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Acculturation?

Many Chinese musicians – both modern and traditional – have absorbed Western influences in the music which they create. This is true of today’s Chinese composers, but also of the youngest generation of performers of inherited traditions such as guqin and pipa music. Given the limitations of their exposure to Western music, many of their Western ‘borrowings’ are probably unintentional, and also more dependent on what they happen to have heard than on a conscious and critical process of selection. The question is what this means in purely artistic terms.

Not sharing with Western musicians solid notions of the historical context of Western music, Chinese performers will easily interpret their borrowings from Western music along different lines than Westerners do. Their music may have a ring of familiarity, although it is not intended to sound familiar. We may laugh, or raise our eyebrows.

Again, the question is: what does it mean, in purely artistic terms? There is no easy criterion for quality in music, and in the end, ‘authenticity’ appears to be the least reliable criterion of all. This applies to contemporary music just as much as to most genres of traditional music.

Whenever Chinese musicians borrow overtly from Western idioms, Western critics are quick to dismiss their performances as ‘products of acculturation’. We accuse musicians of distorting their cultural heritage. If they are composers, we are quick to observe that they are misinterpreting Western techniques and methods.

But what does ‘acculturation’ mean when we discuss intrinsic qualities of a piece of music? More concretely, if stylistic mimicry is unintentional or only partly controlled in a musical performance, does it mean that a musician is not in control of his art? If, in an extreme case, his music sounds like a funny rag-bag of Chinese and Western idioms, must it necessarily be called an artistic failure?

Perhaps – if judged according to our Western historical premises. But precisely our historical knowledge of the evolution of music should warn us against hasty judgements.

We know that living music is never the result of a consistent evolution. More often than not, it is the unpredictable outcome of a fusion of different elements, of conscious or haphazard borrowings from the past and the present, from established cultural traditions as well as unfamiliar ones, belonging to adjacent or even to far-off cultures. The intrinsic meanings of these borrowings may or may not have been taken into the bargain. Very likely, musical expressions adopt different meanings all the time, whenever they occur in a new context. Their values are continually changing. This is a natural process.

Take present-day Togaku, the much-revered Japanese court music. It was partly born of a curious misinterpretation and process of retardation in the performance of an entirely different type of music, played at the Chinese court a thousand years ago. Is it less ‘authentic’, less artistically convincing because of that? Or, take jazz. As an art form, it was never consciously ‘developed’ out of African music. Africa is where it has its roots, but its most characteristic idioms took shape in other parts of the world. Yet we do not therefore declare it to be less authentic, or artistically less valuable. It has acquired meanings of its own.

In the process of fusion, different elements in any musical performance may strengthen each other or they may destroy each other. Both developments are possible; one is not better or worse than the other. Chinese and Western elements need not necessarily reinforce each other in order to guarantee a successful result.
In the long run, the only absolute requirement for survival is that the resulting music is unlike what existed before. It cannot be an exact copy (no matter how visible its roots are) nor can it be judged solely on the basis of what existed before. Some genres of ritual music which emphasize a strictly faithful transmission of an oral or written repertory of music may be exempt from this rule, but I doubt whether even the most rigid traditions can escape the verdict of time. Music without change is dead music.

By contrast, living music is always a tradition in the making. It is always, with every new generation, in the process of acquiring a new authenticity of its own, and it often needs time to do so.

The Italian composer Bruno Maderna was essentially right in regarding virtually all music as ‘contemporary music’. Not only modern music is part of a tradition in the making. Classical traditions, too, are constantly being reborn, and their authority, too, must be reconfirmed in new interpretations, or it will be lost. New interpretations are not necessarily close to any historical ideal. The emphasis in performance may be on ‘authenticity’, but this is often totally unimportant in the perception of the listeners, who are unable to judge and enjoy music with the ears of their ancestors. In the West, today’s audiences may find it hard to accept Mahler’s symphonies played in an ‘authentic style’, with the broad glissandi and pathos fashionable in the days of Mengelberg. Chinese audiences listening to traditional music may find it easier to accept their own traditions in new – Western-inspired – guises than in their ‘authentic’ forms. Their criteria for accepting or rejecting music are not necessarily ’historical’.

It is fortunate that our historical conscience does not enforce any fixed models upon us. It would be the death of culture. Consequently, the term ‘acculturation’ – indicating the presence of uncontrolled foreign influences in native traditions – should be used with the greatest possible reservations. We must acknowledge that ‘acculturation’ really refers to a two-way process: if Chinese musicians are on trial, then so are we, Western audiences.

A NOTE ON CHIME NO. 5

Chime no.5 is late in appearing, which is partly due to its unusual size. This volume contains five of the seven papers presented at the first international Chime meeting, 29 October 1991, in Geneva, as well as two articles written specifically for the journal. The Geneva lectures are presented here in article form, annotated and with bibliographies. Two papers have not been included: François Picard’s lecture on Taoist percussion music, because no written text was available, and Frank Kouwenhoven’s paper on ‘Chinese modality versus Western tonal structure’, because it was based largely on sections from his already published articles on Mainland China’s new music. The Chime meeting in Geneva, attended by some 35 people, was a great success. It included various recitals of Korean, Japanese and Chinese traditional music, as well as two papers on Japanese traditional music, which we have printed in this volume because we consider their central issues (Asian polyphony, and the backgrounds of blind singers) to be of interest to students of Chinese music. In future we hope to include more of such occasional contributions on Asian, non-Chinese musical traditions.

To allow ourselves sufficient time for organization, the next international Chime meeting, originally planned to take place in 1993 at SOAS (London), has now been scheduled for September 1994. Detailed announcements will follow in Chime 6. In the meantime, we would like to thank our readers for the interest they have shown in Chime during the past year. Do stay with us in the forthcoming season!
FIELD NOTES, 1991

Funeral Music in Shanxi

STEPHEN JONES, WITH
CHEN KEXIU, JING WEIGANG & LIU SHI

"The official China Youth News has suggested that prosecutions for noise pollution should be mounted against bored bands which have taken to livening up funerals with popular tunes like 'I can't go on living this way' and 'Love is like a song', in place of the traditional mourning dirges."

The Independent, 10th June 1991

To complement performances of Buddhist monks from the Wutai Shan mountains at the Spirit of the Earth festival in London and Birmingham in July 1992, Stephen Jones introduces the living practice of ritual music in the province of Shanxi. Two major types of instrumental ensemble are discussed: shawm-and-percussion bands, and ensembles led by guanzi (double-reed pipe) and sheng (free-reed mouth-organ), also accompanied by percussion. These bands perform in village funeral rituals and in other ceremonies.

This article focuses on the instrumental ensembles which serve ritual, notably funerals, in Chinese villages today. It results from a brief visit which we made to the county of Yang'gao in northern Shanxi in February-March 1991. It is also a companion to a field-report by Stephen Jones and Xue Yibing (1991) on village ritual ensembles in nearby Hebei.¹

Before we introduce the ritual ensembles of the county of Yang'gao, let us note some general points. The history of modern China, both before and since 1949, is complex.

¹ The article owes much to the guidance of my Chinese colleagues during fieldwork; however, I am responsible for interpretations and misinterpretations of our data. Chen Kexiu (Shanxi Bureau of Culture, Yanbei area, Datong) is a walking encyclopaedia of the local folk music, Jing Weigang (Shanxi Music and Dance Research Institute, Taiyuan) has done detailed fieldwork in the area over the last few years, and Liu Shi (Music Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Arts, Beijing) had already made two previous visits to the area. I hope that this article will stimulate them to write in more detail. I am also happy to acknowledge the help of all the musicians, their families, and hospitable villagers; the British Academy for continuing support for my fieldwork; the Music Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Arts, its Director Qiao Jianzhong, Xue Yibing, and the Foreign Affairs Department of the Chinese Academy of Arts; and the Bureau of Culture of Yang'gao, its head, the mayor, the many local officials, and our patient drivers. [Editor's note: Stephen Jones is based in London and is currently writing a book on traditional Chinese instrumental music.]
After the turmoil of the late Qing, the Republican period, the War against Japan and the ensuing civil war were also periods of great social disruption. The period since the founding of the PRC in 1949 has also seen many disturbances. The government introduced land reform and campaigns against landlords and other 'class enemies', and also restricted the practice of folk religion with campaigns against 'feudal superstition'. The Anti-rightist campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Four Purifications campaign, and especially the Cultural Revolution are often cited by both rural and urban musicians as times of adversity. There may have been relative peace and prosperity since 1978. However, we still know rather little about the experiences of folk musicians over the last sixty years, and in-depth studies are much to be desired.

Much modern Chinese scholarship on village musical traditions tends to suggest an era of Great Peace since 1949, interrupted only by the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, it often glosses over the continuation of ritual from the 'old society'. Western scholars, too, have been slow to document the persistence of musical traditions in the PRC since 1949. While historical study of ritual is obviously valid, the use of the past tense in describing such ritual traditions may mislead. If modern evidence from Northern China is as yet piecemeal, we may not assume that traditional observances there are obsolete, or that such study is of necessity solely historical. The vicissitudes in the practice of folk ritual during this century still await exploration, but it is a basic point that ritual persists today in rural China, despite constant difficulties.

By showing the persistence of rural ceremonial tradition, this article may illustrate the gap between urban and rural culture, which has widened since 1949. It may also expose the long and persistent neglect of popular culture in favour of official elite culture. The Confucian bias of the imperial age has been replaced in modern times by the values of a new elite, stressing urban, professional, and Party-sponsored music-
making. Meanwhile, the music played by folk musicians (minjian yiren) throughout rural China is often neglected. It is time for this imbalance to be adjusted.²

Let us now introduce some concepts basic to the study of Chinese ritual. C.K. Yang has noted the importance in China of ‘diffused’, as opposed to ‘institutional’ religion, whereby religion is diffused in society and lacks a strong and independent institutional authority. A related point is the vernacularization of ritual, whereby ritual has been performed increasingly by lay practitioners.³ The CCP has continued measures to restrict religious practice under the Qing and Republican governments, often with greater efficiency. However, rural society has changed more slowly than urban society, and ritual has revived in many rural areas since 1978.

Folk religion is eclectic, and the regional distribution of Buddhism and Daoism results from the traditional dominance of one or other religion in particular areas. As to the music of Chinese ritual, we may distinguish ‘liturgical’ and ‘para-liturgical’ music. The music of the liturgy itself is vocal, and is generally accompanied and punctuated by the ritual percussion instruments. However, melodic instrumental music is also often performed, which may be called ‘para-liturgical’ in that it mainly serves transitional points in the ritual but lacks specific religious content. While instrumental music is thus only one aspect of the total ritual, the musicians themselves regard it as a distinct and prestigious entity.

Although we may distinguish Buddhist, Daoist, or simply ‘popular’ lines of transmission, their para-liturgical instrumental music is often similar in style and repertory. Even aspects of their vocal liturgy, and the rituals themselves, may be similar.⁴ The instrumental music of the great temples before 1949 had much in common with the local folk music, even if some temples may have preserved a more exalted and conservative style.

**MUSIC IN SHANXI**⁵

The main focus of this article is the instrumental music which serves village ritual. Like much of northern China, the province of Shanxi has two main styles of instrumental music, both mainly serving ritual: the ubiquitous shawm-and-percussion bands, and the declining ritual ensembles led by guanzi (double-reed pipe) and sheng (free-reed mouth-organ), also accompanied by percussion.

Instrumental ensemble music in Shanxi province acquired a limited national reputation after Ya Xin, a cultural cadre in the Eighth Route Army, carried out three months’ fieldwork in 1947, in the midst of civil war and land reform, on the Buddhist temple music of Wutai shan, one of the four great Buddhist mountain ranges of China. In his book ‘Temple Music’, published in 1955, he also transcribed a version of the related folk ‘eight great suites’. Both the temple and folk styles are basically for sheng-guan ensemble.

Work continued in the 1950s, including an important wire-recording of the eight suites in 1953 by Shanxi radio. Yang Yinliu, the grandfather of Chinese musicology, also studied and publicized the music. The title ‘the eight great suites of Shanxi’ (Shanxi ba da dao) became popular.⁶

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² For perspectives on popular culture, see Johnson, Nathan and Rawski 1985.
⁵ On music in Shanxi, note the periodical Yinyue wuda, published in Taiyuan by the Shanxi sheng yinyue wu dao yan jiu suo. On instrumental music in Shanxi, we await the Shanxi volumes of the Anthology of Chinese folk instrumental music (Zhongguo minzu minjian qiyue jicheng); meanwhile, see Shanxi 1991. For an official view of Shanxi culture in modern times, see Heng Bang 1982, esp. pp. 23-65.
After the Cultural Revolution, research on the temple music of Wutai shan resumed as early as 1978, with local fieldworkers attracting central scholars to the area. Today, however, while few monks in the great temples can still perform the ancient instrumental music, folk musicians taking part in village ritual may better preserve the traditions.

Moreover, with the fieldwork being performed under the auspices of the Shanxi volume of the *Anthology of Chinese folk instrumental music*, similar traditions are being discovered all over the province.

The whole central part of the province (called Jinzhong), around the counties of Wutai, Dingxiang, Xinxiang, Yuanping, and Fanxi, is renowned for its instrumental ensembles. Folk Buddhist music is also said to survive in northern Shanxi (known as ‘Northern Jin’ [Jinbei] or ‘Northern Yan [Yanbei]’) at Zuoyun, Ningwu, Wuzhai, Datong, Pianguan, Hequ, Tianzhen, and Yang’gao. Folk Daoist bands of the popular Zhengyi sect are found in northeastern Shanxi around Yang’gao, Tianzhen, Hunyuan and Yingxian. In southern Shanxi, Daoists of the Longmen Quanzhen sect, living in temples, have been reported in Xiangfen, Yicheng, Xinjiang and Jiangxian in southern Shanxi, and Zhangzhi in southeastern Shanxi. Ritual, and hence ritual music, is evidently still to be found throughout the province, even if its practice is becoming attenuated.

As we have seen, there are two main types of instrumental ensemble which perform for folk ritual in Shanxi: shawn-and-percussion bands, and ensembles led by guanzi and sheng, also accompanied by percussion.

The sheng-guan ensembles, consisting mainly of ritual specialists, are in decline, but are traditionally prestigious, with long heritages, and their music is often noted in traditional scores.

However, some sheng-guan ensembles have developed a more extrovert, virtuosic, and popular folk style, and modified the old repertory. The guanzi is the lead instrument, but the small shawn (often called haidi) has been added in some places since the 1950s or earlier, as in the folk ‘eight-tone associations’ (bayin hui) of the Wutai area, Longmen Quanzhen Daoist bands in southern Shanxi, as also in northern Shaanxi sheng-guan ensembles and in the celebrated ‘songs-for-winds’ in Hebei.

The Daoist musicians we consulted in Yang’gao are of the more traditional type.

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8 Work on this vast national project began in 1979, with every province collecting material on its local opera, folk-song, narrative-singing, instrumental music, and dance. Initiated by the Ministry of Culture, the project has been an important stimulus for local fieldworkers. It will comprise the most comprehensive series of transcriptions ever published in China. Some of the volumes on instrumental music are expected to appear soon.

9 Chen Jiabin 1982: 56. Further south, Linfen also has long traditions.

10 Liu Jianchong et al. 1990: 10-11. Note that Longmen itself is here, in present Hejin county. See also Heng Bang 1982: 29-30. For a similar outline of ritual music in Shaanxi, see Liu Jie 1988. Daoist instrumental music throughout China is mainly performed by Zhengyi, rather than Quanzhen Daoists; cf. the celebrated Daoists of the Wuxi-Suzhou region in southern Jiangsu, playing Shifan music, studied before the Cultural Revolution by Yang Yinliu and Cao Anhe. I look forward to news of their present folk practice.


12 Jones and Xue 1991: 3-4.
Shawm-and-percussion music in Shanxi is even less well-known outside its locality than the sheng-guan music, although shawm bands are the most common form of instrumental music in the Chinese countryside. Whereas the sheng-guan music is played by ritual specialists, shawm bands serve ritual but rarely perform the rituals themselves. Only the graduation of the Shanxi shawm player Yin Erwen to the urban professional stage in the 1950s broadened the currency of Shanxi shawm music somewhat. The suite Da desheng from central Shanxi acquired a certain fame when adapted by an army troupe in Shandong in the early 1950s. However, the whole aesthetic of such urban professional renditions is a far cry from that of folk shawm bands, and the latter deserve greater attention now.

Note that plucked and bowed chordophones are used in accompanying opera and narrative-singing, but not in the core repertoires of either the shawm bands or the sheng-guan ensembles. Chordophones are played only occasionally by the shawm bands when they perform their subsidiary entertainment repertory of opera-related instrumental music.

However, it seems that there were amateur string and wind ensembles before 1949, known in the Yang'gao region as ‘self-entertainment bands’ (zile ban). Such ensembles in northern China, largely patronized by local elites, may have been one of the main musical casualties of the revolution; further study is needed.

Although our main subject here is instrumental music, vocal-dramatic genres in Shanxi are of course also worthy of study. Major genres in northern Shanxi include Erren tai (popular also in Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, and northwestern Hebei), various regional genres of bangzi opera or Jinju, Shua hai'er, Luoluo qiang, exorcistic drama called Suixi (commonly known as Nuo drama), and Daoqing; counties such as Guangling, Hunyuan and Shuoxian have celebrated genres of yang'ge dance; not to mention folk-song. Poverty and migration have also inspired a major vocal genre called ‘Leaving by the western pass’ (Zou xikou).

YANG'GAO AND ITS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Let us now focus on Yang'gao. The road between the large towns of Datong and Zhangjiakou passes through the county of Yang'gao; coal lorries are often to be seen. Mountains just to the north, and parts of the old Great Wall, mark the border with Inner Mongolia. Just to the east is western Hebei. The county town of Yang'gao is a busy but relatively traditional county town. The whole area is also a military base, and has traditionally been, both in imperial times and through the troubled period from 1911 to 1949. (See Map 1).

In Yang'gao we again meet the two common types of instrumental ensemble in northern China, the shawm-and-percussion bands and the sheng-guan ensembles. Let us now introduce them in more detail.

The sheng-guan ensemble uses sheng (free-reed mouth-organ), guanzi (double-reed pipe), diizi (transverse flute with membrane), yunluo (frame of gongs), accompanied by hand-drums (gu) and small cymbals (cha), and adding other percussion. It is played

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14 See Ye Dong 1983: 116-17, referring to 1960 and 1965 publications; Li Minxiong 1989: 216-21; also scores in Minzu yueqi chuantong dazhou qu xuanji, suona zhuanyi xujie: 40-57; Yin Erwen 1986: 66-81. Other former folk musicians from the area who ‘graduated’ to the professional troupes after 1949 include the sheng virtuosi Hu Tianquan and Yan Haideng, both natives of Xinxian county in central Shanxi; for Hu, see Yuan Jingfang 1986: 163-4; for Yan, ibid.: 133.
15 In Chinese, yijing, ‘realms of consciousness’.
16 For local history, a basic early source is the Yang'gao county gazetteer Yang'gao xian zhi, compiled in 1729.
by ritual specialists, here mainly folk Daoists. The music of this polytimbral ensemble is locally prestigious, and its core repertory is in a classical and often solemn style.

The other type of ensemble, the shawm-and-percussion band, is often known in Yang’gao as gujiang ban (‘drum artisan band’). Two shawms (suona or laba) are accompanied by a percussion section of drum, small cymbals, and gong. Though this music is generally less prestigious, many northern Chinese shawm bands play music of great complexity. The music is loud, and the raw heterophony of the two shawms and the martial decorations of the drum master may have a visceral effect.
Throughout northern China, sheng-guan music has traditionally been used for funerals (but not for weddings), calendrical rituals as Spring Festival, the ‘Ghost Festival’ (15th day of the 7th moon in the traditional lunar calendar, which is still commonly used by villagers), and birthdays of local deities; and for occasional ceremonies such as exorcisms or pilgrimages to pray for rain. Traditionally, the shawm bands performed for a wider range of events, but now their main function may also be for funerals. Both ensemble traditions are mainly hereditary and male.

In Yang’gao county today there are said to be approximately fifty to sixty shawm bands still performing, but only about six sheng-guan ensembles. The shawm bands are undoubtedly more resilient in a secularizing society than the sheng-guan ensembles, which are more closely connected with ritual specialists: training as a Daoist requires culture, writing, learning texts, talismans, ritual procedure etc., not to mention a certain determination in the face of a secular official ideology. Both genres are doubtless in decline, but they are also still the main form of instrumental music-making here and over a wide area of northern China.

**FUNERALS**

Today the most important context for instrumental music in northern China is at funeral services. Below I describe a funeral in a village near Wang’guan town, with the lay Daoist Li Qing presiding. Funerals are evidently a frequent task for Daoists and musicians here. Within a few days, we also saw a funeral procession (fayin, or chubin) in Yang’gao county-town, and, again in the town, the funeral of a 90-year old man, with two shawm bands, one on either side of the gateway, but no Daoists. To invite Daoists for a town funeral would be ‘feudal superstition’, according to an old lady relative; such a correct utterance was anyway expedient, since the deceased had been a cadre.

As we drove through the county daily, a villager on his bicycle, wearing the white clothes of mourning, and going to make arrangements for a funeral, was a common sight. The Daoist Liu Zhong, an outstanding guanzi player, was going off on another funeral, and the Yangjia bao shawm band were performing a funeral on the same days as our Daoists.

The village funeral that I now describe was a one-day ritual, 21 days after the death. The deceased was a 76-year old woman, whose considerable local standing required a relatively imposing funeral. As ever in rural China, virtually the whole village gathered to join in the spectacle. Mercifully, the spectacle of the Daoists appeared, for once, to entertain the villagers even more than the presence of a ‘big-nose’ and other outsiders.

The local cultural cadres told us that such a funeral cost c. 4000 yuan (c. 400 GBP) in all, of which c. 900 yuan was said to come from the government. A group of eight

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17 Sheng-guan music is common over a wide area of northern China. Cf. the music associations of Hebei: Jones and Xue 1991; and the Buddhist music of Wutai shan, Nearer still in Hebei, note e.g. the folk Buddhist ritual traditions of Yangyuan county in western Hebei, on which see the forthcoming Hebei volumes of the Anthology, edited by Wang Jie.

18 For a good list from Liaoning, if not explicit about the transition from the old to the new society, see Li Runzhong 1990: 78-80.

19 For useful material on funerals, see the articles by Watson, Naquin, and Whyte, in Watson and Rawski 1988, and also Johnson 1989. For funerals in southern Fujian, see Dean 1988 and 1989a.

20 While one is used to hearing urban Chinese employing the cliché ‘feudal superstition’, I have even heard old folk musicians and priests using the term, without apparent irony; for instance, an old former Buddhist monk in Beijing still performing rituals on the side, and an old drummer in Quanzhou who works closely with Daoist priests. Note incidentally that the old lady, a relative who had come from Datong, was a protestant: missionaries were many in Shanxi before 1949, and their reports may also prove to be a useful source on local customs.
Daoists, including Li Qing, participated; they earned 210 yuan plus their accommodation in the village, food, tea, and cigarettes, a minor part of the total expense. Li Qing had arrived the previous afternoon to 'pacify the altar' (an tan), and to prepare all the paper and ritual artefacts; the other Daoists came on the day, and they all left the next morning. There was also a shawn-and-percussion band, for which the family did not have to pay since they were related to the deceased.

A focal point of the ritual was the 'soul hall' (lingtang), a room in the home of the deceased, housing the coffin. Before the coffin was a small altar, and behind and to the side were the standard paper offerings for eventual burning: the house, the lad and lass, the horse, cart and groom, and paper money. Outside, under a temporary awning, was a long rectangular table altar laden with offerings of food, mainly dough in many shapes, around which the Daoists performed part of their ritual. Also outside under the awning were hung the gifts of cloth with inscriptions to the deceased; and the shawn band sat round a fire to the side of the table altar. For a plan of the layout of the funeral, see Map 2. Differently coloured ribbons hanging from the funerary caps of the relatives indicated their degrees of relation to the deceased.

(In China, funeral paraphernalia are traditionally sold in funerary shops. I have seen such shops in Fujian but not in the north, although they were common in towns before 1949, and indeed were the main place to hire the funeral musicians.)

The sequence of this funeral was:

MORNING: jiexian – accepting offerings: receiving gifts for the deceased, and songcan – delivering food offerings to the deceased;

MIDDAY: fang she – issuing the Pardon, the main ritual;

DUSK: qushui – taking water from the well, zhaoping – invitation: procession outside the village, including songsan – burning of paper money;

LATE: zhuanxie / zhuanxian – giving of food to ancestors.21

Let us observe the funeral. The preliminary rituals jiexian and songcan consist mainly of processions to the altar-table before the soul hall. For the jiexian procession, only the shawn band plays, with two shaws, two pairs of cymbals, and knobbed gong, but no drum. For the songcan ceremony, the food offerings are collected in a ceremonial barrow on poles. The close relatives of the family form the main body of some processions; the shawn band leads the way, with the Daoists following behind the family. For their many processions throughout the funeral, the Daoists perform their instrumental music in single file, sometimes just the ritual percussion, sometimes with melodic instruments and percussion. They are led by the soul pennant carried by a grandson of the deceased (see Table A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A:</th>
<th>← pennant - drum - yunluo - sheng - guan - guan - sheng - cha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daoists on procession</td>
<td>← pennant - drum - dangzi - nao - bo - cha / conch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 The ritual manual of the main celebrant Li Qing also has 'crossing the bridge' (duqiao), which had not been requested here, and he described to us the fuller sequence for a three-day funeral, also including the rituals kaifang (or pao wufang), poyu, songgu, kaijing, songqian, yangfan, duqiao, pandou, shaoku, songdeng, and youlian.
On arrival at the soul hall, the Daoists perform the hymn *Shibao en*, sung by a young apprentice Daoist, accompanied by the melodic and percussion instruments. Even for these preliminary rituals, there is a large crowd gathered outside, although the ideal place to listen would certainly be from the altar before the coffin inside the soul hall: the objects of the music are the deceased and the deities. For the order in which the Daoists stand whenever they play around the altar before the soul hall, see Table B.

A house at the other end of the village, belonging to a close relative of the deceased, serves as the ‘scripture hall’ (*jingtang*), where the Daoists can rest and prepare the ritual artefacts, such as copying the texts, including the memorials for use in the ritual and for eventual burning. Throughout the funeral, the Daoists proceed to and from this house. On the gateway leading to the house are pasted Daoist slogans for the funeral.

The music of the Daoists is constantly varied. There is solo singing and chanting, unaccompanied, or accompanied by the drum, small cymbals, and single gong in frame, or by the *sheng-guan* music; and ensemble singing, accompanied by the drum, small cymbals, and single gong in frame. The *sheng-guan* music, accompanied by drum and small cymbals, may perform without the voice; sometimes a *dizi* flute replaces the two *guanzi*. Sometimes the ritual percussion (*faqi*) alone plays, with complementary pairs of large cymbals *nao* and *bo*, and the single gong in frame (*dongzi*), added to the basic percussion section of drum and small cymbals; the *yunluo* does not play, still being
considered part of the melodic section despite only having two gongs instead of the standard ten. Other important ritual percussion instruments are the bowl (qing) and bell (ling), and the conch (huiluo). Each instrumentation has its own repertory.

Other similar ceremonial ensembles in northern China distinguish between Sitting Music and Processional Music: for the latter individual pieces are performed, while the former are often extended suites of many labelled melodies, played at or before the ritual altar. The same principle operates here, though the Daoists stand before the altars.

The lowly position of the shawm band is illustrated by their base at the side of the altar before the soul hall, outside, under an awning and seated around a fire. Similarly, on procession, although the shawm band leads the way, whenever the procession reaches a temporary halt, the shawm band stands at the side of the track. By contrast, the music-ritual of the Daoists occupies centre-stage: it is the ‘main business’ (zhengshi), and physically too the Daoists occupy central and prestigious positions throughout.

THE PARDON
The main part of this funeral ritual is ‘issuing the Pardon’ (fang she) at an open-air altar constructed in the clearing in the middle of the village. The Daoists first construct the altars and platform out of tables on top of tables and chairs, covered in ritual cloth, and then they set up the paper altar ‘palaces’ housing statuettes of the five presiding deities.

After retiring to the scripture hall, the Daoists re-emerge playing the ritual percussion, including the conch and the large nao and bo cymbals. The Pardon is the only part of the ritual to require the main celebrant Li Qing to emerge from the scripture hall; indeed, he only performs the ritual, not playing the melodic instruments, although he is a fine sheng player. First the Daoists pay a visit to the altar before the soul hall, and then they make an elaborate winding procession around the whole structure of the open-air ritual arena, followed by the relatives, to purify the ritual arena. The shawm band also plays, standing to the side of the arena. It is snowing lightly, and the ground is slushy, but everyone is in good humour.

22 For the Pardon in Taiwan, see Lagerwey 1987: 202-15; in Fujian, Dean 1988: 45, 52-3; Dean 1989a: 59-61. This is the ritual which often precedes the Assault on Hell.
The offerings to the five deities are now solemnly presented, with the head Daoist acting as intermediary between the deities and the family. The Daoists take up their positions around the table before the altars of Pardon (see Table C), with the family standing immediately behind them, facing the altars. This is an extended ritual, with the head Daoist chanting, singing and sounding the bowl and bell, and also wielding the soul tablet. For some parts of this ritual a *dizi* replaces the *guanzi*; both have interludes on the ritual percussion. Li Qing appears to be the only Daoist fully *au fait* with the ritual procedure.

### Table C: Daoists before altars of Pardon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sheng</th>
<th>drum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>dizi / guanzi / bo</em></td>
<td><em>dangzi / yunluo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheng / nao</td>
<td>cha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrant / bell and bowl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table D: Daoists on platform for Pardon

| cha sheng guanzi celebrant guanzi sheng drum |
| cha dangzi bo bell + bowl nao drum |

**PLAY**

The Daoists now ascend a platform opposite the altars to the five deities; the three Daoists in the middle put on caps with representations of the deities. The Daoists are now standing in a long line, as in Table D.

This part of the ritual is to read out and present the memorial Pardon to the deities, but it includes a protracted clowning sequence. While Li Qing solemnly prepares the memorials to the accompaniment of a recurring ‘small piece’, the Daoist to his left makes fun of his colleagues, acting the clown. He begins by playing notes on the large and small *guanzi* alternately, and then at the same time. From his bag of tricks he takes out a pair of dark glasses, and puts them on the Daoist to his left, who is playing the *sheng*. He plays phrases with the high-pitched mouth-whistle, and performs ribald gestures with the telescopic Lama horn, joining in also on this: such raucous opera-mimicry (*kaxi*) is popular in northern China. He puts glass balls in his own eyes, one black one white, and imitates a blind man, again playing with the horn as a kind of phallic telescope. He then substitutes a cymbal for the *sheng* player’s Daoist cap. He pretends to take snot from Li Qing’s nose and smear it all over the *sheng* player’s face; later he takes off the cymbal from the long-suffering *sheng* player’s head, puts some snot into it, smears some round the rim, and puts it back onto his head. The *sheng* player, ever the straight man, keeps playing. The audience is having a great time. Finally the clowning gives way to more ritual percussion. Li Qing continues the ritual affably, placing the folded memorials in their large coloured envelopes, and handing them down to the head of the family, while the band plays on.

The Daoists now descend form their platform, parade around the altars, and guide the family in the ritual burning of the memorials. Again, the *dizi* replaces the *guanzi*. Finally they retire again to the scripture hall, with the shawn band leading the way.

Ritual is often likened to opera, and vice versa\(^23\); indeed ritual is a principle form of entertainment for villages. We need to question the Daoists further, but I suppose this clowning to represent the mockery of the ghosts and officials from whose clutches the deceased is to escape on her journey to paradise.

\(^{23}\) Cf. Johnson 1989; Chinese sources also often liken instrumental suites to opera.
Interestingly, the concept 'merit as beginning, play as conclusion' (gongde tou, zuoxi wei), noted by scholars in Taiwan, would seem to have a parallel here: not only in this ritual, but in northern instrumental suites for ritual, the solemn repertory is followed by more popular, semi-improvised pieces. Chinese scholars have compared this process to entertaining first gods and then mortals, but, more than merely pleasing different audiences, it is surely an integral part of the dramatic enactment, however abstracted or condensed.

In southern Shanxi, the Longmen Quanzhen Daoists are said to perform acrobatics and martial arts as part of their ritual, as is common elsewhere. In instrumental music, the popularity of opera-mimicry complements the dramatic and psychological needs of village ritual. The use of popular folk melodies, and of jocular material, is evidently not a recent innovation, nor was it in 1933 as described by Li Jiariu. The story is more complex than the citation at the head of this article would have us believe. New, jocular and popular pieces have long been a part of traditional folk funerals: before pop music, the older musicians told us that they had to play the popular 'lesser melodies' of the region. The recent national inundation of pop music is contributing only indirectly to the decline of the old funeral repertory.

**AFTER THE PARDON**

During the afternoon, the shawn band, back at its base under the awning outside and to the side of the soul hall, entertains the village with popular numbers from local opera, notably Erren tai and Shua hai'er, opera-mimicry, revolutionary songs, and pop

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25 Dean and Lagerwey (note 20 above) describe crowing in the Pardon in Fujian and Taiwan. On “play” in Hong Kong funerals, see Watson 1988: 127-8.
27 Xue Yiping and I saw splendid cymbal-acrobatics at a Hakka funeral in Meixian in 1990. With Yuan Jingfang, I saw juggling with a frame of ten gongs (yuntuo), of all things, at a funeral in Xianghe county, Hebei province in 1987.
28 For popular music in funerals in Beijing before 1933, see Li Jiariu 1933: 171-2.
and film tunes, adding instruments such as yangqin dulcimer and dahu bass fiddle. This shawm band included some blind musicians, as is common.

At dusk, the Daoists proceed to the village well to ‘take the water’ (qushui) for the ritual purification of burned money later in the evening. This is followed after dark by ‘the invitation’ (shaoqing) summoning the ancestors, including the burning of paper money (songsan) on procession outside the village, to the north; as ever, the shawm band leads the way, with the Daoists following the family.

The journey back to the village provides another opportunity for tomfoolery. The Daoists and the shawm band are surrounded, jostled, and taunted until they play a pop piece for the local youths. This becomes a formal slanging-match, the youths showing their determination to get a new piece out of the musicians every few dozen paces. The short walk back to the village becomes a lengthy, tiring and obligatory ordeal for the musicians.

The Daoists were also to play some pop pieces for the final ritual of the evening, which we didn’t see. Next morning the shawm band alone was to accompany the burial procession; Daoists do not go to the burial ground.

DAOISTS VERSUS SHAWM BANDS
There is no question of competition between the Daoist ensemble and the shawm band: the Daoists, as ritual specialists, are acknowledged to be superior. A family may engage one, or two, shawm bands, but they may perhaps not invite a sheng-guan ensemble at all: the shawm bands are appropriately renao (festive, bustling, lively, uproarious), whereas the Daoist sheng-guan ensemble is more sophisticated and also more strictly connected with Daoist ritual, although they too know how to give secular entertainment at appropriate points, as we have seen. Competition only arises between like: two shawm bands, or two Buddhist or Daoist sheng-guan ensembles, as were common before 1949 for lavish funerals.29

Unlike the amateur intra-village associations of Hebei, both the sheng-guan musicians and the shawm bands are paid. Since the Daoists are more prestigious, and perform more specialized services, they thus also ask more money. Some Chinese sources imply that sheng-guan ensembles are amateur, shawm bands semi-professional, but local circumstances are more complex. The picture is further complicated by the fact that bands in central Shanxi can play both repertoires, both shawm music and the sheng-guan music, as did Yin Erwen when young.30 Shawm bands in the northeast, also have a repertory of sheng-guan music, as in Jilin.31 I look forward to studying this further.

