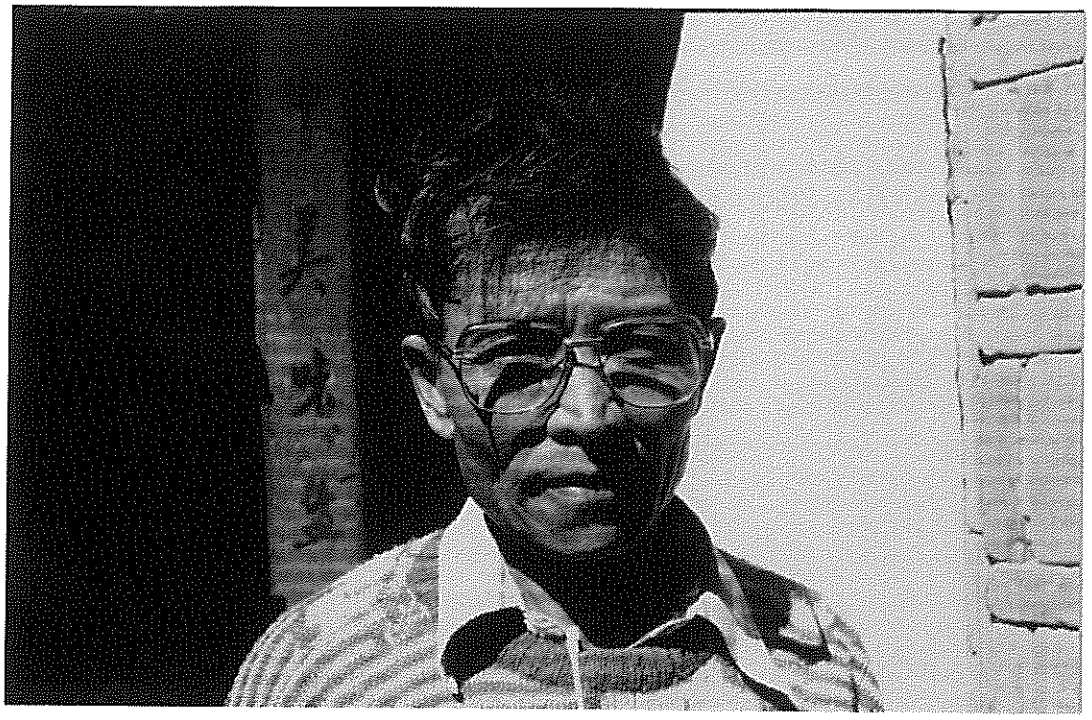
Together with Xuan Ke, I visited the Dongba Institute in Lijiang, which is concerned with the preservation of Naxi culture. The head of the Institute, Mr. Li Sheng, agreed to co-operate, provided that he had a share in the profits of the film.
I made my first visit to a Naxi village in the countryside, trekking through a complicated terrain along Jinsha River. At one point, I met with some hostility on the part of local inhabitants, who threw stones at us immediately after they had spotted us. This was an isolated incident during an otherwise quiet and uneventful trip, in which we were generally met with kindness and generosity. I realized I was facing quite a challenge by embarking on this project, but Xuan Ke's co-operativeness and the prospect of filming the fascinating song and dance rituals of the Naxi convinced me that it was worthwhile carrying on with the project.

## OBTAINING PERMISSION

In April 1990, I finished the scenario for the planned documentary '*Wooo...zeee!*' and submitted it to the Dutch Film Fund. The project was recommended for state subsidy, and in September 1990 I was able to make a second trip to China, this time in order to obtain formal permission from the Chinese authorities to proceed with the film.
The scenario featured images of Xuan Ke visiting shaman priests in front of caves in the Himalaya mountains, priests in traditional robes and with scrolls written in Dongba script, from which they would perform songs. There would be shots from the Naxi orchestra in Lijiang, practising under Xuan Ke's guidance, fragments of interviews with old Naxi musicians, statements from Xuan Ke, glimpses of Naxi men and women singing and dancing at night around a fire, and some historical footage from the late 1920s, showing Lijiang as a trading town along the southern Silk Route. I also planned to include some quotations from Bruce Chatwin's book '*The Songlines*' (1987). (Chatwin had met with Xuan Ke during a stay in Lijiang).

In the company of Wenlang Pang, a Chinese now living in England, I travelled to Yunnan. Wenlang Pang has had a life-long experience with foreign film productions in China. She was, for instance, involved in the making of the English television-series '*Red Dynasty*'.
In Lijiang, I met for the second time with representants of the Dongba Institute. In Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, Wenlang Pang and I contacted the Provincial Branch of the Ministry of Cultural Minorities. Here, we met again with Mr. Li Sheng, Head of the Dongba Institute. To my surprise, he was now reluctant to co-operate in a film in which Xuan Ke participated, dismissing him as a 'ridiculous person'. He was unable to explain why he had changed his opinion about our project. He was unwilling to support a formal request to the Chinese authorities for permission to proceed with the film. The Foreign Affairs officials in Kunming went along with Mr. Li, and I could do nothing but return to Holland. I decided to leave the matter for a number of months.

From January to April, my efforts to find new, suitable contact persons were unsuccesful. If the Dongba Institute was unwilling to provide a formal invitation to our film-crew, some other official organization had to be found in China that was willing to invite us.
I informed the Holland-China Friendship Association (VNC) about my plans, and they immediately offered to start negotiations with the Chinese International Travel Service (CITS) in order to have the project authorized at the highest level by the appropriate Ministries in Beijing.
In June 1991, Sjoukje Sparnaay of the VNC visited Beijing and was met by Mr. Yao of the main CITS office. Mr. Yao received ample information about the planned film on Xuan Ke and Naxi culture, and passed it on for authorization to the Ministries of Tourism, of Foreign Affairs and of Radio & Television. Due to his kind co-operation



Schoolteacher, musician and musicologist Xuan Ke (60) in Lijiang.

and to the professional assistance of the VNC, I was hopeful again that the project could be realized after all. I heard that Li Sheng had been replaced at the Dongba Institute by someone else who was favourably disposed towards Xuan Ke.

## FOREST-WORKERS ON STRIKE

Everything indicated that we were about to obtain formal permission for the making of the film, so I continued in Holland with preparations for the project. The only bad news that reached me was about an incident with another Western film crew in August 1991, in Sichuan Province: they were preparing a documentary film on local culture, and were accidentally caught up in a demonstration of striking foresters. The filmmakers could not resist filming this demonstration. As a consequence, Chinese officials who accompanied the crew were sacked from their offices, and national regulations and conditions for allowing Western film crews into China were said to have been tightened.

I was aiming to make our own film on location in a four-week period in October-November 1991, because of likely favourable weather conditions and the availability of various people to assist in the project in this period. To prepare for the arrival of the crew, I left for Kunming on a tourist visa several weeks in advance. In China, I was now accompanied by my interpreter and field-producer Yin King Chiu. In the meantime, applications for journalist visas for the cameraman and the sound technician were submitted to the Chinese Embassy in Holland.

In Kunming, the provincial branch of CITS acted as our host. It turned out that no formal permission from Beijing had reached Kunming yet, so we could do little more than contact Xuan Ke and discuss with him our plans for filming.
Xuan Ke suggested that we be careful of Mr. Lan Wei, an official working at the Foreign Office in the Lijiang Autonomous District, who might be unfavourably disposed towards the project.

## ARRIVAL OF THE CREW

It turned out difficult to search for suitable film locations in the neighbourhood of Lijiang. Heavy rainfall and landslides had made some of the mountain roads impassable. It also became very difficult to make phone calls from Lijiang. We waited for hours to get through on a very bad line. In the end, we decided to return to Kunming, and travelled for two days over bumpy roads back to Yunnan's capital city.

Early in October, we finally received formal permission from Beijing to make the film. We were told (by CITS in Kunming) to proceed in close consultation with local representants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This would include Mr. Lan Wei in Lijiang. It seemed as if CITS was reluctant to bear sole responsibility for the project. My interpreter, Yin King Chiu, went to the CITS-office in Kunming and returned in a state of shock, with the message that CITS-officials had tried to persuade her not to make a film about Xuan Ke, who was said to be a 'bad' person.
I immediately contacted the head of the CITS-office to inform him that the project could not go ahead unless Xuan Ke's participation was guaranteed. I felt I could not take the risk of inviting our film crew to come over to China unless we could proceed entirely according to plan. In the meantime, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over a formal letter to the Chinese Ambassador in The Hague with an urgent request to the Chinese authorities to offer us full assistance. In this letter, reference was made to a cultural treaty that had just been signed with the People's Republic.
The next day, the head of the CITS-office told us he had phoned Lan Wei. We were given permission to include an interview with Xuan Ke in our film. Our crew arrived in Kunming, 13 October 1991. Before our departure to Lijiang, we were reassured by the Kunming Branch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that there would be no difficulties, provided we agreed to co-operate with Lan Wei.

## TOO OLD AND TOO UGLY

In Lijjiang, we were welcomed by Mr. Lan Wei with a Chinese banquet in the Lijiang Number One Hotel. The day after our arrival, Lan Wei informed us that he had been unable to find the documents concerning the formal authorization of our project. They should have been - and certainly were - among the materials handed over to him by a CITS representative. The next day, the CITS official in our company was approached by an assistant of Lan Wei and was intimidated. He was told that a film which included the presence of a 'bad' person like Xuan Ke was simply unthinkable, and that he must not co-operate in such a project.
In a formal meeting, Lan Wei presented us with a curious contract in which it was stated that we had agreed to make a film not raising any political or academic questions. The film was to focus entirely on scenery and tourism themes. I found this contract unacceptable mainly because we had not agreed to anything and there had been no previous consultation. Instead, I suggested that Lan Wei examine our filmscript very carefully - he possessed a Chinese translation - and come up with suggestions for any changes he considered necessary.
The final result was that Lan Wei prohibited an interview with Xuan Ke. He also forbade Xuan Ke to accompany us to the mountain village of Datong for the filming of the '*Wo ze ze*'. He disagreed with our choice for one of the singers of that particular song. He also disagreed with our choice for various other participants in the film: they were considered either too old or too ugly. Moreover, Lan Wei suggested that another formal request for permission from Beijing was necessary. I saw no reason for that, since our project had already been authorized, as was reconfirmed by telephone. Last but not least, Lan Wei suggested that Xuan Ke was not a useful informant with regard to Naxi culture. He went on to suggest himself as an alternative. Lan Wei told us he was himself a musician, and to prove this he danced and sang for us.

We had arrived at a dead end. We contacted the local Party Secretary of Lijiang, the local Head of the Police Force, as well as Lan Wei's superiors. All seemed in favour of the project, but backed out when it came to the point of formally authorizing our work. We were not allowed to proceed with the film.

## NO TOURIST PICTURES

Shortly before we left China, Lan Wei explained his objections to Xuan Ke's theory about 'music and fear': had he, Lan Wei, agreed to let us interview Xuan Ke, this would have implied that the Party actually acknowledged Xuan Ke's views on the topic. 'But as you know, music is always entirely a product of labour, not of "fear".'

The same day, a meeting of Christian members of the Lisu – an ethnic people closely related to the Naxi – was interrupted by Military Police in a village just outside Lijiang. Loudspeakers were destroyed, some robes torn to pieces, and six bibles confiscated. Five people were arrested...

After our return in Holland, I heard that CITS officials in Beijing had defended our project and had criticized Lan Wei for his actions. Lan Wei was told that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing and the Chinese Embassy in Holland had been sufficiently informed about our aims and objectives with respect to the *'Wooo...zeee!'* project, and had formally agreed to the making of the film.

Recently, I have heard several rumours. One is that steps are being taken to remove Mr.Yao (our supporter at the CITS-office in Beijing) from his post. I have also heard that a Channel Four film crew has visited Yunnan and has offered Chinese authorities US $ 500,000 to obtain permission to make a documentary film about local minorities in the area. The amount is definitely more than I offered - and was able to offer - to the authorities in Yunnan for our Naxi-project. I am, of course, not in a position to check these rumours, and they may be false.

My dream about *'Wooo...Zeee'* has come to an untimely end. I could have come to some agreement with officials in Lijiang about a touristic film, but my sole aim was to make an anthropological film about a musical topic. Filming secretly would have endangered the position of Xuan Ke, who was grateful enough at having been freed from prison under Deng Xiaoping and who does not want to put himself and his family at risk.

At present, I ponder about the way in which I can use my experiences in China in future. If anything, I have come to realize what it means for ordinary people to live in China, in daily confrontation with the edicts of local authorities.

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Jelle Nesna is a young Dutch filmmaker from Amsterdam. He produced various dramas and documentaries. Among his recent productions are 'Poet in Power' (1985, about the South-African poet Breyten Breytenbach, a film awarded with a prize of the Association of Dutch Filmmakers), 'Portrait of Tristan Keuris' (1986, VPRO Television, about a prominent Dutch composer), and 'The Making of the Drama Ajax Antigone', (1991, NOS Television, about rehearsals of the stage company 'Zuidelijk Toneel', directed by Ivo van Hove). The article about Jelle Nesna's experiences in China was edited and translated into English by F.Kouwenhoven).

# 20TH-CENTURY CHINESE COMPOSITIONS IN

# The C.C.Liu Collection

BARBARA MITTLER
(Heidelberg University, Germany)

**Dr. C.C.Liu, Fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, has recently founded a 'Chinese Music Workshop' designed to enable scholars from China and abroad to make use of his extensive library of scores and materials of 20th-century Chinese composed music. Copies of the greater part of the collection have been donated to the Centre of Asian Studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and will, in future, provide research materials for scholars of Chinse music in Europe.The author introduces Dr. Liu and his Hong Kong-based collection. She interviewed Dr. Liu in Hong Kong in October last year.**

Assembled over a period of more than two decades, the C.C.Liu collection is one of the more extensive collections on modern Chinese music outside Mainland China. Living in Hong Kong, Dr. Liu was able to maximize the intake of his collection: it combines materials from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The collection includes not only scores and sound recordings, but also files (i.e. newspaper clippings and articles from magazines), books and journals.

## SCORES

Some 750 scores (300 by Mainland composers, 125 by composers from Hong Kong, and 73 by composers from Taiwan) have been assembled. In addition, there are about 200 scores of Mainland Chinese revolutionary songs and 35 anthologies of various musical works by Chinese composers from the three geographical areas mentioned.
The scores cover the entire period of 'westernized' Chinese music, with the Mainland Chinese compositions ranging from works by the early *xuetangge*-['schoolsong'-] composers to a full set of *yangbanxi* [model operas]. A number of works by the post-1978 generation of Mainland composers are included.
With regard to Taiwanese music, pioneer-composer Xu Changhui is represented as well as his younger colleagues, such as Pan Huanglong. The same applies to Hong Kong: respected senior composers like Lam Doming and young talents like Lam Bunching both have their place in this collection.
The materials assembled in the C.C.Liu Collection offer opportunities to musicologists for tracing musical developments in China and neighbouring regions. Political scientists or scholars of Chinese literature, interested in studying revolutionary song-texts from various periods, may also profit from the collection.

## WRITINGS AND SOUND RECORDINGS

The 130 files in the collection provide a wealth of biographical information (in Chinese and Western languages) about Chinese composers and study materials with respect to the political context of Chinese music. There are approximately 50 files about Mainland composers (with emphasis on the careers of older-generation composers), 10 about composers from Taiwan and 20 about composers from Hong Kong. In addition, there are some 50 files on general topics, such as *Music and Politics in the People's Republic*, *Music circles in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mainland China*, *History of Chinese music*, *Influence of the West and Western Technique*, *Traditional Music* and *Musical Esthetics*. The books in the collection are mostly in Chinese.