As to music, we have already noted several distinctions: vocal liturgical music, the ritual percussion, the para-liturgical music of the melodic instruments. A further layer has been implied, that of frankly secular melodic repertories performed at funerals, such as the operatic or pop excerpts, which are not part of the ritual process. The connection of para-liturgical music with the local folk music is important. However, the core repertoires of both the sheng-guan ensembles and the shawm bands are considered to belong to ritual: these repertoires are contextual and strictly transmitted.

29 For a modern example, see Dean 1988: 60-3. A Western-style brass band may also take part in a funeral, at the same time as a shawm band: I saw this in Quanzhou in 1990, and cf. Watson 1988: 124.
RITUAL SPECIALISTS AND RITUAL IMPOVERISHMENT

Music is one of nine universal aspects of Chinese funerals listed by Watson.32 As he states, it is often used at transitional moments, especially accompanying physical movement. Further, different types of music have different functions: the music of the Daoists comprises vocal liturgy, the ritual percussion and the melodic instrumental music, including suites and ‘small pieces’ led by either guanzi or dizi; not to mention the music of the shawm bands.

Susan Naquin has discussed traditional funeral observances in the old society in northern China. Detailed material is now also needed for the modern period. This article is partly written in the hope that Western and Chinese scholars of ritual will do detailed fieldwork in northern China, without further ado.

The ritual and music alike of funerals have undoubtedly become simplified and compressed over the last 80 years or more. Naquin suggests three reasons: poverty, official disapproval or prohibition, and (a temporary, rather than temporal, factor), hot weather.33 Elaborate funerals have been rare in the north since 1949: few wealthy families remained, and those that did remain lost their wealth. However, families have continued to go to great lengths to enhance their standing by a grand funeral.

Curbs on extravagant expenditure are not new, but they have been quite effective in the north since 1949. So apart from official disapproval of lavish and superstitious funerals, economic power and indeed ritual skill have deteriorated. Our Yang’gao Daoists speak of 3-day, 5-day or 21-day rituals, but they are probably too expensive for most people nowadays, and certainly difficult for the Daoists to recall by now. Li Qing’s own hand-copy of the family ritual manual, adapted from those of previous generations, is rather simpler in respect of omitting some rituals which are perhaps now obsolete: he says there are parts of the old manual, copied by Li Peisen in the Guangxi period (1875-1908), which he and his colleagues no longer know how to perform.34 Thus there is less variation in expenditure and practice than in the old society, but such as there is still requires continuing documentation.

Naquin makes the good point that ‘musicians who specialize in funerals could be brought in cheaply to supplement, or even substitute for some of the clerics’35 Thus at least since 1949, musicians are both cheaper and may appear more secular; but they may still be able to provide a version of rituals, with hymns etc. Musicians, then, are often lay, or part-time, ritual specialists. In the absence of an opera troupe, or of Daoists or Buddhists, the dramatic role of the musicians may also be increased.

The Daoists and the shawm band may be considered different levels of ritual specialists. Geomancers are another type also still required. If the Daoists are ritual specialists, the shawm bands here might be called ‘helpers’, performing a less specialized service. Ritual specialists are not required throughout the proceedings. Many aspects of the funeral, such as burning the paper money, are performed by the family, generally guided by an elder member. Ritual specialists occupy a tenuous place in society, being accepted and needed by the people, and tolerated, recently and in the early 50s, in many places by cadres, while official ideology expresses or implies various degrees of disapproval.

I have seen several different situations at funerals in China. Sometimes there are ritual specialists alone, chanting, singing, and playing the ritual percussion, with no melodic

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33 Naquin 1988: 45-6.
34 Similarly, Dean notes that Daoists in southern Fujian have forgotten how to perform a 49-day jiao ritual: Dean 1989b: 59.
35 Naquin 1988: 60.
instruments. Ritual specialists may have melodic instrumental music too - as in the Hebei music associations. They may have a shawm band with them, or the shawm band may be the martial part of their own civil-martial ensemble. Ritual specialists may perform vocal liturgy with ritual percussion, with one or two shawm bands also present. They may have their own melodic instrumental music, with one or two shawm bands also present - as at our village funeral. There may be no ritual specialists at all, only one or two shawm bands. There may be neither ritual specialists nor shawm bands: only taped music at a secular ceremony.

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY TEMPLES
One obvious difference from funerals in the old society is that there are no temples to report to. The Daoists say there was a Daoist temple in their village until it was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution, but as lay Daoists they didn’t live there. There are very few temples in any northern villages that I have visited, certainly not functioning temples. A glance at any local gazetteer from the Qing dynasty will reveal how large temples were a prominent part of the landscape, both urban and rural, until early this century. Their disappearance during this century has perhaps been more of a loss to Buddhism, since Daoism suits lay activity more. But one must not assume that they were simply destroyed in the years after 1949. Northern temples have been in decline since the last century, through repression by successive imperial and Republican governments and the disruptions of warfare. Many are said to have been destroyed by the Japanese in the war, and by the Chinese in the Great Leap Forward and especially in the Cultural Revolution, but it remains to be detailed how many temples were in decline anyway from the 19th century, how many were destroyed by the Japanese, or indeed by the Nationalists, and how many by the Communists in the years before and after 1949.36

However, in Hebei and elsewhere I have seen many temporary temples, often called ‘tents’ (peng), where beautiful cloth-paintings are hung out and rituals performed. This is doubtless a modification, a response, even a form of underground resistance, to official secular policy, or a means of co-existence. On the other hand, large and small functioning temples are everywhere in Fujian and eastern Guangdong, for instance.

Parallel to this expedient mobility of ritual artefacts is the modification in musical instruments: the Daoists use a small portable hand-drum instead of the unwieldy large drum, and since their ten-gong frame of yunlou was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution they make do with a paltry two-gong one. Elsewhere, such as in the music associations of Hebei, the original larger instruments have survived. Let us now look at the two ensembles of the funeral in more detail.

THE YANG’GAO DAOISTS
Li Qing, in his mid-sixties, is a Lingbao Zhengyi lay Daoist, at least the 6th generation of Daoists in his family, living in a village south of the county town of Yang’gao. Daoism is strong in northern Shanxi: the Hengshan mountains just south of Yang’gao are an ancient site, although these Daoists made no claim about any connection with Hengshan. The history of these Daoists needs further research. There is a family tradition that ‘long ago’ they learned from a Daoist who had studied at the Baiyun guan

36 Basic material for the north in the Republican period is Gamble 1963. See also Gamble 1954: 398-425. For religion in this and the following period, see also e.g. Friedman 1991: 14-15, 20-2, 234-5; Duara 1988: 118-57; Yang C.K. 1967. We visited the early Ming Buddhist Yunlin si temple in Yang’gao county town, which is being restored by the Ministry of Culture; it has shuili murals and a 1939 ordination tablet.
Daoist temple in Beijing (a temple of the Quanzhen sect, actually), but this may be hard to verify. Daoists in this area call themselves yingmen shi, equivalent to the common expression huoji daoshi indicating lay Daoist priests.\textsuperscript{37} The reputation of Li Qing and his colleagues takes them over the whole Yang’gao-Wangguantun-Luowenzao area to perform rituals. Li Qing has just formally taken a disciple, around 20 years old. Li is an accomplished sheng master.

Liu Zhong, in his early sixties, is also an experienced hereditary Daoist, greatly admired for his guanzi playing. In the local style, he changes quickly between small, large and double guanzi, not only between movements, but also, for the more extrovert ‘supporting pieces’ (peiqu) which conclude a suite, between phrases or even notes; he even plays notes simultaneously on the large and small guanzi.

The history of these musicians over the last 60 years is a sensitive issue: ritual specialists have often been persecuted. Local politics are complex: official policies of secularization should be balanced against local exigencies - conversely, official tolerance may conflict with local extremism. Some informants said that there was no ritual activity in Yang’gao between 1964 and 1984, but others hinted that Daoist rituals here may have begun again, covertly, as early as 1973. Such sensitive material requires long and patient collection.\textsuperscript{38}

These musicians, then, are lay Daoists who perform rituals in the whole area, unlike the music associations of Hebei, which are intra-village associations of peasants who are not priests, nor lay priests, but who can perform the rituals their own village requires.\textsuperscript{39} The Shanxi Daoists are independent, not part of a village association: we didn’t hear of such associations in northern Shanxi, although further work is needed.

The Yang’gao Daoists do not perform for weddings. They do, however, say that they do ‘red business’ (hongshi), which usually refers to weddings, but here means rather rituals for the living, as opposed to ‘white business’ (baishi) or rituals for the dead, mainly funerals. As yet we have not studied the content of these rituals for the living, also called ‘reciting the earth scripture’ (nian tujing).\textsuperscript{40} Even a shawm band we visited stated that they now rarely performed weddings: families often prefer to show movie-videos!

Li Qing and Liu Zhong are old colleagues, but now often form separate Daoist troupes to meet the considerable demand for funeral services, especially in the winter. As we saw, they get around 200 yuan (c. 20 GBP) for a one-day funeral, shared between seven or eight Daoists, a small part of the family’s expenses for the funeral, but a good enough sideline for the Daoists if demand is frequent.

**Sheng-Guan Music**

We have seen the different forms which ritual music takes, with vocal music, and melodic and percussion instruments. Both percussion and melodic instruments may accompany vocal liturgy and ritual action, or they may be the focus of attention during transitional points or interludes in the ritual. That the instrumental music is considered special, even specially refined, may be seen from its name ‘Music’ in Buddhist temples of Beijing and in the village ‘music associations’ in Hebei.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Cf. the Daoist mountain of Wudang shan: Shi Xinmin 1987: 7.

\textsuperscript{38} I look forward to a social study of music as detailed as that of local society by Friedman et al. 1991.

\textsuperscript{39} For various types of village association, see Duara 1988: 118-57.

\textsuperscript{40} See Chen Kexiu 1990.

\textsuperscript{41} See Xue and Wu 1987: 88-93.
The classic form of the sheng-guan ensemble consists of pairs of the instruments sheng, guanzi, dizi, and yunluo, as in Buddhist temples of Beijing. The sheng is often considered the basic instrument, while the guanzi plays a leading role. The dizi and yunluo seem to be becoming less important in the Shanxi ensembles. Most instruments have been bought, or remade (in the case of the guanzi) since the Cultural Revolution. The sheng, with its distinctive curved mouthpiece, has 14 sounding reeds, as is common in northern villages.

The complex question of keys, and their representation in the traditional gongche notation, has been thoroughly studied by Jing Weigang. Like several other ancient folk genres related to temple music, and unlike the more common moveable-do system used more recently, it is a fixed-pitch system, with the note he the tonic as E. Three main keys are used, ‘basic key’ (bendiao, with he, E, as tonic), shangzi diao (shang, A, as tonic) and fanzi diao (che, B, as tonic), the latter two are a fifth below and above the basic key respectively.

As to repertory, some liturgical pieces with texts may be accompanied with the melodic and percussion instruments, or may be played in instrumental versions, such as hymns (zan, here called zantan), and dharanis (shenyen or zhou). One piece may be repeated several times, accelerando, the guanzi decorating the skeletal melody with increasing bravura. The Daoists have several named suites (taoqu) with a more or less fixed sequence of labelled melodies until the more free set of ‘supporting pieces’.

A simple percussion formula is played between pieces. As the atmosphere becomes more excited and the tempo accelerates, the large cymbals nao and bo join in and lead the percussion interludes. The drum plays a rather minor role, as in Hebei.

TRANSMISSION AND IMPOVERISHMENT

We have broached the question of impoverishment of ritual above. For music, while the question is relevant, the music is still going, at least, and it is an urgent task to document what still survives. Apart from his ritual manual, Li Qing also has a traditional score of 89 instrumental pieces, ‘The complete divine pieces’ (Shenqu quanbu) copied by Li Derong, an ancestor of Li Qing, also from the Guangxu period. Another elderly Daoist colleague of theirs, Li Yuanmiao, who was unable to be present due to illness, was also admired for the large number of pieces ‘in his stomach’, as Chinese folk musicians often say.

Still, the Daoists can clearly play fewer of these pieces than before, and the next generation down knows only a small proportion of the repertory of the elders. The processional repertory seems particularly sparse. Additions to the core repertory of northern wind ensembles are rare. Pop music might supplement the old repertory, but they can’t keep up: ‘you’d have to learn a new piece every week!’ lamented one elderly Daoist.

Li Qing’s musical practice is entirely traditional, but he also knows the cipher notation system now commonly used in schools, and he knows western solfege too, as do many folk musicians. He worked in the professional town music troupe (wen’ gong tuan) during the bad years from 1958 to 1962. Li Qing’s house is the house of real

42 Jones and Xue 1991: 12-14, 19-22.
43 Yang Yinliu introduced several such traditions in the early 1950s, including the music of Wutai shan, the Zhihua temple in Beijing, and the ‘drum music’ of the Xi’an area. See Yang Yinliu 1957. Now it is apparent that folk ritual traditions in the north commonly use such a system.
44 Cf. Picard 1991. Pu’an zhou is perhaps the most common ritual piece I have encountered in northern villages, in its full form, in both vocal and instrumental versions; it is played also by these Daoists.
45 Jing Weigang, 1990a; for a catalogue of the pieces, see p. 41.
music-lovers, lay Daoists who meet most evenings to play for their own enjoyment, whether or not there is a ritual to perform.

Li Qing and his Daoist colleagues are admired and liked by local cultural cadres, and their musical reputation extends not only to the provincial capital but also to Beijing - and now, I trust, beyond. In the present climate of qualified support for the cultural heritage, they were recognized last year by the provincial authorities by the formal establishment of a Hengshan Daoist music troupe, alongside the Wutai shan Buddhist music troupe, also recently formed, but such few urban performances as they give are rare compared to their continuing ‘rice-bowl’, village ritual activity. The Music Research Institute, Beijing, invited both groups to perform at a major festival of Chinese Buddhist and Daoist music which was to have been held in June 1990 in Beijing, and video and audio recordings have been made by the Shanxi and Beijing music research institutes. Anyway, Li Qing’s musical practice and demeanour appear to have been little influenced by his intermittent exposure to official taste.

THE SHAWM BAND OF YANGJIA BAO VILLAGE

The shawm-and-percussion band is the most common form of instrumental music-making in China. Northern genres are particularly esteemed by Chinese scholars, notably in the northeastern provinces of Liaoning and Jilin, and in eastern Hebei, southwestern Shandong and northern Shaanxi.\(^{46}\)

Traditional shawm bands in northern China are called by such names as ‘drum music bands’ (guyue ban), ‘blowers-and-drummers’ (chuigu shou) or ‘drum households’ (gufang). In northern Shanxi they are often called gujiang ban, ‘drum artisan bands’.

In many parts of China shawm bands have little prestige: the musicians are often illiterate, and some are blind. They have sometimes even been called a pariah group\(^{47}\), and this applies both before and since 1949, despite official slogans of esteem for folk artists: in practice village society tends to degrade them. The traditional litany of social outcasts, ‘pimps, actors, and blowers-and-drummers’ (wangba, xizi, chuigu shou) may still apply. However, there are certainly several degrees: like the sheng-guan ensembles, some shawm bands too have long hereditary traditions with scores, old instruments, and strict transmission. In towns before 1949, ‘sedan wards’ were ceremonial shops where shawm bands could be hired, and some bands were much esteemed.

Since the shawm bands are more secular, more ‘mass culture’, they may have survived the Cultural Revolution somewhat more easily: one outstanding Daoist musician endured the period by joining a shawm band, playing ‘lesser melodies’ through the period, evidently a come-down. However, one local band, the Yangjia bao shawm band, said that they had had to stop playing through the Cultural Revolution. There seems to be a danger that these bands, which are anyway less prestigious, may become poor relations of the sheng-guan ensembles, which are now to some extent being championed by cultural workers as the ‘refined music’ of the temples. However, they are likely to remain the most common form of instrumental music-making in rural China, and some bands are of very high quality.

The local cultural workers say that there are no longer any good shawm players in the town, but plenty in the villages. (This applies also to the sheng-guan ensembles, who as Daoists are hardly to be found practising in the town.) We visited a shawm band


\(^{47}\) E.g. Holm 1991: 156 for northern Shaanxi; Watson 1988: 122-3 for lowly and ‘unskilled’ shawm players in Hong Kong.
with a great reputation locally, at the village of Yangjia bao (‘Yang lineage fortress’), near the township of Luowenzao just east of Yang’gao. Chen Kejia notes that many villages in the area have military names: fortress bao, military colony tun, horse-grazing outpost zao. There is a historically strategic pass nearby, once guarded by the fortress of Zhenmen bao, and he attributes the distinctive shawm music of the region to the presence of the army in imperial times. The connection of shawm music to the military, from the introduction of the shawm to China in the Ming dynasty, is worth pursuing. Being a family business, as shawm bands very often are, the members of the band are all ages, not just old men, unlike many northern ritual sheng-guan ensembles. They too mainly play for funerals. They say that they are hired seven to ten times a month on average. Their leader is called ‘the boss’ or ‘head of the hired hands’ (lantou). 48

THE MUSIC OF THE YANGJIA BAO SHAWM BAND

Some of their instruments are inherited – they managed to keep them through the Cultural Revolution, unlike the Daoists – but some have been bought from shops recently too. A simple processional band consists of two shawms and one or two pairs of small cymbals, perhaps also with a gong; the drum may play only when the musicians are seated. In the sitting instrumentation, apart from the drum, a knobbed gong, a large gong, and later a woodblock are added. The shawms use circular breathing. There is a close rapport in the heterophony of the two shawm players. While the second shawm plays a rather simple version of the skeletal melody, mainly in the basic octave, the leader takes the upper role, often going off high into the upper register. As they converge on the same note or go to different octaves, sometimes landing on 5ths or even 2nds, with different rhythmic densities, a cohesive and varied counterpoint emerges.

The players speak of three sizes of shawm, 1 to 3, but ‘no.1’ is no longer used. 49 The large shawm used for funerals is no.2. Their lowest notes are a tone apart. They also use a long telescopic natural trumpet called changjian, whose main use is to ‘open the way’ on procession. As to the percussion, the drum master is the co-leader, displaying a disciplined virtuosity, with rim-shots, single and double stick techniques etc. The small cymbals play a simple pattern throughout, while the large gong and knobbed gong mark whole measures. The woodblock plays only in the fast final section. Metre is similar in shawm and sheng-guan music, but the drumming of the shawm band is a more complex art.

The musicians learned traditional gongche notation at first, but have now forgotten it: it is thus more of an oral tradition than sheng-guan music. In fact many shawm bands in the northeast have prestigious old scores, but such scores are much more subject to creative variation than those of the sheng-guan musicians. They know cipher notation, but appear indifferent to it. They commonly use only three keys, ‘basic key’ (bendiao), meihua diao and fanzi diao. All three are used during a funeral, but meihua diao is considered the most plangent. While superficially meihua diao is simply a tone lower, its affect is quite different; this is common in Chinese music, such as yifan in Cantonese music and ‘wailing melody’ (kudiao) of Qinjiang opera. Again, their repertory is probably much smaller than that of their father and grandfather. The funeral repertory is still performed in strict sequence, which was also

49 Just as in Longchutu shawm bands far to the south in Quanzhou, Fujian province.
similar in the town funeral which we observed. Most of the titles are common in northern China, and even in the south, part of a complex network of 'labelled melodies' whose regional and historical variants await thorough exploration.50

They gave the following sequence of pieces for a one-day funeral:

**MORNING:**

Jiāngjun lǐng, Shuilóng yín, Báihe yán, Dáyánluò in fānzi diao, Liúhe yíng;

**AFTERNOON:**

Shuilóng yín in méihua diao, Báihe yán in fānzi diao,
'small pieces' and opera-mimicry (flexible choice, including selections from the popular vocal genres Erren t'ai and Shuā hǎi'ěr), Da bā men.

As we saw, they play two versions of Shuilóng yín in the course of a funeral: in the basic key as the morning overture, and in the plaintive méihua diao for the afternoon overture. The title Shuilóng yín is common as a shawn piece in opera, including Kunqu and Peking opera, but is rare in sheng-guan music.

Transcriptions and analyses are not within the scope of this article, but they are to be desired, not to say available recordings.

A subsidiary, but popular, lively, and jocular part of their repertory is opera-mimicry and Erren t'ai, as an interlude of fun and entertainment, in the afternoon of a funeral, as in our village funeral. For this they add mouth whistle, Lama horn, sheng, dizi, erhu (two-stringed bowed fiddle), bass hu, yangqin (struck dulcimer), and hōngzī (wood-block). However, it is the solemn and majestic funeral style which they consider the core of their repertory.

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50 A preliminary attempt to introduce the problems is Jones 1989.
They don’t play *yang*ge, but shawm bands in nearby Hunyuan do. We were unable to get to Gucheng this time, also supposedly outstanding for shawm bands.

The leader of the Yangjia bao shawm band has just bought a Western-style trumpet for his son, Hua Lei, 10 years old. Hua Lei is already playing percussion in the family shawm band, and is just starting the shawm. The family has a TV; Yanggao county town has a cinema. Still, there seems to be no reason why Hua Lei should not continue the family tradition: the music is relevant to the village’s needs, the family supplement their living well by it, and the music is constantly in his ears. I didn’t hear of a Western style brass band in the area, but I have seen several in Hebei, Fujian and elsewhere, playing for funerals and festivities; one day Hua Lei may indeed be able to play funeral music with both types of band.

**CODA: BEIJING AND NEARBY**

While tradition might be expected to persist in rural China, it was more surprising to find a traditional funeral in Beijing in 1991, with a percussion band and a folk Buddhist *sheng-guan* ensemble playing mainly popular opera-mimicry numbers. There was no official priest, but the musicians performed some Buddhist hymns, and there was a long procession through the streets, the women wailing as the paper was burned (*songshan*). The deceased had died, in middle age, the previous day, and cremation was to follow the next day, as is compulsory in the towns.

While the *sheng-guan* music of the Zhuhua Buddhist temple in Beijing has been studied in recent years, it was good also to find a folk tradition of *sheng-guan* music in Beijing: the Guangquan music society (*Guangquan yueshe*), who practice from the Haidian district near Beijing University. They partly play polished renditions of the popular songs-for-winds type repertory, using the opera-mimicry style, but they also preserve an older layer of Beijing Buddhist *sheng-guan* music. There are plainly still many former ritual specialists to interview even in Beijing.

With colleagues from the Music Research Institute I also returned to the plain south of Beijing to extend my acquaintance of the music associations of Hebei. The estimate of thirty practising ensembles now seems conservative, and continuing fieldwork is all the more urgent.

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Lay Daoist Li Qing (to the right), leading rituals in a village near Wang’guan tun (see p.10).
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ROBERT VAN GULIK AND

The Guqin Scores of the Sinological Institute, Leiden

DAIXIAOLIAN
(Shanghai Conservatory, China)

Translated and Adapted by Jonathan P.J. Stock

This paper offers an analysis of representative examples of the guqin scores originally collected by Robert van Gulik and now housed in the Library of the Sinological Institute, University of Leiden. The guqin (or qin) is a seven-stringed zither and is one of China's oldest traditional instruments. A considerable repertoire for this instrument has been preserved in tablature known as jianzipu. The main part of this article discusses the significance and range of van Gulik's assemblage of these scores. It thus provides an example of the nature of guqin research in mainland China and sheds greater perspective on van Gulik's better known published work. The overview of important scores is preceded by a brief account of the library where these scores are now kept and of van Gulik's life. Finally, an annotated list of van Gulik's collection of guqin scores has been appended for those wishing to carry out their own research.

Although the investigation at Leiden University of Chinese culture and civilisation has a history of more than two centuries, the Sinological Institute there was only formally established in 1930. This Institute, the only one of its kind in the Netherlands, has produced a number of outstanding sinologists and ethnologists, and now occupies an important position in this field of study in Europe. Its Library has an extensive collection of approximately 220,000 volumes in Chinese and 20,000 in Western languages. Amongst these are more than 10,000 volumes donated by van Gulik upon his death in 1967, a collection which included more than twenty guqin scores and treatises.

ROBERT VAN GULIK
Robert van Gulik (in Chinese Gao Luopei 高罗佩) was born in 1910. His interest in China began in his youth, and at the age of eighteen he began studies at Leiden University. After graduation he immediately started doctoral studies in the field of oriental culture and history, gradually learning Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan and Sanskrit. Van Gulik graduated with distinction in 1935 and was subsequently appointed a Secretary at the Dutch Embassy in Japan, where he made full use of this
opportunity to realise his earlier desire to carry out research in the East. In 1943 he was transferred to the Dutch Embassy in China, leaving there in 1946. Later, van Gulik went on to serve as Ambassador in Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and the Lebanon, dying in 1967.

Although van Gulik’s major occupation was diplomatic work, his sinological publications, calligraphy, painting, seal carving and detective stories have all achieved note. In several best-selling stories he used the Tang Dynasty figure Di Renjie as his chief character, renaming him Judge Dee. The flavour of the tales is richly imbued with facets of traditional Chinese culture, and van Gulik felt free to adjust historical facts to enhance the dramatic impact of his stories, itself a standard feature of traditional Chinese narrative genres. What must not be forgotten is that he also became an expert in the art of the guqin. Van Gulik was one of the first to comprehensively introduce this instrument to the West, largely through his classic *The Lore of the Chinese Lute* (1940), a work still much valued by Western scholars and musicians as a gateway to the understanding of China’s traditional music. His interest in the guqin arose because, for him, the guqin embodied the spirit and style of traditional Chinese culture.

From 1935 onwards, when van Gulik was posted to Japan, he frequently visited China to carry out study and
research. He became a pupil of the famous *guqin* master Ye Shimeng (1863-1937), a member of the Fujian Minnan school of performance. Ye's teacher was Sun Jinzhai (dates not known) and Sun's, Zhu Fengjie (d.1864). Van Gulik thus inherited a performance style of extensive tradition. Ye had a high standard of performance and was deeply respected by van Gulik. He produced the *Shi meng Zhai*, a score of nineteen *guqin* pieces, teaching van Gulik *Meihua San Nong* first and later a total of ten pieces. Van Gulik was extremely upset when Ye died, dedicating The Lore of the Chinese Lute to his memory three years later (van Gulik 1940). Van Gulik also carefully worked on a painting in traditional Chinese style entitled Master Ye Playing the Qin, the four edges of which bear the inscriptions of other *qin* players.

Van Gulik's widow, Shui Shifang, said that the short time van Gulik spent living in China was the happiest period of his life. His transfer to the Dutch Embassy (1943), then located at the temporary capital Chongqing, enabled him to meet many well known *qin* players and aficionados, including Zha Fuxi, Xu Yuanbai and Wang Mengshu. Van Gulik joined and helped organise the Chongqing Tianfeng *Qin* Society, which met frequently for performance and discussion. The Dutch Embassy provided the Society with a meeting place, and van Gulik was able to collect a large number of *guqin* scores. These scores and treatises include hand-copied manuscripts and volumes and traditional block-printed and thread-bound books. Van Gulik purchased some of these items, copied others by hand himself and was given several by *qin*-playing associates.¹

**VALUABLE HAND-COPIED SCORES**
Van Gulik bought or copied six scores in this category, including two Japanese scores. The one volume which he copied himself he entitled the *Zhong-He Qinshi Qinpu*. This incorporates five compositions including *Lu Ming Cao* and *Xiao Xiang Shui Yun*. It was copied by van Gulik with a brush and bound in the traditional manner.

Of all the hand-copied scores, the *Longyin Guan Qinpu*, is particularly worthy of discussion in some detail, since its discovery extends the history of the prominent Mei'an *qin* school by at least a century. The *Mei'an Qinpu* was produced in 1931 by the *qin*-player Xu Lisun (Xu 1931/1959) from an incomplete, damaged draft in the handwriting of Xu's teacher, Wang Yanqing (1866-1921). ('Mei'an' was the name of

¹ The information contained in this section is derived from Chen 1969a, b & c and an interview with van Gulik's widow, Shui Shifang, held on August 1st 1991.
the place where Wang taught the guqin). Wang’s manuscript was apparently entitled the Longyin Guan Qinpu, but only the name of this manuscript has survived. No one in China today knows its whereabouts or has seen the original score. (Note: this title employs the character ‘覡’, not ‘觀’ as found in the homophonic name of the Leiden score. Both these characters are transliterated as ‘guan’.

To diminish confusion below, the Leiden score is hereafter written as Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu while the surviving name known in Chinese reference sources alone is termed Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu. When either or both scores / names are being referred to, Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu is used). Currently, every reference book gives Wang Yanqing the credit for compiling the Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu, suggesting that he formed the Mei’an school of qin performance in the early years of this century.

In 1990, the Beijing qin player Xie Xiaoping published an article (Xie 1990) about the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu from van Gulik’s collection, based his research on a microfiche of the original. His argument contains the following assertions: 1) “There is a slip of ‘guan’ [覡] for the homophonic guan [覡], but detailed examination of its contents confirms that the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu is the Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu.” 2) The Mei’an qin school did not begin with the publication of Xu’s Mei’an Qinpu based on Wang Yanqing’s Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu but 132 years earlier (ie. 1799) when the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu, the ancestor of the Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu was produced. 3) The author of the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu was named Mao Shihuan.

Unless Xie has discovered a previously unknown copy of the Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu, presumably he has compared the Leiden score with the Mei’an Qinpu and assumed that the Mei’an Qinpu is a close reproduction of Wang Yanqing’s Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu. The circumstantial evidence for this seems persuasive, although only the discovery of Wang Yanqing’s manuscript would prove the point. Certainly, the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu shares many features with the Mei’an Qinpu, for instance the style of discussion of fingering technique, modes and tuning. Also, four pieces, Changmen Yuan, Guanshan Yue, Qiu Feng Ci and Chongyi Yuan are found only in these two qin scores.

Examination of the original Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu, however, reveals much which Xie did not comment upon. From these new discoveries it can be seen that Mao Shihuan is unlikely to have been the creator of this score, just as the Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu has been mistakenly credited to Wang Yanqing, and the possible origin of the substitution of one form of ‘guan’ for the other has been clarified.
Firstly, the Leiden score is a hand-copied book (not "printed" as Xie states), which explains its limited distribution, handwritten copies tending to be fewer in number than block-printed editions. Wang Yanqing's manuscript was also handwritten, which may be why it was later believed to have been his original work. In fact, Wang's pupils Shao Dasu and Xu Lisun say little about the origin of Wang's 將進管 (B) Qinpu, never stating clearly that it was in Wang's own hand (see Xu 1931/1959: Introduction). The definite attribution of the 將進管 (B) Qinpu to Wang appears only in more recent reference books.

Furthermore, close examination of the 將進管 (A) Qinpu failed to discover a preface or postscript, which might have included the author's name. On the title page are the words: "Yue Lian Bieshu chao", and, after the list of contents, "Da Qing Jiaqing Jiwei dongyue Licheng Mao Shihuan baigao". There are also four ink seals, three of which may be identified as being those used by van Gulik. The other reads: "Mao Zong zhi yin", "Yue Lian" is the name of a person or place. "Bieshu" means a villa, and "chao" can indicate a collection of written materials. Preliminary readings of this phrase may thus be either: "part of Yue Lian's home collection" or "part of the collection at the Yue Lian Villa". This phrase shall be returned to below.

"Da Qing Jiaqing Jiwei dongyue" means "winter of the Jiwei year (1799) of the Qing Dynasty Jiaqing reign". "Licheng Mao Shihuan baigao" may be read as "read or collected by Mao Shihuan in Licheng".2 "Mao Zong zhi yin" literally means "Mao Zong's seal". The character romanised as 'Zong' is an unusual one: 吏, perhaps a compression of 'zong' 管 and 'ren' 人. 'Zongren', or clansman, was a term used in the Qing Dynasty for imperial relatives and certain high officials in the government department which dealt with family affairs.

At first sight it appears that Mao Zong may be the same person as Mao Shihuan, Zong being either his official title or his style name. If so, Yue Lian may have been the name of Mao's study. However, Mao Shihuan's style-name was actually Boyu, and he did not become an official in the Department of Imperial Family Affairs until considerably later than 1799 (Mao 1926: 10), the date of his baigao annotation mentioned above. Even when he did, the highest ranks, those including 'Zong' in their titles, were reserved for members of the imperial family. It would thus have been dangerous for Mao to claim this title, so it is more probable that Mao Shihuan and Mao Zong are not the same person. If they are not, then there is less reason to suppose that Yue Lian was the name of Mao's study.

Moving on to analyse the styles of handwriting employed in this score, the body of the score is in a regular kaishu hand, while the title 将進管 (A) Qinpu and the phrase, "Yue Lian Bieshu chao" are both written in an attractive Weibai style calligraphy. The phrase, "Da Qing..." and the listing on the cover of the eight pieces in this score are written in a different style, one with a slight leftward slant. According to a number of experts, this second style of script has been written by a different person from the one who wrote the main body of the score.3 Since the eight guqin solos are already clearly listed in the contents section of the score, their repetition on its cover is superfluous. The position on the score's cover of this list also suggests that it was a later addition. To summarise this section of the discussion it may be suggested that the 将進管 (A) Qinpu was originally written by someone other than Mao.

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2 The exact meaning of the term baigao 著錄 is controversial. This question is discussed in more detail in the Chinese language version of this paper, which is published in Yin Yue Yishu, the Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 1992, No. 2, pp. 67-71.

3 I am obliged to Professors Pei Rucheng, Xu Guanglie and He Yichong and Dr Wang Xiaomao for their comments on the styles of writing found in this manuscript.
Shihuan. When Mao added it to his collection he also added the “Da Qing...” phrase (date and place of acquisition) and copied the names of the pieces onto the cover. Since “Yue Lian Bieshu chao” is not written in his hand and matches the style of the title, it cannot have been the name of Mao Shihuan’s study and must have already been on the score when it came into Mao’s possession.

Finally, musicological and chronological evidence joins the contextual information already stated in making Xie’s identification of Mao Shihuan as the author of the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu even less likely. This score comprises two volumes, one dealing with temperament and one containing pieces. The original author must have been an expert to have written about temperament and accurately notate these pieces. Mao Shihuan’s biography (Mao 1926: 10) does not refer to him having played the guqin at all. Furthermore, in 1799 Mao was twenty-five years old and taking the jinshi imperial examination. It certainly seems unlikely that in such a crucial phase of his life, Mao Shihuan would have found the time to pen a two-volume work on guqin and that if he had, no record of his necessarily outstanding musicianship has survived.

If the author of the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu was not Mao Shihuan, who was it? The only extant evidence is the phrase, “Yue Lian Bieshu chao”. ‘Chao’ 造成 is sometimes used in place of ‘chao’ 衍, to copy ‘Bieshu’, as mentioned above, is likely to have meant a study. The character so far romanised as ‘Yue’ is an unusual one: 岳. This is not found in standard dictionaries, but the Kangxi Zidian (Kangxi 1717/1958) lists ‘岳’ as a variation of ‘岳’, and it is well known that ‘岳’ is a variant of ‘岳’ ‘岳’. ‘岳’ may then be the surname Yue, ‘岳’. The romanisation of the name ‘Lian’ is uncontroversial. The Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu may thus have been a copy made by someone named Yue Lian.

The Canwei Ji (Wang 1697) mentions a Yue Lian who was both a qin player and a Buddhist monk. He came from the Liangxi area of Wuxi in Jiangsu Province. The author, Wang Shizhen states:

On the ninth day of the tenth month [of 1695] the snow had again fallen the whole night through. The chrysanthemum flowers opened late, and I went to visit the monk Yue Lian from Liangxi... I wrote [a poem] about his qin-playing:

A superior man following the white-shod way,  
He hails from Wuxi Mountain,  
Wearing a patched vest, he braves the snow at Yanmen Pass,  
And clapping his dragon-lipped qin  
He plays Youlan, Churen Chang,  
Doya and Han Gong Yin.  
I beg him return to the pegs of jade,  
Stirring thoughts of peaks and streams deep within.5

From the above poem we can see that Yue Lian must have been an excellent qin player, one with a repertoire of ancient and profound pieces.

Returning to the origin of the two titles for the Longyin Guan Qinpu, each with a different ‘guan’ character, the following suggestions may be made. If the score which

4 Mao (1926: 10) gives Mao Shihuan’s year of death as 1844, when he was aged seventy.
5 The ‘white-shod way’ refers to Buddhism, while ‘dragon lips’ and ‘pegs of jade’ are parts of the guqin. Youlan etc. are the names of qin compositions.
is now in Leiden was a copy made by the Buddhist monk Yue Lian, and if he copied it from a score entitled Longyin Guan (B) Qinpu, the temptation for him to replace that 'guan' would have been strong, since it is the character for a Daoist temple. The other 'guan' 廣, that found on the Leiden score, is a more neutral term applied to many kinds of hall. To a Buddhist, like Yue Lian, it would have been greatly preferable. It remains equally possible however, that the use of this 'guan' 廣 predates that of the Daoist alternative now only known through its recording in the Mei'an Qinpu. Scope for further research remains. Another question concerns the identity of Mao Zong. Could this have been Yue Lian's lay name? Or was it perhaps the name of a subsequent collector? Who wrote the original score from which Yue Lian made his copy? I hope to be able to answer some of these questions in a further article in the future.

Based on the above analysis, I suggest that the Longyin Guan (A) Qinpu, which passed through the hands of Mao Shihuan and van Gulik before reaching the Library of the Sinological Institute in Leiden, was a copy made by the monk Yue Lian, probably written in the late seventeenth century. Both its name and contents link it to the later Mei'an Qinpu, and its investigation provides a fascinating insight into musical transmission.

PRINTED SCORES
The printed and thread-bound scores in van Gulik's collection are all stamped with his ink seals on their covers. In all, there are sixteen volumes and two individual score sheets. From these I have selected only three for comment, since in general these scores are similar to those commonly found elsewhere.

The Dahuang Ge Qinpu was written by the Ming Dynasty qin player Xu Shangying, described as the founder of the Yushan qin school. He created an extremely valuable and comprehensive document which combines personal insights from his own style of performance with the traditional basis Xu had inherited from earlier generations. The Dahuang Ge Qinpu thus includes both music and Xu Shangying's writings about the qin. For example, in the section entitled Xishan Qin Kuan Xu lists twenty-four aesthetic necessities, a conceptualisation which exerted a strong influence on later generations of guqin players. The score was frequently reprinted and so spread quickly.

The earliest surviving version of this score is a block-printed edition from 1673. This has been reproduced in the Qinpu Jicheng (Beijing 1982). Comparing the Leiden score with that of 1673 we find that in the Leiden version the above mentioned essay, Xishan Qin Kuan, is inserted as the final volume of a set of four, while in the 1673 edition it was placed after the introduction. Introducing the Leiden score is another essay, San Han Peng Shisheng Qing Lin Fu. Peng Shisheng, a contemporary of Xu, published an edition of this score towards the end of Xu's life. But, the quality of its printing was poor, and all copies seem to have gradually disappeared. The Leiden score is well printed on good paper, so it is unlikely to be a surviving copy of Peng's early edition. More conceivably, it dates from the mid or late Qing Dynasty. Other than this, the Leiden score and that of 1673 are very similar.

Van Gulik's collection includes two Japanese printed scores, the Donggao Qinpu and the Yutang Cangshu Qinpu (Chinese romanisation only given). The former was frequently reprinted, that edition best known in China being one prepared by Suzuki Ryū in 1771. The Buddhist Abbot Togo Zenji (1639-96), originally known as Jiang Xingchou, went to Japan in 1677 and taught the Chinese guqin and its repertoire to several Japanese musicians. His pupils added newly-composed qin pieces and songs to the existing repertoire to form the Donggao Qinpu. The edition now in Leiden was
produced in 1827 by Kojima Yoshi and comprises a total of forty-eight songs by Togo and his Japanese pupils. Van Gulik himself researched Abbot Togo, writing a book about him entitled *Dongguo Xinyue Shenshi Zhiuan* whilst working in Japan.

The author of the other Japanese *qin* score in van Gulik's collection, the *Yutang Cangshu Qinpu*, was Uragami Gyokodō (1742-1818), himself taught by a pupil of Togo. Uragami often sighed to *qin* enthusiasts, "Chinese *qin* songs do not sound good to Japanese ears." By this he meant that they were not suited to Japanese tastes, and so Uragami provided twelve of his own *qin* songs which used Japanese language instead of Chinese. He also supplemented *guqin* fingering technique, recognising the importance of fingering in the production of notes of different timbres. He used the mark "/" to show a sideways positioning of the right hand plucking finger, "//" to show a level position, """ for a short pause and """ for a longer pause. This score was completed by Uragami in 1791.

**FRIENDSHIP WITH OTHER QIN PLAYERS**

Not incorporated in the numbers given above of manuscript and printed scores in the Leiden collection are a number of additional items, those presented to van Gulik by other *guqin* players. Each of these manuscripts and scores has the ink seal of the musician who donated it to van Gulik, as well as one of the various seals owned by van Gulik himself. (He renamed his study each time he moved and had a new seal cut.) An interesting example is the volume *Hui Qin Shikao*, given in 1946 by Wang Mengshu as van Gulik prepared to leave China. This book records the first national meeting of *qin* players (1920), and is a valuable historical document. Zha Fuxi also presented van Gulik with a copy of the *qin* piece *Oulu Wangji* and with a *qin* song collection called *Kai Gu Yin*. These pieces were copied by Zha Fuxi himself, the songs in 1940 from an original in Dayong, Hunan Province and are an example of the Shu school of *qin* performance.6

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6 Since these pieces are little performed by contemporary *qin* players, I have recently recorded them and one of the *qin* songs (with the vocalist Huang Bai). A compact disk (Auvidis B6765: Paris, 1992) is now available.
CONCLUSION
Van Gulik's collection contains some rare and valuable scores, most notably the Longyin Guan Qinpu. Much material in this collection is worthy of more detailed examination. There are both Japanese and Chinese scores, van Gulik's assignments to both countries allowing him the opportunity to assemble a wide range of sources. It should also be remembered that his Qin scores comprise only a small part of his total collection. In many respects, van Gulik appears to have been the archetypal Chinese scholar, his professional life as an official counterbalanced by a multiplicity of artistic and intellectual pursuits, all taken to a high standard. Not only are van Gulik's scores and other books deserving of more thorough research, they also form a fitting memorial to this important figure in Dutch sinology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
My thanks are extended to the Board of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research for inviting me to Leiden for eight months in 1991 and to the Foundation for the Advancement of the Cultural Relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and China for subsidising my research there. Antoinet Schimmelpenninck and Frank Kouwenhoven generously provided me with much help as well as accommodation in their own home. Mrs Shui Shifang kindly consented to be interviewed, and Dr Joyce Wu and the other staff of the Library of the Sinological Institute at Leiden University deserve my warmest gratitude. In Shanghai, Christopher Evans and Jonathan Stock offered a number of helpful comments on the first draft of this paper.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE
Ms Dai's original article is intended for a mainly Chinese audience of Qin specialists, who would be familiar with the various scores and persons she mentions. In this translation I have, in consultation with Ms Dai, taken the liberty of amplifying some of her references and excising or abridging some of her discussion of various ideographs, in order to make her main points more accessible to general readers. For specialists, the original Chinese article was published in Yin Yue Yishu the Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, (Helan cuanjiande guqinpu yu Gao Luopei, no.2, 1992, pp.67–71).

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Da Qing Jiaqing Jiwei</td>
<td>大清嘉庆己未</td>
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<td>冬月历城毛式郁拜稿</td>
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<td>guqin</td>
<td>古琴</td>
<td>Chinese seven-stringed zither</td>
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<td>Guanshan Yue</td>
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<td>fanzipu</td>
<td>减字谱</td>
<td>guqin tablature</td>
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7 A catalogue of parts of van Gulik's collection has been published, and a microfiche set of the qin (and other music scores) is available from the Inter Documentation Centre bv, Leiden.
Mao Zong zhi yin
毛宗之印 ‘Mao Zong’s seal’ – marking on the Longyin Guan Qinpu

Meihua San Nong
＜美花三弄＞ famous guqin solo

qin
琴 (see guqin)

qinpu
琴谱 qin score

Qiu Feng Ci
＜秋风辞＞ composition found in the Mei’an Qinpu

Shimeng Zhai
＜诗梦斋＞ score prepared by Ye Shimeng

Ye Shimeng (1863-1937) 叶诗梦 van Gulik’s principal qin teacher

Yue Lian Bieshu chao
蹩蓬别墅抄 ‘Copied by Yue Lian in his study’ – annotation on the Longyin Guan Qinpu

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1969c ‘Helan Gao Luopei 3’ (Holland’s van Gulik 3), in Zhuanji Wenxue 14/1, pp. 37-42.

Kangxi

Mao Chenglin, Ed.
1926 Xu Licheng Xian Zhi (Licheng County Register Continued), Scroll 39. Licheng: Licheng Xian Zhiju.

Wang Shizhen
1697 Canwei Ji (The Silk-Tail Collection).

Van Gulik, Robert

Xie Xiaoping

Xu Lisun
APPENDIX – A LIST OF VAN GULIK’S QINSORES

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9. Qinshu Cunmu  
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Zhou Qingsun  
1914  
6 Vol.

10. Qin Xue Congshu  
< 琴学丛书 >  
Yang Zongji  
1913-1919  
36 Vol.

11. Qin Xue Rumen  
< 琴学入门 >  
Chang He  
1864  
2 Vol.

12. Song Feng Ge Qinpu  
< 松风阁琴谱 >  
Zhuang Zhenfeng  
1677  
2 Vol.

13. Weiyi Yan Muzhi Ding  
< 微言秘旨订 >  
Yin Zhixian  
After 1692  
2 Vol.

14. Wu Zhi Zhai Qinpu  
< 五知斋琴谱 >  
Zhou Lufeng  
1737  
8 Vol.

15. Yutang Cangshu Qinpu  
< 玉堂藏书琴谱 >  
Uragami Gyuokodō  
1791  
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16. Ziyuantang Qinpu  
< 自远堂琴谱 >  
Wu Kang  
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III. PRINTED SCORE SHEETS

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A DISCUSSION OF TWO SHANGHAI WORK SONGS

Haozi – Working Cries
Turned into Art

HUANG BAI
(Shanghai Conservatory, China)

Translated by Antoinet Schimmelpenninck

Laodong haozi 劳动号子, also simply called haozi 号子, are the musical cries and shouts of Chinese labourers. Haozi regulate the pace of work and help the workers to endure great physical effort. They are more than just functional tools to facilitate monotonous work, since they often require considerable vocal talent and a superb sense of timing. Professor Huang Bai, a teacher of folk song at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, grew up amidst the sounds of work songs in rural Jiangsu, and later started analyzing them. She briefly introduces the genre, reflects on her own experience with singers of haozi, and discusses two particular examples from Shanghai.

When I think of how I developed a proper understanding of laodong haozi, I realize that this occurred in various stages in my life. I was born in 1939 in the countryside of Jiangsu Province. In my early childhood I had ample opportunity to hear local people sing all kinds of folk songs, notably during work. It was peasants, fishermen, boatmen and labourers involved in a variety of jobs who produced these songs, and they often referred to the process of singing as ‘da’ or ‘hearing haozi’ or ‘han’ or ‘shouting’ work songs. I will never forget the deep impression which haozi made on me at the time. I was strongly attracted by the singing of the workmen and deeply moved when these big, burly men demonstrated the power and expressiveness of their rough voices.

In 1945 I moved to Shanghai with my parents, where I was again confronted with haozi. This time it was the urban repertoire of transport workers and construction workers which I came to know.

In the early 1950s many types of physical labour in China, in the fields of transport and house building for example, were gradually mechanized, and the opportunities for hearing the songs accompanying the work became fewer. By the 1960s, it had already become unusual to hear them, but they could still be heard in certain situations.

In 1958, while I was studying at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the school was extending its classroom buildings. This was a particularly important occasion for me to widen my understanding of haozi. I could now hear these songs all around me on the Conservatory grounds.
In this period, it was normal for Conservatory students to receive a certain amount of labour training, and we were given the opportunity, once a week, to participate in the building activities of the Conservatory. While the construction workers taught me how to pound the earth, I began to realize, for the first time, that work songs — in this case *dahang haozi* 打夯号子, pounding songs — were not just sung for fun, but were absolutely essential to facilitate and to help regulate the work. Only then did I begin to grasp the actual functions of *haozi*. This also helped me to comprehend more fully their artistic nature.

**DOCKWORKERS IN SHANGHAI**

In the same period, we students also occasionally went down to Shanghai harbour to participate in transport work. I remember that we used wheelbarrows to move all kinds of small objects. No *haozi* were sung to support that, but on one occasion aged dockworkers agreed to organize a special performance for us, in which they re-enacted the work as they used to do it in the old days. They demonstrated how they had done everything by handpower, transporting heavy loads on poles. They sang a whole series of dockworkers’ *haozi* to accompany their performance.

I was impressed by the music — indeed, by the whole event. It made me even more acutely aware of the artistic value of these songs and of the wonderful creativity of the transport workers.

In 1963, I began work at the Shanghai Conservatory as a teacher and researcher of Chinese folk songs. I took the opportunity to collect and analyze *laodong haozi*, and I also studied and analyzed various folk songs closely related to *haozi*. In the spring of 1983 a delegation of the 601st brigade of the 6th division of the Shanghai Transport Company visited our school and provided a fresh incentive to my studies. The people

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*Dockworkers in Shanghai.*
of the brigade asked the Conservatory to co-operate in making a recording of the repertoire of gang bang haozi 夺棒号子 (carrying songs) of some of their aged workers, in order to preserve and document the tradition for future generations. This inspired me to explore the whole subject even further.

In this paper I propose to introduce, very briefly, the general principles of haozi, and to discuss and to analyze two work songs in particular. First, let me concentrate on some functional aspects of the songs.

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS
When people are engaged in physical labour they put more energy into breathing and moving their bodies than when they are at rest. Naturally, both physical effort and the process of breathing need to be controlled somehow. During work involving repetitive movements over a longer period of time, people will automatically adjust their breathing and their movements to the rhythm of the work. They may also feel inclined to produce rhythmic cries, which accentuate – or even regulate – the pace of their labour. This is how work cries come into being.

In work carried out by a group, such work cries may actually serve as commands: they coordinate the rhythmic movements of a whole group. In addition, they are a welcome source of distraction, helping workers to endure great physical effort and to relieve the monotony of the work. But haozi are often more than just simple ‘cries’ or ‘commands’. Workers use them to express their feelings, to keep their spirits up, and to comfort themselves. In the process, their cries and commands are turned into singing. Musicologists regard haozi as an important folk song category, an art form in its own right, deserving close study.

From antiquity to the present day the working masses of China, like those in other parts of the world, have developed and passed on their work songs through oral transmission from one generation to the next. In the course of time, and notably in the 20th century, many kinds of physical labour have been mechanized. In China, a wide variety of laodong haozi lost their practical functions as a consequence. They retained significance only as part of a traditional heritage of folk art, a heritage documented and laid down in regional and national folk song anthologies. But even today it is still possible in China to hear people singing laodong haozi.¹

For a better understanding of the musical style and structure of haozi, let me discuss two particular examples from Shanghai. The first one is a gangbang haozi (a specific kind of carriers’ song, see Ex.1), the second one a dahang haozi (an earth-pounding song). Sound recordings have been made of both of these songs.

¹ When Professor Huang Bai presented the text of this paper at the CHIME meeting, 27 September 1991, in Geneva, she demonstrated a video tape with splendid examples of various kinds of laodong haozi, as sung in 1985 by fishermen of the Qidong region in Jiangsu province. The tape was produced by staff members of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
Ex. 1. Excerpt from a particular Gangbang haozi: Dandang gangbang, sung by two pole carriers.
CARRIER’S SONGS

Transport workers used to know specific songs which accompanied specific types of work. The gangbang haozi was just one of many kinds of transport haozi popular in the past. It was sung while moving heavy loads on poles. This kind of work was particularly strenuous. One worker alone was expected to carry loads of 100 to 125 kg on his back; this was called gang hao 抬杠 (‘lifting a parcel’). Two men working together were expected to carry loads of up to 250 kg. They used a stout bamboo pole two metres long to which the load was attached with a thick hemp rope. The situation of two men carrying a load on a pole was called dandang gangbang 单扛(挡), (‘single, stout carrying pole’). The gangbang haozi could be sung by two workers on either end of a pole, but also by whole groups, depending on the number of men needed to lift a weight. Loads of more than 2,000 kg were transported by as many as sixteen people, using eight carrying poles. The songs were usually in two parts – two soloists or two groups – sung alternately.

Labourers wanting to join the ranks for this kind of work were expected not only to be very strong, but also had to have musical talent because the singing of haozi was viewed as an absolutely essential aspect of the work. The songs faithfully reflected the various stages of the process of carrying a load. They accompanied the carrying from beginning to end. Usually, a gangbang haozi had the following parts:

- qijian 拎肩 (‘lift on shoulders’): sung when the load was lifted.
- kuabu 快步 (‘fast pace’): sung during transport under normal conditions.
- manbu 慢步 (‘slow pace’): sung while walking on a slope or in a narrow space.
- luojiàn 乐肩 (‘lowering from shoulders’): sung when the load was put down.

The lyrics of carrying songs normally consisted of meaningless syllables, cries like hei ya ho or yo ho hei. Ex.1 shows a transcription of part of a particular gangbang haozi. It was recorded at the Shanghai Conservatory, 10 April 1983, and sung by two men of the Shanghai Heavy Transport Company. The performance was a reconstruction of the way in which this haozi used to be sung in former days, the practice having been abandoned in the 1950s.

This particular fragment is called dandang gangbang haozi, (‘single stout carrying pole work song’). As can be seen in the transcription, there are three introductory bars in flexible rhythm, after which the music continues at a fast pace (at A). Roughly speaking, the whole song can be divided into three sections: (A) fast, (B) slow and (C) fast, corresponding to the changing pace of the two pole carriers. The fast sections are in 3/4 rhythm. This does not mean that the workers were actually waltzing while carrying their load! We will presently see how the rhythm of the song functions.

As I mentioned already, there are usually two parts in a gangbang haozi, sung either by two people or by two groups of people. The first man or the first group walks at the back of the pole, the other in front. Ex.1 shows two solo singers, but in analyzing this example we should realize that the structure of the music and the way in which the singing corresponds to their movements would be no different in the case of two groups. The first man sings a musical motif which rises; the second man responds with a related falling motif. A carrying song will normally consist of a whole series of such pairs of motifs rising and falling. These motifs are not mere repetitions: they can be varied and changed in the course of the song, as the example shows. Moreover, there is consistent overlapping between the two parts. The first man has not completely finished his motif when the second man joins in and vice versa. The interlocking of the two parts affects the rhythm of the song. Whereas the rhythm of each individual part can be interpreted as a double beat, the resulting rhythm is a triple beat.

Ex.2 shows, in a schematic way, how this is achieved. It also demonstrates how these interlocking rhythms are reflected in the way the carriers walk. They might be said to march in 6/4 step, (subdivided into three times 2/4 to sustain a march rhythm). But
they march with a phase difference: whenever one man brings down his left foot, the other brings down his right foot, and so forth. In effect, it helps them to keep their balance and gives their movements a marked sense of agility. Naturally, the overall cadence and tempo are flexible and may change according to the circumstances.

**CARRIERS’ SONGS AS A FORM OF ART**

The pitch range of melodies in carriers’ songs is not very wide, because the physical strain during the work is enormous. In fact, the kernel of the melodic material consists of no more than the notes gong, shang and jiao in the Chinese pentatonic scale — two successive major seconds. Still, the music can be quite powerful in expression. It is full of dynamic contrast and it can be very rich in ornamentation. Let us briefly consider the meaning of these songs as a form of art.

It is only when we think of the actual working conditions of transport workers in China in the first half of this century that we begin to realize the full importance of haozi, not only as cries to support the work or as a source of distraction, but indeed as an essential means of survival. Let us not forget that the music was often born from deep pain and agony. Until the 1940s transport workers in Shanghai suffered enormously under the heavy strains of the work. They moved thousands of tons of material by manpower alone. In return, they received outrageously low wages. The money barely sufficed to buy them a dry crust of bread a day. The music probably helped them to endure and to bear it all. They were able to express intense emotions in these songs. Today, their music conjures up an artistic image of workers with an indomitable spirit; men of truly gigantic stature.

**EARTH POUNDING SONGS**

An entirely different genre is the dahang haozi 打夯号子 or earth-pounding song. Dahang haozi normally support the work of pounding the earth, as a preparation for house building. Traditionally, this pounding was done with a very special tool, a pounder (hang 劈) constructed of wood and metal. It had handles on top with many thick hemp ropes attached to it, the ropes serving to raise and hold the pounder. Two to six people were needed to handle it as it could weigh up to more than a hundred kilograms.

Ex. 4 shows a musical transcription of a dahang haozi which used to be very popular in the Shanghai region and surrounding districts. At one time it was so widely known that children in the streets liked to imitate the movements of the pounding and to sing.
musical phrases from the song just for fun. I actually did this myself when I was a child. Pounding the earth is monotonous work. Consequently, the rhythm of the dahang haozi is regular and moderately fast, but there is one exception. When the pounder is lifted for the first time, a considerable effort is required. This offers an opportunity for the lead singer to sing a somewhat more elaborate opening line in free rhythm, usually focusing on a long drawn-out note (cf. the first bar of Ex.4). The ensuing regular rhythm sets the pace of the pounding and is the most typical feature of the song. The pounder mostly comes down once every two bars, on the first beat of each second bar (to the words hang yo, sung while the workers release their breath). Rhythmic monotony is unavoidable, but it is compensated to some extent by the variety of the words of the song. Dahang haozi are actually sung to words, not just to meaningless syllables. They are often in antiphonal form, with a lead singer and a chorus. The chorus repeats a short refrain, in this case the cry: hang yo! The relatively simple nature of the work enables the lead singer to concentrate on the lyrics, while also offering him the opportunity to pay more attention to the musical quality of his solo part. He can vary and embellish the melodic flow of the song if he is a good singer.

This particular dahang haozi is based on Shi'erzhi taizi "Twelve tables"), a popular enumeration poem sung to all sorts of folk tunes in the Shanghai area. It is not only used in the context of construction work but can be heard on different occasions, even just for fun. The first verse starts with a ‘first table’, the second verse with a ‘second table’ and so on, while the rest of each verse lists a whole series of names, usually the names of well-known Chinese opera characters or heroes in historical tales. The meaning of the ‘tables’ is unclear.

If this song is sung during earth pounding, it will invariably remind the workers of the operas and tales, which are well-known to them. They may have pleasant and nostalgic memories of these – stories and familiar opera scenes, which they have perhaps seen or heard a long time ago, in a street theatre or during temple fairs. It will usually invigorate their spirits and help them to forget the monotony of the work.

![Ex.3. Structure of Da hang haozi. A and B are the main themes; a, b, c, d and e are melodic subdivisions.](image-url)
Ex.4. Dahang haozi.
"Shi'er zhi taizi"

The pitch range of the dahang haozi in Ex.4 is remarkably wide: there are as many as three voice registers – high, middle and low. The melody rises and falls continually, often with leaps bigger than a second, sometimes with a downward modulation of a fifth. This enlivens the melody and gives it sufficient variety and contrast. Ex.3 is a schematic illustration of the structure of the song, showing its essential phrases and its modulatory turning points. It also sheds light on the actual complexity of the song, and it demonstrates that the singers are real artists with a truly admirable sense of timing.²

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the fisherfolk of the Qidong region, the workers of the 601st brigade of the 6th division of the Shanghai Transport Company and the labourers at Shanghai harbour and in Qingpu. Thanks are also extended to members of the Shanghai Conservatory of music, the Shanghai Qinzhou Yishuguan, the Culture Bureau of Qingpu and all those cooperating in the work of research, collecting and recording of the songs discussed in this article. My thanks are also extended to the Sinological Institute and the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research (CHIME) for inviting me to Leiden for eight months in 1991 and to the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for subsidising my research there. Finally, I would like to thank Antoinet Schimmelpenning and Frank Kowentoven for translating and editing this article.

² Professor Huang Bai taught this song to her audience at the CHIME meeting in Geneva.
POLYPHONY IN JAPANESE MUSIC

Rokudan for example

ANDREAS GUTZWILLER
(Basel Music Academy, Switzerland)

Traditional polyphony is rare in Japanese music. There are a number of isolated examples, found in gagaku (music associated with the imperial court), no theatre and the bourgeois chamber music of the Edo period. Andreas Gutzwiler looks at one conspicuous example from the Edo period – Rokudan, by far the most popular piece of traditional Japanese music of all time. He analyses a two-part version of the piece, for koto (bridged zither) and shamisen (lute). The frequent tonal independence of the two parts suggests that the aim of this type of polyphony is not to form a new musical whole but to maintain a certain degree of separation of the parts.

Any paper dealing with polyphony in Japanese music has to begin by stating that Japanese music is homophonic. Some Japanese musicologists who have written on the aesthetics of Japanese music, most notably Kikkawa Eishi (1984), even maintain that the essence of Japanese music is not only homophonic but monophonic in the strictest sense, i.e. it has to be sung by a single voice or played by a single instrument. According to this view, tone-colour is one of the highest aesthetic categories and the appreciation of tone-colour is only possible in monophonic-soloistic music.

Traditional polyphony is indeed very rare in Japanese music. Correspondingly rare is research on the subject. Of course, there is no theory of polyphonic composition and what can be said about Japanese polyphony has to be deduced from the few examples which nevertheless exist. This paper looks at one composition, Rokudan no Shirabe, as an example of this type of music. Rokudan no Shirabe means ‘Piece in six sections’. The two-part version of this piece is known as Rokudan hon-te-kaede, ‘[Piece in] six sections, main part [and] added part’.

ROKUDAN IN THE CONTEXT OF JAPANESE POLYPHONY
Despite the basically homophonic character of Japanese music there are a number of isolated examples of polyphony, found in the musical genres of gagaku, the music of the no theatre, and the bourgeois chamber music of the Edo period. Gagaku, the instrumental music associated with the imperial court is an exception to the general rule in that it is played by an orchestra (wind, string, and percussion instruments). The orchestra and its music were introduced from the mainland between 600 and 800 AD. There is reason to assume that the music was originally homophonic,
or nearly homophonic, when it was introduced from China. The music as it is now played shows what seems to be a secondary polyphony originating from a long and complicated process of adaption and simplification of individual instrumental parts which thereby began to differ from each other: a case of complexity through uncoordinated simplification.

Polyphony in the music of the no theatre originates mainly from the independence of the parts of the flute nôkan and that of the singers and through the loose and polyrhythmic connection of the parts for the singers and the percussion instruments.

The most highly-developed polyphony can be found in the chamber music of the Edo period. This music for voice, the koto zither, and the shamisen lute (sangen), is basically homophonic. The vast majority (approx. 98%) consists of songs accompanied by one or both string instruments, always played by the singer. Purely instrumental music is rare. These pieces (jiuta or utamono) were originally composed to be sung to the accompaniment of only the shamisen. At the end of the 17th century the koto zither was added to the shamisen. The koto part, however, became more and more independent from the shamisen part in the 18th century, a development that led to the genre of kaede shiki sôkyoku at the beginning of the 19th century and thus to the climax of this line of development. In the first half of the 19th century many new pieces were composed simultaneously with parts for shamisen and koto. They were always composed by two people: as a rule the composer of the voice/shamisen part was considered the composer of the piece while the composer of the koto part was considered a mere collaborator. These collaborator-composers were specialists for the composition of kaede, the 'added parts'. One of the most prolific specialist was Yaezaki Kenyô (d. 1848) who worked for most of the famous composers of the first half of the 19th century in Kyôto.

It might be mentioned in passing that professional musicians of koto and shamisen were all blind. ‘Composing’ therefore did not have the connotation of ‘writing down, notating’ music. Composing and teaching was a non-literal process. However, the most popular pieces suited for amateurs were occasionally notated and published.

THE ORIGIN OF ROKUDAN HONTE-KAEDÉ

The origins of Rokudan no Shirobe are not entirely clear. Usually it is regarded as a composition by Yatsuhashi Kenyô (1614 - 1685). However, there has been doubt about the authorship of Yatsuhashi. Instead Kitajima Kenyô (d. 1690), a student of Yatsuhashi, has been suggested as the author of Rokudan (NOD: 1031). A detailed analysis of this piece and other danmono, as this genre is called, can be found in Adriaansz 1973.

Rokudan was first mentioned in the Busô Gafushû music collection of 1755. Rokudan is one of the rare purely instrumental compositions for koto. Since these compositions are outside the mainstream of koto music, they are of relatively minor importance (tsukemono, ‘added pieces’). Rokudan however, became very popular. Perhaps this is the reason why a second part (kaede) for shamisen was later added to Rokudan. The composer of the kaede was Kuniyama Kôtô from Kyôto whose dates of birth and death are unknown. His name is mentioned in the records of the musicians’ guild in 1768, thus we can assume that he worked in the latter half of the 18th century (NOD: 639).

Although the piece is of minor importance in the koto repertoire, Rokudan is by far the most popular piece of traditional Japanese music of all time and has been transcribed and arranged for almost every instrument imaginable, Japanese and Western.

It is interesting to note that the two-part version of Rokudan is performed rather infrequently. I have heard it played only once in the version for two shamisen. There are, however, transcriptions for all combinations of the traditional instruments of Japanese traditional chamber music, koto, shamisen and shakuhachi.
THE MELODIC MOVEMENT OF HONTE, DAN 1 – 3

Rokudan no Shirabe means ‘piece in 6 sections’. These sections (dan) are of equal length, and depending on how one counts, a dan has 52 or 104 beats. A very short introduction of 2 (4) beats called kandō precedes the beginning of dan 1.

The scale of the piece is the so-called insen on G, ascending g - a♭ - c - d - f - g, descending g - e♭ - d - c - a♭ - g. Melodically, however the dominant D plays such a prominent role in Rokudan (most melodic lines and most of the dan ending on D) that one is tempted to consider the scale as a sort of inverted insen, ascending d - f - g - a♭ - c - d, descending d - c - a♭ - g - e♭ - d (Figure 1).

Fig. 1.

insen on G

inverted insen on D

Only dan 3 and 6 end on the tonic G. Rokudan, therefore, is divided very clearly into two parts, dan 1 - 3 and dan 4 - 6. It is also obvious that dan 1 - 3 are modelled on the same pattern while dan 4 - 6 are constructed in a much looser fashion. In fact, the first 3 dan seem to be a model for danmono in general. In the piece Hachidan (‘Piece in eight sections’), also a composition ascribed to Yatsuhashi, the first 3 dan are so closely related to the first 3 dan of Rokudan that the two pieces are sometimes performed together. In this version Hachidan serves as a kaede to Rokudan.

For the purpose of this paper we will consider only the first part of the piece (dan 1 - 3). We will first look at the original part (honte). To make possible a fast and uncomplicated overview of the melodic movement we will use contour lines of the melody (Figures 2a, 2b, 2c). In these graphs the y-axis represents the pitch, the x-axis shows the time in half-beats.

Fig. 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d.

dan 1
Honte

dan 2
Honte

dan 3
Honte

Rokudan 1-3
Honte
The 3 *dan* are quite clearly made up of 3 parts each: Part 1 beats 1 - 44, part 2 to beat 150 approximately and part 3 to the end of the *dan*. How closely they are related to each other (especially in the first half of the *dan*) we can see from the superimposed contour lines of *dan* 1 - 3 (Figure 2d).

**THE MELODIC MOVEMENT OF KAEDE VERSUS HONTE**
Looking at the graphs showing a filtered (smoothed) picture of the melodic lines of *honte* and *kaede* of the first 3 *dan* (Figures 3a, 3b, 3c), we can observe that the two parts seem to be rather independent of each other. Again the first parts of the 3 *dan* show some similarities. We can observe a tendency towards counter-movement: around beat 50 where the *kaede* crosses the *honte*. Only the middle of *dan* 1 shows little polyphony.

Fig.3a, 3b, 3c.

![Graphs showing melodic lines of *honte* and *kaede* for *dan* 1, 2, and 3.]

One important element of the conduct of voices is that they seem to drift apart quite far but then suddenly fall together in unison or in octave parallels on either the dominant or the tonic of the *in sen* scale.

**OCTAVE TRANSPositions**
When however we look at the means by which the independence of the two voices in *dan* 1 is achieved we can see that what is responsible for the independence is a simple but clever use of octave transposition. If, as an experiment, we transpose the *kaede* by an octave in such a way that it is always in the same octave as the *honte*, we get the picture as presented in figures 4a, 4b, 4c (next page). Most of the counter-movements disappear, especially in the first *dan*. In *dan* 2 and 3 *honte* and *kaede* are more independent. The result of this experiment in no way sounds like a *tour de force*. In fact it avoids some rather awkward leaps in the original *kaede*.
ZURE
The only technique of multi-part composing that traditionally has its own technical term is zure. Zure is a rhythmic displacement of one voice against the other by a beat or a fraction of a beat. It is interesting to note that Kikkawa (1984: 173) suggests that this technique was applied in order better to distinguish the two voices because they are no longer superimposed one upon the other. This suggests that the technique has its origin not in the goal to create true polyphony but to maintain a separation of the parts. The zure-technique can be observed frequently in Rokudan. Here are some examples:

Fig. 5a, 5b, 5c.

<table>
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A simple example is Figure 5a where the *kaede* precedes the *honte* by a quarter note. An example that is a bit more complicated is Figure 5b since the direction of the displacement between the two parts is reversed in the second measure.

If we follow the idea that the *sure*-technique has its origin in the desire to maintain independence or separation of the parts then the goal of this form of Japanese polyphony is not to create a new quality in music by combining two or more voices to form a new polyphonic whole, but to combine two voices in such a way that they may occasionally form a simple polyphony but basically stay independent and have to be listened to separately. If it is allowed to use a new technical term then the aim is not symphony but *diaphony* where the parts are conceived rather independently and have to be listened to separately.

In fact there are numerous examples in *Rokudan* where *honte* and *kaede* are absolutely independent of each other. For instance the end of *dan* 2, where it is difficult to find an organized relationship between the two parts. They drift apart, even in key, and come together on the very last note (Figure 5c).

**POLYTONALITY**
In Figure 5c the tonality becomes very unstable (second measure: f in the *honte*, e⁰ in the *kaede*). In fact, we can observe frequent deviations in tonality between *honte* and *kaede*. In *dan* 1, for instance, in measure 28 the *honte* stays in the *insen* on G while the *kaede* briefly modulates to *insen* in C (indicated by the first quarter d⁰). In measures 51–52 the *honte* remains again in the *insen* on G, the *kaede* modulates to *insen* on D (f in the *honte*, e⁰ in the *kaede*).

A very good example of frequent tonal independence between two parts in this type of Japanese polyphony is another *kaede* for *Rokudan* composed by Mitsuzaki Kengyō (d. 1853) in the first half of the 19th century. In this composition the *honte* of *Rokudan* is used as an introduction to the *kumiuta A kikaze no Kyoku* ('Autumn Wind'). Here the greatest independence between parts is achieved: in measure 6 Akikaze modulates to *insen* on D while *Rokudan honte* stays on G, and it is only in measure 21–22 that the two parts give up their independence and meet in unison.