Dr. Liu has been involved in Chinese musical circles since the 1960s. His audio and video tapes feature private recordings of a great many pieces never commercially recorded. The tapes were often given to him by the composers themselves.There is a fair amount of correlation between works in score and works recorded. Recently the collection was catalogued, which allows for an efficient choice of further acquisitions in future.

The collection continues to grow, due to Dr.Liu's personal contacts with composers, musicians and musicologists in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States. He acquired some valuable materials fom Mainland China, which are normally difficult to obtain, such as *Zhongguo jinxiandai yinyueshi yankao ziliao*, internal teaching materials used at the Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Furthermore, a number of unpublished M.A. theses on Chinese Music are included in the collection.The important music jounals from Mainland China (*Yinyue chuangzuo*, *Yinyue yanjiu*, *Yinyue yishu*, *Zhongguo yinyuexue*, *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao*, etc.) are all represented, as well as a number of jounals on revolutionary (and other) songs (*Gequ*, *Lingnan yinyue*, *Shanghai yinyue*, etc.). The few musical journals issued in Taiwan and Hong Kong rarely contain contributions on the topic of 20th century Chinese composition. A limited number of them are included in the C.C.Liu Collection (*Lianghe yinyue* and *Yinyue shenghuo*, amongst others).

## ABOUT THE COLLECTOR

Dr.C.C. Liu was born in Shanghai in 1935. In 1948 his family moved to Hong Kong. Liu enrolled in middle school and took piano lessons. At that time, there were only sporadic concert activities in Hong Kong, mainly undertaken by amateurs such as the (then non-professional) Sino-British orchestra. Liu took an active interest in Western classical music. When The Hong Kong Sacred Institute was founded early in the 1950s, he enrolled as one of its first students and received his first formal musical education. Lin Shengshih, a well-known Hong Kong composer, was one of his teachers. In 1962 and 1963, Liu took part in examinations on musical theory of the London Royal and Trinity Schools of Music. In the late 1960s, he started to work for the BBC, as a translator. In this period, he collected his first Chinese musical materials. He studied Sinology at London University (1968-1972) and later at the University of Hong Kong (1977-1979). His PhD dissertation (1982) focuses on the *zaju* drama from the Yuan dynasty.

Since 1981, he has been working at the Centre of Asian Studies of the University of Hong Kong.

Over the past ten years, the maintenance of his collection of Chinese music scores and recordings has become a major activity. To stimulate contacts with Mainland China, and to facilitate the acquisition of further materials, Liu has organized several seminars on Chinese music in Hong Kong from 1985 onwards. During the seminar of 1986, composer Ding Shande participated as representative from Mainland China. Further seminars, in 1988 and 1990, featured musicians, composers and musicologists from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States as well as Korea, who discussed various aspects of 20th-century Chinese music history.

## LIU'S VIEWS ON MODERN CHINESE COMPOSITION

Dr. Liu is currently preparing a book on the history of 20th-century Chinese music. With a host of materials at his disposal, he is in a unique position to compare developments in Mainland China with those in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Here is a brief summary of his views on the modernization of Chinese music in the 20th century.

Influences of Western classical music first became apparent in the music of Mainland China, several decades before they reached Taiwan and Hong Kong. The first attempts at a genuine merging of Eastern and Western musical idioms date from the May Fourth Era. Composers like Huangzi, Zhao Yuanren and Xiao Youmei, applied Western musical technique in their compositions based on Chinese pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic (folk) melodies. In character Huangzi's schoolsongs are close to the tunes of German *Lieder*, with simple chordal progressions. The music of these composers does not necessarily reflect a deep affinity with Chinese musical tradition[1].

Early Chinese symphonic music, which was also developed on the Mainland, was strongly imitative of Western, 19th-century romantic music, and technically on a poor level, mainly because Mainland composers lacked proper training and opportunities for studying in the West. If they did manage to travel abroad, it was for short periods only. The well-known composer Xian Xinghai, for example, studied in France for some time, but his music shows a poor grasp of orchestration techniques. Some of his works were later reorchestrated. (It remains to be seen whether the original scores or the reorchestrations will be used in the forthcoming edition of Xian Xinghai's *Collected Works*, to be published by the *Xian Xinghai quanji bianji weiyuanhui*).

By the end of the 1950s, numerous symphonic works were composed in Mainland China to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the People's Republic, while the repertory of 'revolutionary songs' also continued to flourish.

In Taiwan and Hong Kong, Western musical influences first began to be noticed in the 1960s and 1970s. In Taiwan, the return of the composer Xu Changhui from Paris in 1959 sparked off an interest in a 'modernized' type of Chinese music. Young Taiwanese composers began to travel abroad to study Western music, their favourite countries being Austria, Germany and France.

A similar effect had the return from Canada of pioneer composer Doming Lam in Hong Kong, in the 1960s. Other Hong Kong composers followed his example and went abroad for some time, to the United States or Canada, rather than to Europe. It marked the beginning of an era of new music in Hong Kong. A real 'avant-garde' circle was formed in the 1970s. The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, founded in this period, offered growing support for Hong Kong composers by commissioning many new works.

In Mainland China, the 'Cultural Revolution' (1966-1976) interrupted the development of a modern, Chinese musical idiom, although the *yangbanxi* ('Model Operas') of this period did present interesting attempts at integration of Chinese traditional (Peking Opera) and Western elements. The 1980s were more favourable for the development of new music in the People's Republic; the country witnessed a real upsurge of compositional talents. In experimental works, composers of the young generation, - frequently referred to in China as *Xinchao*, 'New Wave' - reflected on the rich heritage of Chinese traditional culture. Many students went abroad for long study periods in Europe or the United States. In the wake of the political events of 1989, many more left China to pursue careers abroad. Their compositions, with different combinations of Western and Chinese instruments, are far more sophisticated attempts at a fusion of Eastern and Western than those of their predecessors.

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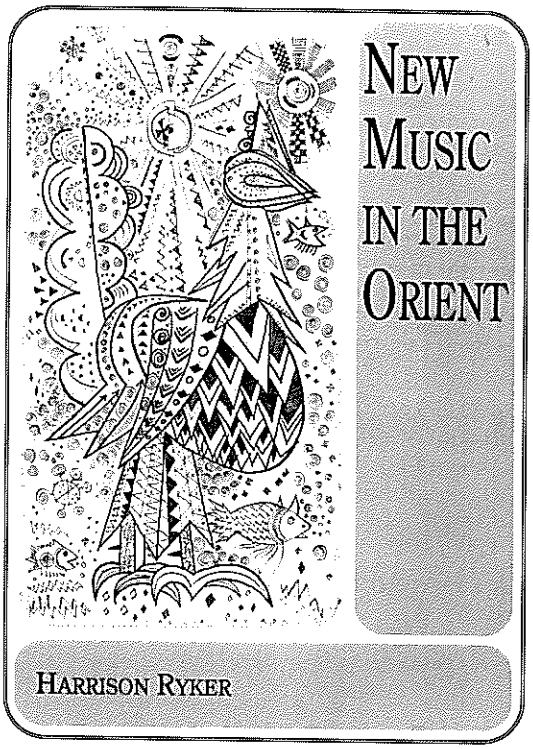
[1] This particular topic is discussed by scholars from the Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan in the latest volume of Liu Jingzhi (ed.): *Zhongguo xiandai yinyueshi*, Hong Kong, December, 1991.

An interesting development parallel to that of the *Xinchao* on the Mainland is the *Xungen* in Taiwan. Like their Mainland colleagues, young Taiwanese composers are searching for their cultural roots - roots situated on the Mainland, in this case more particularly in Fujian Province. Their music reflects an active interest in Chinese traditional concepts. In the 1980s many young Taiwanese composers were eager to visit the Mainland and establish new ties with their own past. In Taiwan, as on the Mainland, the crackdown on the Democracy movement in Beijing and other cities led to profound disillusionment among young artists. In Hong Kong, the 1980s presented a period of technical polishing and perfecting. In general, Hong Kong composers seem less focused on discovering a 'Chinese identity' than their Mainland and Taiwanese colleagues. They appear to emphasize the development of new techniques, says Dr.Liu.

Dr. C.C.Liu is currently preparing a conference on the 20th-century modernization of Chinese instruments. It will be held later this year in Hong Kong.

# A Global Musical Culture

**New Music in the Orient - Essays on Composition in Asia since World War II; ed. Harrison Ryker. Frits Knuf Publishers Buren, The Netherlands, 1991. ISBN 90 6027 5535 (cloth) or 90 6027 5527 (paperback; 286 pp. Price US$ 68 (cloth) or US$ 55 (paperback).**




Any book dealing with modern or contemporary music risks being outdated by the time it is published. The contemporary music stage has become a genuine Tower of Babel – myriads of different languages, more composers, more systems, more means to create sounds or to reproduce them than ever before, and a rapidly shifting set of aesthetic values.Developments in new music are fast and difficult to keep track of.

Most of us have not yet fully digested the essence of the serial and structuralist music of the 1960s, but its idiom already lies behind us, and the term for it, 'avant garde', no longer seems apt for the music that is written today. 'Avant garde' is too conspicuously linked with a stylistic movement that no longer dominates the contemporary music scene. Probably the notions 'new' and 'contemporary', too, will lose their actuality in due course.

According to many conservative critics, there is a 'crisis' in new music: these critics usually attribute the crisis to intellectual boredom, pretentiousness and lack of joy in contemporary music, elements which, they say, continue to frighten audiences away. How often these days do concerts of new music attract a full house, or a truly enthusiastic audience ? Well, it happens every so often, but much depends on one's definition of 'contemporary' music. For some critics, the term 'contemporary music', just like 'avant garde music', refers primarily to an elitist, academic tradition of 'written, difficult music' – as opposed to popular, improvised, instant music.

However, the borderlines between the many styles that populate the international music scene today are rapidly dissolving. Western academic and foreign traditional music are meeting each other and giving birth to new children.

The same happens between other genres. Cultural gaps are bridged with an ease and elegance that stupifies the dryly academic observer. In Japan, Buddhist monks are performing new music created especially for them by contemporary Japanese and American composers. In Holland, contemporary Western musicians are trying to play

ancient Chinese percussion instruments in a modern paraphrase of Chinese peasant rituals. Musical genres – popular or unpopular – suddenly seem to defy classification. Are they really 'genres', or are they stages of music in transformation ? The 1970s and 1980s show a fascinating process of cultural fusion everywhere: not only do different musical worlds mix together, but so do their audiences.
Musicologists may soon have to relegate distinctions like folk, jazz, rock, classical, and avant garde to the annals of musical history. Many musicians have already done so. We have witnessed the birth of an unprecedented musical pluralism, and twentieth century musical culture as a whole may well be characterized in such terms; there has been a growing recognition on a global scale of the values and rich potentials of local music repertoires. There have been substantial cross-fertilizations, bridging vast distances in time and space.
African music came to America. Western music came to the Orient. Somewhat slowly, African and Oriental music came to the West. One may argue about the terms of exchange, about the economic and military domination of the West which may have led to a more forceful influence of Western cultural values in poor and developing countries than vice versa. But at least we are beginning to recognize, beginning to (show the willingness to) understand the music of foreign cultures *on their own terms.*

This is by no means an achievement of concerned ethnomusicologists, though they did contribute to it. I see it primarily as an achievement of composers and musicians. It was made possible by the rapid, global dissemination of modern communications technology and modern means of sound production. We live in an age of recorded sound, of film, radio and television. This has deeply changed – and will continue to change – the face of music on a global scale.

Writing about such developments, and writing about new music in general, remains an activity somewhat akin to journalism. The object under study is going through rapid transformations. Writing about it involves (apart from a tremendous knowledge) the courage to speculate, as well as a firm inclination to be unacademic, and (sometimes) to write faster than one's shadow. We do not have to predict future taste or even come close to it, but we do have to make our own premises clear, at all times, with utmost care.

One way to prolong the life of any publication on new music is to reserve ample space in it for contemporary criticism, and, naturally, to document meticulously and economically. Archival information, names, biographical data, anything that will really help to enhance and sharpen the musical *self-portrait* of an era or genre is important, but the choice should be selective. There should be interviews with composers and critics, who – preferably – defend contrasting viewpoints. There should also be essays about developments at large, which put the music in a wider (social, historical, musicological) perspective. There should be lists of recordings, scores, compositions, dates on first performances.

Harrison Ryker's *New Music of the Orient*, which focuses on East Asia and some adjoining countries, indeed contains all these elements, but not for each separate area covered. It is a valuable and fascinating but curiously unbalanced collection of twelve essays, each dealing with a particular geographical region. The book is primarily of interest to musicologists and composers with a curiosity for things oriental. Musicians will find many new names that may arouse their interest, but essential information on compositions (their instrumental settings, duration, accessibility of scores) is lacking. The book was not intended as a manual for reference of that kind.
As a survey of Far Eastern developments at large it is very valuable, because it is the only book on this topic so far, with a genuine wealth of information, and with some parts that are a definite pleasure to read. It is fascinating because it contains unexpected

viewpoints and many important, previously unpublished data. It is only unfortunate that its chapters are so very, very unequal in approach and in quality, and it is regrettable that several major areas – India, Japan, Vietnam, and mainland China after 1978 – are not at all covered in the book. Major topics relating to cultural identity or technological development in East Asian music are scattered throughout the various essays, with no attempt at any sort of organization. Each chapter simply covers a country or region, and all chapters share one major theme: post-World War II musical composition in Asia.

The plan for this book first took shape more than a decade ago, during a conference of the Asian Composers' League (ACL) in Hong Kong in March 1981. The actual collection of twelve essays materialized only ten years later, and new developments that took place in the meantime have not always been covered very well.
The main reason for including new music of the 'white' populations of Australia and New Zealand is, apparently, that these countries formally participate in the ACL. There are many intercultural links between them and the overseas Asian world – the influx of Australian contemporary music in China, for example, or the coming of East Asian composers to Australia and New Zealand – but these are hardly touched upon in the book. (The presence of a prominent composer like Julian Yu in Australia is not mentioned in Ann Boyd's chapter, and is even left out of the chapter on his native country, mainland China.)
The Asian countries presented in this book are Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, and there is an additional essay by the Chinese composer Chou Wen-chung on 'Asian Esthetics and World Music'.

Each chapter in this book was intended to be written by a native composer or musicologist from the country in question. A laudable and interesting approach, but it did lead to some problems. The editor was unable to find suitable writers to cover certain areas. As a consequence, we learn nothing about the new music of Vietnamese composers (surely an author dealing with that topic could have been found in Paris), nothing about new directions in Indian traditional music, including the huge development of Indian popular film music and the cautious first successes of Indian 'avant garde' composers like Pritty Paintal and Naresh Sohal. We hear nothing about Japan, about Takemitsu and his many contemporaries and younger colleagues, and very little about the impact of Isang Yun on his younger colleagues. We stay completely in the dark about Indonesia, where, although there may not be a noteworthy 'avant garde', certainly substantial transformations have taken place in traditional music.