**CONCLUSIONS**
The aim of this paper has been to investigate patterns of polyphony in Japanese traditional chamber music. To this end we have dealt with the *Rokudan* composition and its various ‘added parts’ with the understanding that the techniques employed are representative for the polyphony of this genre of music. We have seen that the means of generating a second voice of the *honte* – the two parts were never conceived simultaneously – are *sure*, rhythmical displacement, and the use of octave transpositions. The frequent tonal independence, where the two voices play in different keys, suggests that the aim of this type of polyphony is not to form a new musical whole but to maintain a certain degree of separation of the parts; diaphony not symphony seems to be the goal of this musical form.*

* The presentation of this paper at the ESEM meeting 1991 in Bossey was followed by a concert where various combinations of *Rokudan honte* / *Rokudan kaede* / Hachidan / *A kikaze no Kyoku* were played on *shakuhachi* by the author, Ueli Derendinger and Jürg Zürnühle. A tape with these recordings and the musical examples quoted in this paper is available from the author.
A score or the first dan of *Rokudan* and all the possible *kaede* (continued on next page).

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF ‘GOZE’ IN JAPAN

Blind Female Musicians on the Road

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The goze, blind itinerant female singers who accompany themselves on the shamisen, a three-stringed long-necked lute, belong to the large group of wandering performers and street artists who characterized Japanese folk culture for many centuries until recent times. Ingrid Fritsch discusses the guild-like organizations of these wandering singers, the function of their music in Japanese society and the role of the blind.

Many of the so-called geinin-arts, outdoor performing folk arts, were originally religious in nature and were derived from popular beliefs and rituals rooted in magic. The transformation to (more or less) purely entertaining and theatrical arts was gradual. Nevertheless, ‘the belief of the spectators in the power of these performers has remained strong even to recent times’ (Raz 1983:37).

In the present paper some elements of the organization of the goze are briefly described, shedding light on the function and functioning of guild-like musical organizations in general as well as on the function of music in Japanese society and the role of the blind. Of course these short remarks can only be introductory and tentative.

Nothing is known in detail about the early historical development of the goze, who have probably existed since the Japanese Middle Ages (i.e. Muromachi period: 1392-1573). Originally active throughout the country, from the Meiji period (1868-1912) on their organizations were only to be seen in the northwestern part of the main island. After flourishing at the beginning of this century their number decreased rapidly during and after the second World War. Today only seven goze remain. They live in a home for old blind people. The youngest is 69 years old, the oldest is 91.

For the research material for this study I referred mostly to written documents which were either transmitted within the organization itself or recorded by outsiders in the 18th or 19th century, and to field research done by Japanese folklorists, usually twenty or more years ago.

THE PROFESSION
First some words about the practice of the goze profession. The goze spent a large part of their life on the road. Even during the long winter months, when northwest Japan is
↑ Goze scene from Wakoku hyaku-onna ("Hundred Japanese Women"), a picture scroll from the late 17th century.

Photos: 1) Three goze at the beach of Futagawa, one of the ‘Fifty-three Stages of the Tōkaidō’ (colour print by Andō Hiroshige 1797-1858). 2) To the accompaniment of the shamisen, two Goze sing a short blessing called kadosuken. (From: Murata’s Goze-sama wa kieta, 1981, p.30.) 3) Goze often went in groups of three. (From: Murata’s Goze-sama wa kieta, ibid., p.105.)
covered in snow, they would leave their residences for long journeys, wandering from village to village to entertain the peasants. They often went in groups of three, one after another, forming a line. The woman at the head of the line was usually a tebiki or ‘hand-holder’. She was not blind. Her function was to help the goze with their housekeeping at home and to find their way on the journey. The tebiki were not musicians, that is, not being blind they were not taught by a goze master and thus were not fully recognized as goze. Usually they were the daughters of very poor peasants who had given them as infants to goze-houses.

Upon arrival in a village the goze first went to the goze-yado — the house in which they were to stay for the night — to leave their luggage. This luggage, which contained clothes and other necessities for a ‘concert tour’ of at least a few weeks (including a second shamisen), was carried on the back. Each goze carried about 15 kg.

After a short rest in the goze-yado, which was often a rich farmhouse in which the musicians found shelter every year, the goze would go from door to door in the village and play at the gates. To the accompaniment of the shamisen they sang a special type of very short blessing called kadozuke-uta (‘song sung while standing at the gate’). In return they received a small amount of rice or money. Then they announced the performance, which would take place at their lodging. In the evening the villagers would gather for the concert, which followed roughly the following sequence: first the goze, dressed in beautiful kimonos, announced danmono sections (old long epics in several parts) and kudoki (shorter ballads of a more recent origin, mostly telling a tragic love romance). This singing (called yado-uta), was meant as a form of payment for shelter and hospitality. Then a kind of musical request programme was performed during which the goze might receive small presents from the guests. The repertoire of the goze seems to have been incredibly wide: apart from their special domain of kadozuke-uta, danmono and kudoki they also knew parts of the narrative shamisen genres gidayū-bushi, iokiwa and kiyomoto, of the lyric genre nagauta and of course all categories of minyō (folk songs) up to the latest popular ditties. The following morning, after a long night of entertainment, the goze would start off for the next village.

Of course this brief outline of the goze profession is a very simplified, idealized version. The women did not always find shelter for the night, nor were they always well received. In addition — especially for young goze — it was difficult to avoid the attentions of young village men, an occurrence which resulted in severe punishment, even dismissal from the guild.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In order to explain the way in which the goze tried to cope with the impact of the outer society, I shall now briefly describe the organizational form of two different groups, the Nagaoka and the Takada Goze in the Niigata prefecture.

The nucleus of all goze organizations is a small group consisting of a master goze (called oyakata or kumi-gashira), her pupils and a tebiki. In Takada in 1901 there were 89 goze living in 17 houses. If the parents of a blind girl living anywhere within the sphere of activity of the Takada goze wanted their daughter to become a goze, then the child — usually at the age of about six to eight — had to be officially adopted by a master goze into her house in Takada. After seven years of irreproachable behaviour the girl would be awarded the rank of honkyoku and given permission to adopt a stage name. From now on she would be treated as an adult and called nesan (older sister) by younger disciples. After 10 years she would be allowed to take pupils herself, after 15 years she would be awarded the rank of chūro and after 27 years the rank of ichirō.

The headmistress (zamato) of the whole Takada guild was always the goze with the most experience — usually over 40 years.
In contrast, the organization of the Nagaoka-Goze was geographically much less centralized. The groups lived throughout the region of Chū-Etsu, which comprises several districts. When they were not travelling the pupils were allowed to stay with their parents if the master goze was not living too far away; this would mean that they had to pay for their lessons. Other disciples (so-called uchideshi) stayed with their teacher all the time, helping her in the house; some were also adopted. If the parents were rich, there was also the possibility that the master goze would visit the house of the pupil as long as the child was small. The apprenticeship lasted for twenty-one years. Afterwards the young goze normally went back to their mother homes to found a new group which would take the name of the village.

The large size of the Nagaoka-group, which around 1900 had about 400 members, may be due to this geographic decentralization. The headmistress (goze-gashira) called Yamamoto Goi lived in the main quarter in Nagaoka. The first Yamamoto Goi was considered to be the founder of the Nagaoka guild and all following headmistresses took that name. There have been six generations of Yamamoto Goi goze. In 1898 a special reform was instituted to strengthen further the administration and the moral behaviour of the members. In the head office in Nagaoka and in each of the 9 rural branch offices a paid vice-president and an office clerk were appointed. The office clerk, who did not belong to the goze guild, was not blind and did not have to be female.

WORSHIP AND MORAL CODES
Once a year among all goze organizations a Myōon-kyō meeting was held in honour of their common guardian deity Myōōten. Attendance was strictly obligatory and absence severely punished. In the case of the Takada and Nagaoka goze the meeting place was a temple. Other, smaller groups called a priest to the house of the headmistress. After the recitation of the sutra ‘Hannya-shingyō’ in front of an image of
the goddess, parts of the myth of origin and the guild's principles were read and the most gifted goze performed some songs. According to these writings, which are nearly identical in all organizations, the founder of the goze is the blind daughter of Emperor Saga (reigned 809-23). When she was seven years old she had a dream in which she was told that she was in fact a transformation of the god Shimogamo-Daimyōjin, who had taken her appearance out of mercy to the coming generations of the blind. From now on the princess was to rule over all blind women, descending to the common people and earning her living by the arts.

The Myō-onkō meetings were important in several respects: because punishments and commendations of members were announced in public it served to imbue the moral rules of the goze-society. One effective form of punishment was the prolongation of the training and a loss of social status in the group by the penalty of nen-otoshi: a degrading of the years of apprenticeship. It was a severe psychological punishment for a young woman who had studied for ten years suddenly to be treated like a child again, losing her stage name and being referred to as 'younger sister' by much younger girls. Often these goze had violated the guild law which stated that contact with men was strictly forbidden. A pregnant goze had to leave the group, but was allowed to come back if she agreed to give away the baby and to apologize in front of her master goze and the guild's headmistress. Another aspect of the Myō-onkō meetings was the distribution of new songs the goze had learned during their travels. When the formal part of the ceremony was over, they would have a meal, talk about their travels and sing new songs they had learned. Still another aspect of the Myō-onkō was the recitation of the guild rules and the legend of origin. This document, which was considered by the group members as historically authentic, served a twofold purpose: it convinced the members of the guild as well as the world outside the organization that the transformation of a Buddhist deity into the body of a blind noble person gave the goze a political and religious legitimacy with historically vested rights.

In fact, however, their social rank was very low, and they may even have belonged to the class of outcasts (hinin), as was the case with some other artists (see Nakayama 1976: 445). The goze developed two ways of legitimizing their existence: 1. by submitting to a strict organization with an extraordinarily severe musical education in order to be taken as seriously as other artisan guilds (shokunin); 2. by making a virtue of necessity, considering their blindness to be a divine stigma which invested them with a particular power and spiritual capacity. Each of the elements which characterizes a goze, i.e. blind, itinerant, female and the subsistance as a musician is, perhaps in all societies, strongly associated with magical connotations. Indeed, the goze were not regarded purely as entertainers by the peasants, but to some degree credited with a certain religious power: that meant, for example, that to drive a goze away would bring misfortune to the house and the harvest. In some regions their power was believed to be particularly effective on silkworms, who, as one of the goze told me, loved the sound of the shamisen so much, that they raised their heads when the goze approached.

The isolation of the guild from the rest of society, the long years of severe apprenticeship, the final initiation (which imitated the form of a wedding ceremony) and the prohibition of contact with men, in addition to ensuring the continued existence of the guild, had the correlative function of protecting the women and their magical qualities from the world around them.

THE ROLE OF THE BLIND

In conclusion, let me say some final words concerning the motives for entering the goze guild. A girl was impelled to become a goze simply because she was blind or had
a strongly reduced visual faculty. Her motive or that of her parents was purely practical and, at least at the time of the decision, did not imply the presence of outstanding musical talent. By becoming a goze she would become a viable member of her community rather than a useless burden.

A number of occupations have been traditionally reserved for blind people in Japan. The most prominent example is what was called the tōdō-za, a strictly organized nationwide guild which was officially recognized by the Tokugawa government. It included not only all male professional blind chamber musicians but also covered the fields of massage and Chinese medicine (acupuncture, moxa cautery). In fact licences for teaching biwa, shamisen, or koto music, a domain which is nowadays mostly dominated by women, were until the abolition of the tōdō-za in 1871 only given to blind men. In Kyūshū, the southern island of Japan, blind men can become mōshō, priests who recite buddhist sutras while accompanying themselves on the biwa. In the northern region, in Tōhoku, the profession of shamanistic medium (iitako) is, in some districts, the monopoly of blind women. In all these cases it is not so much a musical or religious calling that is of prime importance as simply the need to find a gainful occupation for otherwise ‘useless’ members of society.

Today, with improvements in medical care, compulsory education for blind people, the changing of religious attitudes and the introduction of radio and TV in the smallest mountain villages, the traditional professions for blind people, which enabled them to live an independent life, have been rendered meaningless. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper the last 7 goze are living in a home for old, blind people, but once a year they still have their Myōdōkō ceremony, offering their guardian deity, who is also out of work, a few songs.

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**GLOSSARY**

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CONSTRUCTIVE TECHNIQUES IN

Music for Chinese Two-Stringed Fiddles

JONATHAN P.J. STOCK
(Queen’s University, Belfast, UK)

This paper investigates the role played by various small-scale means of melodic variation in music for traditional Chinese two-stringed fiddles. Examples shall be drawn from ballad singing, instrumental ensemble and solo music as required. Apart from identifying and demonstrating variation techniques, the author also looks briefly at their theoretical and practical contexts within Chinese music.

Forms of two-stringed fiddle are widely used in many musical situations all over China. Although these fiddles may all be constructed and used differently, the music performed on many of them makes common use of a number of small-scale techniques of melodic construction and decoration. Since similar techniques are found in music for other Chinese instruments and the voice, it is hoped that an analysis of these techniques will have a broader relevance to the understanding of traditional Chinese music in general.

MELODIC OUTLINE
In the great majority of the traditional genres in which a fiddle is used, it is part of an ensemble which performs in a largely heterophonic style. Each performer simultaneously recreates the same general melodic outline in a manner suitable to the technical capabilities of his own instrument and in accordance with his own aesthetic

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1 The fieldwork which permitted this research to be undertaken was funded by the award of a British Council - China State Education Commission Studentship for the academic year 1989-90. My gratitude is due to these organisations, and to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, my host institution during this period.

2 One or more kind of fiddle is often found in the accompanying ensemble of a large number of local opera and ballad singing styles as well as in certain regional instrumental ensembles and the more recently created genres of the Chinese national instruments orchestra (see Han 1979), recital solos and screen sound-tracks. For a more detailed consideration of the diverse musical situations in which two-stringed fiddles are found in contemporary China see Stock 1991.
preferences. In group performances it would clearly be necessary for musicians to establish either a degree of structural consensus before beginning or at least a system of recognisable cues by which ensemble could be maintained throughout. On the other hand, in solo genres, such as street music performed by beggars, the player could work quite freely with his melodic material, combining it seemingly as his fancy dictates. The issues of musical cognition and communication in group pieces shall not be directly addressed here, however; these are major areas worthy of independent consideration elsewhere.

The means of small-scale melodic variation which are discussed have been referred to as constructive techniques because, as shall be seen below, it is through the employment of techniques such as these that the Chinese fiddle-player creates individual melodic realisations from musical outlines more generally applicable to a number of instruments and/or performance speeds. Before giving examples of each variation method, however, it is pertinent to begin by summarising the interrelated nature of musical mode and standard fingering patterns on two-stringed fiddles.

MODAL FINGERING PATTERNS

Modal fingering patterns are important to fiddle-players because they form the framework upon which the most basic small-scale variation techniques are erected. Several different tunings and modes are used in music for two-stringed fiddles. In contemporary practice, these modes are identified by the sol-fa pitch names to which the open strings are tuned, in each case a fifth apart. The following figure shows adapted fingering charts for two of the most commonly encountered modes in music for the fiddle erhu (see Figure 1).3

It may also be suggested that the form of transposable number notation widely used by contemporary fiddle-players, and other Chinese musicians, reinforces these modal fingering patterns in that, as it portrays relative rather than absolute pitch, it encourages performers to associate each modal degree with its potential fingering(s) and not as an absolute position on either of the instrument's strings.4

The parallel lines on each of the diagrams in Figure 1 represent the two erhu strings. Both strings have been marked with the pitches produced when the string is stopped in each approximate position. In the centre column of each diagram numerals show the standard fingering patterns traditionally employed in each particular mode. Sometimes one finger is expected to cover two notes—here marked with a short square bracket—and, generally, the different hand positions overlap by one note. As can clearly be seen, notes common to both modes (in this case, D, E, G and A) are performed with a different fingering in each.

The significance of this is that certain types of ornamentation, trills, mordents and various kinds of grace notes, the smallest means of melodic variation, tend to be associated with certain ergonomically-convenient finger movements. As the fingering used to perform, for example, the note d" is different in each mode, then it follows that

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3 The upper ranges of these charts represent theoretical possibilities which may be little used in certain traditional genres. However, on existing evidence, it is not possible to entirely discount the use of these higher notes by at least some traditional players. See, for example, the compositions of Abing, Sun Wenming and the huqin fiddle part of Rong Zhai's Xiumiao: Shisan Tao of 1814.

4 This system was invented by Chevé in France and transmitted to China via Japan in the early twentieth century. It relies upon use of the digits 1, 2, 3 etc. to represent do, re, mi etc. Absolute pitch is specified at the beginning of the piece and subsequently as necessary. Octave register is shown by superfixd or subfixed dots, one per octave above or below the standards register respectively. Metrical and rhythmic values are added much as in staff notation. This means of notation has largely replaced an indigenous system, known as gongchepu, which used a similarly transposable series of simple Chinese characters.
the decorative possibilities which may be applied to this d' also differ from one mode to another. Certain decorative patterns are also closely connected to changes or even potential changes of hand position. As the curly brackets in the very centre of the diagram make explicit, in each mode changes of hand position take place on different notes. These decorative patterns will thus tend to occur in different places in each mode.

![Diagram showing standard fingerings in two commonly encountered modes for erhu.](image)

**THE BAN STRUCTURAL PRACTICE**

The importance of the modal-fingering framework extends beyond the potential addition of trills and other decorations to the surface of a relatively fixed melody, however. The *ban* structure of much Chinese operatic and instrumental music is another area in which established modal-fingering patterns act as a limiting force. For those not readily familiar with the *ban* structure, it may be very briefly defined as being the metrical expansion or contraction of melodies to form respectively slower or faster versions of the same theme. The process of expansion may be likened to the accretion of different layers of ornamental notes between certain key pitches which remain in
metrically similar positions in most versions of a theme. Contraction suggests the stripping away of such decorative insertions. The use of a well-known example should make this clear (see Example 1 and also Thrasher 1985:243-4, 248-50).

Example 1. Illustration of three related melodies created under the ban structure.

Key

S – Key structural pitch (forming unchanging melodic skeleton)
R,r – reiteration or return after auxiliary decoration
E,e – escape note
A,a – auxiliary note
P,p – passing note
B,b – bridging note (octave transposed escape note)
O,o – octave transposed pitch (compared with Baban)
L – octave transposed passage
l – link note (leading to next phrase)
- – link passage

Capital letters take precedence over lower case letters
Underlined letters take precedence over non-underlined letters

In Example 1 three versions of a phrase of the tune Baban are compared: a basic version of the melody in its simplest form, an expanded version named Xiao Liuban and a further expanded version known as Zhonghua Liuban. Each version has been annotated with the letter ‘S’, representing basic structural pitches, and other letters, denoting additional decorative notes. The majority of these may be defined and understood as in Western music, with the following clarifications. Passing and auxiliary notes may be based on either pentatonic or heptatonic scales. The escape note ornaments stepwise movement between two notes by touching a third pitch adjacent to one of the pair; thus, the penultimate note of Baban, the pitch E, decorates the pentatonic step from B to D. Octave transposition, as seen in the middle of Xiao Liuban, refers to notes or short passages which are realised in performance an octave differently, normally higher, than theory would suggest. Octave transposition of this kind is necessarily applied to notes which fall beneath the tuning of the fiddle’s lower string but may also affect higher notes outside the reach of the player’s fingers. Rather than retuning the instrument so that all notes fall within its range or making frequent

5 Xiao Liuban, Chen Yingshi, personal communication 23.4.89; Zhonghua Liuban, Steven Jones, personal communication 2.12.87. For a further discussion of this melody see Huang (1982).
alterations of hand position, in some traditional pieces, all music may be arranged within the span of one hand position. Finally, there is the bridging note, which may be described as an octave transposed escape note, but also has an additional foundation in fingering technique. As can be seen in Xiao Liuban, the pitch E is used to decorate movement from B to D. B and E are both performed with the same fingering, the bow simply being moved from the higher to the lower string.

DEcoration
As illustrated in Example 1, following the ban structural practice, different layers of ornamental notes may be superimposed on a simple musical phrase or progression to create a relatively complex melody. As each new layer of decorative notes is added, the previous layer becomes technically redundant, resulting in a flowing, undulating melodic contour. Analysis of a large number of such pieces suggests that musicians tend to add the notes nearest at hand in whatever modal fingering pattern the piece calls for. Taking several fiddle realisations of the expanded melody Zhonghua Liuban as an example and extrapolating the most common decoration inserted between any two pitches, it is possible to produce a chart as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Most frequently used decorative additions in four Zhonghua Liuban erhu parts.

The first pitch of a pair is shown on the left axis, the final pitch occurs on the upper axis. The basic melodic progression between any two notes in each horizontal row is shown on the right. The most frequently encountered inserted decorative pitch between each pair of notes, if any, has been analysed and described as on the previous diagram.
The chart shows that wide progressions (those of three or four steps) are normally ornamented with octave transposed passing or escape notes respectively. Melodic movement of two steps is most often decorated with use of a passing note. A single step in either direction is most often decorated with an escape note, and level movement tends to result in selection of an auxiliary ornamentation. These results are perhaps unsurprising, but they do confirm that fiddle-players, or at least those who performed the versions of Zhonghua Liuban analysed, have a strong tendency to choose their additional ornamental notes from those most convenient in their current hand position.

Small-scale variation of many melodies may rest on this theoretical and practical basis, but this is not all that the Chinese traditional fiddle-player can do with his musical material. Thus, in many pieces are found selective use of techniques of repetition, extension, contraction, substitution, insertion and omission. As an example which illustrates several of these techniques, part of the introduction to a Xuzhou qinshu (ballad) performance of Ma Qian Bo Shui shall be considered (see Example 3).

Ex. 3. Melodic omission, contraction, substitution, extension and repetition in a Xuzhou Qinshu introduction.
In this example three parallel sections from the zhuihу fiddle part of the ballad’s introductory music have been transcribed.\(^6\) (Parts for the dulcimer yangqin and wooden clappers ban have been omitted). Each section has been copied onto one stave and arranged in such a way that parallel passages from each occur in approximate vertical alignment. A fourth stave has been added to emphasize the more significant structural pitches in each section. Each version has been annotated with bar numbers, and also marked is one instance each of the techniques here referred to as omission, contraction, substitution, extension and repetition. These terms are relative: for example, what is described as extension in one version could alternatively be marked as contraction in the others.\(^7\)

The use of techniques such as these is thus an important ingredient in much Chinese traditional music. A further example, taken from three different pieces of the repertoire of the street musician Abing, shows just how profound an effect these techniques can have upon melodic construction in music for two-stringed fiddles (see Example 4).\(^8\)

\(\text{Ex. 4. Contrasting melodic construction of one musical idea in three solos for erhu by Abing.}\)

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\(^6\) This transcription is taken from a China Record Company commercial recording of the ballad \textit{Ma Qian Bo Shui} (YL-319 1987).

\(^7\) In instances where musicians very frequently follow one practice and only very rarely follow a variant it may be possible to decide between alternatives such as extension or contraction, omission or insertion (not shown above). The perspective of the musicians concerned would be a basic to an analysis of questions such as this.

\(^8\) Abing’s performance of three pieces each on erhu and the pear-shaped lute pipa were recorded in 1950. A complete analysis of the three erhu pieces is available in Stock 1991.
In this example there are seven different realisations of the same musical idea. The horizontal layout of each realisation has again been manipulated to allow maximum parallels to be drawn between each version. A selection of varied segments have been annotated. Notice, for example, the extension of material in the second and third bars of the second version as compared with the first and the omission of this material altogether in the fourth and fifth versions. The penultimate bar of versions three and four is metrically contracted in comparison with the other versions and there is a modified repeat of the central portion in version six. Versions six and seven are in fact performed at approximately twice the speed of versions one to five. Nonetheless, analysis of these versions reveals that they are contrasting realisations of the same basic musical idea filtered through a pervasive blend of small-scale variation techniques and not an assemblage of completely unrelated musical material.

That such a means of constructing music is not the prerequisite of Chinese fiddlers alone is demonstrated by R. Anderson Sutton’s quotation (1979:59) of a passage written by Judith Becker about Javanese *gamelan*:

Until recently, it was believed that oral performances were either memorized or improvised. In fact, they are neither. The basic building block of an oral tradition is the melodic formula, not a fixed formula, but one which can be expanded, condensed or rearranged according to the needs of the musical situation in combination with the fancy of the performer.

To this perhaps it may be added that if flexible melodic formulae are the basic building blocks of an oral tradition, then the techniques through which these formulae are expressed in performance must be the basic constructional procedures of an oral tradition. As such, we need to analyse and understand these procedures before going on to discuss the finished musical products which result from their use.
GLOSSARY

Abing 阿柄  street musician, properly called Hua Yanjun [华彦钧] (1893-1950)

Baban 八板  “Eight Beat” folk tune found in many forms and with many names across much of China

Ban 板  wooden clappers or a system of metrically-expansible melodic outlines

Erhu 二胡  two-stringed spike fiddle with snakeskin-faced soundbox

Er Quan Ying Yue 二泉映月  “The Moon Reflected on the Second Springs” erhu solo by Abing

Gongchepu 工尺谱  traditional Chinese notation based on symbols of relative pitch

Han Chun Feng Qu 寒春风曲  “Cold Spring Wind” erhu solo by Abing

Huqin 胡琴  ancient “barbarian stringed instrument”, more recently a general term for Chinese fiddles

Ma Qian Bo Shui 马前破水  “Pouring Water In Front of the Horse”, Xuzhou qinshu composition

Rong Zhai 棠斋  Manchu courtier and musician active in early nineteenth century Beijing

Sun Wenming 孙文明  street musician (1928-68)

Ting Song 听松  “Listening to the Pines” erhu solo by Abing

Xiansuo: Shisan Tao 弦索十三套  “Thirteen Sets for Xiansuo” string ensemble score of 1814 prepared by Rong Zhai

Xiao Liuban 小六板  “Small Six Beat” expanded version of Baban

Xuzhou qinshu 徐州琴书  Xuzhou ballad singing

Yangqin 扬琴  dulcimer

Zhonghua Liuban 中花六板  “Middle-Decorated Six Beat” Jiangnan sizhu melody, an expanded version of Baban

Zhuihu 醫胡  two-stringed fiddle with snakeskin-faced soundbox and wooden fingerboard
REFERENCES


FRANÇOIS PICARD

LA MUSIQUE CHINOISE

La Chine recèle une des musiques les plus riches du monde, à la fois vivante et traditionnelle, proche et totalement autre. A lors que ses artistes commencent à se faire connaître en Europe, et que chaque année apporte son lot de concerts, de disques et d’enregistrements, il était urgent de dresser l’état des connaissances en matière de musique chinoise. Par-delà la musicologie, l’ethnologie ou la sinologie, cet ouvrage veut avant tout fournir des repères au mélophile, à l’auditeur, au voyageur curieux. Après un parcours des genres et des traditions, chaque instrument est abordé en liaison avec ses modes de jeu, ses styles particuliers, ses origines et ses variantes. Musicien lui-même, l’auteur nous restitue l’image d’une musique originale, profonde et sensible, riche et techniques et à l’esthétique raffinée, au coeur de laquelle compositeurs et interprètes occupent une place prépondérante.

Ancien élève du conservatoire de Shanghai, François Picard a soutenu un doctorat de musicologie sous la direction d’Iannis Xenakis. Il collabore à des émissions à France-Culture et réalise des enregistrements pour l’UNESCO.

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MAINLAND CHINA’S NEW MUSIC (3)

The Age of Pluralism

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"All music is fusion"
Leonard Bernstein

The ‘New Wave’ is no more. Whatever it is that is defined by the term has fallen apart and no longer plays an effective role in Mainland China. Young Chinese composers from the Mainland have settled in Europe, America and other parts in the world in search of opportunities which are denied them in their own country. Taken together, they no longer form a coherent group with shared ideals and shared background – if they ever did. New Chinese music now means a very different thing, depending on where it is written, and under what kind of influences. In this final article in a series of three on Mainland China’s avant-garde music, the author presents a bird’s-eye view of the recent achievements of young Mainland composers. He follows their track from China to New York, Paris, Hamburg, Melbourne and other places, and examines the gradual transformations of their musical language. He also takes a final look at the future prospects of new music inside China.

Western students of Sinology or Musicology occasionally visit me to discuss contemporary Chinese music. They always appear interested in one and the same theme: the impact of politics. While the influence of politics on every single aspect of life in China is undeniable – and its role in contemporary music has been frequently emphasized in my own writings – it is unfortunate that so very little attention has been paid to the music itself. The works of young composers are seldom studied outside the framework of Chinese political history. They are hardly ever viewed in an international musical context. This article is a first and cautious attempt in that direction. The article can also be used as a reference source. It includes biographical information on more than 100 Mainland composers. A register of names has been appended.

CHINESE WRITINGS ON NEW MUSIC
A discussion of new Chinese music in purely musical terms is urgently needed. Western musicologists are generally not enough informed about China and therefore hesitant to undertake the task. They lack affinity with Chinese traditional music or

The spirit of John Cage has found its way to China in Yu Qiang’s ‘Action Theatre’ (see p. 130).

know too little about the impact of history on Chinese culture. Chinese musicologists are in touch with their own culture, but their views are limited in different ways. First of all, they cannot escape political and ideological censorship, which inhibits free discussion. It requires considerable courage for a Chinese musicologist to go against the stream of political and scholarly conventions in his country. He is always expected to acknowledge the values of contemporary Chinese music within an official political framework. As a result, many Chinese articles about new music are a toilsome struggle with established musico-political theories rather than practical and informative essays. Wang An’guo’s review of the ‘New Tide’ (Wang, 1986), in spite of many good observations, is a case in point.²

Secondly, only few Chinese authors possess real affinity with – or knowledge about – music outside China. The situation is gradually improving, but it remains a problem. While Western influences in new Chinese music are readily acknowledged, their impact is never questioned, nor their origin specified. In an essay on the development of Chinese symphonic music ³, Liu Hongjun provides many interesting examples of the use of both contemporary Western and traditional Chinese elements in the works of Chinese composers. So does Wang An’guo, in his article on the ‘New Tide’. But both

³ Liu Hongjun – Lun Zhongguo jiaoxiang yinyue fengge yanbiande guiji, in: Zhongguo yinyuexue, 1989, no.1, pp.126-141. While longer and more substantial than many other Chinese articles on new Chinese music, it is hardly acceptable as a general outline of the field. Liu quietly passes over the deep conflict that ensued between progressive and conservative artists when contemporary Western techniques were imported. He hardly specifies the impact of those Western techniques, since he doesn’t know where exactly they stem from, nor how really ‘new’ or ‘established’ they are in the West. His study presupposes a continuous evolution of ‘orchestral style’ in China. Nothing could be less true.
authors present their examples in an entirely Chinese framework, as if the Western techniques quoted have no historical origin and no acquired meaning of their own. In this way, it is impossible to test Western concepts against Chinese ones, or to examine the artistic integrity and individual views of Chinese composers when they liberally adopt Western elements in their music.

Chinese authors tend to define the development of 20th century Chinese academic music as a single evolutionary process. In their view, major political events in China serve either as a brief interruption (civil war, the Cultural Revolution) or as a major incentive to ‘the’ musical evolution. The possibility that there have been many different developments on independent levels, leading to a variety of results, is hardly considered; the interaction between political and cultural history is reduced to a one-dimensional, linear process; its complexities and many contradictory developments are ignored.

DISTORTED PICTURE
As a consequence, Chinese authors fail to recognize, for example, the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the music of the younger generation. They portray the period as an isolated tragedy. Only a few will admit that it actually paved the way for a new cultural era, but even those who do so, fail to describe how. None of them does (or dares) recognize the immense distance between the artistic conceptions of older and younger composers. Liu Hongjun considers both Xian Xinghai’s Tchaikovksian orchestral pieces from the 1940s and Qu Xiaosong’s ‘Mong Dong’ from 1984, a piece for a mixed chamber ensemble, to belong to the same Chinese symphonic tradition. In short, they offer a generalizing, perhaps sympathetic, but distorted picture, in which musical doctrine rather than musical history is emphasized, quantity rather than quality, and musical detail rather than musical essence.

While I criticize such writings, it is not my aim to reject them. Indeed, the authors have no other choice but to work within the narrowly defined limits of cultural policies and scholarly hierarchies as they exist in China. Their private convictions may be far removed from what they dare commit to paper. Their intentions are pure – authors like Li Xi’an, Liang Maochun and Wang An’guo have offered vital support for a new generation of young and vulnerable artists. Their writings provide fascinating study materials in the fields of Chinese cultural policies and musical aesthetic theory. Nevertheless, they offer no views on China’s new music within the general framework of 20th century musical history. Even if the authors are ready for it, the circumstances in China make it impossible for them to achieve such an aim.

The reader should not expect an all-round discussion of the music of young Chinese composers in this article. There is no space for a detailed discussion of even the major pieces of the past fifteen years, and quite apart from that, it should be clear that now is hardly the time for a general assessment. In this respect, Chinese and Western musicologists are up against the same problems.

The necessary distance in time is still lacking, a distance needed to arrive at a really balanced judgment. Below, I can only attempt to discover a general sense of direction in the composers’ achievements. If my examples turn out to be a misrepresentation, I must take full blame.

PLURALISM – THREATENING AND INSPIRING
The new-won authority of some Chinese composers, both at home and abroad, is beyond dispute. Their sudden careers surprised Western audiences. Their works testified to a musical renaissance in China which, only a decade ago, nobody would

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have thought possible. But the surprise is quickly wearing off. The main attraction is no longer the fact that a group of artists from a tragic and politically harrassed society are capable of writing good music. While leading figures like Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong and Ge Ganru in New York, Chen Qigang in Paris, Chen Xiaoyong in Hamburg, and Guo Wenjing in Beijing are widely praised for their works, it remains to be seen in what direction each of them will eventually move, and whether future audiences will continue to react so favourably to their works.

Their music has now become part of an international contemporary tradition where – as Paul Griffiths puts it\(^5\) – plurality is the single distinctive feature. Chinese composers currently work in widely differing surroundings, absorbing very different musical idioms which they adapt in the light of their own Chinese experience. One might say that cultural pluralism is the very force which at once keeps alive and threatens new Chinese music.

The dilemma is deep for young Asian artists in general, and particularly for the Chinese, who grew up in an isolated country, where political campaigns and national outrage against art and intellectual employment itself kept people ignorant of major developments abroad. It was impossible for Chinese composers to resist the myriad influences that, quite suddenly, penetrated from outside after 1978. Some turned into musical chameleons, constantly shifting from one ‘modern’ idiom to another. Others found their own voice, but only after a very deep struggle.

Of necessity, a bird’s-eye view of new Chinese music becomes a musical journey through many countries, through many different musical idioms, with the unresolved dichotomies of Eastern and Western culture ever looming in the background.

THE OCTOGENARIANS & THE MIDDLE-AGED
To prolong the metaphor of a musical journey, let me head the initial entry of this travelogue: China, the early 1980s. We should recapture briefly the atmosphere of excitement, heated debate and youthful recklessness at the conservatories in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu, at the time shortly after the Cultural Revolution when the whole country was about to make a new start and to (re-)open its doors to the West.

Let us focus, for a while, on the older and middle-aged teachers, some of whom encouraged young students to find new ways in Chinese music and to look for examples abroad. What has become of these older men and their music?

We can be brief about the brazen romanticism of revolutionary China, most of them now octogenarians. They were never prepared for what happened, nor did they realize the true extent of musical change afterwards. They were concerned witnesses rather than active participants in the new music movement, none of them able (or interested, for that matter) to claim a substantial contribution to their students’ success. It appears that their own music offered little inspiration to the students, and it hardly attracted attention outside China. Their emotional reactions towards their students were a mixture of jealousy, abhorrence and disbelief.

The situation is different with teachers of the middle generation, people now in their late forties to early sixties. Some were directly responsible for the climate of change. They were the ones to introduce new Western techniques to their students. These teachers all experienced the same tragic fate. They were in the cross-fire of political upheaval from the 1950s onwards and suffered most from the painful process of cultural transformation which they helped to bring about in the 1980s: while enthusiastic about avant-garde, they failed to pursue, in their own works, the new path laid out by them. The avant-garde was a new musical domain which they entered,

partly with relief and with curiosity, but perhaps also with a dark premonition that they
would be in it, but not of it: the musical climate of revolutionary China had marked
them so deeply that they began to sway unhappily between Western tonal romanticism
and superficial ‘modern’ gestures, between mock-Chinese tunes and true borrowings
from Chinese tradition.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?
It was mainly elder composers like Sang Tong, Luo Zhongrong, Gao Weijie and Wang
Lisan who first introduced atonal music and serialism in China. Their own experiments
in that field were heavily dependent on Western models.
It was middle-aged composers like Zhao Xiaosheng, Yang Liqing and Peng Zhimin
who began to invent new compositional systems or to introduce constructivist methods
in China on a more systematic scale. Their theoretical writings boldly discussed the
technicalities of a modern fusion of Chinese traditional and Western music. But their
own works, while formally based on tone-rows, pitch-class sets, and complicated
structural formulas (mixing Chinese and Western theoretical ideas), would – in sound
– betray nostalgia for a bygone era.

Some explained their own conservatism by pointing to conservative public demands:
the public – meaning: the government – compelled them to write old-fashioned music.
Indeed, their social position was such that they were expected to set an orthodox
example for their students. They could ‘innovate’, but only within certain limits, with
ample reference to the musical past, with its revolution-inspired ‘music for the
masses’.
Others seemed hardly aware of following a beaten track. They argued that serialism
and other Western devices, applied in a Chinese context, were bound to lead to a new
kind of music.

Western techniques did acquire a new meaning when they were introduced in China,
but naturally they did so in many different degrees, on many different levels. While the
‘atonal’ or ‘serial’ works of middle-aged composers in China struck native listeners as
radically new works of art, in the views of many Western listeners they sounded like
poor imitations of European music of the 1920s to 1950s.
All the same, they should hold some fascination for Westerners, even from a stylistic
point of view, because they present an extraordinary attempt to reconcile totally alien
worlds – the claustrophobia of Stalinist heroic romanticism with the intellectual
freedom and arrogance of European serialism. One could hardly conceive of poles
wider apart! Some Chinese artists may have silently recognized the dilemma, but they
never verbalized it in these terms.

EARLY TWELVE-TONE MUSIC
In a variety of different ways, horizontally and vertically, sometimes simply with a
grateful nod to Schoenberg, sometimes with the help of newly invented rules, Chinese
composers of the early 1980s began to adopt twelve-tone principles in their music.
Recently, the Chinese musicologist Zheng Yinglie has tried to summarize the
development of Chinese twelve-tone music. His technical observations about the
adoption of Schoenbergian and Hauерian principles in China are correct, but he does
not bother to determine their new significance in a Chinese context, if any. His music
examples seem to indicate that, very often, the mechanisms of twelve-tone music have
been adopted, but not their functions.

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6 Zheng Yinglie – ‘Letter from China: The Use of Twelve-Tone Technique in Chinese Musical
Most Western composers – whether they approve of twelve-tone technique as an end in itself or not – will agree that the technique has primarily served, and may still serve, as an escape-route from the conventions of 19th-century tonality. However, the Chinese works quoted in Zheng’s article – pieces by Luo Zhongrong, Lu Shilin, Wang Jianzhong, Li Baoshu, Wang Xilin, Zhou Jinmin, Peng Zhimin and Yang Hengzhan – usually remain dependent – at least in some degree – on conventional Western tonality, thus ignoring a major function of twelve-tone technique. Their melodies and chords are often based on twelve-tone series in which Chinese pentatonic intervals dominate. As a result, the piano pieces, songs and miniature chamber works of these composers are frequently reminiscent of Western fin-de-siècle music, with added flavours of chinoiserie. In actual sound, they appear more indebted to Hindemith and Debussy than to Schoenberg or Webern.

Luo Zhongrong’s art song ‘Picking Lotus Flowers along the River’ (1979), which contains the first strict twelve-tone melody ever written in China, is a case in point. It has a twelve-tone melody, but with a pentatonic basis, so much so that the music remains essentially tonal. (Ex.1).7


‘Picking Lotususes’ is an attractive but entirely Western type of art song. The writing for piano, the vocal technique, the melodic and dynamic gestures are all borrowed from European music.

This same pattern of overall imitation can be detected in the songs and piano pieces written in the 1980s by other composers of Luo’s generation, like Wang Jianzhong and Chen Mingzhi.

EARLY SERIAL EXPERIMENTS

We can see some artists gradually expanding their twelve-tone experiments. They adopt genuine atonality and various strands of serialism. As a result, their music occasionally tends to become even more ‘Western’. This is true for younger generation composers as well – Han Yong and Wang Haiping, for example. While displaying an admirable control of European techniques, it appears that they do little beyond imitating those techniques. In some cases, atonalism is simply transplanted to the domain of Chinese traditional instruments. Cui Wenyu wrote a piece called Y un (1987), a quartet for dizi, erhu, sheng and zheng. It moves along melodic lines sometimes reminiscent of Schoenberg, but retains the inherent Chinese expressiveness of the bamboo flute, the mouth-organ and the string instruments employed. The result may be judged attractive – the piece was received well at the ICTM World Music Days in Hong Kong, 1988 – though the combination of Chinese and foreign elements appears to be a facile and somewhat noncommittal one (Ex.2):

Ex.2. Cui Wenyu – Y un (1987), beginning. A passage for sheng (mouth-organ) and zheng.

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8 Han Yong was born in 1957 in Xi’an. He began his career studying piano, but overstrained his hands and had to give up the instrument. Between 1978 and 1982, he studied composition at the Shanghai Conservatory with Ye Chunzhi and Shi Yongkang. He developed a compositional system of his own, much indebted to twelve-tone principles, and wrote a technically admirable 13-minute, Berg- and Bartók-like Violin Concerto (1982). He now lives in New York. Wang Haiping studied at the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing. Some of his atonal pieces for xiao (bamboo flute) were recorded by the China Record Company (’A Treasury of Xiao Tunes’, AL-14, 1987). He now lives in Vancouver, Canada.

9 Cui Wenyu was born in 1952 in Gulyang (Guizhou) and graduated in 1981 as a composition student from the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. He is in charge of the Guizhou Chinese Music Association.
A Schoenberg in Chinese disguise? Whatever the answer, it is important to realize that many Chinese composers do not attach the same importance to originality as their Western colleagues generally do. One composer, Luo Zhongrong, says that he has never actively sought to establish a personal style in his music.

Luo: ‘A personal style is something which you cannot manipulate. You can only hope that what you make doesn’t sound like the work of others. I know that many people hammer at the importance of originality, but I haven’t given it much thought. I am attracted by new music, and influenced by it, but I have never written pieces for the sake of newness itself.’

This becomes immediately clear when one listens to Luo’s music. Most of it is romantic and could easily be judged ‘old fashioned’, but a handful of his works are harshly dissonant and percussive in style. Like many of his contemporaries, Luo Zhongrong is somewhat of a stylistic chameleon. But unlike many, Luo has attracted some attention outside China. His ideas are certainly not without merit. Interestingly, it was partly Chinese tradition which first put him on the track of serialism.

Luo: ‘If you wish to investigate the history of serialism, you might as well start in China. There is a coincidental but very interesting relationship between the rhythmic or timbral serialism of composers like Messiaen and Berg, and the structural principles of shifan luogu, a genre of Chinese ritual percussion music. Messiaen began to work with rhythmic and timbral series in the 20th century, but Chinese musicians already did so many centuries ago.’

Luo applied serial principles of shifan luogu in his own compositions from the early 1980s onwards. He took them from Yang Yinlin’s study Shifan Luogu (1980) and applied them in a number of piano and chamber works, notably in his Three Piano Pieces (1986) and his Second String Quartet (1985). Below, an example of a traditional luogu series is quoted, which combines rhythmic and timbral elements (Ex.3).

Ex.3. Yu he ba, (‘The Sum is Always Eight’). One of many rhythmic formulas used in shifan luogu.

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10 Luo Zhongrong (b. 1924, Sichuan) started his musical career as a violinist. As a composition student of Tan Xiaolin and Ding Shande at the Shanghai Conservatory, he developed a special interest in the music and writings of Paul Hindemith, whose book on Harmony he later translated into Chinese, (1983/87). He maintained his interest in modern music after China became a Communist republic. His formal reputation as a composer was initially based on a popular mass song, ‘The Land is Beautiful Beyond the Mountain’ (1947). He went to Beijing in 1951 where he became a resident composer of the Central Philharmonic Society. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he produced various successful orchestral works, some in romantic style (e.g. Symphony no.1, 1959), some mildly dissonant and reminiscent of early folklore-inspired works of Bartok (e.g. Sichuan Suite, 1963). He was harrassed and imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution. When he took up composition in 1979, his style gradually grew more modern, while his interest in Western music shifted from Hindemith to Schoenberg. He wrote several song cycles and chamber works applying serial techniques. He visited Germany in 1985. Mo Wuping and Chen Qigang were among his music students. Because of his personal and artistic integrity, he is regarded as somewhat of a fatherly hero by composers of the younger generation.

11 From an interview with Luo Zhongrong at his home in Beijing, 25 June 1990.

The series should be read from left to right and from top to bottom without a break, ignoring the blank spaces between the notes. In luogu music, the sequence is played by two groups of percussion instruments, A and B. They play in alternation, the part of A gradually growing shorter, that of B gradually becoming longer, until the end is reached and the whole sequence is repeated. To enhance variety, each line of A is played by different instruments, resulting in different timbres.

This particular series is called Y u he ba (‘The Sum Is Always Eight’), referring to the total sum of beats per line, which remains eight. (True enough, each line is supplemented by a tail-sequence of a fixed number of beats – ‘x’ in the example shown above – but these additional beats do not affect the validity of the ‘A+B=8’ principle.) The result in sound, in traditional Chinese music, is a tight pulse of quavers with rapidly shifting long accents. The sound colours vary from short, dry beats on woodblocks to loud and resonant gong beats. The short, fast movements of Luo Zhongrong’s Second String Quartet are strongly percussive in character and make use of various luogu series, including the one quoted above. Interestingly, Luo Zhongrong retains the general idea of telescoping rhythms in luogu, but not necessarily their underlying pulse. A traditional Chinese percussion player would hardly recognize the Y u he ba series as applied in the fifth movement of the quartet (Ex.4):

Ex.4. Luo Zhongrong
2nd String Quartet
(1985), beginning of 5th Mvt.
Here, the idea of timbral variety in the original series is translated into different playing techniques on the string instruments (Bartók pizzicato, col legno, arco and ordinary pizzicato).

The result of this experiment with luogu materials is interesting in several ways. Firstly, the percussive nature of Chinese ritual music is emphasized in Luo’s String Quartet, but the actual rhythms in this piece are not necessarily reminiscent of luogu—

the influence of traditional rhythms is present on a theoretical rather than a practical level. Secondly, the melodic material of the quartet is based on twelve-tone series. But the twelve-tone technique as applied in this piece is not necessarily reminiscent of Western twelve-tone composers either. The actual melodies and counterpoint in the piece often sound more like Bartók.

These two remarkable paradoxes need closer examination, because they are representative of a general trend in the music of elder Chinese composers in the 1980s.

THE IMPACT OF BARTOK

When I confronted one particular composer, Zhao Xiaosheng, with the mysteriously dominating influence of Bartók in contemporary Chinese music, he was not surprised, but reacted by saying that Bartók was not always necessarily a direct influence.13 Zhao pointed out a number of similarities which happen to exist between Chinese and Hungarian folk music—certain pentatonic scales, certain syncopic rhythms. It may have led Chinese and Hungarian composers to adopt folk tunes and folk rhythms in their own music along similar lines.

Zhao referred to an essay by the musicologist Du Yaxiong about remarkable melodic relationships between Chinese and Hungarian folk songs14, and he mentioned certain musical instruments which the two countries have in common, notably the dulcimer.

I remained sceptical, because I was aware of the fact that Bartók’s music was well-known in China already by the 1960s.13 I had found that Bartók’s influence could

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13 From an interview which the author had with Zhao Xiaosheng, 30 April, 1990, in Shanghai.
14 Du Yaxiong — ‘The Relationship Between Chinese and Hungarian Folksongs’, manuscript, 1990. This essay will be published in Chime, vol.6, Fall 1992 (forthcoming). It is specifically concerned with folk songs of the Western Yugurs, a minority of Turkish descent in Western China (Yugur — not to be confused with Uyghur). See also: Du Yaxiong – Xiongyali min’ge he Hasake min’ge you yuanyuan guanshi ma? – Yu Han Bing tongzhi shangque. In: Xinjiang Yishu, 1989, no.3. Furthermore: Zhang Rui – Xiongyali min’ge tong woguo mouxie min’ge xiangzi yuanyin qiantan, in: Yinyue wudao yanjiu, 1985, no.6, pp.21-28. And: Bu Jie – Yuguze xibu min’ge he Xiongyali min’ge xiongzi de yuanyin. In: Yinyue wudao yanjiu, 1985, no.11, pp.19-21.
15 Cf. Chao Feng – ‘Bartók and Chinese Music Culture’. In: ‘Lisz-Bartók, Report of the 2nd International Musico-logical Conference, Budapest 1961’, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1963, pp. 383-393. This article must be read with strong reservations, because Chao (pinyin: Zhao) Feng, a researcher from Beijing, offers a rather idealized picture. He claims that Bartók’s popularity in China is
clearly be discerned in Chinese piano pieces of that period, such as Wang Lisan’s Sonatina (1957). But something interesting happened when Zhao Xiaosheng asked me to listen to his Second String Quartet of 1981. He acknowledged that this piece, written while Zhao studied in the United States, was directly influenced by Bartók. In fact, it was dedicated to the Hungarian composer and performed during the Bartók Centenary Celebrations. However, at one point during the piece, when the strings were playing a telescoping rhythm which immediately struck me as typically Bartókian, Zhao Xiaosheng jumped up and said enthusiastically: ‘Can you hear it? Wonderful! This is just like Chinese percussion!’

If I remember correctly, the strings played this: (Ex.5)

Ex.5. Telescoping rhythm in Zhao Xiaosheng’s Second String Quartet.

\[ \begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c} & & & & & & & & & \\
6 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & \end{array} \]

Zhao said he had been inspired by luogu rhythms.

Even if one assumes that the influence of Bartók in the work of Chinese composers is usually a direct one, the question remains why Bartók has been so much more influential than other major composers from the West, like Schoenberg or Stravinsky. Not only his rhythms, but also his harmonies and contours of melodies can be heard frequently in Chinese modern music. Are they subconscious quotations? Or do underlying relationships exist between certain types of Chinese and Hungarian folk music, which create natural affinities with Bartók’s music? (Cf. also Ex.7). Obviously, the matter needs further investigation.

(One other Western composer that immediately springs to mind is Debussy. His ‘broken’ tonality fits in wonderfully with the floating nature of Chinese pentatonicism. Debussy’s impact on Chinese music, too, deserves to be studied in detail.)

**ZHAO XIAOSHENG’S TAIJI SYSTEM**

I mentioned two notable paradoxes in modern music by elder Chinese composers. One is the strong impact of Bartók, in spite of the fact that the music is often based on socialist principles which never appealed to Bartók. The other paradox concerns the major influence of ancient Chinese traditions and theories – traditions and theories much talked about, much discussed in Chinese scholarly essays, but hardly audible in actual sound.

Take, for example, Zhao Xiaosheng. His Taiji system, a set of rules for musical composition, is based on the Chinese concept of yin and yang – the theory that everything in the world is born from one source and will eventually return to one source, and that everything can be expressed in terms of a balance between diametrically opposed forces.

In ancient Chinese music theory, the principles of yin and yang were reflected in the system of twelve ti, twelve standard pitches, produced by bells or bamboo pipes. These pitches were divided into six yang (male) and six yin (female) pitches. The ratio 3:2, or 2:3, using the numbers which symbolized heaven and earth, was applied to the lengths of pitch-pipes to generate series of pitches. In his Taiji system, Zhao

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largely due to the efforts of the Communist Party, and that ‘thousands of music conservatory students [in China] draw inspiration from his compositions’. In reality, by the early 1960s, Bartók’s music was severely criticized, and students who imitated him – if they were able to find any materials about Bartók in the first place – were likely to be criticized, too.

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Xiaosheng adopts these principles and combines them with the hexagrams of the *Yijing*, a Chinese classic of divination. He then creates a vast and complicated network of horizontal and vertical pitch sets (Ex.6):

Ex.6. Diagram from Zhao Xiaosheng's *Taiji* system of composition. (*Taiji zuoqu xitong*, p.86).

Unlike Schoenberg's twelve-tone rows, Zhao Xiaosheng's tone sets vary in length. In the circle shown above, sets in opposite positions present contrasting combinations of *yin* and *yang*, which will either 'supplement' or 'extinguish' each other. Zhao: 'A careful selection of pitch sets will enhance contrasts in your music. For example, in *Chang E*, a song for soprano and piano which I wrote in 1988, I switch to an opposite set only in the final chords of the piece, to create an effect of freshness.'

Recently, Zhao Xiaosheng has elaborated his *Taiji* system. It now combines elements of ancient Chinese music theory with Western conventional harmony (the antithesis of major and minor keys) and twelve-tone composition. He says that, from the very beginning, he has found inspiration for his *Taiji* system not only in ancient Chinese sources and in Western contemporary music, but also in the paintings of M.C.Escher, and in J.S.Bach's crab fugues.

Over the past few years, Zhao Xiaosheng has written many compositions based on *Taiji*, ranging from piano solo and chamber works to orchestral music. While the whole aim of his system is to merge West and East, ancient and modern, the music based on it often sounds predominantly Western, and not always as innovative as Zhao
Xiaosheng may have intended. His very first piece based on the system, which shares its name, *Taiji*, is a piano solo piece from 1988 which explores virtually all of the 64 pitch sets shown in Ex.6. It serves as a kind of showcase of the whole network. The dreamy, ten-minute work alternates softly floating passages with short, brilliant fortissimo outbursts. But whatever its Chinese and ancient roots may be, the music is surprisingly reminiscent of Bartók in its rhythms and gestures (Ex.7):


While theoretical concepts from Chinese traditional music are frequently applied by Chinese composers, the results do not necessarily guarantee a ‘Chinese sound’. Most of the elder composers consciously try to establish a Chinese identity in their music. The problem is that they were primarily educated in Western music or Western techniques, and that their knowledge of Chinese traditional music was based only on theoretical sources or on the virtuoso type of traditional music invented at Chinese conservatories and developed under strong influence from Western music. (The *erhu*, for example, was never a virtuoso concert instrument in ancient China, but its appearance and technique were adapted in the 20th century, to turn it into a Chinese equivalent of the Western violin.)

Zhao Xiaosheng probably gets much closer to his Chinese ideal in some of his works for Chinese instruments than in his piano music. His brilliant *Huan Feng*, for a 31-valve *sheng* (1989), and his concerto *Yi* for *erhu, gaohu* (two types of Chinese fiddles) and Chinese orchestra (1988) are expansions of the ‘academic’ tradition of Chinese folk music as developed in Chinese conservatories.

His own importance as a composer hardly depends on the *Taiji* system. Zhao is a very enthusiastic and energetic music teacher, and a piano player with a great talent for
improvisation. The impact of his music is largely created in performance and perhaps depends more on musicianship than on his architectural talents. It is highly significant that his piano improvisations on Chinese contemporary paintings sometimes sound like real compositions, while his compositions often sound like improvisations.\textsuperscript{16}

Couldn’t it be that, in the end, improvisation is much more at the core of Chinese tradition than any of the theoretical, structural devices applied so dexterously by Zhao and his colleagues? True enough, the idea of elaborate mathematical and mystical organization of music and ritual, down to the tiniest details, also seems strongly inherent to the cultures of the Orient. It may go some way towards explaining why Chinese composers began to rely heavily on ancient Chinese theoretical sources, and why they developed such an enthusiasm, too, for Western serialism: it may have given them a shock of recognition.

**A GROUP OF STRUCTURALISTS IN SICHUAN**

The early 1980s saw the emergence of many inventors of Chinese-inspired systems of composition, serialist or otherwise. Zhao Xiaosheng’s adventures illustrate what many of his contemporaries tried to achieve. The tone for Chinese-style structuralism was not set by Zhao in Shanghai, however. Things were in motion first by Gao Weijie and his students at the Sichuan Conservatory in Chengdu. Gao’s description of how it happened is rather revealing.

It was in Sichuan that the first (informal) group of contemporary music in China was born. The Sichuan conservatory invited foreign experts of new music at a relatively early stage.\textsuperscript{17} Gao Weijie, an older composer, born in 1938 in Shanghai, started his career as a romantic in the 1950s, but radically changed his style after the Cultural Revolution, when he initiated study sessions on modern music in Chengdu together with pupils.

Gao: ‘It began in the summer of 1980. We had already found our way to the music of Hindemith. Then we began to write works in twelve-tone style. Everyone studied some material separately, and then all of us came together to discuss it. In the beginning, we worked on Schoenberg and Webern, but soon we were to discover Messiaen, Penderecki, Ligeti, Berio, Stockhausen and others. Foreign experts began to visit us, so that Chengdu became a real centre of new development. Our group was actually very informal, you might say we were a kind of open salon. In 1985, we founded an unofficial organization, which was led by He Xuntian and me. We called it the ‘Exploratory Society for Musical Compositions’. We tried very hard to introduce more contemporary music in the official curriculum of the Conservatory students, and partly succeeded. I remember we asked Yang Liqing, a colleague from Shanghai, to come over and do some lecturing, because he had been to Germany and knew a lot

\textsuperscript{16} Zhao Xiaosheng was born in 1945 in Shanghai. He graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory in 1967 as a piano player, then continued to study composition. From 1981 to 1984, he was a visiting scholar at the University of Missouri, Columbia, but he returned to China to promote the cause of new music. He currently teaches composition in Shanghai and is a very productive composer. Among his recent works are a symphony for Chinese orchestra (1991), two piano concertos (1985, 1991), a ballet ‘The Sun on the Wild Earth’ (1992), and a wide variety of chamber works for Chinese and Western instruments. His Taiji system of composition is described in various publications, the most important one being Taiji zuoqu xitong, an anthology of essays (Guangzhou, 1990). He has also developed a new study method for piano playing, partly based on Chinese philosophical principles: Gangqin yanzou zhi dao (Hunan, 1991).

\textsuperscript{17} Among the first foreign guest-lecturers in Chengdu were Leland Smith (a former student of Milhaud, now a professor at Stanford University, California) in 1984, and Carl Vine (a young composer from Australia) in 1986.
about new music. In that same period, He Xuntian began to develop his own system of composition; in 1986, he won a prize with his piece 'Sounds of Nature', which was a great encouragement to all of us. A year later, the New Zealand composer Jack Body visited our Conservatory. His interest in genuine folk music exerted a deep influence on us. We began to wonder how we could use folk music in our own compositions. Body also made us realize that twelve-tone technique was already considered 'classical' in Western music, so he encouraged us to invent our own systems. In my piano piece 'Autumn Wilderness', written in 1988, I used pitch class sets. Not because I wanted the music to be completely atonal — I think we have moved away from complete atonalism again, just as much as we can now discern, in contemporary Western music, a tendency towards neo-classicism.  

**JIA DAQUN AND MATHEMATICS**

The new music group in Sichuan gradually fell apart in the late 1980s. Two teachers, Yang Lu and Lan Guangming, left for America. Gao Weijie himself moved to Beijing, where the stage for a different kind of contemporary music had already been set, and He Xuntian was invited to start teaching at the Shanghai Conservatory.

Nevertheless, a strongly theoretically oriented new music movement had been born in China, and its spirit was carried on by several composers — those who stayed behind in Chengdu, like Jia Daqun and Hu Ping, as well as others, like Peng Zhimin and his group in Wuhan and Cao Guangping and colleagues in Guangdong.

Jia Daqun, who is currently still in Chengdu, is perhaps one of the most gifted younger composers among those who immersed themselves in structuralism. Jia was born in 1955 in Chongqing and started his artistic career as a painter, but he spoiled his eyes during the Cultural Revolution, working for eight years in an insufficiently lit room. He began to discover music as a possible alternative, rapidly shifting his attention from Chinese revolutionary opera to Beethoven, from Tchaikovsky to 20th century Western composers. He became an early student of Gao Weijie. His String Quartet of 1988, which recently won an award in Japan, is based on the pitch set theories of Alan Forte. Another of his compositions, the wind sextet...

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18 From an interview which the author had with Gao Weijie, 27 June 1990, in Beijing. Gao is still very active as a composer. He is particularly fond of orchestral music and has written various ballets, including Yuan ye (1987), furthermore a Symphony (1989), a Dizi Concerto (1992) and various smaller works. He is a skilled craftsman in the field of small-scale pieces for Chinese instruments, compositions which he often refers to as 'play-things' or 'games'.
19 Yang Lu (b. 1953) is a theoretician, now working in a laboratory for computer music at Stanford University. Lan Guangming (b. 1954) is still active as a composer. He studies with Allan Forte at Yale University.
20 Hu Ping, born 1959, Chongqing, is a former student of He Xuntian. Among his works are Xuantong, for 7 performers (1988), modelled after He Xuntian's 'Sounds of Nature', and a String Quartet, Wu jie ('World of Awareness'), written in 1989. He is now a teacher at the Sichuan Conservatory.
21 Peng, although a composer himself, is mainly influential as a theoretician. He writes in various journals. He founded a modern music society at the Music Conservatory in Wuhan. His piano and chamber works betray a strong interest in serialism.
22 Cao Guangping was born in 1942 in Shanghai. He graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory in 1965. He is currently a teacher at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou. He mainly writes chamber music. His piece Nüwa, for prepared piano and 19 extra instruments (1987), was played during the World Music Days in Hong Kong in 1988. It is partly reminiscent of Crumb's Macrocospus and appears to quote freely from Debussy and Messiaen.
23 Jia's Quartet won the 12th Trion Prize for Chamber Music, 15 July 1991, in Tokyo.
Hu Ping (Sichuan Conservatory).

‘Counterpoints of Time’ (1989), is rhythmically very tightly organized – using number systems like the Fibonacci series – while the pitches in the piece are free.

Jia Daqun: ‘I thoroughly enjoy using mathematical principles to express emotions in music. I have been inspired by many Western examples. In my view, Webern is a more rational and therefore more important composer than Cage, for example. Obviously, Cage has a logic of his own, closer to nature perhaps than that of Webern. He has a philosophy, probably not all that far removed from the impulsiveness and free-flowing thought found in ancient Chinese music. But at present I feel there is a general tendency in music towards rationalism. Rationalism represents modern man, and I feel naturally attracted to it. Of course, rational principles applied in music can lead to many different types of results.’

His own music seems to underline this thinking. The written score of his String Quartet betrays a carefully constructed edifice, but the music does not sound all that much ‘constructed’. It has overtones of quiet Taoist hymnal music and flows along freely. It is somewhat difficult to imagine that the composer who wrote this piece usually spends his evenings as a keyboard player in a local disco in Chengdu.

BEIJING - A DIFFERENT DIRECTION
While reviewing the ‘serialist’ works of elder composers, I have gradually begun to turn my attention towards younger artists. The main question is, then, whether or not younger composers in China generally follow suit with respect to serialism and structuralism: has it become a purpose in itself for them, like in the music of Gao
Weijie and his younger colleagues in Sichuan? The answer is not an easy one. Most of
the young composers who are still active inside China have few opportunities to come
to the fore with their compositions, and to demonstrate what they are actually doing.
Concerts of new music in China have become rare events. Some musical journals, like
Yin Yue Chuangzuo, occasionally include musical scores of piano and chamber pieces
by young composers, but less so than before, and they are only a meagre handful,
randomly selected from hundreds of unpublished and unplayed works. It is difficult to
know what is going on.

However, among Chinese composers who have left China to go abroad, and whose
works are now being performed in Europe and America and elsewhere, the interest in
serialism is visibly limited (with a few exceptions).
The early works of Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong, written during their conservatory years
in Beijing, already demonstrate the use of serialist principles as an extra means, and no
longer as the sole key to the structure of the music. It was Tan Dun, in particular, who
set the scene for a genuinely new direction in Chinese music, and who also helped to
establish a platform for Chinese composers abroad. He dominated music circles in
Beijing until his departure from China in 1985. He was among the first to return to the
genuine roots of Chinese folk and traditional music, while experimenting freely with
whatever modern compositional techniques the West had to offer.

TWO WORSHIPPERS OF NATURE
Both Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong, now living in New York, appear to have reached a
stage in their career where they may still be deeply indebted to Western composers, but
are no longer dependent upon them. Their music, apart from reflecting Western and
Chinese influences, carries a unique message of its own.
They have partly taken cues from American music, their examples ranging from
serialism to Crumb, from jazz to minimal music. But their works are deeply personal
statements. Qu Xiaosong (b.1952, Guiyang), sometimes called ‘wolf’ by his friends,
is a lover of nature, a romantic philosopher and painter. His early works are wild and
exalted, his later works quiet and concentrated, usually exploring the interplay of
sound and silence. Tan Dun (b.1957, Changsha), too, is a worshipper of nature. He
promotes naivety, directness, the scent of the earth and of primitive, tribal life in his
music. His music is a continuous exploration of spatial and timbral contrast, with a
dominant role for percussion, but it is also frequently infused with ritual elements —
shouts, whispers, frantic or slow, mysterious dance rhythms, or ghost-like drum-
beats. Tan is by far the best-known and most productive composer of his generation
now in America.

At the time when both composers were still studying in Beijing, they upset their
teachers and colleagues by always being one step ahead of them.

QU XIAOSONG’S EARLY WORKS
The titles of Qu Xiaosong’s early works leave little doubt about the romantic nature of
his aspirations: ‘Mountain Song’ for cello and piano (1982), ‘Girl of the Mountain’ for
In 1980, he had visited Guangxi to collect folk songs, together with Fan Zuyin, a
teacher, and a group of fellow students. He was deeply moved. The landscape and the
songs brought back to him memories of a happy youth in the countryside of Guizhou,
during the Cultural Revolution.
The first movement of his String Quartet of 1981, later rescored for strings, piano and
percussion, betrayed many folk influences but was also reminiscent of Bartók. Qu: ‘I
began writing it before I had heard any Bartók. So you can imagine how surprised I
was when, shortly afterwards, I discovered Bartók and found striking similarities to my own music. I was even more excited when I read that he had based much of his works on peasant tunes.  

Looking back in late 1983 on the works he had written as a student so far, Qu Xiaosong found them conservative. He tried an entirely new approach in Mong Dong (1984), a ten-minute piece for chamber orchestra of Western and Chinese instruments, more 'folk-like' than any of his previous works, (though influenced, too, by the music of George Crumb). Mong Dong was a joyful orgy of battering and shouting, like the wild dance of some primitive tribe. The piece immediately established Qu's name in China. The music of Mong Dong was inspired by the crude, unstudied and childlike rock-carvings of the Wa minority in Cangyuan, Yunnan. Qu was moved by their serenity, which he took as a symbol of primitive people's oneness with nature. In the vocal parts of Mong Dong, the composer dispensed with established singing techniques and concentrated instead on natural vocalization, which he had become familiar with through folk song. There was no real text, the words being either abstract syllables (like the title), or randomly selected dialect words (including one naughty local term of abuse).

The exuberant timbral and rhythmic explorations in the piece were suggestive of rural ensemble music. There were folk instrumental sounds (including imitations by Western piccolo and oboe), primal shouts, ritual drum beats. Qu also applied shifan luogu formulas, including the yu he ba series which we already came across in Luo Zhongrong's music. He stayed closer than Luo to the audible effects of the rhythms (Ex.8):  

Ex.8. Mong Dong, bars 85-92. Yu he ba: the sum of rests and quavers (per two bars) is always eight. 

![Music notation](image)

Qu used microtones, harmonic cells and tone-rows in Mong Dong, but tone row principles were applied only incidentally  

because he basically regarded them as 'unnatural'. In fact, Mong Dong was very much born from a sudden impulse. It was written down in full score immediately. Its range of expression and variety of techniques easily surpassed the achievements of Qu's seniors or fellow-students at that time.

The piece was illustrative of a renewed interest in Chinese tradition, on a practical level this time. Young composers became fascinated with ancient Chinese culture as a whole. Their music became a spiritual return to the splendours of China's great, mysterious past. They put on the garments and proud airs of celebrated writers and

25 From an interview with Qu Xiaosong, 7 December 1990, New York. Qu subsequently wrote a second movement (of the String Quartet) which became almost a straight paraphrase of the opening of Bartók's 'Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta'. In his enthusiasm for Bartók, he was unable to control himself, as he later expressed it.

26 For another example, see the part of the woodblock from bar 111 onwards. The score of Mong Dong was published in Yinyue Chuangzuo in 1985.

27 E.g. the melodic development in bars 32-49 is formally constrained to a range of five notes.

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philosophers from remote dynasties, so to speak. While reading Zhuangzi, they became Zhuangzi themselves. While admiring ancient rock-carvings, they became rock-carvers. It was a soothing and miraculous antidote to the painful memories of the more recent past. Not just a mental escape, but a total rebirth.

TOWARDS ‘STILLNESS’
Qu Xiaosong again adjusted his course shortly after finishing Mong Dong. In Huan, for piano and strings (1985) he explored, for the first time, the quiet atmosphere evoked by single tones and long sustained silences which would become his identifying mark in later works. He temporarily returned to a Shostakovichian type of romanticism in his Symphony of 1987, a sombre piece written in response to a tightening of political and cultural control in China.

His big cantata ‘Cleaving the Coffin’ (Da pi guan), written later in the same year, was optimistic and romantic in a broad sense, taking in elements of Sichuanese folk opera. It was a work for vocal soloists, choir and orchestra, very direct in appeal, probably closer to the ideal of a Chinese ‘music for the masses’ than any of the drab socialist cantatas of model composers of the 1950s. Its borrowings from folk music were genuine, its humour and wit very convincing. The text, based on a story about the classical philosopher Zhuangzi, was to be sung in Sichuanese dialect.

Subsequent works, like the dynamic Concerto for Percussion and Wind Instruments (1986), for example, and ‘Song of Deities’ (1987) for Chinese wind instruments and Chinese orchestra, attested to his continued interest in folk music materials.

But gradually, his focus shifted towards a greater economy of resources, and greater sparsity of lines. His music gradually acquired a more reflective nature. ‘Game’ for two percussionists (1988) and Ya Ya for six musicians (1990) retained the playfulness of Mong Dong but were literally childlike in their simplicity. Ya Ya was partly based on number systems, showing that Qu Xiaosong sustained an interest in academic devices. Yi for seven players (1991) reached a new level of tranquillity, its score showing more blank spaces than even a Webern score. One of his works was called ‘Stillness’ (1991). His development away from the brazen folkly spirit of Mong Dong towards meditation and serenity disappointed some and impressed others. What remained was the impulsiveness of his writing, as well as his fascination with childlike purity and longing for a spiritual union with nature.

TAN DUN’S FASCINATION WITH FOLK MUSIC
Folk songs, native scenery, closeness to nature, childlike spontaneity — these were also points of departure for Tan Dun in his career as a composer.