The editor, Harrison Ryker, a lecturer of Musicology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, readily acknowledges these and other obvious 'holes' in his book, but remarks that including more geographical areas would have led to a further, intolerable delay in its publication. He also observes that 'editorial attempts to impose consistency [in the various contributions by different authors] seemed to result generally in greater diversity'. Indeed, this appears to be the other main problem of *New Music in the Orient.*.
A comparison of the contributions on New Zealand and Australia alone suffices to reveal the somewhat kaleidoscopic nature of the anthology. The New Zealand chapter, (written with the humor and self-deprecating touch that seem to mark the real 'Kiwi') limits itself to a readable discussion of various composers and their works, but pays no attention to the public reception of those works nor to critics' reactions at home or abroad. Ann Boyd, in her essay on Australia, does include such aspects, and also dwells elaborately on, for example, links between traditional and Western music in her country. She includes notated music examples.

The chapters on Malaysia and Singapore are brief and factual and in some ways disappointing. There is no substantial discussion of the contents of the music, while important questions, for example about the immense impact of China on native traditions in these countries, are hardly touched upon. Still, these papers are among the first assessments in any Western language of the present situation in Malaysia and Singapore, and as such, they are valuable.

A good example of how things can be done differently is Bruce Gaston's presentation of music in Thailand. Fascinating for its wealth of ideas and unusual in design, it leads the reader right into the heart of the matter: the music. We are invited to sit behind the piano and follow the lively discussion of Bruce Gaston with his former teacher, the composer Boonyong Gatekong, while they exchange views on new music with their hands on the keyboard.
Boonyong Gatekong's remarks on Asian musical aesthetics are no less enlightening than those of Chou Wen-chung, in his essay on the same topic, but they often seem in disagreement with them. For example, Chou stresses the overall importance of timbre in Asian music (pp.180-181), while Booyong Gatekong remarks that it was basically Western music that taught the Thai to become more interested in timbre (p.136). Two more interviews are part of Gaston's contribution. They provide only glimpses of contemporary musical life in Thailand, yet within a limited space they seem to raise more issues than most other chapters in their entirety.
Only at the end of Gaston's series of interviews do we learn the actual identities of the people interviewed. Reading the texts without introductory information is a bit confusing, but it does put the reader in an unprejudiced position: he is like an eavesdropper at an unspecified occasion, he can hear but cannot see who is talking, and should try to become aware of the nature of the subject discussed. It forces him to frame his own picture of these people and their ideas, before any preconceived biographical data or neatly arranged views are presented. It makes for interesting reading.

The chapter on the Philippines is on a par with the ones on New Zealand and Australia, informative and well-written. It has no music examples. In general, it is a pity that no sound document was published together with this book. Much of the music discussed in the book is simply unobtainable for the average reader. It would seem fair to provide at least a rough idea of the 'sound' of certain works on an accompanying cassette. Admittedly, it would be difficult to provide a coherent selection because so many countries are included.

The views on Asian musical aesthetics of the Chinese-born, American-based composer Chou Wen-chung have been publicized several times before, in various forms and guises, but they are of sufficient interest to deserve inclusion in this book. I am inclined to agree with most of Chou's observations, except for his contention that thematic development plays a subordinate role in Chinese or Asian music. It may do so in written sources, discussing aesthetics, but not in the music itself, not in 'living aesthetics', so to speak. However, it is thematic development of a rather different nature from that in Western music.

The chapters on Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese music are largely disappointing. The chapter on Taiwan (by Hsu Tsang-Houei) hardly touches upon music at all, while the chapter on Mainland China (by the older composer Li Huanzhi) is no more than an enumeration of names and titles, rather than a serious attempt to put the music itself in the picture or to describe its development. While Li Huanzhi is known to be sympathetic towards the younger generation of Chinese composers (those who started composing after 1978), he hardly discusses them in this survey. There is growing pressure from the Ministry of Culture in Beijing to neglect or attack contemporary

music of Chinese composers in official writings produced in the People's Republic. As a consequence, we learn nothing about one of the most important developments in Asian music over the past decade. Composers like Ge Ganru, Chen Qigang, Qu Xiaosong and many others are not mentioned once. This cannot be called an omission, it is essentially a deception, but we cannot put all the blame for that on Li Huanzhi.
If one were to judge developments in China from Li's paper, it would seem that there was a continuous and harmonious development of music in post-war China, with a regrettable interruption during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. At present, Chinese composers seem to live happily together, joining forces in the creation of a modernized 'socialist' music. This is what Li suggests.
In fact, many older composers in China went through a terrible ordeal, even long before the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, the schism between old and young composers in China is, at present, as deep and painful as it is among composers in Japan, Furthermore, quite unintentionally, the Cultural Revolution has been a vital force in the creation of an entirely new era in Chinese music after 1978, not just a chaotic interruption. Li Huanzhi suggests that we 'skip those ten fruitless years'.
The chapter on Hong Kong (by Daniel Ping-leung Law) is far more satisfying, but again it provides little insight into the actual nature of the music, and fails to answer some of the most obvious questions. Does new music in Hong Kong have an identity of its own ? What is the binding force between the composers in Asia's metropole of musical pluralism ? Why have Hong Kong composers so far been less successful with their compositions in the West than some of their young mainland colleagues ? Law's contribution is also flawed by curious remarks like: 'Orchestral compositions should be the backbone of any contemporary music culture', Or: 'Hong Kong is the only Chinese place in which a genuine Western influence may be found'. His survey of Hong Kong composers is not complete. Many talented young composers (Joshua Chan, to mention just one) are not referred to, which is a pity, while some older ones seem to receive over-generous attention.

*New Music in the Orient* is an important book. Its flaws should not deter the reader from recognizing its essential values. It is a first and very bold attempt at an overview of new music in a huge part of the world that has been grossly neglected in the West for so many years. It rightly focuses attention on a rich contingent of composers who share cultural backgrounds fascinatingly different from that of European or American composers. There is much food for thought in the book, not least in Ryker's excellent introductory chapter. He raises many essential topics and adds some vital viewpoints that are not raised in the rest of the book.
One major question is, of course, to what extent 'avant garde' music in Asia can be regarded as a native tradition, rather than an imported culture. Well, Asian composers, while deriving major impulses from the West, have also implanted Asian musical concepts overseas in return, Ryker observes. There is no question of one-way traffic in this respect. Moreover, the controversy between new music and tradition no longer seems to be an issue of 'West' versus 'East', but rather one between different levels of technological development: 'By implication, musical life in Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Seoul is more akin to that of Paris or London than to that of their respective countrysides. The issue which a composer must face, therefore, seems not to be "cultural imperialism" so much as "technological imperialism", and the suitability of music to the environment in which it is presented.'
The general topics discussed in the book – Asian ideas about composition, about music as an intellectual or social property, about the specific role of the musical creator – will obviously be the subject of ongoing debate, and many of its specific themes – the impact of electronic music in Asia, the creation of new types of opera and chamber music, and so forth – should certainly receive further attention in specialized studies. Ryker's book may stimulate further discussion of these subjects.

**Frank Kouwenhoven**

# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The editors of the CHIME Journal encourage all readers to submit news about their own research projects and fieldwork trips, announcements of meetings, notices of recent publications, abstracts of papers, theses and dissertations, and news about performance activities in the field of Chinese music. For the announcements below, we gratefully acknowledge the assistance of: Wu Ben (WB), Mireille Helffer (MH), Andreas Vath (AV), Peter Micic (PM), Nicholas Wheeler (NW), Noël Nickson (NN), Deng Wei (DW), Jonathan Stock (JS), Ho Wai-On (HW), Paul Dice (PD), Martin Gimm (MG), Zhou Qingqing (ZQ), Boris Avramets (BA), Chen Yi (CY), Wang Hong (WH), and Mark Trewin (MT). These announcements were compiled by Antoinet Schimmelpenninck (AS) and Frank Kouwenhoven (FK).*

## PEOPLE & PROJECTS

### THE KONGHOU RECREATED

The *konghou* 箜篌 is an ancient Chinese plucked stringed instrument. It is known in two different forms: a horizontal *konghou* (zither), which first appeared in China during the periods of Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, and a vertical *konghou* (harp), which was introduced in China from Persia in the Han dynasty. Both kinds were played extensively during the Sui and Tang dynasties, but were lost in the Ming dynasty.

In the past few decades, various researchers have attempted to reconstruct the ancient *konghou*, with the help of ancient pictures and descriptions, but only after 1980 did these attempts result in an instrument which could be used satisfactorily in performances.

Zhang Kun, a senior technician of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music started to work on a *konghou* in 1979. Before that, he had already built new versions of two other traditional Chinese instruments, a *sheng* (mouth organ) and a *zheng* (a plucked zither with moveable bridges). Zhang created a *sheng* with a keyboard attached to it and a *zheng* with mechanical tuning facilities. In February 1980, Zhang Kun built his first *konghou*, a fact which was entered in the Dictionary of Chinese Music and noted by musicians; this *konghou* was soon incorporated into China's Central Orchestra of Traditional Instruments, mainly as a solo instrument. Subsequently, Zhang Kun designed and built four more versions of the *konghou*, trying to improve the sound and the range of the instrument.

Basically Zhang's design retains the form of the ancient vertical *konghou*, but its strings are arranged like those of a Western harp and it also has the latter's tuning pedals. It has two rows of strings on each side, and there is a lever at the lower end of

Zhang Kun and his reconstructed Konghou.

the strings which equalizes the tension on each pair of strings and ensures a homophonic sound if they are plucked together. Chinese style ornamentations can be played on the instrument by modifying (pressing or vibrating) the strings with the help of the lever. Furthermore, the *konghou* is equipped with a double sound box with bridges which act as sound transmitters.

The strings are tuned in a natural heptatonic scale, with a range from A1 to C4. Free modulation is possible with the help of three pedals. The double row of strings enables the performer to play fast melodies and chords on the instrument.

Zhang Kun's design of the *konghou* was greeted by other Chinese experts of the instrument as a very succesful achievement. The latest version was shown at the Beijing International Exhibition of Inventions in 1988. It won the official accolade of the Ministry of Culture in 1989 and obtained a Chinese patent in 1991.

Since May 1980, the reconstructed *konghou* has travelled widely for performances at home and abroad, and has featured in an International Harp

Festival. *Konghou* solo recitals have been held in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States and various European countries. In China, music students in many provinces have started to learn the instrument, and there are now even some students of *konghou* outside the Mainland (in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and the United States). For more information, write or phone the designer of the instrument: Zhang Kun, No.5 - 2, Mingyue lane, section 1, Sanhao Street, Shenyang, China. Telephone (China, Shenyang) 392165. (WB)

### TAIWANESE STUDENTS IN PARIS

Two students from Taiwan currently work on PhD dissertations in ethnomusicology at the Université de Paris X - Nanterre. They are: Wu Rang-Shun, who carries out comparative research on vocal polyphony of the Paiwan and Bunun minorities in Taiwan, and Lin Ching-Tsai, who works on the musical traditions of the Siraya in Taiwan. Both students were sent to Paris on recommendation of Professor Hsu Tsang-Houei. They are supported by the Taiwanese government. (MH)

### INSPIRED BY CUI JIAN

After studying Sinology in Munich University, Germany, Andreas V.Vath spent a year in Taiwan in 1991. In Tainan, he joined a local pop group. On the invitation of rock musician Cui Jian (Beijing), this group toured in Mainland China and played concerts together with Cui Jian in Beijing and Chengdu. Vath is currently planning to write an M.A.thesis on the development of a Chinese popular music scene, with special reference to Cui Jian's music. (AV)

### THESIS ON CHINESE POP STARS

Peter Micic (Monash University, Melbourne, Australia) is working on an M.A.thesis titled 'Pop Stars as Unofficial Role Models in China and their Influence on Chinese Urban Youth in the 1980s'. It will be outlining several pop singers who became an indelible part of urban Chinese youth culture, briefly analyzing the eclectic range of foreign influences that spurred on rock bands in China, and comparing the lyrics of these pop songs to those officially approved by the Party. (PM)

### MINORITY MUSIC

Nicholas Wheeler graduated at the Ethnomusicology Department of the School of Music, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand in 1989 on a thesis titled *Transcriptions of vocal polyphony of the Dong, Buyi, Zhuang, Yi, Mulao, Yao and She Minority Nationalities of China.* He studied Chinese language and in 1990 continued his study of Chinese at the Beijing Linguistic Institute. He is currently studying for a Master's Degree at Victoria University; the subject of his thesis is *A Survey of Material Published in Chinese Periodicals on the Musics of the Minority Nationalities of China.* In the future, he hopes to go back to China for doctoral field work. Wheeler published his transcriptions of polyphonic minority songs in the booklet *Aspects of Chinese Music*, which accompanies a cassette tape with field recordings of teahouse dialogue songs from Guiyang and polyphonic songs from Southern China, published by the Asia Pacific Archivein 1991. (Tape and booklet are available from the Asia Pacific Archive, School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington, P.O.Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand. (NW)

### FOLK SONG RESEARCH

The Australia China Council has awarded Dr. Yang Mu a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for three years (1992-1994), to further his study on Chinese folk songs. His research will be focussed on China's folk song culture in its social context – a study of the interaction between social behaviour and musical expression in a region of north-western China (central Gansu, eastern Qinghai and southern Ningxia). Dr. Yang Mu, a musician originally from Beijing Conservatory, came to Australia in 1984 to work on his Ph.D. at the University of Queensland. He is now resident in Melbourne. In 1991, he prepared audio-visual and written materials for a developing project, 'Chinese Music for Secondary Schools', funded by the Australia China Council. (NN)

### RESEARCH ON PIPA

Mr Deng Wei, a *pipa* soloist and composer from Beijing, currently works on a Ph.D.-study on a *pipa* repertory item dating from the earliest known oral source early last century, a virtuoso item that became popular through transmission, and subsequently established itself over 150 years in a number of solo versions published for the instrument, and more recently in arrangements for Chinese orchestra. His study is supervised by Professor Noël Nickson at the University of Queensland. Mr Deng Wei worked as a soloist and composer in Beijing from 1969 to 1983 and completed degrees in music both at the Chinese and Central Conservatories in Beijing. Afterwards, he settled in Australia, where he obtained his Graduate Diploma of Music in 1984 in Brisbane, and where he completed his Master's degree in 1988. Next to his (part-time) Ph.D. study, he is active as a concert-performer, together with his wife, who is a trained Chinese singer. The couple tours schools and performs for the Arts Council of Queensland. (NN/DW)

### CHINESE VISITING SCHOLARS

- Zhang Ning from the Chinese Musicians' Associa-

tion, Beijing was Visiting Professor in Ethnomusicology at the Queen's University of Belfast. The subject of his study is Chinese mass songs. Professor Zhang was based at the Department of Social Anthropology in Belfast, Northern Ireland from October to December 1991. (JS)

- Wang Di, Professor at the Music Research Institute (Beijing) and a noted scholar of *guqin* music, is a research Fellow in the Music Department of Harvard University for 1991-1992.

- Du Yaxiong, Associate Professor at the Chinese Conservatory (Beijing) and a noted scholar of music of the National Minorities in China, is a Fullbright Fellow at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana for 1991-1992.