In the final years of the Cultural Revolution, Tan lived among peasants of the Huangjin commune in his native province Hunan, where he soon discovered that the only escape from the drudgery of field labour was through music. Though only 18 years old, he took on the role of a genuine stage director, inspiring and organizing the local villagers in performing musical plays based on their own, home-style folk opera or folk songs. With new words to suit the revolutionary spirit of the times, the tunes were brought alive in Tan’s ad hoc arrangements. The self-made director and conductor added his own music to the performance, which was played by the village ensemble on whatever folk instruments or everyday materials were available for sound production; it sometimes resulted in ‘fantastic aural effects’.

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The music evenings in the Hunanese countryside proved crucial to Tan Dun's development as an artist. They made him aware of the rich potential of folk music, but also of the musical implications of speech and language, which could easily be detected in Hunanese folk music. His years in the Huangjin commune provided the basis for his later preoccupation, as a composer, with ritual chant and the vast sonorities of that king of all instruments: the human voice.  

His earliest success as a student at the Conservatory in Beijing was Li Sao, a romantic and ambitious symphony, which he wrote much against the wishes of his teachers. In 1980, it earned Tan an important prize, as well as the reputation of being a rebellious and non-conformist pupil. The music contained folkly elements, but was also strongly Western in style, imbued with Mahlerian gestures. His subsequent chamber works for Western instruments continued to follow European models and did not always manage to rise above the level of brilliant, theoretical essays. His Piano Concerto (1983) and Second Symphony (1985) contained memorable passages, but added little to the orchestral experience of the Li Sao Symphony.

His attempts to connect Chinese traditional gestures with Western modern techniques found a more grateful expression in some of his early pieces for Chinese traditional instruments, such as Fu, Fu, Fu for chamber ensemble and voice (1982), the Pipa Concerto (1983) and Shan Yao, for Chinese winds and percussion (1984). In each of these works, the various participating instruments seemed to be situated on different planets, playing tunes or sequences with only the faintest indication of a mutual dialogue. The music was perhaps too easily taken for granted by Chinese audiences because its colour and melisma sounded so recognizably 'Chinese'. In fact, these works were daring etudes in bitonality and new instrumental technique, and they represented very careful studies of time, space, motion and stillness in an Eastern tradition.  

Ex.9. Tan Dun – Nian xiangzi (1984) for xiao (bamboo flute) and zheng. One of several miniature essays in spatial and timbral contrast, written for Chinese instruments in the early 1980s. This opening sequence for zheng alone evokes a vast space, via extreme contrasts in colours, pitches and loudness, and via bitonality.

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Fu, Fu, Fu had an almost ‘classical’ Chinese impact, but was also the first piece in which Tan Dun applied principles of Western serialism. The human voice, used sparingly but with great imagination in this piece, produced a wide range of sounds, from ghost-like laughter to low, whispering sounds. Tan’s treatment of the vocal part raised great enthusiasm among his colleagues. Within a few years, ghost voices suddenly began to reverberate through the repertoire of many young composers.

Tan Dun’s genuine breakthrough came in 1985, after he wrote ‘On Taoism’, for voice and orchestra. In retrospect, he said that this was the piece that ‘changed him most’. In subsequent years, the work was in many international festivals and evoked enthusiastic responses from audiences all over the world. This piece, too, was clearly influenced by traditional Chinese music, but its expressiveness went far beyond the notion of a plain ‘blending of East and West’ which had been the course of young Chinese composers so far.

A KID SINGING FOR HIMSELF
‘On Taoism’ was written in a single week, by way of experiment. Tan wanted to create something ‘by chance’, in a self-evident way, without any pre-conceived materials, without structure even: ‘I wanted to write something in a single breath, just like a kid singing for himself. Basically, I used ‘non-concept’ and ‘non-discipline’ as a concept. That is really something from Taoism. I knew very little technique at that time. It was a kind of “writing by the ear”’. Yet, I think that I expressed myself very well in this piece – it was not influenced by twelve-tone technique, by Bartók or by romantic music, but mainly by the sounds of Taoist music, of Chinese chanting, all of which I tried to convey through a Western orchestra.

The vocal part of ‘On Taoism’ reflects influences from southern folk song and from kunqu, China’s elite opera, but it also echoes the glissandi and terse harmonics of the classical, seven-stringed zither, the guqin. Bass clarinet and bass bassoon follow the recitative style of shan’ge (folk songs) and play microtonal passages as heard in Chinese folk instruments. Piano strings are plucked to suggest guqin harmonics, and oboe and trumpet are employed pretty much like suona and guanzi (Chinese reed instruments). Here, the Eastern elements are no longer a part of any artificial attempt to proclaim ‘Chineseness’ but simply a natural means of expression for the composer. In ‘On Taoism’, conceived standards of Western melody, pitch design and rhythmic design have been swept aside, just as have many pre-conceived ideas about Chinese music. The piece is a victory over the medium of the Western orchestra and over Western concepts of form and structure, which have come to dominate Chinese orchestral music so strongly ever since the 1930s.

In its outward form, the work is a ‘rondo’, with returning sections for the solo voice. Its chain structure might be said to resemble the suite form in Chinese folk music. But

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31 The flute solo in the beginning is a twelve tone theme. Fu fu fu was written before the String Quartet Feng-Ya-Song.
32 It was first recorded on cassette in China in 1986, with Wang Lifu as vocalist (‘A Collection of Orchestral Works by Tan Dun’, AL 53). The Pacific Music Company, Hong Kong, produced a second recording on CD, featuring Chinese orchestral works played during the First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival (1986). Tan Dun himself sang the vocal part, accompanied by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra directed by Kenneth Siermerthorn. (HK 8.240442, publ. 1987, also on tape: HK 4.240442 CC). The German label Schwann will publish a recording later this year with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra performing under Tan Dun’s direction. The same CD will contain recent orchestral works of Tan Dun, ‘Orchestral Theatre’ and the Symphony ‘Death and Fire’.
33 These and following quotations are from interviews with Tan Dun held on 3 and 9 December, 1990, in New York.
Tan Dun: “writing by the ear”.

the continuity and actual logic of the piece are determined by the nature of the voice part itself. The hymnal chant that opens ‘On Taoism’ significantly foreshadows all the events that follow. For example, the sudden manner in which the voice flares up in the very beginning is echoed only a minute later in the first statement of the full orchestra. The soft wavering and scintillating of the voice is taken over in almost every sustained note played by the orchestral instruments, and the wide spacing of the voice part is reflected in the deliberate juxtaposition of high and low parts in the orchestra. The instrumental parts in the piece are almost like natural extensions, sometimes even like paraphrases, of the textless solo chant. The full orchestra is employed sparingly, nearly all instruments playing brief solo parts, as if they are all ‘kids singing to themselves’.

In this composer’s first genuine masterpiece, the mental attitudes of Taoism helped him to escape from simple notions such as ‘mixing’ Chinese and Western culture, or from blindly following either Chinese or Western musical models in the act of composing. But for Tan Dun, a major confrontation with Western contemporary music was still ahead.

TAN DUN AND SERIALISM
When Tan wrote his first atonal music in 1982, he was only interested in serialism on the level of melodic design. After he began to study in New York in 1986, his teachers at Columbia University urged him to apply twelve-tone procedures again, in a more thorough way. Nearly all of his early American works bear the stamp of atonality, both horizontally and vertically. But the more he began to experiment with Western compositional systems and media, the more difficult it became for him to shape his ideas. The musical material of his trio ‘In distance’, for piccolo, harp and bass drum
(1986), was a combination of Chinese folk song with Western atonalism, but there was no real integration of these elements, the folk element being bluntly combined or alternated with atonal lines. His Violin Concerto (1987) took shape as a somewhat unhappy marriage of Chinese opera style melos with Western serialism, and his Third Symphony ‘The Great Wall’ (1987) had soloists singing Chinese folk tunes in a tonal idiom, while the orchestra replied with twelve-tone statements throughout. Here, East and West remained even literally separated, in terms of performers.

In his Second String Quartet (1986-88), the composer again applied serialism, but armed himself against too much formality by making this piece a veritable in-depth study of the *glissando*, in all its possible manifestations. Its continuous melisma on single strings recalls the unique patterns of the single voice in Asian musical tradition, and clearly links this piece to his works written in China. However, by applying twelve-tone technique, in the quartet and in the other works, Tan Dun was rapidly moving towards a Western, academic kind of sophistication, which he felt increasingly uneasy about.

By 1989, he turned away from the academic tendencies which he had been confronted with at Columbia University, declaring 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.’

His opera ‘Nine Songs’ (1989), premiered in New York, marked a *volt-face* in his stylistic development.34

**RITUAL OPERA**

‘Nine Songs’ was a Chinese theatrical piece with a strongly ritualistic character, in which Tan Dun largely dismissed the Western orchestra and Western compositional techniques as working tools. Instead, he employed a group of singers and dancers chanting, shouting, speaking, singing and moving like actors in a tribal, shamanistic ceremony, to the accompaniment of ceramic chimes, bells, and jars of special design, as well as Chinese traditional instruments.

The opera was a radical experiment, even by Tan’s standards. There was no actual story or conventional scenic dialogue. The text of the opera consisted of fragments of the classical poet Qu Yuan’s concise and enigmatic verse, partly in the original language, 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 earthen instruments – designed in co-operation with ceramicist Ragnar Naess – fitted perfectly in Tan Dun’s vision of a ritual opera which propagated the ‘back to nature’ canon. Basically, its music and stage actions were an intensely romantic appeal to reject the cold, technological and inhuman side of modern society. Tan’s musical dream of mother earth and the spiritual values of an ancient, mythical world was not all that far removed from the ideals of Qu Xiaosong in *Mong Dong*.

‘Nine Songs’ marked a change in Tan’s musical style, but not a rupture. Basically, the composer resumed the thread of ‘On Taoism’, which had also been conceived as a ‘ritual’ ceremony, and in which the element of monophonic chant was already essential. The underlying concept of ‘On Taoism’ was monophony; its music basically unfolded itself along a single, uninterrupted line. But this ‘one-voice music’ was realized by more than just one performer, in the colours of a multiple-voice medium, namely the Western orchestra. Tan’s opera ‘Nine Songs’ again pursued the idea of ‘one-voice music’ but did so more literally: it had almost no counterpoint.

34 The opera was recorded with the New York cast under Tan Dun’s direction in 1990 by Composers Recording Incorporated, 170 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023. [CRI CD 603].
In his second piece for ceramics and voices, ‘Soundshape’ (1989)\textsuperscript{35}, Tan Dun went on to explore the possibilities of ceramic wind and string instruments. This time, the ensemble consisted of only seven performers, playing a handful of traditional Chinese instruments, along with more than fifty newly invented instruments, including ceramic ‘lutes’ which could be bowed, plucked or used as percussion, and a variety of end-blown pipes in straight or curled form. The players of these instruments were expected to contribute vocally to the piece. For example, the opening of the work was a Tibetan monk-like lowing, and certain climaxes in the piece were accentuated by fierce shouts. Like the opera, it was a work of ritual dimensions, and a strongly theatrical piece, including bodily movements and processions of the musicians circling the concert stage. Its spiritual message was largely the same as that of ‘Nine Songs’.

Tan’s experiments with newly invented instruments and ritual theatre had opened up new vistas, but did not occupy his entire horizon. He continued to write small-scale chamber works for Western instruments, and even returned to the medium of the Western symphony orchestra. But, not surprisingly, his works for conventional forces were now influenced by his ‘ritual’ pieces. Their music echoed the dance rhythms, shouts and syncopations of his stage music. Furthermore, a new spirit of musical eclecticism now began to prevail in these works.

**RITUAL SYMPHONY**

In ‘Orchestral Theatre’ in 1990, Tan Dun tried to recreate the world of ancient Chinese theatre with Western means. The players in the orchestra were required to play their instruments in an atypical (Chinese) manner, and to sing and chant like shamans or Chinese stage actors. But the familiar timbres of the orchestra were also modified by adding an ensemble of *xun* in various tunings – pear-shaped clay-pipes resembling ocarinas. The composer divided these Chinese folk instruments over the woodwind section in the orchestra. He conjures them up right at the beginning of the piece, in a kind of wolves’ crying (Ex. 10). The soft and husky tones of the *xun* are highly suited to conveying a sense of remoteness and mystery. The *xun* is also employed as a solo instrument in this piece.

Ex.10. Tan Dun – ‘Orchestral Theatre’ (beginning), featuring a battery of *xun*.

Both ‘Nine Songs’ and ‘Soundshape’ were already saturated with non-Chinese and non-Western folk influences, underpinning Tan Dun’s growing inclination towards a more ‘global’ idiom. There are strands of African and South American music in ‘Soundshape’, while one of the basic features of the piece – the division of its

\textsuperscript{35} A BBC television documentary about ‘Soundshape’ was made the same year, when the piece was performed in the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland.
instruments into classes of different timbres – upholds the connection with ancient China. ‘Orchestral Theatre’ embroiders on these elements. The clay instruments are a natural extension of Tan’s preoccupation with ‘earth sounds’, and we can hear some of the primal dance rhythms of ‘Soundshape’ returning (Ex.11):

Ex.11. Tan Dun – ‘Orchestral Theatre’. A rhythmic sequence from the central section.

There are allusions to ‘On Taoism’ in the contrast of the cool, dark timbres of double bassoon or bass clarinet and soft, sustained chords in the high strings. At the same time, the music often seems reminiscent of Western models. Its central climax, with fast syncopations and wildly beating tom-toms, sounds like a direct tribute to Bernstein.

The marks of Western predecessors may be read even more clearly in Tan’s Symphony ‘Death and Fire – Dialogue with Paul Klee’ (1992), which is arguably his most eclectic work to date.

‘DEATH AND FIRE’

Strands of Mahler, Bartók, Shostakovich, Messiaen and Bach in this piece have led some critics to call it a work of ‘acculturation’. But the final result is unlike any music that existed before, and the hand of Tan Dun is recognizable in every bar. It may well be that the Symphony illustrates a general tendency of eclecticism in current avant-garde music. A great many composers, from Schnittke to Druckmann, have come to regard the entire musical past as a potential reservoir of basic materials for new compositions. They quote and borrow freely. Tan’s music is a different case, because many of his ‘quotations’ are probably unintentional. The connotations of his borrowings may also be different from what they were in their original context, simply because the composer does not share the historical affinities of his Western colleagues with respect to the European past. Does it necessarily mean that Tan Dun is no longer master of his own fate?

Let me rephrase this question and make it into a general one, because the subject is one of wider relevance: should a composer always be fully aware of the historical implications of the materials which he uses in order to create something that can be regarded as a genuine work of art?

Well, the music of many Chinese composers, and that of Tan Dun in particular, has convinced me that knowledge of historical values can be a threat as much as a blessing. There is no easy answer to the question. In my view, the only really important requirement for a piece of music is that it embodies a kind of musical coherence, powerful enough to convince us. The composer’s debt to historical models can be either great or small, and he may actually have serious misconceptions about his models, but this – in itself – does not necessarily deflate his art. Good music is that which strikes us as ‘necessary’, not because it is respectfully aware of the past, but
because every single note is the result of a unique logic, a logic that is bred by the composer alone and will always take us some time to discover. If that inner logic is really there, it will emerge in good time, but it can be analysed, circumscribed, and elucidated in words only after we have acquired a certain degree of affinity for it.

Therefore, I believe that we must be cautious in our assessments of Chinese composers' borrowings from Western music. The label of 'acculturation' is too easily attached to what strikes us as uncontrolled or quoted out of context. We can be too rash in discerning the 'all-too familiar' or the 'pastiche-like'.

If we have to apply the term acculturation at all, we should acknowledge that it refers to a two-way process: we obviously expect Chinese composers to develop some understanding of our musical heritage; but Western listeners, too, should be prepared to adjust themselves, i.e. to reconsider and perhaps to reject much of what they have taken for granted in their own culture. That should probably be the basic condition for our encounters with anything new.

Tan Dun's 'Death and Fire' Symphony is intended as a tribute to Paul Klee, and its various sections carry titles of paintings by Klee. 'Death and Fire' itself is a late painting by Klee, often referred to as the painter's final self-portrait. However, Tan's Symphony is also partly a self-portrait of Tan Dun. Its centrepiece is formed by an attractive Adagio for Strings which Tan wrote in 1985, while still in China. It combines the spatial feeling of his Chinese chamber pieces with a superb command of 20th century string orchestra technique. The outer parts of the Symphony are new and employ the entire orchestra.

The Bach tunes towards the end of the work are conscious and literal quotations, intended as a reference to Klee's comments on Bach as a master of counterpoint and of spatial feeling. However, the way in which Tan Dun actually weaves these quotations into his music may well remind Western listeners of Alban Berg's skilful treatment — in that composer's Violin Concerto — of a Bach choral. I am convinced that the similarity of style and means, in this case, is coincidental and bears no message in itself.

The overall impression of the symphony is that of a kaleidoscope of rapidly changing sonic events, in which the element of sound colour is all-important. The basic materials of the work are either melodies of single tones, waveringly produced in space by solitary instruments, or bold, dance-like tunes to pointed rhythms, with a major role for percussion. These tunes and motifs are clearly linked throughout the entire work, but they offer some very strong contrasts among themselves: yin and yang could hardly be further apart from each other.

One reason for paying so much attention here to Tan's music is that it illuminates so many aspects central to the whole issue of Chinese music. His interests in ritual concepts, in spatial contrasts, in sudden transitions, in primal rhythms, in percussive music and — more than anything else — in sound colour are illustrative of the music of his entire generation.

For all his experiments in avant-garde music — in what is so often regarded as an essentially Western art form — Tan Dun has remained an essentially Chinese artist. He is basically an explorer of sounds: single sounds, and the microcosmos of timbral and dynamic contrasts contained in them. His music is essentially a play of light and shade, and he might actually adopt Paul Klee's one-time motto: 'Colour possesses me.'

Tan is currently still living in New York, working on what may well become his biggest project so far: an opera about the travels of Marco Polo. For the libretto he has

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36 Entry in the diary of Paul Klee, 16 April 1914, Tunisia, when he formally declared himself a painter.
secured the assistance of the British musicologist Paul Griffiths. The topic itself – a journey through time and through different cultural realms – is more than a faint indication that the composer will probably continue along the line of a broad-ranging musical eclecticism.

OTHER CHINESE COMPOSERS IN AMERICA
Over the past ten years, scores of other young Chinese composers have settled in America, to study composition and to seek better performance opportunities for their own works. Historically, America is probably their most important destination in the West. The country is generally looked upon by young Chinese as a symbol of freedom and as a refuge from the poverty and social pressures of China.

True enough, the actual face of America has disappointed many. Most composers have found it very difficult to gain a foothold, both economically and artistically. Nearly all of them stopped writing music for a while, some never took it up again, the ‘culture shock’ or the enticements of a trade job proving too big. Those who came early in the 1980s missed out on the ‘back-to-Chinese tradition’ movement at home, and sometimes practically turned into Western-style composers. Others, arriving in the latter half of the decade, were more critical of Western music. Here is a list of young Chinese composers currently active in the United States, as far as they are known to this author:

Bright Sheng (b.1955, Shanghai)
Chen Yi (b.1953, Guangzhou)
Chen Yuannin (b.1957, Guizhou)
Cui Shiguang (b.1948)
Ge Ganru (b.1954, Shanghai)
Han Yong (b.1957, Xi’an)
Jin Xiang (b.1935, Nanjing)
Li Binyang (b.1956)
Lin Dehong (b.1956)
Lu Pei (b.1956, Guangxi)
Luo Jingjing (b.1953, Shanghai)
Qu Xiaosong (b.1952, Guizhou)
Tan Dun (b.1957, Hunan)
Xia Liang (b.1953)
Xu Sike
Yang Yong (b.1955, China)
Ye Xiaogang (b.1955, Shanghai)
Zhou Jinmin
Zhou Long (b.1953, Beijing)
Zhou Qinru (b.1947)

Some are in America for a short period only, others have settled permanently. The list is not complete, there are probably many more composers, but I have been unable to trace them. Conservatories in China do not keep track of their students’ careers after graduation, and the composers themselves do not stay in touch with each other very much after they move to the West. There is little ‘community feeling’ among Chinese composers in America. True enough, some of those listed here occasionally meet each other, and quite a few of them live in New York.

It was the older composer Chou Wen-chung (b.1923) who helped many young students to find their way to the New World. Chou, the godfather of new Chinese music in the West, has taught composition to Chinese students at Columbia University for many years, familiarizing them with serialism and other aspects of Western compositional techniques. While some of his students, like Chen Yi and Zhou Long, have gradually developed a deep affinity with serialism, others like Tan Dun have turned away from it, experiencing it as incompatible with the spirit of Chinese
tradition. Basically, this is where the roads of the young generation of composers in America have split. While nearly all of them defend their ‘Asian heritage’ and frequently refer to it in their music, they differ widely in opinion about its actual contents, and about the possibilities to base a new expressive musical language on it, especially when Western techniques and methods of composition are involved.

LEARNING FROM THE WEST

Among those who stay very close to Western models is Yang Yong. He taught harmony and counterpoint at the Central Conservatory in Beijing for several years before coming to Pittsburgh in 1987, where he began his American career as a technically skilled composer with an evident interest in atonality and complex structures. His Concerto for Chamber Orchestra (1989) is based on a Chinese folk tune, but not audibly – the tune is stretched out through the whole piece and functions as a structural backbone, determining rhythm, pulse, harmony and motivic changes in the piece. His Octet (1990), recently awarded at the ALEA III International Composition Competition in Boston, is even more overtly indebted to Western models. It sounds like a tribute to major representatives of American serialism such as Elliot Carter, Milton Babbitt and Charles Wuorinen.37

Another even more ‘Americanized’ Chinese composer is Sheng Zhongliang. After his arrival in New York in 1982, he changed his name to Bright Sheng, to make it more easily pronounceable for Westerners, and perhaps also as a formal mark of distance from his troubled life in China in the Cultural Revolution. He studied with George Perle and Hugo Weisgall, then moved to Columbia University, where his teachers were Chou Wen-chung and Mario Davidovsky, and he eventually received scholarships at Aspen and Tanglewood. The pianist Peter Serkin and the conductors Gerard Schwarz and Leonard Bernstein became ardent supporters of his music.

Bright Sheng: ‘At first, when I came to New York, I felt lost. I began to imitate all kinds of Western music. Later on, I realized the importance of studying the Western repertoire from a historical angle, starting from Bach and other early composers. This eventually gave me a much better understanding of 20th-century composers like Bartók and Schoenberg.’ Developing an awareness of Western musical history was his first ‘big step’ after he arrived in the West, so he says, the second important step being his contacts with Bernstein. ‘I have learned so much from him, because he was always so deeply involved in music and talked a lot about it. I was still very uncertain about my own development as a composer. Only after knowing him for a year I dared to ask him whether he thought a fusion of Eastern and Western music was actually possible. He said: “Shame on you! What do you mean fusion? Stravinsky is fusion. Shostakovich is fusion. Debussy is fusion. Brahms is fusion with folk music. I’m fusion. Of course it’s possible.”’ 38 In 1990, Bright Sheng orchestrated Bernstein’s ‘Arias and Barcarolles’, at the request of Leonard Bernstein, and offered the score to him as a birthday present.39

Bright Sheng’s own reputation in America is primarily based on his orchestral work Hun (‘Lacerations – In Memoriam 1966-76’)40, a dense and dramatic piece recalling

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37 Yang Yong recently started on a PhD study at Brandeis University, while continuing his activities as a composer. Among his other works written in the USA are ‘Leeh’ (1988) for solo piano, ‘Intentionen’ for orchestra (1988), ‘Darkening Light’ for clarinet and strings (1990) and various chamber works, including a Trio (1987) and a Second String Quartet (1990).

38 From an interview with the composer, 5 December 1990, New York.

39 The piece was recorded on New World Records, CD 80407-2, together with chamber works and piano music by the same composer.
the violent tragedy of the Cultural Revolution. The music, written in 1988 and performed successfully in various major cities around the world, is strongly rhythmic and percussive in nature. Its syncopated rhythms and skilfully built-up tensions and climactic outbursts may remind some listeners of Bernstein. American critics have also heard echoes in this piece of Penderecki’s ‘Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima’, and of Ligeti, Varèse, and Bartók.

Bright Sheng’s chamber works are different, more lyrical, more recognizably ‘Chinese’ as far as melodic materials are concerned. Bright’s ‘Three Chinese Folksongs’ for soprano, viola and piano (1988) are essentially Western art songs, delicate, though overtly romantic. ‘I could never be an extreme avant-gardist’, Bright Sheng says. His one-act opera, ‘The Song of Majnum’ (1990), to a libretto by Andrew Porter, was recently performed by the Chicago Lyric Opera, where Bright Sheng is currently composer-in-residence. I have not heard the music, but I expect it to radiate the same kind of Western sophistication as his other works to date.

In mid-1990, Bright Sheng was selected to represent the younger generation of American composers in a Festival of American Music in Moscow. His piece *Hun* featured in a programme together with pieces by Carter, Bernstein, Schuller and Kirchner. He was honoured, but also rather embarrassed to be regarded as an American, while he sees himself as a Chinese artist.

‘What worries me is... I have been in America now for over eight years. I was planning to visit China again, but ‘Tiananmen’ came in between, in 1989. I feel that I am still in touch with Chinese culture. But what will happen when I have stayed here for another eight years? I may well become completely Americanized.’

Another composer who has deeply immersed himself in Western music is Chen Yuanlin. Chen came to America only in 1990, after a successful career as a teacher and composer at the Beijing Central Conservatory. His early orchestral work *Hai shi* ‘Sea Erosion’ (1989) betrays influences of Britten, French impressionist composers and serialism. It is tightly packed and powerful music, which holds a promise for the future of this composer. The musical language of his choral work *Ga* (1987), a piece written for a film about tribal traditions of the Dong people in southern China, is close to Ligeti and Schoenberg.41

As in the case of Bright Sheng, it is difficult to assess, in Chen’s music, the actual weight of all these Western influences. How much of it is sheer imitation, how much of it is truly absorbed, transformed and remoulded into a musical language that can be understood and appreciated on its own terms? Has the composer really digested his materials, or have his materials digested him?

**LEARNING FROM CHINA**

Naturally, most Chinese composers in America feel the threat of such questions, at least at some stage in their career. The fear of loss of their ethnic identity usually manifests itself as soon as they are really face to face with Western culture – take their first walk on Broadway, play in an American school orchestra or wash dishes in a Manhattan soup kitchen. Only then do they become interested in preserving an essentially ‘Chinese’ style in their music, often with the help of Chinese means. Only then do the sounds of Western music suddenly become a foreign intrusion in their own scores. The spiritual road back home is not always easy.

41 In Beijing, Chen Yuanlin was a student of Wu Zuqiang. He was in the same composition class as Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Chen Qigang, Zhou Long, Chen Yi and others. Among his older compositions are *Yewu*, ‘Ancient Dance’ for orchestra (1983), which is partly based on *shicun xiangmu* rhythms, and a String Quartet (1981), as well as various pieces for synthesizer and percussion.
Zhou Jinmin, currently a PhD student at the University of Maryland in Baltimore, was among the first to write contemporary solo music for guqin, the seven-stringed zither which embodies the spirit of the Chinese literati and of classical Chinese poetry. His guqin piece Xiao Yao You (1985) sounds like a free improvisation, combining Western atonality with melodic gestures reminiscent of both guqin and Chinese opera music.42 His works for Western instruments are folk-flavoured imitations of Western music.

Li Binyang started his career in Beijing with a 12-minute, brazenly romantic Symphony (1985) in a mixed idiom recalling Rimsky-Korsakov, Honegger and French impressionists. Only after his arrival in America did he make his first attempt to write music for Chinese traditional instruments. ‘Southern Features’ (1986) is a playful piece for xun and guqin, in which Li pays tribute to southern Chinese folk music. The work includes a ‘jazzy’ passage where the guqin is employed as percussion instrument. Li’s recent chamber works for Western chamber ensemble, like ‘Eguor Notab’ (1990) and ‘Ecliptic’ (1991), while indicating his essentially lyrical stance as a composer, show that he is still looking for a personal voice.43

More exciting is the music of female composer Luo Jingjing. She was educated in Shanghai and Beijing and started her musical career as a piano prodigy. Her early compositions include a Piano Concerto (1980), ‘Songs of Dunhuang’ for soprano and orchestra (1980), piano solo pieces based on three Dunhuang Poems (1981) and Two Movements for piano, mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1983), all of which draw heavily on Western romanticism. After Luo entered the New England Conservatory in Massachusetts, she moved away from Western patterns and developed closer affinities with Chinese music. Her piece ‘Cicada Slough’ (1986) combines the classical guqin with a Western brass and percussion ensemble.

Like Tan Dun, Luo Jingjing has acquired a strong interest in theatrical elements. She is an active performer of her own music – not only as a pianist but also as a guqin player and vocalist. While it is ever more common for avant-garde composers everywhere in the world to become performers of their own music, the need is more urgent in the case of Asian artists who wish to employ native and uncommon instruments – or their own voices.

The road is not always from romanticism towards serialist sophistication and then back to Chinese tradition. Take, for example, Lu Pei, who entered the field of serious music as an admirer of the linear textures of Anton Webern. Already in his student days in Guangxi, and later in Shanghai, he experimented with Chinese traditional sounds, focusing in particular on Chinese folk songs and tribal music. In ‘Scenery of Daning River’ for orchestra (1986), Lu Pei uses a tape with a folk song which he recorded in Sichuan. He wrote various pieces for Chinese instruments, including a Yangqin Concerto (1986), a violent and brooding Symphony for Traditional Orchestra (1988) and a Sextet (1989). Several of his works, including ‘The Vibrating of the Rainbow’ for chamber ensemble (1987), were inspired by words of the contemporary poet Bei Dao.

As in the case of so many others, the threat of ‘foreign influences’ only became apparent to him after he came to America in 1991. Studying at the School of Music of Louisville University, he found it hard to escape the influences of American academic

43 Li Binyang graduated at the Central Conservatory in Beijing in 1985. He recently obtained a Master of Music Degree from Louisiana State University. A concert of his chamber works was presented in Baton Rouge in November 1991, including the works mentioned above. ‘Eguor Notab’ is ‘Baton Rouge’ written backwards. Baton Rouge is Li Binyang’s current residence. ‘One direction of the word corresponds to my Eastern background and the other corresponds to my Western knowledge’, the composer explains in a programme note.
trends, as is evident in his latest works *Yì*, for flute, clarinet, violin, percussion and piano (1991), ‘Fantasy’ for oboe, saxophone, doublebass, harp, piano and celesta, and ‘Duet’ for cello and marimba. Lu Pei hopes to go back to China eventually, after finishing his formal education. He prefers to live in his own country and wants to reinforce ties with his native culture.

Perhaps none of these composers in America – with the exception of Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong – have attracted quite the same attention, internationally, as Zhou Long and his wife Chen Yi. Zhou Long and Chen Yi are both in their late thirties. They live in New York, that king-size city where all the cultures and all the musical idioms of the world come together and mix. They are well-known in China as an avant-garde composers’ couple, but co-operate mainly in practical matters, while pursuing individual careers as

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44 Zhou Long was born in Beijing in 1953 and spent his youth doing compulsory labour in the countryside of Heilongjiang province, in the barren northeast. He worked in a local song and dance company before starting his professional musical training in Beijing in 1978, where he studied with Professor Su Xia. He went to New York in 1985. Chen Yi was born in Guangzhou in 1953 and worked as a violinist in a Beijing Opera Troupe in Guangzhou before moving to the Beijing Conservatory in 1978, where she studied with Wu Zuqiang. She followed Zhou to New York in 1986. Some of Chen Yi’s and Zhou Long’s early works were published on three cassettes by the Chinese Record Company: ‘Zhou Long – Compositions for traditional instruments’ (RL-29, 1984), ‘*Guang Ling San*, A Collection of Orchestral Works by Zhou Long’ (AL-52, 1986) and ‘*Duo Ye*, A Collection of Orchestral Works by Chen Yi’ (AL-57, 1986). Chen Yi’s *Duo Ye* for piano was recorded on CD by Shi Shucheng (Chinese Record Company, CCD 90-088, 1990).
composers. Both Zhou Long and his wife move happily to and fro between the high-brow avant-garde idiom of Columbia University and the free-flowing lyricism of ancient China, as they do between ‘uptown’ and ‘downtown’ traditions. If one piece – by either one of them – sounds like traditional music, the next one may sound like academic music, or a strange mixture of both. More than any of the other composers mentioned above, they seem to achieve a balance between East and West, not by a gradual process of fusion, but by continuously shifting their positions.

ZHOU LONG AND CHEN YI
Zhou Long and Chen Yi first met each other in the famous composition class in Beijing where Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong also began their careers. Among their first full-scale compositions were some boldly romantic works for Western orchestra. Chen Yi became known as the first Chinese composer to write a concerto for viola and orchestra (Xian Shi, 1982). Zhou Long wrote a Guang Ling San Symphony (1983), which, like Chen Yi’s viola concerto, is a ragbag of Western influences – in spite of its reference in the title to a piece of classical guqin music. But Zhou Long soon took revenge with a number of fine works in Chinese traditional style, in which he applied Western principles only sparingly, such as Su for flute and guqin (1984), ‘Valley Stream’ for dizi, guanzi, sheng and percussion (1983), and a string quartet based on the sounds of the guqin – ‘Song of the Chin’ (1984). In China, these works sounded modern enough to make one musicologist in Beijing remark that Zhou had ‘dealt a blow to the established formulas of Chinese music of the last thirty years’. In retrospect, they sound rather innocent, like contemporary arrangements of traditional pieces.
Chen Yi soon surprised native audiences with a virile and Bartókian dance piece for piano, *Duo Ye* (1984), which, in various orchestral arrangements, would bring her some fame in the United States as well.

Music had come to Zhou Long easily in China, but the process of composing became slow and laborious after he went to the United States. For two years, he wrote almost nothing. Then, under the influence of his teachers at Columbia University – Chou Wen-chung, Mario Davidovsky and George Edwards – his music gradually acquired a technical and stylistic sophistication which marked almost a complete departure from what he had written before.

Both the Russian-inspired romanticism and the Chinese traditionalism of the pieces composed in Beijing were now dropped in exchange for a European avant-garde idiom and a growing fascination with serialism. Some of his colleagues soon began to describe Zhou Long as 'a typical Columbia composer', a criticism which does not do justice to his best works.

The strong impact of American serialism in a piece like the *Shijing* Cantata for soprano and chamber ensemble (1990) is undeniable; there are echoes of Carter and Schoenberg in both the inflections of the voice part and the individual treatment of the instruments. Zhou Long appears to have grown closer to his native culture as well. The sparsity of lines, the expressive glissandi in various solo statements, and in particular the undercurrent of tranquillity and meditation in the cantata are all reminiscent of Chinese elite musical traditions, such as *kung*, *nanguan* and, of course, *guqin* solo music. These elements are prominent in many of Zhou Long's chamber works of recent years, and they are further supported by literal quotations from ancient Chinese music.

Zhou Long has continued to write music for Chinese traditional instruments, albeit with varying results. *Daqu* (1991) for percussion and orchestra is an energetic but rather uneven work, not quite successful in blending Chinese percussion with the ways and manners of a Western symphony orchestra. 'The King of Chu Doffs His Armour' (1991), for *pipa* (Chinese lute) and orchestra, is a traditional piece in romantic disguise – almost like a return to Zhou's idiom of the early 1980s, though technically far superior. But then again, in one of his most recent chamber pieces, *Wu Ji* (1991) Zhou Long successfully and masterfully combines two instruments which are almost opposites in terms of sound and technique: the piano and the *zheng* (Chinese bridged zither), supplemented with percussion. *Wu Ji* is a truly fine piece, which combines the Chinese sophistication of Zhou Long's early chamber works with the technical mastery which he acquired in America.

Chen Yi, after her arrival in America in 1986, showed far less affinity with American serialism than her husband, but she, too, was influenced by it, and she experienced similar difficulties in finding her direction.

She studied with the same teachers as Zhou Long, and was notably inspired by the ideas and favourite notions of Chou Wen-chung – a return to ancient Chinese values (as expressed in classical literature), a taste for Chinese traditional sonorities, especially that of the *guqin*, and the idea of applying aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy to music. Her biggest success in America was probably *Duo Ye* II (1987), a piece which does not necessarily comply with any of the notions mentioned above. It is a work for full orchestra, not so much another orchestration of the piano piece *Duo Ye* of 1984, but a complete reconsideration of it. While the piece has an impressive energy and vitality, it is clearly anchored in romantic tonality, and its many borrowings from Bartók are too frequent to be overlooked. (Actually, it is somewhat difficult to associate the almost mechanical drive and violence of the piece with the friendly and happy personality of Chen Yi, which is not meant as a criticism, of course.)

In my view, some of her recent chamber music is far better – more advanced in style, more concise, perhaps also more personal in expression than any of her orchestral
works. She wrote a fine Woodwind Quintet (1987) which combines atonal lines with the sonorities and grandeur of Chinese temple music, and also a very intimate piece for soprano, violin and cello, called 'As in a Dream' (1988), which was performed with Chen Yi herself singing the solo part. (She is an excellent violin player and a very gifted singer.) Other pieces among her recent output sound like a somewhat facile return to the past. 'The Points' for pipa solo (1991) has all the grandeur and technical display of a traditional pipa piece, which indicates its merits as well as its obvious limitations.

GE GANRU
Two more Chinese composers in America need to be mentioned, because they are important and because they write music unlike all the others: Ge Ganru and Ye Xiaogang.

Ge Ganru is essentially a percussive composer, evoking rhythms and sonorities as close as possible to the spirit of either Chinese guqin or traditional percussion music. His Yi Feng ('Lost Style') for amplified cello solo (1983) is a truly astonishing piece, in which Ge employs the cello mainly as a percussion instrument (see Ex.12). It may well be termed the first genuine 'avant garde' piece in the People’s Republic, surpassing the achievements of many other Chinese composers at the time when it was written. Ge was then a composition student of Chen Gang, at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

It was actually a seminar on contemporary music by the British composer Alexander Goehr in Beijing in 1980 which he attended that had first made him aware of the possibilities of genuine avant-garde music. It led him to write works like Yi Feng, the Trio for soprano, flute and clarinet (1980), the Chamber Symphony (1981) and 'Moments of Time' for piano (1981). The last two already explore the possibilities of serialism, of tone clusters and of aleatoric music.
Ex.12. Ge Ganru – Yi Feng\textsuperscript{45}, for cello solo (1983), excerpt. Ge invented his own notation for this piece, with separate staff lines for the areas before and behind the bridge of the instrument, as well as for the body of the cello. There are no bar divisions, only time indications in seconds. When played with an acoustic amplifier attached to the cello, the often percussive effects of this piece are grandiose. Traditional luqin players in China would probably love it!

Ge Ganru’s first years in America were very difficult. Like Chen Yi and Zhou Long, he studied with Chou Wen-chung and Mario Davidovsky at Columbia University. He actually spent most of his time trying to stay alive, earning money. His first composition abroad was \textit{Fu}, a String Quartet (1983), which embroidered on the musical experience gathered in China. It was performed by distinguished ensembles like the Manhattan Quartet, the American Quartet and the Kronos Quartet and was later followed by two more string quartets (1988, 1989). Perhaps his most remarkable works were those he wrote in close co-operation with the pianist Margaret Leng Tan from Singapore, who specializes in contemporary music, particularly in music for prepared piano.

Margaret Leng Tan is happiest when piano no longer sounds like piano. She premiered Ge’s Piano Concerto, \textit{Wu} in 1987, and a more fitting epithet to her achievements as a champion of new music is hardly thinkable. The part for prepared piano shares moments of classical grandeur with gestures as intimate and mystical as a hardly audible slide on a guqin string unplucked. The music is more effective in its original setting for 17 instruments than in the later version for full orchestra. The concerto deserves to be better known, although the percussive and harsh sonorities which dominate the outer parts owe as much to Bartók as to Ge Ganru’s own, inventive genius.

Another noticeable work for prepared piano by him is \textit{Guyue}, ‘Ancient Music’, written in the same year. It is a suite of piano solo pieces which are conscious imitations of four Chinese instruments (gong, drum, \textit{pipa} and \textit{guqin}).\textsuperscript{46} More than just mimicking their sounds, Ge Ganru brings out the inner qualities of these traditional

\textsuperscript{45} The cello solo piece was premiered by the young, talented musician Huang Su in Shanghai in 1983, shortly before Ge’s departure to America. Ge Ganru later found out that many young composers in China had a copy of a sound recording of the piece.

\textsuperscript{46} Recorded by Margaret Leng Tan on a CD, ‘Sonic Encounters: The New Piano’, published in 1988 by Mode Records (PO Box 375, Kew Gardens, NY 11415 USA). It co-features music for prepared piano by Cage, Crumb, Alan Hovhaness and Somel Satoh.
instruments. He superbly re-creates the spirit of guqin music on piano — definitely the most unlikely Western instrument for such a purpose, because of its fixed pitches and indirect contact with the strings. 47 Technically, he borrows from John Cage, but Ge Ganru definitely has his own things to say. Gueyue is an exquisite work.

His Requiem Ji, for choir and orchestra (1989), dedicated to the millions of Chinese who lost their lives in political turmoil and civil war, though impressive in its macabre grandeur, is essentially a Western work. It easily calls to my mind similar grand-scale, elegiac works for choir and orchestra by composers like Penderecki and Gorecki. Ge Ganru is perhaps unaware of following any models, he may not even know them, but he did write a work of mourning dangerously close to the idiom and expressiveness typical of these Polish avant-gardists. No doubt, its emotional message — summarized in repetitions of just one word, the Buddhist incantation amitofu — is deep and sincere: Ge Ganru knows only too well, from his own former experiences in China, what he is speaking about.

YE XIAOGANG
Like Ge Ganru, Ye Xiaogang was born in Shanghai, and received his first important artistic impulses in Beijing, in Alexander Goehr's master class. He was among the first Chinese avant-garde composers to be discovered abroad, with his chamber orchestral work Xi Jiang Yue (1984), a piece in the subdued, contemplative style that was to mark his future direction. Very Western, yet also a work with personal features. Other early works are his romantic Violin Concerto (1983), his quasi-Mahlerian Symphony 'Horizon' for soprano, baritone and orchestra (1985), as well as 'Eight Horses', a playful piece for twelve Chinese instruments and chamber orchestra (1985). One could further mention ‘Ballade’, a vigorous piece for piano (1986) and — less known and earlier than the other pieces mentioned, but interesting — Juzi shoule ‘Oranges Ripe’, a setting of a fine poem by Bei Dao for unaccompanied choir (1981). 48

In all these early works, Ye Xiaogang hovered between overt Western romanticism and the tranquillity of Chinese elite traditions. The element of meditation and quietness began to dominate especially after he continued his studies at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester in 1987. Among his first works in America were the introspective ‘threnody’ for piano quintet (1988) and — quite unlike anything else he has written — a ballet piece for choir and orchestra called ‘Dalai VI’ (1988), a powerful and ‘folky’ evocation of Tibetan ritual music.

‘The Ruin of the Himalaya’ for orchestra (1989), which won him the Howard Hanson prize, is a continuation of his more conventional exploitations of Western romanticism. In 1989, Ye became a PhD candidate in composition at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and studied a few months with the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen. His music gradually developed in the direction of greater clarity and stricter economy of resources. A noticeable outcome of this development is his recent

47 In my view, Ge Ganru is one of the few Chinese composers who ever managed to recreate guqin music convincingly on piano. Not even Chou Wen-chung's 'The Willows Are New' sounds very satisfying, although Chou at least knows what he is doing; he understands guqin, and shows great inventivity in transplanting its essence to a Western medium. Many composers living in Mainland China, if they rephrase guqin pieces on piano, simply harmonize the tunes as if they were Western ditties and blindly interpret the exceptional rhythms and unique tone colours of guqin in terms of Western piano technique. It is as embarrassing and ineffective as trying to recreate Chopin or Schumann on guqin - or playing Ravi Shankar on barrel organ, perhaps.

48 Many of Ye's early orchestral works were recorded on cassettes. 'Horizon' was published by the Chinese Record Company in 1986 (AL-51), and contains the symphony and some smaller pieces. The HK record company is currently preparing a CD featuring his Violin Concerto, and his ballet suites 'The Old Man's Story' (1985) and 'Da Lai VI' (1988). 'Song of the New Moon' for zheng and orchestra (1984) was previously published on cassette by the same HK company.
work 'The Mask of Sakya', a reflective and mystical piece for shakuhachi (Japanese vertical flute) and Chinese orchestra (1990). This music also exists in a version with Western orchestra.

Ye Xiaogang’s quietness is rather different in nature from that of Qu Xiaosong. There is no adoration of mountains or earth in it, there is indeed nothing ‘earthy’ or passionately human in his quest for tranquillity. Ye’s world is philosophical, abstract, detached, never radical or impulsive in its utterances—though Ye was radical enough in his emotions when he started out as a romantic in his early years in Beijing.

Finally, there is a touch of almost painful melancholy and regret in much of his music. It can be understood, perhaps, if one takes into account the infinitely sad experiences of this composer during the Cultural Revolution.49

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OCEAN

Obviously, Chinese composers in America have not always developed their music along similar lines. Admittedly, there are some amazing double stars, like Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong, or Zhou Long and Chen Yi, whose artistic orbits sometimes resemble each other. But all of them have basically chosen their own directions, offering widely different solutions for the many similar problems which they encounter along the way.

I must stress again that it is very difficult, at this moment, to assess their achievements. A real overview is still not possible, also because I have actually been unable to uncover the tracks of many composers who once started promising careers in China but then left for America—such as Lin Dehong, Zhou Qinru and Wang Chengyong, to name just a few.

But there are one or two aspects which I believe are true for most of the Chinese composers now in America. Nearly all of them, in accepting the challenge of a downright confrontation with Western avant-garde music, have taken important cues from American music. This will not come as a surprise, but there is also something else. While not all of them have addressed the same practical issues, or worked with the same tools, it is quite remarkable that most of them have shown surprisingly little interest for what is regarded in the West as one of the most important developments in 20th century new music—that of electronic and computer music.

Some Chinese composers have tried to work with it furtively, but they do not like it, while many others have hardly come across it. The situation may change very quickly, but the fact is that it is quite different already in Europe, where a small but enthusiastic group of Chinese composers is now working in the IRCAM studio of Pierre Boulez in Paris. Others in Germany have discovered electronic music, too.

In shifting our attention from America to Chinese composers in Europe, we will probably discover many other differences, not only in terms of means and resources, but also in terms of personal development.

YANG LIQING

Where did things start, on the other side of the ocean? Quite possibly in Germany. This country was the first in Europe to see the arrival of young Chinese composers in the early 1980s. Germany had no central figure like Chou Wen-chung to serve as a focal point, however, nor was there a German equivalent to that queen of all cosmopolitan cities of culture, New York. The Chinese composers dispersed to various German cities after they arrived, had little or no contact with each other, and were often entirely absorbed in local circuits of new music.

A pioneer was Yang Liqing, a composer from Shanghai, who arrived in Germany as early as 1980. He was among the very first Chinese who, shortly after the Cultural Revolution, were allowed to leave China to study musical composition in the West.\(^5\) Yang was then 38, and knew very little of new Western music. The confrontation with Penderecki’s Violin Concerto was an overwhelming and painful experience for him. Yang: ‘I simply couldn’t believe my ears. It was very difficult for me. In Hannover, I met various people from the contemporary music scene, such as Lachenmann, Kupkovic and Malherbe\(^5\), some of whom taught me composition, for some time, but I found it hard to adjust my ears to their music.’ Eventually, he became a pupil of Alfred Koerppen, a more moderate figure at the local Musikhochschule. ‘It was mainly Koerppen who familiarized me with notions like serialism and klangfarbenmelodie. When I returned to China in 1983, my musical style had changed, somewhat comparable to that of Zhao Xiaosheng: it was modern and romantic by turns.’

In China, Yang was praised mainly for his exuberantly romantic pieces, like ‘Grievances at the Wujiang River’ for pipa and orchestra (1986), or the ambitious symphonic ballet Wuzi pei (1988), written in co-operation with his fellow-composer Lu Pei. The music of Wuzi pei was based entirely on a ten-note row of Rodion Schedrin, but this was a structural element which only formally connected the first two acts of the ballet (written by Lu Pei) with the last two (written by Yang Liqing).

The two composers pursued rather different musical goals. A creative ‘co-operation’ of this kind is somewhat reminiscent of the ‘collective’ creations of Chinese artists under Maoism. Perhaps only in China can a piece so incongruous in style still be written, but — looking at it from a positive angle — it bears witness to the increasing importance attached to individualism in that country, and it is also one of the few genuinely

\(^5\) The quotations in the paragraphs about Yang Liqing are based on an interview held with Yang in Shanghai, April 1990. Yang Liqing was born in 1942 in Sichuan province. He studied composition at the Conservatories of Shenyang and Shanghai, with Huo Chunhe and Sang Tong, and began writing music himself in the early 1960s. His list of works includes many piano pieces, various concertos, full-scale ballets, symphonic poems and choral works, as well as some works for traditional Chinese instruments. He was in Germany from 1980 to 1983. In 1986, he became a professor of composition at the Shanghai Conservatory. He wrote the first monograph on Messiaen in Chinese, and is currently working on a treatise on contemporary techniques of instrumentation, taking his examples from Chinese avant-garde music.

\(^5\) Helmut F. Lachenmann, German composer, former student of Nono and Stockhausen. Ladislav Kupkovic (b.1936), Slovak composer and conductor, colleague of Karlheinz Stockhausen and an interpreter of his music. Edmond Malherbe, French composer of microtonal music.
modern dance scores that were ever written and performed inside the People’s Republic. \textit{Wu \textsc{z}i \textsc{p}ei} was followed in 1989 by an impression and gloomy piece for choir and orchestra, ‘Prelude, Interlude and Postlude’, as part of a larger dance drama, ‘Memorial without Words’.

A number of Yang Liqing’s vocal chamber works, written while he was still in Germany, are perhaps more important. Mainland Chinese composers with an interest in modern Western poetry or literature are rare, but Yang is a fine example. In 1982, he wrote \textit{Die Entstehung der Taodejing von Lao-Tse} for unaccompanied choir, based on a text by Brecht, and in the same year, he composed ‘Three Songs’, on poems by Lorca, for soprano, flute, cello and piano. The Brecht piece retains the original German, which is quite unusual. (I could think of many Western composers who set Chinese poetry to music, but almost none who did so in the original language!) Another vocal work of interest is Yang’s setting of ‘Four Poems from the Tang Dynasty’ for soprano, piano and percussion (1981), also sung in German. From a Western point of view, Yang Liqing remains an essentially conservative composer, but his influence as an advocate of new music in China has been tremendous. He is not only a respectable craftsman but also the author of many noteworthy Chinese books and articles on new music. He paved the way for many younger Chinese students to go abroad. In 1990, Yang himself returned to Europe to teach new music for a year at the \textit{Mozarteum} Musikhochschule in Salzburg, Austria.

\textbf{OTHER CHINESE COMPOSERS IN GERMANY}

In the wake of Yang Liqing, other Chinese composers came to Germany. From 1982 onwards, Su Cong (b. 1957 in Tianjin) spent some years at the Free University in Berlin as a doctoral student of ethnomusicology, before settling down in Munich as a film music composer. His music for Bertolucci’s film ‘The Last Emperor’ (1988) won him an Oscar and sudden fame, a fact which helped him to obtain a position at the Film Academy of Baden-Württemberg as a lecturer on film music.\textsuperscript{52} Su continues to write music for the concert hall. As a composer he received somewhat over-generous attention in Chinese journals and newspapers, probably because of the Oscar.

Su started his career under the guidance of his father Su Xia, a composer of revolutionary music in Beijing. As a child, he was not particularly fond of music. He played the piano because his father wanted him to, and he began to take lessons on the violin mainly to escape the hardships of work in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. But he was very talented. As early as 1973, he took some harmony lessons with Sang Tong in Shanghai, and he developed a serious interest in composition during his student years with Du Mingxin at the Central Conservatory in Beijing.

As a student, he was less noticed than some of his classmates, like Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong. Su’s earliest success was a Concerto for Strings, ‘Dong Village’ (1981), a romantic piece. After his graduation and departure to Germany, he became more interested in Western contemporary music, particularly while listening to late-night radio-broadcasts. ‘I had to adjust my daily rhythm of life completely in order to hear those radio concerts’, Su remembers. ‘I had to stay up late, I was often having dinner at the same time, and a lot of new music gave me serious stomach troubles.’

The music he wrote in reaction essentially betrays his continued interest in romanticism. He took no further composition courses, except for one master class led by Dieter Acker in Munich in 1984. Visits to Donaueschingen and Darmstadt brought

\textsuperscript{52} The Film Academy of Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg (near Stuttgart) is the first academy in Germany where it is possible to study ‘film music’ as a major, and Su Cong the first teacher to supervise it as such.

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him furtively into contact with composers like Stockhausen and Henze, but his subsequent encounters with film composers like Maurice Jarre, Ernest Gold and Giorgio Moroda had a much deeper impact.

Among his works for the concert hall, ‘Concert Overture’ for orchestra (1983, revised in 1986) is probably his best, a tranquil, romantic piece which shows him primarily as a shrewd craftsman, and hardly as an innovator. It is difficult not to think of pictures when listening to it. Some of his other concert works, too, like ‘Daybreak’ (1984), sound as if they were inspired by film images.53

Other Chinese composers currently in Germany are Zhu Shirui, who arrived in Stuttgart early this year 54, and Yang Jingmao. Far more important, and arguably the most promising Chinese artist currently living in Germany, is Chen Xiaoyong (b.1955, Beijing).

CHEN XIAOYONG
Chen is still shaking off the impact of his teacher György Ligeti and of German austere complexity. His intricate music would strike anyone as very ‘contemporary’ in style, perhaps as ‘too Western’, but its timbral qualities and its rare concision make it unique.

53 Other works by Su Cong are a Symphony, a Piano Fantasia on a theme by Liszt (1985), which won the 2nd prize in an international Liszt composition competition in Budapest, and three string quartets. The Second Quartet (1983) was re-arranged for string quartet and orchestra. The Third Quartet (1987) won a prize in the Weber Composition Competition in Dresden. Su wrote music for a wide variety of stage plays, television plays and films produced in Germany, China, Japan, Taiwan, Canada and Switzerland. A project which attracted particular attention was Der todlustige Mund (‘The Rabid Mouth’), a drama about the life of the great German writer Heinrich von Kleist. It was staged by the Berlin Theatre of Freedom in 1988, directed by Hans Neuenfels. Su Cong is currently working on an opera or musical theatre play about the life of Marco Polo. The quotation in the paragraph above stems from an interview, held in Stuttgart, 13 February 1992. For a general introduction to Su Cong, see Du Wei – ‘Composer Su Cong’, in China Reconstructs, Beijing, February 1989, pp.42-44.

54 While still in China, Zhu Shirui (b.1954 in Sichuan) was primarily active as a theoretician. He wrote important analytical articles in leading journals under his pen name Si Rui. He studied composition in Sichuan with Gao Weijie and later went to the Central Conservatory in Beijing, where he composed, amongst others, a number of works for traditional instruments, such as Gu feng (‘Ancient atmosphere’, 1985), for a quintet, and Sihe (‘Combination of Four’, 1988) for erhu and pipa. Like Cui Wenyu’s Yun (see Ex.2), they are free applications of Western contemporary techniques in settings for ancient Chinese instruments. Furthermore, Zhu wrote music for a number of important films produced at the Xi’an film studios, including ‘The Black Canon Incident’ (Huang Jianxin, 1987) and ‘They are still young’ (Tamen zhenqiang nianqing, Zhou Xiaowen, 1987), a new forbidden film about Chinese PLA soldiers in Vietnam.
He arrived in Hamburg in 1985, shortly after his graduation from the Central Conservatory in Beijing. His composition teacher in Beijing, Su Xia, hardly ever taught him any Western music beyond Beethoven, but friends and family provided him with records and scores of contemporary composers.

In 1984, the discovery of a score of Ligeti’s ‘Atmosphères’ made a deep and lasting impression on him. In that period, he also studied folk songs in Jiangxi and in Yunnan, and developed a deep affinity with kunqu and other genres of traditional theatre. The contrast between the timbral layers of Ligeti’s orchestral piece and the rough, timbral heterophony of Chinese folk music – as well as the unexpected affinities which he discovered between these outwardly incomparable worlds of music – ignited the fire of inspiration. He wrote a Piano Quintet, so ‘modern’ that it was ignored by his teachers and could only be tape-recorded in secret, during a nightly session with friends. Later, Chen used his experience as a professional viola player in the Beijing Symphony Orchestra (1976-80) to write a conventional but brilliant Violin Concerto (1985), in which he combined elements of Western serialism with the percussive sonorities and melisma of Chinese opera. This concerto, his graduation piece, was highly praised in Beijing, but within a few days after its premiere, Chen Xiaoyong had already left China.

Supported by Yang Liging, he had written a letter to Ligeti, and sent him his Piano Quintet. Naturally, he was not the only young composer who wanted to become Ligeti’s student. Ligeti would regularly work his way through huge piles of young talents’ scores, to select the few works of genuine interest. Fortunately, he took notice of Chen’s quintet, and invited Chen to come to Hamburg. Ligeti taught him for several years, and supported him financially. The maestro was impressed by the first work which Chen wrote in Germany, a String Quartet (1986-87). It was performed and awarded a first prize in Donaueschingen in 1987.

Chen Xiaoyong’s music, like Tan Dun’s, can be described as a continuous play of light and darkness, of timbral shades and tiny variations in pitch. Not surprisingly, Chen Xiaoyong is a respectable guqin player. But unlike Tan Dun, whose music is often violent, theatrical and frequently marked by persistent rhythms, Chen Xiaoyong’s music is introvert, austere, more tightly structured and far more complex in nature, betraying his deep involvement in Western European music. Chen Xiaoyong is actually still wrestling to find his own voice. In his String Trio (1987-88), the impact of Ligeti and Scelsi is too obvious. Some of his recent pursuits are more promising. In 1989, Chen wrote a fine and elegant ‘Duet for Violin and Zheng’, (premiered by himself and his Japanese wife, who is a zheng player), and he recently finished an ambitious work for orchestra, Die (1988-92).55 Together with colleagues, some of them ex-pupils of Ligeti like himself, he has founded a Studio for Computer Music in Hamburg. It will be interesting to see how Chen’s future explorations in this field compare with those of his Chinese contemporaries in France.

THE ‘FRENCH CONNECTION’

Needless to say, Paris is at the heart of the new music scene in France. Actually, this was where most Chinese composers headed once they started coming to Europe in the early 1980s.

55 Premiered in Baden-Baden, 5 June 1992. Other recent works are Guàn jù, for 16-part choir (1987), San Jie, for Chinese Orchestra (1990-91) and Yün, for soprano and 11 instruments (1991). Yün will be premiered in Cologne, in October (1992). Chen Xiaoyong is active in the newly founded Gesellschaft für neue Musik Hamburg, which will organize its first festival in 1993. For a good introduction to Chen and his music, see the programme book of the Donaueschingen Musiktagen 1987, pp.35-36, where the composer wrote about himself: ‘Chen Xiaoyong’.
A forerunner of the young generation was the female composer Tona Scherchen-Hsiao (b.1938), a daughter of the conductor Hermann Scherchen and the composer Hsiao Shu-sien. She was actually born in Switzerland but spent most of her youth (1949-60) in China, learning Chinese music and playing the pipa at the Conservatories of Beijing and Shanghai. Back in Europe, she studied with Henze, Messiaen and Ligeti, and began to write sophisticated and complex music, not unlike that of Chou Wen-chung, but distinctly French in orientation.

Her achievements have been overshadowed in recent years by the adventures of some composers of the younger generation, notably by Chen Qigang, currently one of the leading figures in new Chinese music. Chen Qigang is respected as a prominent composer not only in France but all over Europe. He was the first of a steady stream of young Chinese artists coming to Paris from 1984 onwards. Here is a brief list:

Chen Qigang (b.1955, Shanghai)
Li Ying (b.1956, Tianjin)
Liu Bin
Mo Wuping (b.1959, Beijing)
Xu Shuya (b.1961, Jilin)
Xu Yi (b.1963, Nanjing)
Zhang Haofu
Zhang Xiaoafu (b.1959, Jilin)

Some of these artists have lived in Paris for years. They have adopted French features in their music – the influences ranging from Debussy to Boulez, from Fauré to Tristan Murail. Irreverently, one might refer to them as the ‘French connection’, although they would be certain to protest such a label. Certainly their formal careers run parallel in many ways. Li Ying56, Xu Yi57, Mo Wuping58 and Xu Shuya all started their careers at the Ecole Normale de Musique. The last two, who came from Shanghai in 1988-89, went on as students of Ivo Malec at the National Conservatory. It was Malec who first roused their interest in electronic music. Zhang Xiaoafu, from Beijing, followed the same route.

In recent years, the studios of IRCAM have become a focal point for Chinese wishing to experiment in electronic and computer music – something which is utterly

56 Li Ying is the daughter of Li Huade, a well-known conductor and director of the Central Conservatory in Beijing. From 1981, she studied at the Central Conservatory with the conservative composer Shi Fu, finishing her education already in 1983, in a special crash course accessible only to children of talented parents (!) She came to Paris in 1985 and studied for some time with Jacques Castérède and with the Japanese composer Yoshihisa Taira. Her main interests are in (romantic) orchestral works. Her most ambitious piece is Caprice du Shan Gui for orchestra (1986).
57 Xu Yi studied composition with Chen Mingzhi at the Shanghai Conservatory. She graduated in 1986. Among her early works are various chamber pieces for traditional instruments, such as A fathomless interval across infinity (1984), Xu Su (Empty Valley) for trio (1986) and Han shan si, for soprano voice, dizi, erhu and guqin (1986), both of which won prizes in Shanghai. She also wrote a Symphony (1986) for Western orchestra. Nei dong (‘Internal moving’) for soprano, violin, clarinet and piano (1987) and Tao I for Western ensemble (1991) were played at women composers’ festivals in Washington and in The Netherlands. Other recent works include a String Quartet ‘Pour l’Erreur’ (1989), ‘Seul(e)’, for clarinet solo, strings and percussion (1989), ‘Apésanteur’ for flute, 2 voices, 2 percussion players and strings (1990) and Jiu Gong for strings (1990). Xu Yi’s music is generally reflective and quiet in character, and often influenced by Taoist philosophy.
58 Mo Wuping studied composition with Luo Zhongrong in Beijing. He was a student of the Central Conservatory from 1983 to 1988. His string quartet ‘Sacrificial Rite in Village’ (1987) won a prize at the World Music Days in Hong Kong in 1988, and was later performed in Tokyo and in Amsterdam, by the Arditti Quartet. Fan I, for male voice and ensemble (1991), won a prize at the Asian Festival of Arts in June, 1991, in Sendai (Japan). Other works include an ‘Overture’, for voice and orchestra (1988), ‘For Violin Solo’ (1991) and Ao, for bassoon, harp, percussion and double bass (1992). His recent works show a sophistication and powerfulness of expression that definitely earn him a place on the rostrum of true innovators of Chinese music. He is a splendid vocal performer of his own music.
impossible in their own country. Before continuing our survey of Chinese composers in France, let us briefly consider the general impact of this particular genre of music on China.

CHINESE COMPUTER MUSIC?
The question mark is justified, not because computer music is essentially a Western invention, but because mainland Chinese have had very few opportunities so far to experiment in this field. The East Asian involvement in electroacoustic music probably dates from the mid-1950s and started in Japan with the founding of the NHK studio in 1954. A limited number of analog synthesizers found their way to other Asian countries in the late 1960s and 1970s, but most of the electronic compositions created in this period were taped pieces, using live sounds, or live performances in which the sounds of the players were amplified and transformed. Only a handful of East Asian composers have shown real enthusiasm for electronic music. Takemitsu and Mayazumi in Japan created some taped pieces in the 1960s. More recently, Suk-Hi Kang (Korea) and Lam Man-yee (Hong Kong) have begun to explore the possibilities of genuine computer-steered sound technology.

Mainland China only entered this field in the early 1980s, when digital synthesizers became available in Beijing and Shanghai. Synthesizers became popular almost overnight. They were employed mainly in pop and popular music, and only haltingly found their way to avant garde music, because of the costs involved. Commercial studios of light music could easily afford to pay for the instruments, but composers at music conservatories couldn’t.

Zhao Xiaosheng already dabbled with synthesizer music during his stay in America (1981-1984) but lost his interest after his return to Shanghai, where no sophisticated equipment was available.

The situation was different in Beijing. There were attempts, at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, to set up a genuine studio for computer music with support from the Australian Ministry of Culture. Two lecturers at the University of Sydney, Ian Fredericks and Martin Wesley-Smith, went to China in 1986 to install a Fairlight computer on behalf of the Australian government. They also taught a handful of students how to use it. China appeared to be interested and actually wanted to contribute to this first professional computer music studio on the Mainland by installing more synthesizers and a Macintosh computer, but it seems that the initiative was thwarted by the Tiananmen massacre and subsequent events in 1989.

Nevertheless, a number of young composers in Beijing did write electronic music, even before this period. They mostly worked with synthesizers borrowed from pop musicians. Chen Yuanlin’s Hao (1986) and Niwa buntan (1986) and Zhu Shirui’s ‘Goddess’ (1984) can be quoted as examples.

The latter piece employs as many as seven synthesizers, according to Zhu the entire population of synthesizers in Beijing at the time when it was written. At the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing, too, some composers began to use synthesizers in their music. Jin Xiang (b.1935) wrote various tone poems for orchestra including synthesizers, such as Chao Xueqing, Hong lou fixiang (both composed in 1989) and

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59 Zhu discovered them in the possession of friends and colleagues. He borrowed the instruments in turn, taught himself how to play them, and finally managed to bring all of them together in several performances of improvised music, together with friends. Local audiences, eager to hear the synthesizers, were enthusiastic. The outcome of Zhu’s explorations in this field was the piece ‘Goddess’, premiered in September 1984. It was probably the first composed piece of electronic music ever to be played in a concert of ‘serious’ music in China. The exceedingly sketchy score and a tape of this concert were eventually taken to Australia, where the piece was re-edited and re-arranged with the help of advanced music computers and sound synthesis modules in Australia by Chan Kam-Biu, a music student from Hong Kong. Zhu Shirui was not involved in the editing and never heard the result!
Mo Wuping, vocal performer of his own music.

*Nüwa* (1990). Attempts to use previously taped sounds in combination with live music, or to create electronic effects by attaching contact microphones to instruments or other sound sources, were very limited. This was mainly due to the poor quality of the available equipment – usually locally manufactured walkman recorders.

None of the above-mentioned works has attracted much attention abroad. In these works, the composers are still mainly in the process of discovering basic possibilities of relatively unsophisticated means of sound reproduction.

At present, apart from the widely used, inexpensive digital synthesizers employed in popular music (mostly Yamaha and Rowland), electroacoustic forces available in the Mainland are still very limited. I fear that Mainland Chinese academic composers will hardly be able to profit from any future revolutions in audio engineering. The equipment will be too expensive. Since avant-garde music is hardly supported by the Chinese government, they cannot rely on cultural subsidies. Perhaps only very
successful pop singers and other commercial artists in China – usually backed by recording studios – will be able to buy new and more costly technology in future.

The one possible exception are Chinese composers who went abroad. Some of them can make use of splendid facilities, such as those at IRCAM in Paris. Any genuine development in the field of electroacoustic composition is likely to take place outside the People’s Republic, unless economic and political change creates an entirely different situation in China in the future.

Composers like Zhang Xiaofu, Zhang Hao-fu, Xu Yi, Xu Shuya and Chen Qigang have all worked with the computer music facilities of IRCAM or the National Conservatory. Xu Shuya, in particular, has been most active in this field. In 1990, he wrote Taiyi, a dynamic and energetic 5-minute piece for tape, based on electronically transformed sounds of the xiao (vertical bamboo flute), played by Xu himself. The moments of attack, when a tone is about to be produced on the flute, were used as primary materials. They were multiplied and amplified, resulting in a very percussive piece of music. In 1991, Xu wrote a more introvert sequence to this piece, Taiyi II, for flute solo and tape. Both works attest to Xu Shuya’s craftsmanship in this field, and his great enthusiasm for it.

Xu counts his teacher Ivo Malec, but also York Höller and Bernard Parmegiani among his major inspirations. He hopes to continue his adventures in electronic music in future, drawing new materials from Chinese opera and folk music.

Xu Shuya has also demonstrated a great technical mastery in handling more conventional forces, in works like Choc, for four cello’s (1989), Dongba (1990) and Chute en Automne (1991), both for instrumental ensemble. The sheer complexity of these works is reminiscent of Brian Ferneyhough. Their brilliance may disappoint Western listeners who expect works by Chinese composers to sound (superficially) ‘Chinese’. Like Xu Yi, Xu Shuya draws major inspiration from Taoism, even with regard to musical sounds, but his philosophical ideas are translated primarily in terms of Western technique.

Among Chinese composers, I find it hard to think of an equivalent to Xu Shuya when it comes to the complexity of his scores, but complexity has never been an aim in itself for Xu Shuya. His early works, written in China, show a preference for lyrical and melancholic moods – ‘autumn’ being an ever recurring theme in their titles. His recent music is sometimes more dramatic and energetic in nature.

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60 Zhang Hao-fu is originally from Beijing. He came to Paris from Brussels (Belgium), where he studied for several years. Recently, Zhang’s String Quartet (1991) was premiered in Brussels.

61 B. Parmegiani, composer of electronic music at GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) in Paris.

62 Xu Shuya was born in 1961 in Jilin, in northern China. His father is a traditional opera composer, his mother a singer. He took cello lessons and studied composition at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (1979-1983), where Ding Shande and Zhu Jian’er were his most important teachers. He worked
The works of Zhang Xiaofu appear to be more reflective, inclined towards New Age, experimental jazz or even rock music. His Yīn, ‘Poème musical fantastique’ for xiao and synthesizers (1988), may occasionally remind listeners of the world of Jan Garbarek or that of Terry Riley.63

Only recently, Chen Qigang, too, has begun to explore the possibilities of electronic music. At the time of writing, I have not yet heard the results, but his achievements in other fields certainly raise expectations. Chen told me he has suddenly become very enthusiastic about computer music, somewhat to his own astonishment.

CHEN QIGANG

More than any other Chinese composer in Paris, Chen Qigang has surprised audiences with a distinctly audible ‘French’ flavour in his music, a delicacy of instrumentation directly inherited from Ravel or Debussy, and a familiar kind of melancholy that will certainly appeal to listeners with romantic aspirations. The instrumental colours and the pensive melos of the music are largely his own. Moreover, it is not difficult to distinguish oriental elements in his works. It appears that Chen Qigang has succeeded in reinforcing the meaning of romanticism in Chinese music without lamely reverting to Western stereotypes of the past.