- Kunqu master Hua Wenyi, currently living in Los Angeles, recently performed at the Los Angeles Festival and the International Festival of Theatre in Madrid. Assisted by Susan Pertel-Jain, a doctoral student in Theatre Arts at the University of Hawaii, Hua taught a section of Peter Seller's opara class at UCLA. She will be at Antioch College in May and June, 1992, giving workshops and a performance. (Source: ACMR Newsletter 5/1)

## HONG KONG COMPOSER IN LONDON

Female composer Ho Wai-On from Hong Kong has now lived in England for more than twenty years. While reading Chinese and English literature at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, she won the John Swire UK Scholarship in 1966 to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. After graduating from the Academy, she studied film and television direction and production in London, and later went back to the Royal Academy to have composition lessons with James Iliff. She was elected a member of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain in 1974, and, the following year, was selected by the Gulbenkian Foundation to participate in the 1st International Dance Course for Professional Choreographers and Composers, under the direction of Glen Tetley. She has worked extensively in electronic music studios, participated in the computer music workshop at Stanford University, and obtained an M.A. in Contemporary and Electronic Music from Cardiff University. In 1984 she was elected A.R.A.M.

She has written numerous compositions for various combinations – vocal, instrumental, orchestral, electronic, computer, multi-media, and the scores for three short films. Since 1974, she has lectured and many of her works have been performed (and/or broadcast) in the UK, Hong Kong, US, Denmark and Taiwan. In 1979 the Hong Kong Urban Council presented a concert of her compositions at the City Hall Concert Hall, including a multi-media work which involved electronic-computer music, live instrumental performance, mobile scenery and colour lighting, slide projection, costume and choreography. In 1987 she was invited by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts to direct and design Acis and Galatea, and transformed Handel's music into a dance-opera. In 1990, she wrote the score for a NOH theatre project, which was performed at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden.

Ho Wai-On is founder-director of Inter-Artes and presented three combined-arts programmes in London in the last two years. (For more information on Inter-Artes, see News and Reports.) (HW)

## SURVEY OF PERFORMERS

At the recent meeting of the Chinese Music Society of North America (Chicago, October 1991), Paul Dice presented a paper titled 'A Western Approach to Chinese Instrumental Composition'. He is continuing research on this topic, collecting information on performers on Chinese instruments who are interested in playing new compositions. He hopes to provide composers with a network of interested performers. For more information, contact: Paul Dice, 4829 Vincent Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55410, USA. (PD)

## HISTORICAL SINOLOGY & MUSICOLOGY

Professor Dr. Martin Gimm (Cologne University) has recently finished the first volume of a planned series of three on the life and works of Cui Lingqin of the Tang Dynasty, including the study of Cui's Buddhist environment and the editorial history and underlying traditions of the *Jiaofang ji*.

He is currently working on an elaborate monography on the problem of the decay of Chinese medieval music traditions, in particular that of Tang musical scholarship during the Song dynasty. Professor Gimm bases himself on various historical sources, with particular reference to Chen Yang's *Yueshu*.

Other activities currently in progress are: co-operation in some contributions on China in a new edition of Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Bärenreiter, Kassel); an essay on 'Emperor Kangxi and the penchant for European music and natural sciences in 18th century China' (in German); supplementary comments and corrections to his (German) translation of the Yuefu zalu, and a dictionary of terminology on Chinese musical instruments, which, so far, contains some 5,000 entries. (MG)

## ANCIENT MUSIC NOTATION / ZHOU YI

Cao Zheng (70) is a teacher of *guzheng* (Chinese zither) and Professor of the National Music Department of the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing. Part of his research is concerned with ancient systems of musical notation. He has published various articles on the subject, notably *Gongchepu de laili* 'The Origin of Gongchepu' and *Zhongshi gudai yuepu de yanjiu* 'The Importance of the Study of Ancient Scores'. Furthermore, he has studied musical as-

pects of the *Zhou yi* (a Chinese classical source) and published an article on the subject: *Zhouyi he Zhongguo yinyue de ruogan wenti* 'Some issues concerning Zhouyi and its relation with Chinese music' in the journal *Zhongguo Yinyue* (Chinese Music) no.3, 1984. It was re-published in *Zhonghua Yixue*, 1988, Taiwan. (ZQ)

### CHINESE & WESTERN OPERA COMPARED

Jiang Jing (59), Assistant Professor of the Musicology Department of the Central Conservatory in Beijing, is carrying out comparative research on Chinese and Western opera. In July 1986, she presented a paper at the 4th annual meeting of the Society of Chinese Traditional Music, entitled *Zhongguo xiqu yinyue jiegou yu xi'ou gequ de bijiao* 'A Comparison of the Structure of Chinese Opera and European Opera'. In September 1989, she gave a special course on this subject at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Her article 'Interaction Between Chinese and Western Opera', *Zhongguo xiqu yu xifang gequ de hurong huzhang*, was published in *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music), 1990 no.1, pp.3-11. In August 1988, she participated in an international conference on musicology held in Melbourne, Australia. Subsequently, she gave lectures at various universities in Sydney and Canberra. One of her lectures was entitled 'Folk Tradition in Contemporary Chinese Compositions'. From September 1989 to January 1990, she lectured at universities in San Francisco and Houston in the United States on the topic of 'The Influence of Traditional Chinese Music on Professional Instrumental Composition'. She subsequently published this lecture in the Asian Music journal (Vol. XXII-2, Spring/Summer 1991), published by Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. (ZQ)

## NEWS & REPORTS

### CSE FOUNDED IN TAIWAN

The Chinese Society for Ethnomusicology中国民族音乐学会was inaugurated in Taipei, Taiwan, on February 8, 1991. Professor Hsu Tsang-Houei is Chairman of the Board. The major aim of the Society is to stimulate research into, and international exchange concerning ethnomusicological issues. The Society plans to organize regular, national and international conferences on ethnomusicological topics. It also plans to publish periodicals, books, cassette and video tapes, and to organize concerts, exhibitions and other cultural activities. For membership, information or subscription to the Society's Newsletter, please write to: Wang Wei-Chen, Chinese Society for Ethnomusicology, Fl. 8-6, No.59, Sec.4, Chung-Shiau E. Road, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC. Tel: (02) 773-0906. (Source: CSE, 1991).

### ORIENTAL MUSIC CENTER IN LATVIA

The Latvian Oriental Music Center was founded in Riga in 1990. It was established to introduce Latvian people to the best of Asian and African music and dance, to further the professional growth of the musicians involved and to promote scientific and educational activities in this field. The creative meetings, seminars, lectures and workshops of Asian and African music and dance as well as to encourage the organization of concerts. It concentrates on promoting scientific research in ethnomusicology, and preparing publications as well as radio and TV broadcasts. The Center believes that music of the world must become one of the main factors in forming a proper worldview and musical feeling for the children, so it works out and prepares learning materials (textual, audio and visual) for various educational extablishments.

The Latvian Oriental Music Center cooperates with scolarly, cultural and musicological organizations and institutions in Latvia, India, USA, USSR, Germany, Switzerland and other countries. Contact address: Latvian Music Society, Oriental Music Center; Brīvības ielā 85; Rīga 226450; Latvia. Tel: (0132) 276004; fax: (0132) 278060. (BA)

### E-MAIL NETWORK

Electronic mail is an efficient method of communicating among colleagues nationally and internationally as well as participating in news and discussion groups on a variety of topics. A special e-mail discussion group network of scholars interested in Chinese music research is now being formed by the Association For Chinese Music Research (ACMR). It will be based at the University of Hawaii and coordinated by Theodore Kwok. To facilitate communication among the Chinese music scholarly community, Kwok is compiling a list of people with e-mail adresses. Anyone wishing to acquire an electronic mail address should consult with the computing centre at his or her institution regarding the availability of electronic mail services. In the ACMR Newsletter Vol. 5, No. 2, a preliminary list of people interested in Chinese music with e-mail addresses is included. While catering mainly to ACMR members, the network is basically open to anyone. Persons interested in having their e-mail address listed in the Directory are asked to send a message by e-mail to Theodore Kwok stating name, e-mail address, affiliation, and country. For more information, contact Theodore Kwok, University of Hawaii Library, 2425 Campus Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, Phone: (808) 956-5425. E-mail address (Internet & Bitnet): tedk@uhunix.bitnet, or: tedk@uhunix.uhcc.hawaii.edu. (Source: ACMR Newsletter 5/1)

### YANG YONG WINS COMPOSITION PRIZE

Chinese composer Yang Yong 杨勇, who gained

his Master's degree at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, and who is currently working on a PhD in America, won the first prize at the ALEA III International Composition Competition in September 1991. Out of several hundred compositions, nine pieces were pre-selected, from which Yang Yong's Octet was chosen as the best work. The piece was premiered by the Boston ALEA III Chamber Music Ensemble, conducted by Gunther Schüller. Earlier this year, Yang Yong won a first prize at an international composition competition in Washington. (*Renmin yinyue*, 1991/11, p.45.)

### COMPOSITION COMPETITION

The 'Music from China' ensemble, based in New York, sponsors an international competition designed to encourage the creation of new works for traditional Chinese instruments. The competition is open to all composers with an affinity for Chinese music. The winning contestants will be awarded cash prizes (1st prize, US $ 300, 2nd prize, US $ 200), and winning works will be premiered by the ensemble at a concert in 1992. Terms and conditions of the competition are as follows. 1. The competition is open to composers of all nationalities, with no age limit. 2. Works must be written for a chamber ensemble (from 2 to 9 performers) and should be from six to ten minutes in length. Instrumentation must be from the following: *dizi*, 17-reed soprano *sheng, pipa, zheng, sanxian* or *liuqin, erhu* (doubling on *gaohu* or *banhu*) or *zhonghu, yangqin, ruan* and percussion. 3. No works that have previously won awards, or have been previously published, performed in public, or used commercially in whole or part or in any other version are eligible. 4. Composers retain the copyright to their compositions. 5. All submissions must be accompanied by an official entry form, available from Music from China. 6. Scores will not be returned; applicants should keep their original scores and submit copies only. 7. The decision of the jury will be final. The jury reserves the right to divide awards, or to decline to make an award.
Address: Music from China, 170 Park Row, Suite 12D, New York, NY 10038, USA. (CY)

### MELBOURNE CHINESE MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Founded in 1989, the Melbourne Traditional Chinese Music Ensemble comprises of a number of professional musicians from conservatories, orchestras and traditional ensembles in China. The musicians are: Wang Zhengting (*sheng*), Dong Qiuming (*dizi*), Chen Wenjie (*zhongruan* and *pipa*), Li Li (*guzheng*), Shen Pangeng and Julian Yu (*erhu*). Wang Zhengting, a founding member of the Ensemble, was born in Shanghai in 1955. A graduate from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (1978), Wang has played at a number of venues in Melbourne, including the International Festival of the Arts (formerly the Spoleto Festival) and the Chinatown Arts Festival during Chinese New Year (1991), where he accompanied the Australian composer and bassoon-player George Dreyfus in a rendition of the Herdsman's Song (*Mumin xin'ge*). Wang has also been invited to perform a contemporary Japanese piece with the principal oboist of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.
The Melbourne Traditional Chinese Music Ensemble has performed at numerous festivals, the most recent being The Melbourne International Festival of the Arts. Two Sydney-based musicians, Feng Zhihao (*erhu*) and Hu Weigang (*suona*) appeared as guest soloists who performed at the Chinese Teahouse with the ensemble during the Festival. Yang Mu (based in Melbourne) also appeared as a guest soloist playing the *guqin*. (PM)

### THE CHINESE TEAHOUSE

The Chinese Teahouse (September 21-28, 1991) was a main attraction at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts. As Melbourne and Tianjin are sister cities and Victoria and Jiangsu sister states, Melbourne audiences were treated to a smorgasbord of performing arts presented by the Tianjin *quyi* troupe, performing *Jingyun dagu* (story-singing with drum accompaniment, sung in Peking dialect), *Xihe dagu* (story-telling with drum accompaniment in Hubei dialect), *kuaibar* (story-telling to the accompaniment of bamboo clappers), the Jiangsu *pingtan* troupe, performing Suzhou tanci (story-telling and ballad singing in Suzhou dialect), Peking opera and a puppet troupe from Yangzhou. There was also martial arts (presented by the Australian Wushu Sports Academy) and acrobatics, featuring Lu Guangrong (originally from the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe and now an instructor at the Flying Fruit Fly Circus in Albury, Victoria). (PM)

### TAIWANESE ENSEMBLE VISITS AUSTRALIA

The Han T'ang Yueh-fu Ensemble from Taiwan performed at the Macquarie Theatre at Macquarie University in Sydney in early September 1991. The ensemble specializes in performing *nanguan*, a genre of instrumental and vocal music from Fujian province and Taiwan. According to an article in The Australian (September 11), the Han T'ang Yueh-fu Ensemble was established 'to train musicians in the art of traditional Chinese music and to carry out research into ancient Chinese music theory'. (PM)

### CHINESE ART ACADEMY

Enthusiastic amateurs in Amsterdam recently founded a Chinese Art Academy, supported by the 'Foundation for Chinese Culture, Music and Art'. The academy is supervised by Steve Huang, a

Chinese businessman. Major aim is the promotion of cultural exchange between East and West, in particular between Chinese and Western culture. Another aim is to stimulate and reinforce interests of the younger generation of overseas Chinese in their cultural origins. The Academy offers courses on various aspects of Chinese culture: language, calligraphy, dance, painting, Western and Chinese musical instruments and the singing of pop songs. Chinese instruments taught are *yangqin*, *guzheng* and *erhu*. For more information, contact: Chinese Kunstacademie, Oude Zijds Voorburgwal 183, 1012 EW Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel. 020-6364927 (9 AM -13 PM) or 06-52833377. (AS)

## INTER-ARTES

Inter-Artes, a London-based charity organization headed by the composer Ho Wai-On, was set up in 1988 to support artists active in different fields of art at the same time, and to promote intercultural (more specifically, Anglo-Chinese) understanding through combined art forms.

Next to the staging of concerts and performances in Britain and abroad, The organization supports music, dance, drama and visual arts – with emphasis on projects of exchange between these various fields. Since 1988 Inter-Artes has staged four productions, with seventeen performances of combined-arts items, six photographic displays, one concert, one forum, one lecture and one workshop. Nearly 200 artists from different disciplines and backgrounds took part in the activities. In 1990/91 a number of performances were staged both in London and inHong Kong.

For more information on Interartes, contact: Ms. Ho Wai-On, 25 Wellington Road, Wanstead, London E11 2AS, U.K. Tel: 44.71.530-5687. (AS)

## CHINOPERL MET IN NEW ORLEANS

The Conference on Chinese Oral and Performing Literature (CHINOPERL) met 11-12 April, 1991, at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. The meeting featured the following papers related to Chinese music:

Mark Bender (Ohio State Univ.) – *Yang Shen: A Folk Arts Worker of the Yi Nationality*; Bao Chengjie (Traditional Opera Research Inst. Beijing) – *From* Bajiaogu *(medley) to* Quju *(drum song drama)*; Sai-Shing Yung (Princeton Univ.) – *Cantonese Opera Groups in New York City*; Chun-Jo Liu (Univ. of Minnesota) – *Two Performances of 'The Orphan Zhao Recaptured* '(with video tape); Dana S. Bourgerie (Ohio Stat Univ.) – *Eating the Mosquito: A Cantonese Version of Frere Jacques*; Cai Yuanli (Folk Arts Research Inst., Beijing) – *The Current State of* Quyi (with video tape); Don Sutton (Carnegie Mellon Univ.) – *Festival Processions in Taiwan: A Performance Analysis* (with video tape).

## FIRST CHIME MEETING HELD IN GENEVA

Friday 27 September 1991, the first international CHIME meeting was held in Geneva, as part of the VIII. European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM). Some 35 people attended the meeting. The following papers were read: Dai Xiaolian (Shanghai Conservatory, China) - *A Report on the Guqin Tablature Collection of Robert van Gulik, Kept in the Library of the Sinological Institute in Leiden (Holland)* (with live performance), François Picard (Sorbonne Univ., Paris) - *Les temps superposés du maître-tambour taoïste* (read in English); Huang Bai (Shanghai Conservatory) - Haozi*: Working Cries Turned into Art. A discussion of two Work Songs from Shanghai* (with video tape); Ingrid Fritsch (Bonn) - *Female Blind Musicians on the Road: Aspects of the Social Organisation of the 'Goze' in Japan* ; Jonathan Stock (Queen's Univ., Belfast) - *Constructive Techniques in Music for Chinese Two-Stringed Fiddles*; Frank Kouwenhoven (CHIME, Holland) - *Chinese Modality Versus Western Tonal Structure in He Luding's 'Cowherd's Flute'.*

The proceedings of this meeting will be published in Chime Vol. 5 (June 1992). (AS)

## CMSNA ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN CHICAGO

The Fifteenth Anniversary of the Chinese Music Society of North America was celebrated with an International Conference, held in conjunction with the SEM and other conferences in Chicago, 10-13 October, 1991. The following papers were presented: Session A: 'Overview': Sin-yan Shen (National President of the CMSNA); Hsiang-kuen Mao and Charng-ming Liu (CMSNA) – *The National Chinese Music Conference of 1976*; Bruno Netl (Univ. of Illinois) – *Training the Music Professional – The Teaching of Non-Western Music Performance*; Session B: 'Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Society' – Pao-kuan Wang (Univ. of Wisconsin), *moderator. Philosophy of Chinese Music in Modern Compositions*; Doming Lam (Univ. of Hong Kong) – *Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra – The Cradle for Chinese NEW Music*; Hwang-long Pan (National Inst. of the Arts, Taiwan) – *Acoustical Artistic Conception and Composition*; Nan Xu (Anhui Academy of Music and Arts, China) – *Changes in Philosophy and Formal Structure in Modern Chinese Composition*; Linda A. Seltzer (Princeton Univ.) – *Chinese Poetry and Music in Computer Music Compositions*; Paul Dice – *A Western Approach to Chinese Instrumental Composition*; Sheldon Atovsky (DePaul Univ.) – *Heterogeneous Schizothymia and the Current Musical Mélange: The Role of Tradition in New Music in Contemporary Society from a European American Composer's Point of View*; Richard A. Simons (The Burgundian Consort) – *Arranging 'Moon Over the Han Palace' for Early European Instruments* Session C: 'Bridging the Gap Research' – Shu-ping Wang (Purdue Univ.), *moderator.* Pao-

kuan Wang (University of Wisconsin) – *Scientific Methods of Musical Analysis*; Nian-ci Shen (Anhui Academy of Music and Arts, China) – *Instinctive Poetic Expression and Taoist Philosophy in Chinese Music Compositions*; Jianming Tsai (Northern Illinois Univ.) – *Acoustics and Use of the Chinese Qing*; Nadine M. Saada (Bowling Green Univ.) – *Trends for the Future: A Comparative Study of Chinese Attitudes towards Chinese Music*; Richard A.Simons (The Burgundian Consort) – *An Iconographical Overview, Discussion and Demonstration of Stringed Instruments in Use in Southern and Western Europe from the 13th through the 16th Centuries*; panel on the *Development of Orchestral Music*. Session D: 'A Fifteen Year Review and Future Challenges'– Der-tung Yuan, *moderator*. Yu-lin Chen (China National Orchestral Society, China) – *The Modern Chinese Orchestra: Origin, Accomplishments and Future*; Der-tung Yuan – *A Review of Contemporary* Erhu *Performance*.

Next to the sessions, there was a competition of *sheng-guan* (wind) and *tan-bo* (plucked string) ensembles, and a concert by the Chinese Classical Orchestra. For further information on the activites of the society, contact The Chinese Music Society of North America, P.O. Box 5275, One Heritage Plaza, Woodridge, IL 60517, USA. Tel: (708) 910-1551.

## SEM CONFERENCE HELD IN CHICAGO

The Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) held its 36th Annual Meeting on October 10-13, 1991 in Chicago, Illinois. The following papers on Chinese music and related topics were presented:

Joanna Lee (Columbia Univ.) - *The Politics and Control of the Cantopop Chart in Hong Kong*; Lawrence Witzleben (Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong) - *Music and the Taiping Qingjiao Taoist Ritual in Hong Kong*; Terry Miller (Kent State Univ.) - *Traditional Music in Post-Revolutionary Laos: Continuity and Change from 1974 to 1991*; Yingfen Wang (Univ. of Pittsburgh) - *Tune Identity in* Zhongbei *Songs: An Application of Semiotic Analysis to Chinese Art Music*; Terence Liu (National Endowment for the Arts) - *Chinese Opera Companies and Their Audiences in the USA*; Tim Brace (Univ. of Texas-Austin) - *Chinese National Music (*minzu yinyue*): Tradition, Legitimation, and Musical Style*; Wei Hua Zhang (Univ. of California, Berkeley) - *The Chinese American Jazz Group as a Cross-Cultural Musical Phenomenon: Search for a New Identity*.

The SEM Pre-Conference took place on 9 October and was sponsored by the Society for Asian Music. Four sessions made up the day's programme: *State and Social Ideologies*; *The Music Industry and Asian Pop*; *Issues of Regional Identity*, and *Commentary and Discussion*, led by Charles Hamm (Dartmouth College) and Peter Manuel (Columbia Univ.). The day was concluded by an evening session of video viewing and music listening.

The papers of this Pre-Conference will be published as a special issue of *Asian Music* in 1992.

## ACMR MEETING HELD IN CHICAGO

The Eleventh Semi-Annual Meeting of the Association for Chinese Music Research was held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology 10 October, 1991 in Chicago. The programm consisted of three reports: Valerie Samson (UCLA) – *Protest Music and Contextual Meaning: The Example of Tiananmen Square, 1989*; Tim Brace (University of Texas) – *Why the Flap over the New Wave? Thoughts on the Recent Criticism Campaign in the PRC*; Eric Lai (Indiana Univ.) – *Pitch Organization in the Early Music of Chou Wen-chung: 'Soliloquy of a Bhiksuni'*. Special guest at the meeting was Professor Du Yaxiong of the Chinese Conservatory (Beijing), who gave an informative and entertaining talk on *Recent Issues in Music Research in the People's Republic of China*. The attendance at this meeting was 36, the largest in ACMR's history. Summaries of some of the papers are included in the ACMR Newsletter Vol. 5, No.1 (Winter 1992).

## NANYIN MEETING HELD IN QUANZHOU

Thanks to the efforts of the *Zhongguo Nanyin Xuehui* (Society for Nanyin Studies), the second conference on *nayin* (or *nanguan*) was finally held in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, from 14-17 October, 1991 (the first meeting being held seven years earlier). Most of the participants came from various provinces in China and from Taiwan, with Ying-fen Wang (Univ. of Pittsbrugh) and Kyle Heide (Indiana Univ.) being the only representatives from abroad present at the meeting. Papers by Nora Yeh (USA) and Yang Guixiang (Japan) were also submitted, but the contributors could not attend the meeting in person. The papers and discussions covered a wide range of approaches, such as historiographic, organological, music analysis, linguistic, ethnographic, anthropological and sociological, as wel as inviting comparisons between *nanyin* and other Chinese musical traditions. Two concerts of *nayin* music were presented by musicians from Quanzhou and neighboring counties, and from Taiwan. (Source: ACMR Newsletter 5/1 (1992), report by Ying-Fen Wang)

## GUZHENG MEETING HELD IN YANGZHOU

The second National Discussion Meeting on the *Guzheng* (bridged zither) was held by the Chinese Musicians' Association and the Yangzhou City Government in Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province) from 19 to 23 October 1991. Over three hundred *guzheng* players, experts and music scholars attended. *Guzheng* artists from Hong Kong, Singapore, Tai-

wan and Mongolia were invited as special representatives. The programme of the meeting featured both concerts and discussion meetings. On the final day, over two hundred children played *zheng* together in an ensemble in the Yangzhou Gymnasium. Lü Ji, chairman of the Chinese Musicians' Association, Feng Guangyu, vice editor-in-chief of the Central Editorial Dept. of the Chinese Folk Music Anthology, and *guzheng* experts Zhou Yangjia (Xi'an Conservatory) and Cao Zheng had been invited to attend the concert as special guests. The proceedings of the *guzheng* meeting will be published by the Chinese *Guzheng* Society. (WH)

### YANGZHOU QINGQU EXPERTS MET

From 1 to 4 November 1991, eight experts of *Quyi* and Chinese classical literature attended a meeting on reform of *Yangzhou Qingqu* (a regional genre of story singing). *Yangzhou Qingqu* originated in the Yuan Dynasty, developed in the Ming and flourished in the Qing dynasty. *Qingqu* is one of three main genres of *Yangzhou quyi* (the other two being *pinghua* and *tanci*). *Qingqu* is sung throughout and contains no spoken text, unlike the other genres. Its name, *Qingqu* (litterally: 'unmixed tunes') actually refers to the dominance of music. Another characteristic feature of *Qingqu* is that the actors do not need to put on makeup for the performance. (WH)

## PUBLICATIONS

### BEIJING OPERA MUSIC

**Listening to Theatre: The Aural Dimensions of Beijing Opera by Elizabeth Wichmann. 1991, 360 pages. University of Hawaii Press, 2849 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, HI 96822.**

Beijing opera is perhaps more widely known and admired for its dramatic (and acrobatic) qualities than for its musical content. Previous books and articles in English have delved into and speculated on Beijing opera's visual appeal and theatrical uniqueness.

Listening to Theatre presents an ambitious and thorough-looking musicological examination of this elaborate art form. Wichmann's aim is 'to describe major components of aural performance as they are understood by Beijing opera practitioners and connoisseurs.' Individual chapters focus on aesthetics, including role types, plots, and dramatic structure; language, in lyrics and stage speech; composition; voice production and types; the instruments, individually and in ensemble; and the integration of components in performance. The book is replete with musical transcription examples, charts, and other analytical material. (Source: Music From China Newsletter, Vol.1, No.4: Winter 1991)

### ASIAN MUSIC, VOL. XXII-2

The Spring/Summer 1991 issue of Asian Music (Vol. XXII-2) focuses entirely on 'Views of Music in China Today'. It contains the following contributions: Charles Hamm - 'Music and Radio in the People's Republic of China' (pp.1-42); Tim Brace - 'Popular Music in Contemporary Beijing: Modernism and Cultural Identity' (pp.43-66); Paul Friedlander - 'China's "Newer Value" Pop: Rock 'n' Roll and Technology on the New Long March' (pp.67-82); Jiang Jing - 'The Influence of Traditional Chinese Music on Professional Instrumental Composition' (pp.83-96); Mao Yurun - 'Music under Mao, its Background and Aftermath' (pp.97-126); Peter Chang - 'Tan Dun's String Quartet *Feng-Ya-Song*: Some Ideological Issues' (pp.127-158). The first three essays in this number were presented in a panel at the annual meeting of the American branch of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, held in New Orleans, April 1990. Asian Music is published twice a year by the Society for Asian Music, Inc. Annual membership fee is US $ 20 for individuals. The journal can be ordered from: Society for Asian Music, Department of Asian Studies, 388 Rockefeller Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853.

### NEWSLETTER ACMR, VOL.4, NO.2

The Summer 1991 issue of the Newsletter of the Association for Chinese Music Research (ACMR), published by the Music Department of the University of Pittsburgh (USA), includes summaries of two lectures presented at the tenth semi-annual meeting of the ACMR on 10 April 1991. The lectures were given by Frederick Lau of California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo ('Music and Musicians of the Traditional Chinese *Dizi*') and Bell Yung of the University of Pittsburgh ('Programmatic Labeling and Formal Structure in the Guqin Composition *Jiu Kuang*'). Frederic Lau is also the author of a brief book review in the newsletter of the Volume on Music and Dance of the *Zhongguo Dabaike Quanshu* (Encyclopaedia Sinica, 1989, published in Beijing). Siu-wah Yu (Harvard University) discusses the two recently published volumes of Sau Yan Chan's *Xianggang Yueju Yanjiu* (Research on the Cantonese Opera of Hong Kong, 1988-1990, Hong Kong).

Perhaps the most important contribution to the newsletter comes from Robert Bridges (University of Pittsburgh): a nine-page bibliography on Chinese Music & Ritual (covering Western language materials).

The ACMR Newsletter is published twice a year and can be ordered from the editor, Professor Bell Yung, Music Department of the University of Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. (Annual subscription fee US $ 5 for individuals / students and US $ 10 for institutions. Overseas subscriptions: add $ 5 for mailing).

**ACMR NEWSLETTER Vol.5, No.2**

The Winter 1992 issue of the *Newsletter of the Association for Chinese Music Research* (ACMR) was published recently by the Music Department and the Asian Studies Program of the University of Pittsburgh (USA). It has 32 pages, and features two lectures presented at the 11th semi-annual meeting of the ACMR, 10 October 1991 in Chicago: Du Yaxiong's lecture *Recent Issues in Music Research in the People's Republic of China* is printed in full, and a summary is given of Valery Samson's lecture *Protest Music and Contextual Meaning: The Example of Tiananmen Square, 1989.* Next to news and announcements, and reports on meetings and on-going research projects, the *Newsletter* includes a 14-page *Current Bibliography on Chinese Music*, compiled by Theodore J. Kwok (Univ. of Hawaii). This Bibliography is meant to complement Su de San Zheng's compilation *Updated Bibliography on Chinese Music Since 1985*, which was published in Vol. 4, No.1 of the ACMR Newsletter (Winter 1991). It include scholarly and popular books, articles, reviews, dissertations and theses written since 1985 on music in China, including the music traditions of ethnic minorities.

The ACMR Newsletter is published twice a year and can be ordered from the editor, Professor Bell Yung, Music Department of the University of Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. (Annual subscription fee US $ 5 for individuals / students and US $ 10 for institutions. Overseas subscriptions: add $ 5 for mailing. Checks should be made payable to the University of Pittsburgh, and sent to Ying-Fai Tsui (Secretary/Treasurer), Music Dept. Univ. of Pittsburgh, PA 15260.)

The ACMR has recently adopted a Board of Advisors, consisting of Professors Kuo-Huang Han, Fred Liebermann, Rulan Chao Pian and Barbara Smith. This Board is formed to lend guidance to the future direction and development of the Association.

**MUSICA ASIATICA 6**

Musica Asiatica Volume 6 was published by the Cambridge University Press in 1991. This volume contains the following articles: Song Bang-Song (College of Music, Yeungnam University, Korea) - *Koguryo instruments in Tomb No. 1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan, Manchuria*; Riley Lee (Dept. of Music, University of Sydney, Australia) - *Shakuhachi honkyoku notation: written sources in an oral tradition*; Andreas Gutzwiller (Basel Academy of Music, Switzerland) and Gerald Bennett (Zurich Conservatory and College of Music, Switzerland) - *The world of a single sound: basic structure of the music of the Japanese flute shakuhachi*; Cheng Yingshi (Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China) (translated by Coralie Rockwell)- *A report on Chinese research into the Dunhuang music manuscripts*; David Waterhouse (Dept. of East Asian Studies, Univ. of Toronto, Canada) - *Where did Toragaku come from?;* Gregg W. Howard (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Brisbane, Australia) - *Musico-religious implications of some Buddhist views of sound and music in the Surangama Sutra*; Hugh de Ferranti (Dept. of Music, Univ. of Sydney, Australia) - *Composition and improvisation in Satsuma biwa.* The volume was edited by Allan Marett. ISBN 0 521 39050 8.

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GUNTHER, Robert – 'Die Poesie des Unhorbaren: Von den Konnotationen der altchinesischen Musiksprache.' In: *Die Sprache der Musik: Festschrift Klaus Wolfgang Niemoller zum 60*, ed. by Jobst Peter Fricke, 217-237. Regensburg: Gustav Bosse

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## CHINESE PUBLICATIONS

### CHINESE MUSIC YEARBOOK 1990

The 1990 volume of the Chinese Music Yearbook (*Zhongguo yinyue nianjian*) was published in 1991. It was produced by the Music Research Institute in Beijing, and published by the Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe. It is the fourth yearbook since 1987, containing valuable information about major developments in the world of Chinese music. The book is an overview of publications, articles published in the various Chinese music journals, conferences, concerts, contests, prizewinners, and other topics. It includes feature articles on major research topics and new trends in music research. The 1990 volume provides a survey of ten years of developments in Chinese traditional music and in ethnomusicology. Other topics are comparative studies of Chinese and Western music, the development of the study of musical symbols, and music therapy. The Yearbook costs 11.20 RMB and can be ordered from the Chinese Music Yearbook editing office, or from the 'ziliaoshi' of The Music Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Arts, 100027 Beijing Dongzhimenwai, Zuojiazhuang, Xinyuanli, West Building no.1. (Taken from the Newsletter of the Music Research Institute, 1991/4: p.5).

### SLIDES OF CHINESE INSTRUMENTS

The Music Research Institute in Beijing has published a series of 380 slides of Chinese musical instruments. 300 are pictures of ancient and modern Chinese instruments, including instruments of ethnic minorities in China. 50 slides show how instruments are played, and 30 provide pictures of instruments played in various Chinese ensembles. The series is accompanied by three cassettes, with programme notes in Chinese and/or English, and a book. Price of the whole package: 550 RMB. For more information, write to: The Music Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Arts, 100027 Beijing Dongzhimenwai, Zuojiazhuang, Xinyuanli, West Building no.1. (Taken from the Newsletter of the Music Research Institute, 1991/3: p.9).

### MAGNUM OPUS ON CHINESE INSTRUMENTS

*Zhongguo Yueqi* 中国乐器 ('Chinese Musical Instruments') was published by the Xiandai chubanshe in 1991. The main editor is Zhao Feng. The book contains elaborate essays on the genesis, evolution, structure, function, shape and performance techniques of over 300 musical instruments from China. The book includes a number of rare colour photographs. This publication is part of a project initiated by the International Music Council of UNESCO. Editors from different member countries of UNESCO were asked to contribute to a series called *Musical Cosmos - A History*. Zhao Feng is editor for the Asia region. The book on instruments is the first of several volumes on Chinese and Asian music to be published in the series. Price: 70 RMB. Publisher: 504 Anhuali, Andingmenwai, 100011 Beijing. 北京安定门外安华里504号. (WH)

### CHINESE MUSIC BETWEEN 1949-1986

*Zhongguo xiandai yinyue shigang* 中国现代音乐史纲 ('Outline of the history of contemporary Chinese music'), ed. by Wang Yuhe et al, was published by the Huawen chubanshe in 1991. It covers the period between 1949 and 1986, presenting an overview on music developments in China during that period. The book includes music examples in western staff notation. The price is 4.70 RMB. Publisher: 100800 Beijing Fuyoujie 135, Huawen chubanshe faxingbu. 北京府右街135号 华文出版社发行部. (WH)

### HOW TO PLAY CHINESE INSTRUMENTS

A practical book is *Shiyong minzu yueqi fa* 使用民族乐器法 ('How to play Chinese traditional instruments'), ed.by He Huajun and Zhang Shiye. It was published in 1991 by the Shandong wenyi chubanshe. It is a general book of instructions for people interested in playing on Chinese musical instruments. It includes descriptions of the characteristics of these instruments and information on the structure of traditional Chinese instrumental pieces. Price: 8.50 RMB. Publisher: Shandong wenyi chubanshe, faxingbu; jinan jingjiu lu xingli dajie 39, 250001, Shandong Province, China.
山东文艺出版社发行部, 250001 山东济南经九路胜利大街39号. (WH)

### HENAN DRUM SINGING

*Dagushu shilu* —大鼓书史录 ('The History of Narrative Drum singing') was published recently by the editorial department of 'The annals of Chinese Quyi, Henan Volume' ( 中国曲艺志 河南卷 编辑部 ). Most of the materials in the book were taken from items in local news papers, published between 1916 to 1937. The editor, Han Deying 韩德英 is a drama-researcher who works at the Henan Province Research Institute of Drama. He used his spare time to collect these materials from local libraries. 223 pages, one photo. The materials are divided as follows: 1) Dagu shuhua 大鼓书话 2) Dagu shuping 大鼓书评, 3) Dagu shuling 大鼓书伶 , 4) Dagu shuci 大鼓书词, 4) Dagu shici 大鼓诗词 and 6) Shujie zalu 书界杂录. Price: 3 RMB (1990 edition). (WH)

### COURT SONG TEXTS

Another publication of potential interest is the *Sui Tang Wudai Yanyue zayan geci ji* —— 隋唐五代燕乐杂言 ('The Anthology of various words and song texts from the court music of the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties period'), 1818 pages in two volumes. Sacred texts used at the court, as well as other (song)texts from the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties were collected by Professor Ren Bantang (Yangzhou Teachers' College) and Wang Kunwu (Literature Institute of Shanghai Normal University). The authors pay special attention to the distinctions between different genres of musical literature, such as *Quzici, Yaogeci, Qinqugeci, Daqugeci,* etc. The book contains basic study materials for Chinese musicology and Chinese language research. Texts of Buddhist storytelling and narrative singing, ceremonies, feasts, including prayer and supersition of folk festivals are all included in the book, which offers an interesting source for Tang-research. (WH)

### DRAMA & HUBEI NARRATIVE SINGING

Two older publications, still available by mail-order are worth mentioning. *Zhongguo xiqu lilun yanjiu wenxuan* ——— 中国戏曲理论研究文选 ('Selected Articles on Theoretical Research on Chinese Drama') was edited by the Drama Institute of the Chinese Academy of Arts, Beijing, and published in 1985 by the Shanghai wenyi chubanshe; 624 pages in two volumes. The book consists of six parts: 1) The characteristics of drama; 2) The literature of drama; 3) The music of drama; 4) Stagecraft; 5) Director and performance; 6) 'Weeding through the old to bring forth the new'. Publisher: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, Shaoxinglu 74, Shanghai. Price: 8.20 RMB. *Hubei xiaoqu* 湖北小曲, was edited and published in the same year by the Chinese Quyi Performers' Association, Hubei Branch. *Hubei xiaoqu* is a genre of narrative singing in Hubei Province. Price: 3 RMB. (WH)

## MEETINGS

### NEW INTERCULTURAL MUSIC, APRIL 1992

The Centre for Intercultural Music Arts organizes its 2nd International Symposium & Festival on the theme 'New Intercultural Music, at City University, London, 30 March to 4 April,1992. The symposium is intended to generate information about what composers of intercultural music are doing, to provide a forum for exchange of ideas among composers, scholars, publishers and others involved in intercultural music, and to facilitate a better understanding of new intercultural idioms of music. The symposium consists of composers' sessions, scholarly sessions and live concerts. Several Chinese performers are involved in the concerts: Zhou Yi (piano), Cui Junzhi (Chinese harp), Pan Jing (pipa) and Liao Zilan (zheng). Among the other performers of Asian music, Tran Quang Hai can be mentioned. For more information, contact Anne McLellan, 16 Mabel Thornton House, Burma Road, London N16 9BG, England. (MT)

### 12TH ACMR MEETING, APRIL1992

The Twelfth Semi-Annual Meeting of the ACMR will be held in Washington D.C. on Saturday, April 4, 1992, from 6 to 8 pm, in conjunction with the annual

meeting of the Association for Asian Studies. Members of the ACMR will receive details in early March. Proposals for presentations should be sent by February 15, 1992 to Bell Yung, Music Dept., Univ. of Pittsburgh, PA 15260; Fax# 412-624-4180; e-mail: byun@pittvms. As usual, ACMR encourages graduate students to participate, and solicits reports on research in progress, fieldwork experiences, and in-depth discussion of narrowly focused subjects.

### IMS CONGRESS, MADRID, APRIL 1992

The 15th Congress of the International Musicological Society (IMS) will be held from 3 to 9 April, 1992 in Madrid. Ten 'Round Tables', fourteen Study Sessions (focusing mainly on Mediterranian Musical Cultures), and forty 'Free Paper' sessions are scheduled. One of the Free Paper sessions focuses on Asia and relations between Asia and Europe. The following papers will be read: G. Schwörer-Kohl (Germany) - *Animische Relikte in den Orchestern Südostasiens an Beispielen der Trommelverehrung*; M. J. Kartomi (Australia) - *Politics and the Revival of Musical Traditions in the Sultanates of Ternate and Tidore, Eastern Indonesia*; L.H. Chang (Canada) - *Cross-cultural Musical Processes and Results: Music along the Silk Route (From Second Century B.C. to Tenth Century A.D.)*; K.M. Lo (Taiwan) - *New Documents on the Encounter Between European and Chinese Music*; M. Jing (China) - *Italian Violin Music in China*; J.Jin (China) - *Die Italienische (Europäische) und Chinesische Oper.* For more information on the congress, contact: Secretariat of the XV Congress of the International Musicological Society (IMS); Siasa Congresos, S.A.; Paeso de La Habana, 134; 28036 Madrid, Spain. Tel: 34.1.4574891; Fax: 34.1.4581088; Telex: 46999 SIAC E.

### SCTM, BEIJING, JULY 1992

The Society of Chinese Traditional Music (Zhongguo chuantong yinyue xuehui) will hold its seventh annual meeting in mid-July 1992, at the Chinese Conservatory of Music in Beijing. There is only one major topic: The Past Status quo and Future of the Study of Chinese Traditional Music. A very large gathering is expected, because a full, general assembly has been planned as part of the meeting. For information, write to the Organizing Committee, Chinese Conservatory of Music, Dewai Sizhuyuan, 100101, China. (WB)

## SOUND RECORDINGS

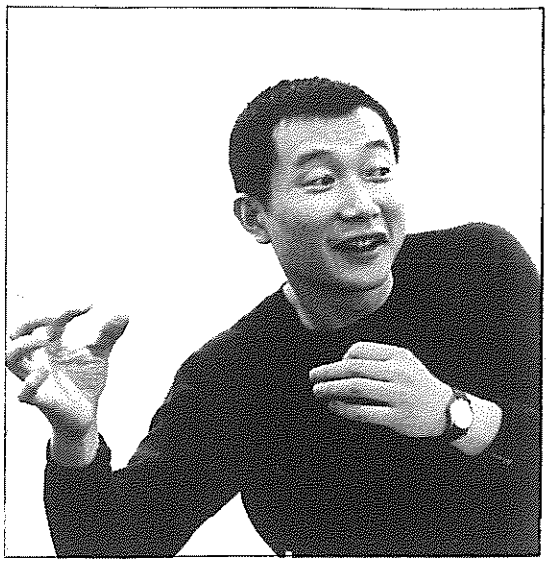
### THE GENESIS OF A MODERN OPERA

**Tan Dun - 'Nine Songs, Ritual Opera.' Performed by the Nine Songs Ensemble and Chorus, conducted by the composer. CRI CD 603. Total playing time 70'33". Produced by Mary Scherbatskoy.**

Late in 1988, the Mainland Chinese composer Tan Dun made a bold, artistic move. For some time already, he had been reconsidering musical ideas from his student days in China, notably the idea for an opera. While living in New York, he felt he was actually growing ever closer to China, and reinforcing his affinity with his native culture. It was a new experience, as he explained later in a BBC television documentary: 'When you get out of China, you see your country much clearer than when you are inside China.' His growing interest in his own, cultural past made him turn away from the academic tendencies with which he had been confronted at Columbia University for a number of years. He was ready to declare that 'twelve tone music was dead', though he admitted that the confrontation with serialism had had a positive, formative influence on him: 'Twelve tone composers teach you how to repeat without boring.'

When Tan Dun embarked upon his new and ambitious opera project, he dismissed the Western orchestra and Western compositional techniques as working tools. His basic idea was to create a Chinese theatrical piece with a strongly ritualistic character, and for this he required a group of singers and dancers ready to chant, shout, speak, sing and move like actors in a tribal, shamanistic ceremony. The singers would be accompanied by an ensemble of ceramic chimes, bells, and jars of special design, as well as by Chinese traditional instruments.

Indeed, it was a sudden change in musical direction

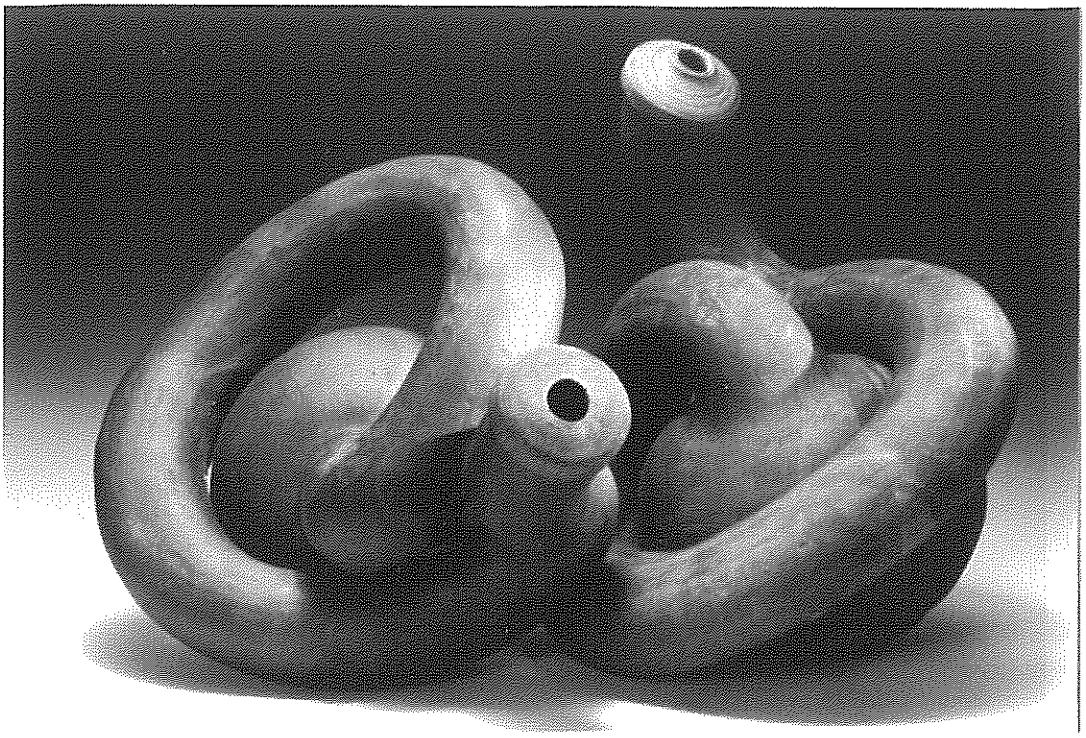


Composer Tan Dun.

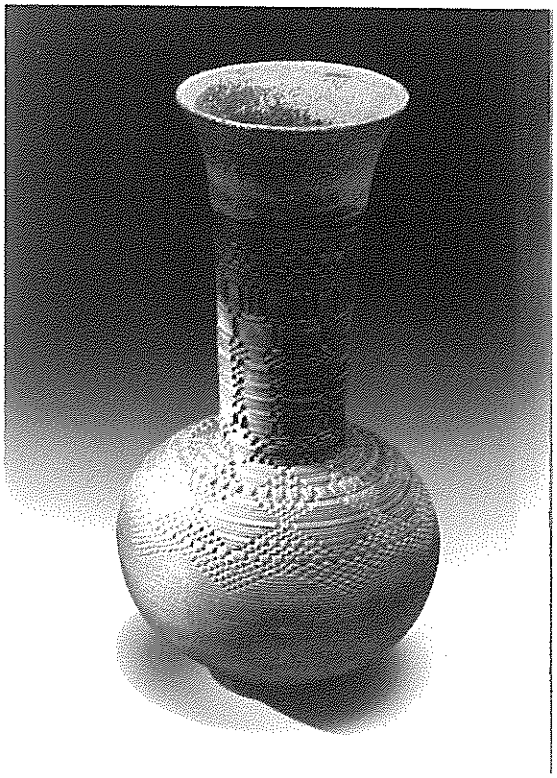
– probably not what his Columbia teachers had hoped for. Tan Dun was once more acting the rebel, like ten years before at the Beijing Conservatory, but this time he had a strong reputation to support him, and – not least important – sufficient financial backing for his plans. His opera was in fact a commission, with ample funding from the New York State Council for the Arts and other important institutions, including 'the family of great Buddhist scholar Theodore Stcherbatsky'.
An amateur potter, a Taiwanese friend of Tan, had first aroused Tan's interest in ceramics. Shortly afterwards, the composer's encounters with the New York ceramicist Ragnar Naess marked the beginning of a fruitful co-operation, resulting in the production of a whole range of astonishing instruments. 'When I was talking to Ragnar about making the instruments, I felt I had already heard their sounds, and even touched them', Tan later recalled. 'I kept asking myself what would happen if they were combined with the sounds of metal, wood, skin and silk.'

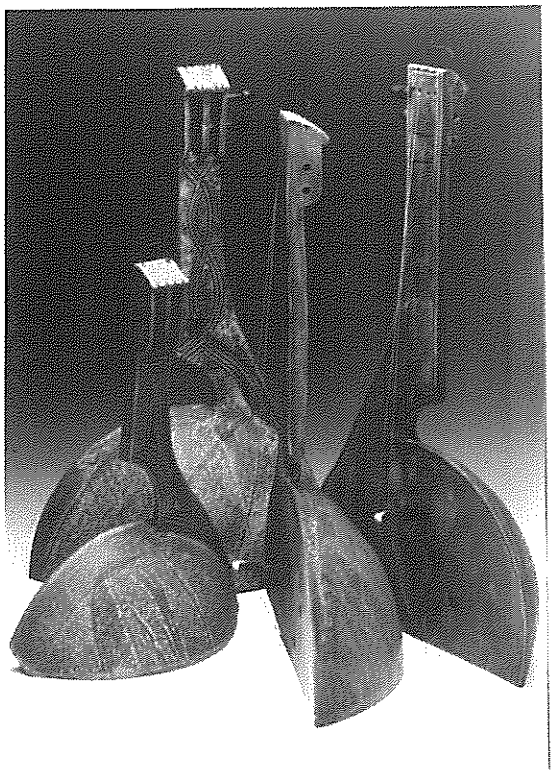
The idea of 'earth sounds' strongly appealed to Tan Dun. He associated it almost intuitively with ancient Chinese philosophy, in which the material world was divided in metal, wood, water, fire and earth, with a prominent, well-nigh moralistic role for the element 'earth': earth was believed to help maintain the balance among all things. Earthen instruments fitted perfectly in Tan Dun's vision of a ritual opera which propagated the 'back to nature' canon. Its music and stage actions were an intensely romantic appeal to reject the cold, technological and inhuman side of modern society – an aspect of life which the composer had become more than familiar with in New York; an appeal, moreover, to embrace mother earth and the spiritual values of an ancient, mythical world. No doubt, Tan's childhood village in Hunan and the happy years he had spent there were the hidden model for that world, but this did not become clear from what happened on the stage. The opera was called *Jiu Ge*, 'Nine Songs', after a series of classical poems by Qu Yuan, the poet who had inspired him to write his *Li Sao* symphony in 1980. In fact, the initial idea for the opera dated from the same period as his first symphony, but took almost ten years to materialize.

'Nine Songs' was premiered on 12 May, 1989, in the Pace Downtown theatre in New York. The international cast consisted of sixteen singers, and an accompanying ensemble of three percussionists, three players of Chinese winds and strings and two contra-bassoonists. All performers were young, in their twenties and thirties, and only six of them were Chinese. The very able lead singer, Chen Shizheng, was a Hunanese tenor who had previously sung an astonishing solo in 'On Taoism', in Tan's succesful Lincoln Center concert of the preceding year. The director and choreographer, Yoshiko Chuma, was a Japanese. The others came from many different parts of Europe and the United States. The general mood during the last month of rehearsals was one of major excitement, not only because of the music, but also because, at the time of the premiere, the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in China reached their peak. The situation in Beijing and other large cities was one of elation and hope, but it grew tense in the latter half of May. This rendered an unusual cachet to the opera performance in New York.
Tan Dun himself conducted the orchestra, which was arranged in a semi-circle with more than a hundred instruments on display, facing the stage. The singers and dancers performed against a dark backdrop, the only scenic props being two enormous *yin* and *yang* signs in flat position on the stage, which could be used as platforms during part of the action.
The opera was a radical experiment, even by Tan Dun's standards. There was no actual story or conventional scenic dialogue. The text of the opera consisted of fragments of Qu Yuan's concise and enigmatic poetry, partly in classical Chinese, partly in English translation, rendered in such a broken way that it could only convey an 'atmosphere', no coherent message. The stage action consisted of dancing and playful movements. The performance was mainly intended as a visual and musical extension of Qu Yuan's poetry, giving expression to its deep, romantic longing for nature.
It was a new Tan Dun that sounded in this piece. Part of the music was so wild and 'folky' that it might have been borrowed straight from some Asian tribal ceremony. The vocal contributions ranged from etherial two-part humming on hymn-like melodies to stylised wailing, martial shouts and soft whispers. Like in genuine ritual folk music, there was a domi-



Ceramic instruments designed by Tan Dun and Ragnar Naes.





nating role for percussion, and the composer succeeded in making effective use of the space of the theatre: at one point the different ceramic pieces dispersed among the musicians were played in such a way that the tones of a single instrument seemed to fly around the pit.

Critics and audience generally reacted positively, though some were unimpressed by its choreography. However, there was little doubt about the expressive power of the music. For the players themselves, working together under Tan's direction had been an elevating experience. 'Nine Songs'

was performed eight times in all. In one particular rehearsal, the final tenor solo made an indelible impression on those who were present, and the music moved many people to tears. It was at the time when hardliners in Beijing began to send in the army to crush the protesters around Tiananmen square.
'Nine Songs' marked an extraordinary change in Tan's musical style, but it was not really a break with his development so far. Basically, he resumed the thread of his well-known piece for voice and orchestra, 'On Taoism'. That piece, too, had been conceived as a 'ritual' ceremony, and one in which the element of monophonic chant was already essential. The underlying concept of 'On Taoism' was 'one voice music', but realized by more than one voice, in the colours of a multiple-voice medium – the Western orchestra. Tan's opera 'Nine Songs' again pursued the idea of 'one voice music' but did so more literally. In 'Nine Songs', the composer further limited the role of the accompanying instruments, and gave a major weight to the voices. Percussion was used to accentuate the 'one-dimensional' aspect of the music – its continuous, melodic flow.

Inventing new instruments is not a new phenomenon in avant-garde music, but, for Tan Dun, the incentive to work with ceramic instruments must have been almost an organic one. It is part of his beliefs, part of his ties with China, and his major incentive for the idea of 'new instruments' may well have been the simple materials that Hunanese peasants used when they participated in the musical evenings that Tan Dun organized during the Cultural Revolution. There is nothing forced or artificial in the use of ceramic instruments in 'Nine Songs'. Tan Dun's main concern is to obtain the sounds he is looking for. For example, he has experimented a long time to find the right objects to be used for drumming on the ceramic jars; in the end it was rubber slippers that satisfied him: only they could produce the low-pitched, resonant sound that he had been thinking of.

The opera 'Nine Songs' was beautifully recorded by Composers Recordings, Inc. (New York), with most of the original cast.
It is a very interesting piece, with many moving and some truly exciting passages, and a wholly original approach to the idea of 'opera'. I would like to hear the Chinese react to this piece, but unfortunately, the CD- recording will not be available in China, and no performances are planned in China, as far as I know. The music unambiguously illustrates Tan Dun's present position as a composer. For all his experiments in '*avant garde*' – in what is so often regarded as an essentially Western art form – he has remained an essentially Chinese artist.The delicate *sound harmony* of Asian music is at the heart of all his creative thinking, and he is basically an explorer of sounds: single sounds, and the colourful microcosm contained in them. At the same time, Tan Dun's growing inclination towards a more 'global' idiom is underpinned by the many non-Chinese and non-Western folk influences which can also be heard in 'Nine Songs'. We look forward to many more CD's with Tan Dun's music. (FK)

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**MINORITY MUSIC**
**Mongolian Epic Song, "Zhangar"; World Music Library no.36, various performers, King Record Co. Japan, produced 1991, recorded 1985 in Tokyo, Compact Disc, brief programme notes in Japanese and English; KICC 5136.**

**Music of Chinese Minorities; World Music Library no.42, various solo performers, King Record Co. Japan, produced 1991, recorded 1981, 1983 and 1985 in Tokyo, Compact Disc, brief programme notes in Japanese and English; KICC 5142.**

Two of many haphazardly produced compilations of (mainly) Asian traditional music in the 'World Music Library' series produced in Japan under licence of Min-On. Mostly these are virtuoso but sterile or even downright boring studio performances by professional or semi-professional artists from China's border regions. The artists – we learn nothing about their background or current whereabouts – seem to display more affinity with the Western concert stage than with their native towns or villages. They often play in a carefully arranged style which seldom can be said to even vaguely *resemble* their native traditions. The sound quality of the recordings is impeccable, and the listener should still be prepared for occasional musical surprises, but the lack of documentation is appalling, and there is no justification for the unbalanced and haphazard selection pre-

sented on these discs. As a matter of fact, other CDs in the same series hardly promise a better standard. One is called 'Chinese Music of the Han People' (KICC 5140), which may include any of hundreds of different genres. Another is entitled 'Chinese Music of the Han and the Uighurs' (KICC 5141): Uygurs would certainly object to their music being called Chinese.

The first five items of 'Mongolian Epic Song' (KICC 5136) are honey-sweet arrangements for a Chinese instrumental ensemble and for female solo singers who are evidently well trained in Western and modern Chinese vocal techniques, but scarcely aware of the characteristics of Mongolian chant. The second half of the disc, with some male solo songs from the Silingol area, are more convincing and more interesting. In fact, the 25-minute Zhangar epic song for male voice and horse-fiddle accompaniment that concludes the programme is of genuine interest. The listener would very much like to know the text of the poem or poems chanted here, or their main contents, but unfortunately the accompanying booklet (5 pages in Japanese, 2 in English) gives no clue whatsoever, and the song, like all other items on this disc, remains incomprehensible, as does the cultural background from which the music originates.

The same lack of information is found in 'Music of Chinese Minorities' (KICC 5142), a CD which, quite incredulously, claims to serve as an introduction to Chinese minority music. The only link between the five solo instruments recorded here is that they all stem from traditions situated somewhere along the Silk Route. From the programme notes, the listener will hardly learn more than that, plus a few scattered facts about the *komuz* and the *rewab*, plucked instruments from the West, the Mongolian horse-fiddle, the Korean fiddle *haegum* and the southern-minority reed-pipe mouth-organ *lusheng*. Each instrument is presented in two, three or four short solo pieces which show considerable technical ability but hardly any musical passion on the part of the players. The booklet contains five tiny photographs with two-syllable explanations.The music has been carefully re-arranged – 'carefully' implying, in this case, that most of the liveliness and genuine folk spirit often characteristic of local performances on these instruments has been eliminated. We are left with clean and somewhat academic performances of repertoires that would probably come to life only in genuine field recordings. In addition to the solo music, there is a somewhat more inspired fragment from Tibetan opera, another concert stage reconstruction of a living folk tradition, but at least more spirited and convincing in performance. But why was it included ? This ten-minute excerpt (from a two-hour performance) seems to have been added as an afterthought, to bring the disc to an acceptable total playing time of some 60 minutes. There is no relationship with the previous pieces, though the booklet seems to suggest that there is. Again, in 7 pages of Japanese and 2 pages of English accompanying text, we learn nothing about the background of the players or the various traditions presented here. But at least on this disc, *some* of the performers' names have been included.
The nonchalant publication of compact discs of this type is to be regretted: they put the listener on the wrong track with respect to the musical traditions presented, and will seldom inspire any enthusiasm for the music itself. Serious CD-buyers of traditional music should avoid the 'World Music Library' series, and the Japanese producer should look for a better editor. (FK)

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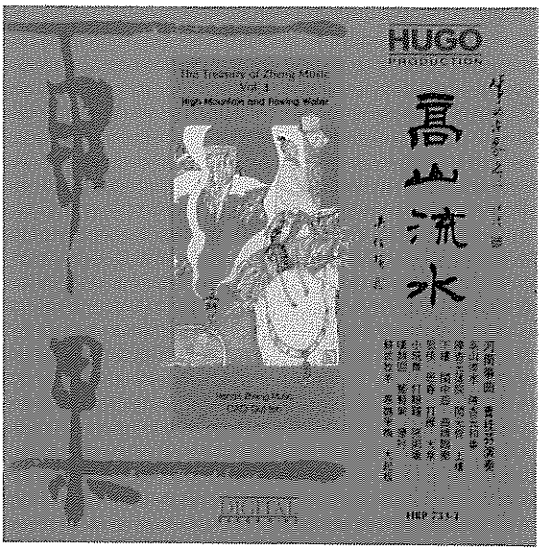



SERIES OF GUZHENG MASTERS
**'Guangdong Kejia - Han Zheng Music'; The Treasury of Zheng Music Vol. 1, performed by Rao Ningxin, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1987, recorded in 1987 in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, cassette tape, brief programme notes in Chinese and English; HRP 704-4.**

**'Han Zheng Music'; The Treasury of Zheng Music Vol. 2, performed by Jiao Jinhai, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1989, cassette tape, brief programme notes in Chinese and English; HRP 705-4 (CD: HRP 715-2).**

**'High Mountain and Flowing Water - Henan Zheng Music'; The Treasury of Zheng Music Vol. 3, performed by Cao Guifen, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1990, recorded in 1990 in Shanghai, compact disc, brief programme notes in Chinese and English; HRP 733-2.**

**'Book Rhyme - Shandong Zheng Music'; The Treasury of Zheng Music Vol. 4, performed by Han Tinggui, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1990, recorded in 1990 in Shanghai, cassette tape, brief programme notes in Chinese and English; HRP 734-4**

**'Jackdaws Gambol Water - Chaozhou Zheng Music'; The Treasury of Zheng Music Vol. 5, performed by Lin Maogen, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1990, recorded in 1990 in Shanghai, cassette tape, brief programme notes in Chinese and English; HRP 735-4**

'The Treasury of Zheng Music' is a series of 5 music cassettes or CDs introducing different schools of *guzheng* playing, produced by the Hong Kong-based label Hugo. Each volume is dedicated to a performer of a particular style or 'school' of *guzheng* playing. Four major Chinese *zheng* schools are represented: the so-called Han Zheng School (popular in the Kejia District, Guangdong Province), the Henan School (said to originate in narrative singing in Henan province, and now widely popular in many parts of China), the Shandong School (centered around Heze and the Liaocheng district in Shandong province; together with the Henan School referred to as the 'Northern School') and the Chaozhou School (prevalent in Chaozhou and the Shantou district in Guangdong province).

On first hearing the recordings, one is struck by the wide variety of styles, playing techniques, modes, styles of ornamentation, as well as by the differences in tone colour of each individual instrument introduced. The performers seem to have been selected with great care: each one of them displays a technical perfection and individualism worthy of genuine masters. As an outsider in the field of *guzheng* music, I have always tended to regard this music as too sweet and too monotonous for my taste. I now realize that *guzheng* music has far more to offer than a continuous flow of arpeggios and other 'running-river' effects. It seems that this over-enthusiastic rushing of hands over the strings from bottom to top and back again is a relatively recent technique in *guzheng* playing, stressing a virtuoso manner of performing which may have little to do with the original traditions of the instrument. Modernized versions of the instrument carry up to 25 strings, but traditionally the *guzheng* had only 13 to 16 strings, so there was less to 'show off' with.

Modern and traditional pieces are juxtaposed in this series, most audibly in Vol. 4 (Shandong Zheng Music, performed by Han Tinggui), which includes some pieces recently created by the performer. They are a mere show of technical skill, including theatrical effects (galloping horses) and imitations of Western instruments (notably harp); they lack the calm and depth of the older style pieces, with their plain and unadorned style and subtle play of colour in each individual tone.

All volumes in this CD series feature *zheng* solo pieces, except for Vol. 5, where a *yehu* is added. This two-stringed fiddle has a soundbox made of a coconut-shell. It sounds a bit hoarse. The *yehu* is used in many genres of Chaozhou music. In the *zheng* pieces, the *yehu* follows the melody of the *guzheng* closely, with only some very mild deviations. The few *zheng* solo pieces on this CD actually give the listener a better opportunity to taste the delicate ornamentation and remarkable melodic curves of Chaozhou tunes. Chaozhou *zheng* music makes use of a wide variety of very specific modes, a feature that deserves to be studied in detail. The programme notes to Vol. 5 do not offer much information in this respect; they merely give a number of terms used for various modes and methods for variation and ornamentation in Chaozhou *zheng* playing. The programme notes to each separate CD in the series provide some background information on the particular *zheng* school presented (origin and geographical distribution) and some information on the performers. The pieces played are described in a few lines only.

The sound quality of these five CDs is excellent, except for some 'flutter' in the second half of Vol. 1. The series will please *guzheng* specialists, and surprise general lovers of Chinese music. (AS)

MUSIC OF THE ABORIGINALS IN TAIWAN

**Taiwan - Musique des peuples minoritaires; compiled and recorded in Taiwan by Cheng Shui-cheng; CD, total recording time 44'17", Arion ARN 64109, France, 1989.**

**Polyphonies Vocales des Aborigenes de Taiwan; archival recordings made by Lu Pin-Chuan in Taiwan in the 1960s & recordings of the Festival of the Pacific in May, 1988, Paris, by Maison des Cultures du Monde; CD, total recording time 48'53", Auvidis, W 260011, France, 1989.**

**Taiwan, Republic of China - Music of the Aboriginal Tribes; recorded in the field by Wolfgang Laade, 1987; CD, total recording time 73'05", Music of Man Archive, Jecklin-Disco JD 653-2, Zürich, 1991.**

**Peuples aborigenes de Taiwan, Chants de Travail et d'Amour; compiled by Hsu Tsang Houei; gramophone record; total recording time 36'05", Arion ARN 33785, France, 1985.**

Some fields of traditional music in East Asia are well-covered on commercial records, while others hardly receive any attention. To mention one example: the

vast range of music traditions of over fifty different ethnic minorities living within the current geographic borders of Mainland China - more than 67 million people - has never been properly documented. At the same time, the vocal music of a number of small ethnic groups living on the island of Taiwan - some 400,000 people in total - are amply documented in a number of excellent compact discs and gramophone records which have been produced in Taiwan and in France in the last few years

The most substantial document, in terms of both written information and playing time, is a CD made by Wolfgang Laade in his *Music of Man Archive* series: it contains over 70 minutes of field recordings of impeccable sound quality, and is accompanied by an 80-page booklet with maps, drawings, photographs, essays on several of the ethnic cultures and extensive notes on the recorded musical items. Laade was in Taiwan in 1987, and his recordings all date from that year. He was assisted in his fieldwork by some former students of Hsu Tsang-houei, who is the 'founding father' of ethnomusicology in Taiwan.

Recordings of Hsu Tsang-houei himself were assembled on various Taiwanese longplay records published by the Chinese Folk Arts Foundation in Taiwan. These records are now out of print or unobtainable outside Taiwan, but some of the items have been re-issued on a gramophone record published in France by Arion in 1985. This record, titled 'Chants de Travail et d'Amour', can still be found in some record shops and is of considerable interest because it features a number of (rare) field recordings of the late 1960s, notably of solo songs of the Atayal.

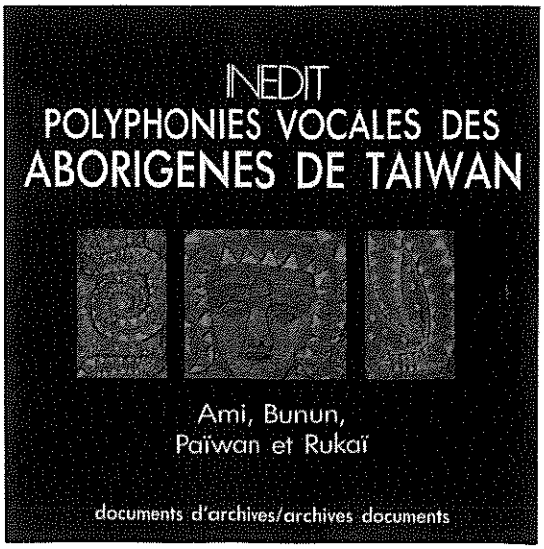
The sleeve-notes for this Arion record were written by Cheng Shui-Cheng, a musicologist at CNRS in Paris, who travelled to Taiwan in 1989 to prepare his own commercial record of music of Taiwanese aboriginals. Cheng's field recordings resulted in another Arion production, this time a CD.

Finally, a number of field recordings from the 1960s of yet another Taiwanese researcher, Lu Pin-chuan, have been linked with recent French recordings of stage performances of Bunun minority musicians during the Festival of the Pacific, May 1988 in Paris.

None of these recordings can claim to give a full overview of aboriginal music traditions in Taiwan. Although Taiwan is only a relatively small country, many of its local, cultural traditions are only summarily described in ethnographic studies, and some have hardly been studied at all. Much of Taiwan's local music remains to be discovered. This holds true, in particular, for the music of the ethnic cultures which populate the mountainous regions of the island. The aboriginal tribes in Taiwan (less than 2 percent of the entire population on the island) are part of a vast contingent of tribal cultures accross East Asia and the Pacific, from which we may perhaps expect the answers to some intriguing questions about the historical roots of East Asian and Oceanic music as we know it day. Any field recordings of music of these tribes should be welcomed.

We are dealing with a predominantly vocal tradition. While it is possible to find solo songs and duets, and songs performed to instrumental accompaniment, the vast majority of the items presented on these four discs are unaccompanied group songs. These are the most common type of songs found among the various 'hill tribes' such as the Ami and the Bunun.

The fact that the four discs show very little overlapping, in terms of musical items and musical styles, attests to the astonishing variety of musical worlds presented. Each disc has something special to offer, and in presenting the various major ethnic groups, each disc seems to focus on surprisingly different



aspects of these groups. The Auvidis record is musically perhaps the most spectacular one – the Ami group songs are just *lovely* music – but Wolfgang Laade may claim to have produced, on his disc, the most varied and perhaps most presentable cross-section, including some instrumental items, while his recordings are certainly the only properly documented ones. Together, these four discs present a formidable picture of the vocal traditions of the aboriginal tribes in Taiwan.

Let me briefly describe some of the differences between the four sound documents in more detail. Some of the older field-recordings are contained on 'Chants de Travail et d'Amour' (Arion) and on the Auvidis CD. The latter features some musically very attractive Ami group songs, while the first one has a number of Atayal solo songs, a genre hardly presented on any of the other discs; (Laade has one example only, Cheng Shui-Cheng has two).
The sound quality of both the Arion (1985) and Auvidis recordings is excellent; some of the field recordings were acoustically re-channeled to obtain a more 'spatial' sound; in some instances, this resulted in sounds so 'clean' that it is almost as if they were produced in a studio, rather than in the field.
One particular item, an Ami song to celebrate the building of a house, can be found on both the Arion gramophone record and the Audivis CD. This recording is definitely identical on both discs, but it is, in one case, ascribed to Hsu Tsang Houei, and in the other, to Lu Pin-Chuan. Obviously, this is a mistake.
The programme notes of both discs are rather brief and hardly provide the listener with substantial information about the music presented in the recordings. No names of performers, no locations and no song texts are included, and little information about the functions of the songs is provided. Many details in the music give rise to questions. For example, what about the flutes that can be heard in the recordings of the Paiwan seduction songs (Auvidis nos. 16 and 17): are they part of the music, or was there another musical performance going on next door while the songs were recorded ? And what about the rustling sound that accompanies these particular recordings ? What does it mean ? The booklet (four pages of French text, plus an English translation) provides no answers. The gramophone record (Arion) is even more sadly lacking in documentation; it offers only a brief and largely superficial introduction to Taiwanese minority music.
The same is true for Cheng Shui-Cheng's recent CD: five pages of brief notes in French, plus an English translation. These are crimes against the spirit of modern ethnomusicology! Again, most of the performers on this disc remain anonymous, no locations are mentioned, and the contents of the songs are not explained. The sound quality of some of Cheng's field recordings is not quite satisfactory, but the inclusion of a number of music traditions not found on any of the other discs more than compensates for this imperfection. Cheng Shui-Cheng's CD is the only one to include some Hakka songs (sung to instrumental accompaniment), and it also offers the best variety of Paiwan songs. It features a rare 'warrior song' of the Paiwan, and it is the only CD to pay attention to Christian hymns - both Catholic and Protestant -, a relatively new genre which can be heard in some of the aboriginal churches, notably among the Bunun and the Paiwan. This music emerged only in the last fifty years, and it is partly Western in style, but Cheng also includes some adaptations of the hymns in traditional – what he calls 'popular' – style. Unfortunately, we learn very little about these hymns, sung either in unison or in polyphony. Cheng states that they are sung unaccompanied, but at least in one instance, an accompanying instrument – is it a piano ? – can be heard in the background. (In the Bunun Hymn of praise, no.9 of the disc).

We have to turn to the booklet accompanying Wolfgang Laade's CD for an excellent and elaborate survey of the music traditions of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes. Laade briefly describes the fieldwork and the musicological studies that have been carried out so far, and then goes on to discuss the traditions of the Yami, the Siraya, the Atayal, the Bunun the Ami, the Puyuma, the Rukai and the Paiwan in a series of brief chapters. Elaborate notes accompany the recorded items, and the documentation is further completed with maps, drawings, 16 photographs and a very substantial bibliography (over a hundred entries). This is really the way in which all ethnomusicological recordings ought be produced! Wolfgang Laade definitely provides a wonderful example with his 'Music of Man Archive'. (The same is true for his recordings, in the same series, of Confucian Temple music, which I hope to discuss in the next issue of Chime).
Laade's CD is the only one with some brief examples of songs of the Siraya, one of the 'lowland' tribes of Taiwan. Furthermore it includes some instrumental music of the Bunun (a duet of Jew's harps, a solo on 'musical bow' and music produced with differently tuned wooden pestles). Laade notes that most of the traditional musical instruments among the minority tribes have fallen out of use.
There is some slight overlapping between Laade's recordings of Bunun music and those in the Auvidis collection. Both discs contain the (now famous) 'Pasibutbut', a ritual song to make the millet grow, which is unique in form and concept and continues to strike the ear of Western listeners: it sounds somewhat like a mixture of buddhist chant, Penderecki and Ligeti. The music is a marvellous display of dense, choral timbres and of rising tension. The Japanese researcher Takatomo Kurosawa has suggested that the gradual rise of the pitch

in the song is an acoustic analogy to what the millet is asked to do: Grow! Two more items found on both discs are a drinking song (no.11 in Laade's collection, no.8 on Auvidis) and a headhunters' song (no.10 on one disc, no.13 on the other). Laade has very few Ami songs – only two group songs and three very short solo songs, but the latter are very interesting for their contents.

It is a great pity that none of the four discs contains the *full texts* of any of the songs. Apparently, the texts are considered to be subordinate to the music. However, the words of many of these songs are of vital importance – they determine the musical form and they give life and sense to the whole performance.We are fully entitled to know what the singers are actually singing about; brief descriptions like 'celebration song' or 'harvest song' do no justice to the singers and their art.

Let us respect the meaning of the words, and try to value them as much as we value our own Western poetry and literature. Reading song-texts is essential in achieving a proper understanding of the music in its natural context. (FK)

**GUANGDONG MUSIC**
**'Tolling of Buddhist Temple - Guangdong Music'; performed by an ensemble of nine instrumentalists, HUGO Recording Production Company, Hong Kong, produced in 1990, recorded in 1989 in Guangzhou, China, compact disc, brief programme notes in Chinese and English, HRP 729-2.**

A pleasant surprise, this CD with Cantonese music: lighthearted tunes played in mild heterophony by an *ad hoc* ensemble of mixed instruments in ever-changing combinations. The musicians were apparently recruited from the Guangdong Folk Music Association. The English programme notes provide photographs of some of the musicians and brief descriptions of the pieces, including names of composers, contents of the pieces, and sometimes the modes in which they are played. All the items recorded on this disc sound fresh and truly enjoyable. Why don't we hear this kind of music more often in Chinese restaurants in Europe ?

Next to the traditional 'silk and bamboo' instruments like *gaohu, yehu, erhu, dizi, xiao, houguan, sanxuan, yangqin* and *ruan*, two unexpected ones have been included: violin and xylophone. They appear in some of the pieces, and merge wonderfully with the typical sounds of Guangdong music The violinist plays exclusicely in the high register of his instrument and makes us believe he is actually playing a *gaohu.*

It is a pity that Hugo does not pay more attention to its programme notes, which do not come up to the excellent standard of the performances. (AS)

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