Nothing in Chen Qigang’s childhood in Beijing seemed to point in the direction of an artistic talent or a future career in music. Chen was the son of a well-known calligrapher, but not exactly a talent in drawing or in calligraphy himself. He learned to play the piano and the clarinet, was impressed by a musical performance by young children at the Central Conservatory of Music, decided he wanted to go there, and was eventually accepted as a student, much to the surprise of his parents. Even his classmates – Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Ye Xiangang, Chen Yi, Zhou Long and others – did not think of him as a composer. He was perhaps more of a linguistic genius; he had a respectable knowledge of French and English long before any of his colleagues learned to speak any foreign language.

as a lecturer at the same institute before coming to Paris in December 1988. Among his early works are a Violin Concerto (1982), a String Quartet (1982), a Cello Concerto (1984), as well as the exquisite ‘Waiting in autumn’ for 3 flutes, string quartet and 52 string instruments (1985) and an ambitious symphony, ‘La Courbe’ (1986). While these works betray a wide range of influences, from Debussy to Ligeti, and from Stravinsky to Takemitsu, they also attest to Xu Shuya’s astonishing control of Western media.

63 Zhang Xiaofu played bassoon and erhu (Chinese fiddle) in local orchestras in Changchun (Jilin province) before coming to Beijing in 1978. He studied composition at the Central Conservatory with Wu Zaqiang, graduated in 1983, and continued his education in Paris from 1989 onwards, taking lessons from Yoshihisa Taara and Ivo Malec. His recent compositions include ‘Three Odes to the Spring’ for bamboo flute solo and Chinese orchestra (1988), a String Quartet (1989) and Xuan, five pieces for soprano, clarinet and percussion (1990). In China, he also wrote some large-scale works for Western orchestra and film and theatre music.
While the others wrote avant-garde pieces that shocked Chinese audiences in the early 1980s, Chen composed almost nothing, except romantic miniatures and one orchestral piece. Partly guided by his teacher Luo Zhongrong, he concentrated on technique, on harmony and counterpoint, feeling that he still lacked the 'scientific' knowledge to write a genuine modern piece of music.

Chen went to France in 1984 and began to study with a number of influential composers. An important event for him was his subsequent encounter with Olivier Messiaen, who became his teacher between 1984 and 1988, and an ardent supporter of Chen's music. Chen developed a personal friendship with the maestro and spent some of his summer holidays at Messiaen's home.

The works which Chen wrote in France show an almost 'logical' evolution and progress, each work representing a clear step forward. Le Souvenir for flute and harp (1985) underlines his affinities with French impressionism. Yi for clarinet and string quartet (1986) was his first genuine exploration of Western contemporary techniques, a surprisingly concise and energetic piece, but regarded by Chen as a 'study' because it mainly reflected established trends. Voyage d'un Rêve for sextet (1987) appeared to bridge the two worlds of lyrical impressionism and contemporary instrumental brilliance, as explored in his previous pieces. The work was a conscious homage to Debussy, but also an attempt to move away from all-too-conspicuous 'avant-garde' gestures. This piece won a prize in Darmstadt.

Yuan, for large orchestra (1988, the title means 'Origins'), was his first essay in modern orchestral writing, in which he tried to recreate the sensibility and timbral finesse of his chamber pieces on the much larger canvas of the symphony orchestra. He added some Chinese percussion instruments, but only a well-informed listener would discern 'Chinese' elements in the very complex score. Yuan was stronger and more concise than any of his previous pieces, and also less overtly 'romantic'. By now, his overriding interest in timbral variety was more than evident in the magic of his instrumentation. He further explored this direction in Lumieres de Guangling, for instrumental ensemble (1989), and he reached new heights in Poème Lyrique, for baritone and ensemble (1990). Lumieres was primarily inspired by images (of a film), which suggested harmonic and timbral colours to the composer, a union of sound and pictures that was new for this composer.

But arguably the most fortunate union in Chen Qigang's music was that of music and words, as realized in his Poème Lyrique. For this piece, he drew inspiration from classical Chinese poetry and from vocal techniques used in Chinese opera. The music was a profound expression of the feelings caused by separation—a double separation in this case, involving human beings, but also the enormous distance that separated Chen Qigang from his native land.

He managed to bring these elements together in a piece of perfect unity, in which Chinese and Western elements are no longer discernible as separate ingredients. The ensemble-writing leaves no doubt about his superb command of Western forces. Chen found an excellent performer for the work in the baritone Shi Kelong, a Chinese living in Paris. Shi is well-versed both in Western and in Chinese operatic vocal techniques. But subsequent performances of the piece with other soloists—amongst which one

64 Ivo Malec, Claude Ballif, Betsy Jolas and Jacques Castérède. He also followed courses at IRCAM and with Franco Donatoni in Siena (Italy). Several of his works were awarded prizes in international composition contests held in France, Darmstadt, and Trieste. He received scholarships from the International Nadia Boulanger foundation and from SACEM (1989). Among his most recent works are Feu d'ombres for soprano saxophone solo and ensemble of wind instruments (1991), as well as a work for flute and orchestra (1991) and a work for instruments and electronics prepared at IRCAM (1991-92).
Polish countertenor – prove that the solo part is also accessible to non-Chinese singers.\textsuperscript{65}

In Poème Lyrique – revised and baptized Poème Lyrique II in 1991 – Chen Qigang has liberated himself from his Western examples (Fauré, Debussy, Messiaen, Ligeti), retaining in terms of technique and expressiveness what is needed to define his own, unique idiom. While maintaining that he does not want to be primarily a ‘Chinese’ composer, his music has almost imperceptibly grown closer to the cultural traditions of his Asian past. In the handwriting of his scores, there is more than a cursory trace of the calligraphic talent of his father (see Chime no.2, 1990, p.64).

Moreover, his aesthetic opinions are remarkably close to those expressed in the Confucian classics. His concept of beauty encompasses classical melodic eloquence, grandeur, dignity, a harmonious spirit and the absence of harsh, ‘vulgar’ sounds or any undue excitement. His music can be powerful and dramatic, loud and fast, but it is never theatrical, raw, folky, or exaltedly ‘primitive’ like Tan Dun’s. Chen and Tan Dun are at opposite ends of a scale which shows the tremendous range of possibilities offered by the spiritual union of Western and Chinese musical ideas.

Chen distances himself from certain academic trends in European music, notably from serialism and from the tremendous impact of a composer like Boulez in France. In a recent letter, he stated: ‘I don’t like to choose a position between Orient and Occident, rationalism and irrationalism, nationalism and internationalism; I rather prefer to retain from each whatever benefits me, anything that can help me in finding my personal style. I feel that I increasingly possess the courage to refuse to respond to musical fashion, especially here in Paris, that capital city of cultural snobbery. It has been difficult for me to find that courage.’\textsuperscript{66}

His recent successes as a composer have proved him right. He is much praised in France and Germany. Last year, his music was performed for the first time in the United States, by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Benjamin. Benjamin is another very successful student of Messiaen and a friend of Chen. There are more than cursory similarities between the worlds of the two composers, especially where their command of instrumental colours is concerned. Needless to say, ‘colour’ was the magic word in the entire oeuvre of Messiaen, and it may well have been the reason for this master to be so proud of these two students of his...

CHINESE ARTISTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Naturally, Chinese composers have found their way to many other parts of the world. Let me name just a few: Huang Anjun and Wang Haiping in Canada, Sun Yi (b.1954) and Chu Wanghua (b.1941, Yixing) in Australia, Mei Hongfu in Holland, Yao Henglu (b.1951, Beijing) in England, Da Pingqiu in Finland and Wang Yanqiao in Japan. Some have identified themselves so much with local traditions that they were totally absorbed by them. This is especially true of some artists currently living in Russia, such as Chen Baohua (b.1937, Beijing) and Zuo Zhen’guan (b.1945, Shanghai), who became part of the Soviet ‘music-for-the-masses’ tradition.

There may be many others. In general, these artists have not been able to earn reputations comparable to those of their colleagues in America and Europe.

\textsuperscript{65} Two recordings on CD have been planned for release in the autumn of 1992, one by the ensemble 2E2M in France, one by the Nieuw Ensemble in Amsterdam. Shi Kelong will be the vocal soloist in both versions. The French CD will contain more works by Chen Qigang, the Dutch one (on the label Etcetera) will include recent compositions by other Chinese composers: Mo Wuping (Fan), Guo Wenjing (She Hua), Xu Shuya (Chute en Automne) and Qu Xiaosong (Yi). These works were all premiered in Amsterdam in the spring of 1991.

\textsuperscript{66} From a letter to the author, dated 8 September 1990.
One possible exception is Huang Anlun, a composer who has adopted features of Prokofiev, Hindemith, Bartók and others in his own music. Like Yang Liqing, he was among the first Chinese composers to go abroad after the Cultural Revolution. He went to Toronto in 1980 and later studied with Jacob Druckman at Yale University. His list of works is impressive, including several operas, three ballets, two oratorios, many orchestral works and concertos, as well as piano solos and chamber music. His style is conservative and firmly dependent on Western examples. He has been widely performed in Asia and in the West, notably in America and Canada, where many of his works were premiered.

JULIAN YU

One other exception is Julian Yu, a composer from Beijing now living in Victoria in Australia. He is among the few young Chinese composers who studied in Japan — he was a pupil of Joji Yuasa in the early 1980s. Later, he settled in Australia and took on the Australian nationality. In Tanglewood, in 1988, he studied with Hans Werner Henze and Oliver Knussen. His musical style is firmly rooted in Western avant garde, the influences ranging from Scriabin to Takemitsu.

The idea for one of his recent orchestral works, the 10-minute ‘Great Ornamented Fuga Canonica’ (1988), came to him while he was researching the evolution and development of melody in traditional Chinese music. He tried, in his own words, to transplant the ‘richness and variety of ornamentation of traditional Chinese melodies’ to the medium of the Western orchestra, while using a theme from Bach’s ‘Musical Offering’ as basic material. As far as I can see, he only adopted a universal principle of folk improvisation to develop this material. The way in which people in China learn to sing or play folk music, first by imitation, then by improvising until they are able to embellish a tune and transform it in their own, individual way, is not necessarily different from the process of learning folk music in other parts of the world. Lawrence Whiffin’s conclusion that, by applying this method, the composer effectively blends ‘characteristic Chinese idioms with European atonality’ does not make sense to me. ‘Chinese idiom’ to me implies the use of typical Chinese intervals, typical Chinese ornaments or rhythms, but I can detect nothing of that kind in the ‘Fuga Canonica’. Ultimately, the point is a theoretical one, since the final product should speak for itself, and the origin of its materials should not bother the listener.

67 Huang Anlun was born in 1949 in Guangzhou, son of the Chinese conductor Huang Feili. He began his education in Beijing, at the Central Conservatory (1961-1968). After teaching himself modern harmony and counterpoint and after taking lessons with Chen Zi, he moved to the University of Toronto in Canada in 1980. Later, he went on to study with Lothar Klein in London and with Jacob Druckman at Yale University, at the same institute where his father Huang Feili had once been taught by Paul Hindemith. In 1982, he wrote a romantic Piano Concerto for the pianist Joseph Banowetz, who had become a personal friend. The concerto was recorded on CD in Hong Kong (‘First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival 1986’, HK 8.240442). Other recent works are an opera, Yue Fei (1985), a Brass Trio (1985), a Toccata in D for 30 cellos (1986), and the ‘Eastern Cantata’ for unaccompanied choir (1986).

68 Julian Yu was born in Beijing in 1957 as Yu Jingjun. He studied composition at the Central Conservatory in Beijing and then joined the teaching staff there. From 1980 to 1982, he studied in Tokyo with Joji Yuasa and Schin-ichiro Ikebe. In 1985 he settled in Australia. His music won several international prizes, including the Koussevitzky Tanglewood Composition Prize (1988), the 35th Premio Musicale Citta di Trieste (1988) and the 10th Irino Prize (1989). His works are published by Universal Edition. Recently, his puppet music theatre ‘The White Snake’ (1990), commissioned by Hans Werner Henze, was performed at the New Music Theatre Festival in Munich in Germany. Last year, he won Australia’s prestigious Paul Lowin Award for orchestral works, for his 21-minute piece Hsiang Wen, ‘Propitious Filigreed Cloud’ (1991). For a brief introduction to the composer, written by Julian Yu himself, see ‘Tradition, Ethnic Integration and Contemporary Composition’, in: Sounds Australian, Winter 1991, pp.25-27.

The ‘Great Ornamented Fuga Canonica’ is neither a homage to Bach nor a tribute to Chinese tradition. The original Bach theme is there, but in augmented form and hidden behind thick layers of orchestral sound which make it unrecognizable. There are no conspicuous borrowings from Chinese music, either, but the work is a technically brilliant and impressive achievement in its own right. The music is marked by loud, sonorous, Messiaen-like exclamations in brass supported by metal percussion, and by complex sound figurations which are occasionally reminiscent of Scriabin or Richard Strauss. There are indeed moments of unabashed romanticism, in which the music of still other fin-de-siècle composers is momentarily brought back to life.

Less ambitious but perhaps more concise in expression than the ‘Fuga Canonica’ is Wu Yu, which Yu wrote in 1987. This piece is a brief and powerful exercise in orchestral dynamics and colours. Another fine work with an exquisite sense of timbre is ‘Scintillation II’, for piano, two vibraphones and glockenspiel (1987). His choral work ‘In the Sunshine of Bach’ (1990) treats a theme from ‘The Art of the Fugue’ in serialist fashion. ‘Reclaimed Prefu’ for two pianos (1989) again takes a Bach tune as its point of departure. Interestingly, as in the ‘Great Ornamented Fuga Canonica’, the final result is again closer in spirit to (late) Scriabin than to Bach.

Julian Yu has gradually established himself as one of the more promising young artists of Australia. Like Chen Qiang, he is not interested in parading as a typical ‘Chinese composer’, but characteristically, some of his best works do contain oriental elements, not so much in their structure or melodic materials but in their delicate sense of colour and of dynamic contrast.

THOSE WHO STAYED BEHIND IN CHINA

But China, not Australia or the West, should be the final chapter of this broad survey. What about the young composers who stayed behind in China, who did not or could not go abroad and had to make the best of it at home? What about the youngest generation in particular? Do they write exciting music, do they follow the road opened up to them by people like Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong?

Sadly enough, young students in China are hardly in touch with developments abroad. Tightened emigration rules make it ever more difficult for them to leave China, and increased ideological control imposes limits on the spread of new musical techniques. At the moment, there are no concerts of genuine avant-garde music in the Mainland. Young composers in China today are often just as ignorant of the outside musical world as their predecessors were ten or twelve years ago. The best thing they can do is study tapes or scores of new music which are copied and handed around privately or by sympathetic teachers.

There is no doubt that the 1989 political massacres in Beijing and elsewhere played an important role in bringing about this temporary stalemate in Chinese new musical culture. The situation may certainly change, but it is futile to make predictions.

All this is not to say that new music in China has come to a total standstill. For example, there is a large group of composers who try to maintain the newly-won level of liberty of the early 1980s in works that would not be called ‘contemporary’ in the West, but are still ‘new’ enough for China. Their position is comparable to that of their middle-aged teachers whom I described earlier. Here is a selective list of names of these composers.

Han Lankui (b.1959, Lanzhou)
Jiang Xiaopang (b.1954)
Liu Xing (b.1962)
Ma Jianping
Pan Guoxing
Shi Zhengbo (b.1957)
Wang Xilin (b.1937)
Wu Xiaoxiong (b.1955, Quanzhou)

Xu Changjun
Xu Jianqiang (b.1953, Shanghai)
Xu Jixing (b.1960, Guangxi)
Zhang Dalong (b.1955, Shanxi)
Zhang Qianyi (b.1959, Shenyang)
Zhao Guang
Zheng Bing (b.1956, Dalian)
Zou Xiangping (b.1951, Sichuan)
I refrain from providing biographical details. Most of these artists are active in local Song and Dance Troupes. Their output includes full-scale Stravinskian ballets, as well as works of well-nigh Elgarian pomposity for all sorts of official occasions. Some of them also write music for films or provide pop musicians with professional song arrangements.

In addition to this, some have written delicate and attractive ensemble pieces for traditional Chinese instruments, works which may yet win them wider audiences abroad, either in avant-garde concerts or in the realm of ‘world music’.

Xu Jianqiang’s *Dao Bai*, for *sheng*, *xiao* and *sanxian* (1986) is just one fine example of the genre, in which playing techniques and expressive means of traditional instruments are stretched to new limits.

All the same, none of these artists has drawn quite the same attention as one composer of the older generation. I am referring to Zhu Jian’er (b.1922 in Tianjin), who basically put the achievements of all the composers listed above to shame in his extraordinary Fourth Symphony (1990). This work for *dizi* (bamboo flute) solo and strings recently won the Queen Marie José prize in Geneva, Switzerland. It is a moving and powerful elegy, in an idiom reminiscent of Ligeti or Penderecki, arguably the best work that Zhu Jian’er has ever written, and one that shows that musical innovation in China is not the exclusive domain of younger composers. Zhu began his career as a romantic composer in the 1940s, but he switched to Bartók and to serialism in the 1980s and continued to modernize his style afterwards. His extraordinary development should encourage Zhu’s contemporaries – young or old – to be more daring, and to view every new creative effort as an exploration of unknown territory.

THE REMAINS OF THE “NEW WAVE”

There are still some other hopeful signs in the People’s Republic. A small group of artists might be referred to as the remains of the ‘New Wave’. Some were directly involved in the birth of a genuine avant-garde movement in China in the early 1980s. Others, only a few years younger, discovered new music in the mid-1980s, early enough to respond to it wholeheartedly before another winter of artistic freedom set in. All of them continue to write controversial pieces. Let me list the ones that I know:

Chen Qiangbin
Guo Wenjing (b.1956, Chongqing)
He Xuntian (b.1954, Sichuan)
Liu Yuan (b.1959, Hangzhou)
Quan Jihao (b.1955, Jilin)

Guo Wenjing and He Xuntian are probably the best-known composers in this list. Their music has been played abroad many times.
He Xuntian studied composition with Gao Weijie at the Sichuan Conservatory. His most popular work, *Tianlai* ‘Sounds of Nature’ (1986)\(^{70}\) is an evocative and haunting piece for seven performers, using some thirty different instruments. It is hard to think of a Western composer who wrote anything like this. Probably no one did. *Tianlai* combines elements of folk music and primitivism with a touch of suspense and a good sense of timing. The instruments were designed by the composer himself: bamboo pipes, pieces of wood or metal, drums damaged to change the timbre, a large arsenal of flutes specially tuned, and ceramic pots with holes in them. The piece was a remarkable experiment in sound colour and in spatial contrasts. It won prizes in Shanghai (1986) and in the USA (1990), and it was followed in 1987 by *Meng xi ze*, ‘Four Dreams’, an intriguing and nightmarish concerto for *erhu* and Western orchestra.

His other orchestral works of the same period, the ‘Tonal Patterns’ Symphony (1986) and ‘Telepathy’ (1988), sound as if they are much indebted to Ligeti, although the composer says he didn’t know Ligeti’s music at that time. A more recent work like ‘Phonism’, for ensemble (1990), appears to embroider on the Ligeti principle of slowly shifting timbral layers without breaking any new ground. ‘Imagine the Sound’ (1991), also for chamber ensemble, is a study in quietude; it lacks the powerful impact of his earlier pieces.

Guo Wenjing began to play the violin at the age of 11, and studied at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. He became very active in the field of film music. His musical style was deeply influenced by the folk music of Sichuan, particularly local opera and folk song, but also by Western examples. It is the voice of Shostakovich in particular that rings through Guo’s symphonic cantata *Shu Dao Nan* (1987), an elegy which mourns the general tragedies of war. But it does so in a country that still has not been able to cope, psychologically, with the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution. It is hardly a suprise that Shostakovich’s music has become so very popular in China, and that influences of his sombre and eerie style, especially that of his later symphonies – his shattering reply to the continuing atrocities of totalitarianism – can be detected in the works of a great many Chinese composers.

But it was Bartók, not Shostakovich, who had a deep and lasting impact on Guo’s style. Guo’s String Quartet ‘The River of Sichuan’ (1981-84), while showing his extraordinary craftsmanship in that genre, is suffused with Bartókian rhythms and chords, and it is the ‘Miraculous Mandarin’ which shines through in his splendid piece ‘Suspended Ancient Coffins on the Cliffs in Sichuan’, for two pianos and orchestra (1983). This exuberant work also shows a more daring and more personal Guo Wenjing; it demonstrates a new kind of sophistication through a free adaptation of elements of rural folk music. He explored this line more fully in his attractive Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1986-1987), but only found his true voice in *She Huo*, a piece for Western ensemble with added Chinese percussion (1991), which evokes the

\(^{70}\) For a technical discussion of this work and the composition theory on which it is based, cf. Si Rui - *Shiyanxing* · *Ren yi li* · *duyingfa ji qia* · *xi* *Tianlai*. In: Renmin yinyue, 1989, no.2, pp.12-13.
atmosphere of outdoor rural folk festivities. Guo is not exactly fond of the spiritual and artistic refinement of Chinese calligraphy or elite music. The philosophy of tiny gestures, of quietude, acquiescence, 'emptiness' — everything that is so often regarded as the very essence of Chinese culture — does not really appeal to him. He grew up in rural Chongqing, amidst the rough cries of boat people, the loud banging of percussion players in ritual opera. This world is brought to life again in his own pieces, in an inimitable way, with a superb command of both Western and Chinese vocal and instrumental forces that puts Guo in the forefront of contemporary composers and true innovators in Asia.\footnote{Guo Wenjing is currently a composition teacher at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. His works have won many prizes in national competitions. He has scored music for more than twenty-five Chinese films and television plays. His Prelude for piano, 'The Gorge' (1979), his Rhapsody for cello and piano, \textit{Ba} (1982), his Suite for Violin Solo (1985) as well as his String Quartet were recorded on a commercial tape by the China Record Company in 1986 (AL-56). Among his other works are 'Two Movements' for Orchestra (1983) and the symphonic poem 'Sutra Streamers' (1986).}

Chen Qiangbin and Liu Yuan are both graduates of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. They impressed audiences at the Shanghai Spring Festival in 1991 with relatively unconventional works, Chen with a Violin Concerto (1990) that appeared to combine influences of Prokofiev, Schnittke and Shostakovich, and Liu Yuan with a 30-minute Symphonic Rhapsody (1988-89).

Unfortunately, I have not been able to hear the Rhapsody, or study its score. Liu Yuan has fine-tuned his technical abilities in a broad repertoire of pieces, including opera, piano music, symphonic works and works for Chinese instruments. He wrote some attractive works for a small ensemble, where he combines a Chinese sparsity of lines with an unusual intensity of expression, notably \textit{Gui yi} for two guqin, xiao and baritone (1987) and 'Postlude of Symphony no. Zero', a dynamic piece for cello and two percussion players (1989).
Quan Jihao, finally, is a composer of Korean descent. In Shanghai, he studied with Wang Jianzhong and Yang Liqing. Recently, he joined the teaching staff of the Music Conservatory of Shenyang. His early works, including a Violin Concerto (1982) and various works for piano solo, are influenced by Bartók, serialism and occasionally by Spanish (!) music, but he gradually developed a strong interest in his Korean roots. This can be heard in his recent chamber works, such as his Quintet for Chinese Instruments Zong (1987) and Yao sheng tan yin (‘Looking into the secret of the vibrato’) for Chinese ensemble (1988), as well as in some of his orchestral music, such as his Fantasy Shan hun (1990). His style sometimes resembles that of Isang Yun, especially in his very introvert and ‘empty’ chamber pieces, but Quan Jihao is a strong musical personality, whose future development should be followed carefully. It is regrettable that he has had so very few chances to have his works played abroad. He merits greater attention.\(^2\)

THE YOUNGEST GENERATION
In principle, the youngest generation in Mainland China should have the final word. But why is it that we hear so very little of them? Do they lack courage? I hardly think so. Is there no real talent left? I don’t think this is the case. Perhaps it was the incredible contrast between the Cultural Revolution and the freedom of the early 1980s which prompted the generation of Tan Dun to perform miracles. The experience was obviously not the same for their younger colleagues, who never witnessed the Maoist era themselves: perhaps they are incapable of matching the achievements of Tan’s generation simply because they lack the powerful incentive, the ‘shock treatment’ that their predecessors received?

\(^2\) Quan’s Suite for piano solo ‘Long and Short’ (1985) was recorded on CD: ‘The Dream of Heaven, New Piano Music from China’, produced on the German label Wergo in 1988, (WER 601238-50).
Perhaps. Opinions are divided on this subject among Chinese composers themselves. Many are speculating about their future position in history. The minds of all these artists have been violently tossed by political upheavals, cultural doctrines, and a tremendous tidal wave of Western music that reached them almost overnight. How can they not wonder about what they are, and where they will go?

Chen Yi, Zhou Long and Chen Qigang regard themselves mainly as representatives of a "transitional generation". They believe that only future generations will obtain sufficient knowledge and expressive power to really transform Chinese music and discover new vistas. They are convinced that more time is needed for such development. Others disagree. Chen Xiaoyong in Hamburg, for example, reacts: ‘We, a transitional generation? That is just nonsense. What sort of music are we supposed to write, then? Transitional music? There is no meaning in that at all. One should be able to find one’s own voice, and to write works that speak for themselves, just like composers elsewhere do.’

There is no question of talent having simply dried up in the People’s Republic. In previous articles, I have already mentioned a few young talents: Zhu Lixi (b.1961, Shanghai), Hao Weiya and Fang Quanyi, the last two being students at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. I could add still other names. Jia Guoping (b.1964, Shanxi), for example, a very skilled young composer now living in Beijing. Yang Liqin in Shanghai currently guides some promising students of Korean descent: Qin Wenchen, Soong Pier-an73, Wu Aiguo74 and Yin Mingwu. Some of them took part in last year’s Shanghai Spring Festival with various chamber works.75

Needless to say, a lot still depends on the circumstances. In China, it may simply not be the right time to risk any real experiments in music. Young students who cross the boundaries of what is currently accepted in Chinese music conservatories as ‘proper music’, risk expulsion. They may lose all future career perspectives as composers or as musicians. Sadly enough, the absolute limit, in terms of ‘modernity’, currently appears to be twelve-tone music. Let me quote the extraordinary case of one student who tried to go beyond that limit and got into serious trouble.

THE SOUP OF LIFE

Yu Qiang (b.1964, Sichuan), a student of Yang Liqin, recently carried out a musicotheatrical experiment somewhat in the spirit of John Cage. As a consequence, he received a severe reprimand from the Shanghai Conservatory, and his chances to find a job as a composer in Shanghai have been reduced to zero. The turmoil which his initiative caused among the leadership of the Music Conservatory seems out of proportion with the actual purport of his experiment.

Yu described his project as an example of ‘action art’, xingwei yishu. Last winter, he gathered a number of friends and a handful of onlookers in the garage of a waste-

73 Soong Pier-An is also known in Shanghai under his Chinese name An Chengbi. He was born in Heilongjiang in 1965. He studies composition with Yang Liqin and Zhao Xiaosheng. He has written many orchestral and chamber works. Both his septet Mingwu, and San Jo for violin and piano won prizes in Chinese composition contests. His music combines serialist influences with the quietude and meditative character of much Korean traditional music. There is also a touch of Messiaen in his works.

74 Wu Aiguo has written various ‘impressionist’ pieces for Chinese instruments. His piece Meng (‘Dream’), for sheng (Chinese mouth organ) and ensemble is a work of sustaining interest.

75 Their music drew little attention during the Festival, but only because there is hardly a concert tradition of chamber music for Western instruments in China. Qin Wenchen’s ‘2-1-2’ for two cellos, piano and two percussion players (1990), Soong Pier-An’s Mingwu for septet (1989) and some works by Wu Aiguo and Yin Mingwu all demonstrate technical abilities which put these students on a par with composition students in the West. Some may be talented enough to secure themselves a position in the international avant-garde circuit in the near future.
disposal factory in Shanghai. The Music Conservatory had forbidden his project, which was originally intended to take place on the roof of the Conservatory, so Yu Qiang decided to carry it out in secret, in a different place. Someone later reported his activities to the Conservatory.

The event took place on the evening of 27 December 1991. It was freezing cold. The garage where Yu and his friends met was not heated, so everyone present wore thick overcoats. Yu decorated a cleared space in the centre of the garage with music paper, which was hung on ropes. There were fragments of Beethoven, bits of traditional guqin music, scraps of Haubenstock-Ramati, of He Xuntian, even some pages of Yu's own compositions. All this music could also be heard on tape, through loudspeakers. The garage floor was strewn with tiny clay and wooden musical instruments, made by a close friend of Yu, a visual artist.

In the course of several hours, Yu Qiang conducted a strange ritual which he called '1/8' (quaver note), and in which some friends participated. The audience – a handful of students and some factory workers – observed it all in bemused silence. While the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony pounded through the loudspeakers, the music paper was plucked from the ropes and quietly torn to pieces. It was collected in a big pot and boiled in water. Ginger, soya bean oil, pepper and other ingredients were added to transform the wet paper mash into a spicy Sichuanese soup – a symbol for the 'soup of life'. When the soup was ready, it was eaten with spoons. Some of the onlookers spontaneously participated in all this.

Yu and his colleagues then began playing Chinese chess. Some also tried their luck in painting at calligraphy, or played some music on the tiny ceramic instruments scattered over the floor.

Towards the end of the ritual, the beautifully made instruments were crushed with big hammers and hack-knives. The remains of the soup were poured out over it, and the wet mass on the floor was kneaded and moulded into a recognizable form. Yu Qiang
first made it into something resembling the Chinese character ren (human being), but the final outcome was a music note – a quaver. End of project.

The description may make it all sound like tomfoolery. But far from treating it as a joke, Yu Qiang regards the project as a sincere homage to the music he loves and to Chinese philosophy. When I met Yu in Shanghai last April, he went to great lengths to explain the meaning and underlying Taoist and Buddhist principles of the whole ritual, down to the tiniest details.76 Yu’s project ‘1/8’ was criticized by the Shanghai Conservatory because it was regarded as a ‘nihilistic’ event – one that had nothing to do with ‘serious’ music. Yu Qiang now hopes to be able to move to Beijing, where he has been invited to join the teaching staff of the Chinese Conservatory of Music. He is being helped by some older composers who have full confidence in his unorthodox mind.

Thinking of Yu’s experiment, one might say that the spirit of John Cage has found its way to China. Or perhaps it is a spirit akin to Cage, but native to China?

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**GLOSSARY OF COMPOSERS’ & THEORETICIANS’ NAMES**

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76 He also played a tape of some of his recent musical compositions, amongst others ‘A Memorial Rite’ (Ji), a partly improvised, experimental piece for cello, percussion and sheng, which he had written in 1991. The work leaves no doubt about Yu’s musical talents.
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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: Stephen Jones (SJ), Mireille Heiffer (MH), Nicholas Wheeler (NW), Richard Hayman (RH), Linda Jarvis (LJ), Wang Hong (WH), Dai Xiaolian (DX), François Picard (FP), Jo Riley (JR), Chou Wen-Chung (CWC), Laurent Aubert (LA), Jin Jingyan (JJ), Peter Crowe (PC), Zhang Weiliang (ZW), Li Xiangting (LX), Dong Ya (DY), Pan Jing (PJ), Zhao Ben (ZB), Ding Mingjuan (DM), and Shi Kelong (SK). These announcements were compiled by Antoine Schimmelpenning (AS) and Frank Kouwenhoven (FK).

overtone singing

Tran Quang Hai (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, Paris) won the Van Laurens Award at the International Congress on the Voice for his paper "The Mysteries of the Overtone Singing Style" in June 1991. He worked with Hugo Zemp on the 1989 film The Song of Harmonics, which has been awarded four international prizes. Tran Quang Hai and Hugo Zemp also co-authored the article "Recherches expérimentales sur le chant diaphonique" (Cahiers de Musiques Traditionnelles, Vol. 4; Voix; Sept. 1991). Tran Quang Hai was elected Liaison Officer for France at the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) meeting in July 1991 and has been a member of the CORD (Scientific Board of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology) since September 1991. (Source: SEM Newsletter Vol.28, No.2, March 1992).

korean minorities

Keith Howard, a scholar working at the Centre of Korean Studies of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, is planning to visit northern China later this year, for a two-months period, to investigate local music traditions of Korean minorities living inside the People's Republic. While on his fieldwork, he will be accompanied by Wu Ben, a scholar of Chinese traditional instrumental music at the Musico Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Arts in Beijing.

buddhist music in taiwan

Ms Gao Yali is a student from Taipei who recently started a doctoral study at X-Nantes University in Paris. Her dissertation focuses on buddhist music in Taiwan. She is guided by Professor Mireille Heiffner of the ethnomusicology section of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Ms Gao was sent to Paris on the recommendation of Professor Hsu Tsang-Houei. She is supported by the Taiwanese Government. (MH)

shamanic music (manchuria)

Ms. Li Lisha is currently working on a doctoral dissertation about shamanism and shaministic music in Manchuria. She is based at St. Hugh's College, University of Oxford (UK). In her research, she tries
BIBLIOGRAPHY ON MINORITY MUSIC
Nicholas Wheeler (25), a student at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, recently completed a Masters thesis titled 'A survey of material published in mainland Chinese periodicals about the music of the minority nationalities of China'. It is an annotated bibliography covering any material concerning the musics of the minority nationalities of China published in the periodicals Zhongguo Yin Yue (Music in China), Zhongguo Yin Yue Xue (Musicology in China) and Yue Qi (Musical Instruments). It covers the decade from 1981, when Zhongguo Yin Yue and Yue Qi commenced publication, through to 1991, and includes summaries of all articles in English and full translations of a selection of articles. Furthermore, it examines the attitudes of the authors towards the musics of the minority nationalities. Nicholas Wheeler is currently in Beijing to continue his research in the field of minority music, as a student at the Central Conservatory of Music. In China, he can be reached at the following address: Nicholas Wheeler, CHEP student, 6F Xinmin Dashi, No.1 Ritan dong er ji, Chaoyang qiu, Beijing shi, China. (NW)

BUDDHIST MUSIC
Stephen Jones visited China in August and September for a brief period of fieldwork in the Wutai Shan area in Shanxi Province. He is studying local Buddhist music traditions in that area, in the framework of his general research on ritual music traditions in China. He carries out his collaborative fieldwork mainly with the Music Research Institute in Beijing (Drs Xue Yibing, Wu Ben and Liu Shi) and with local branches of the Ministry of Culture. He has carried out fieldwork in China since 1986, in Hebei and Shanxi, Jiangsu, Fujian and Guangdong.

NEW MUSIC IN CHINA
Richard Hayman (New York) is currently working on a book about new music in China. He is a sinologist specialising in cultural affairs in China. Hayman has travelled extensively in China since 1980 as a lecturer, journalist and business consultant. His education includes undergraduate and graduate studies at Columbia University and the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing. As Senior Editor of the new music journal Ear Magazine, Hayman has written many articles introducing Chinese music developments to Western audiences. He has also written for such journals as Asialweek, Asia 2000 (Hong Kong), Asian Wall Street Journal, Contact (London), Tes Graph (Tokyo), People's Music (Beijing), New Aspect (Taiwan) and World Journal (Taiwan). His radio programs of Chinese music have been presented on many stations, including WKCR, WNYC, and recently he gave commentary on the acoustics of Chinese instruments on the National Public Radio program 'Sounds of Science'. For further information about his activities, contact Richard P. Hayman, 71 Leonard Street, New York 10013, USA. Tel: 212 219-0724. (RH)

POP STAR HOU DEJIAN
Linda Jarvis, a researcher currently based at the Contemporary China Centre of the Australian National University, is preparing a book on the Chinese pop singer Hou Dejian. Its working title is Banned in China: The Strange Tale of the Pop Star, Detector and Dissident Hou Dejian. It is a biography that has as its background both the historical issue of Taiwan Mainland relations and their development, and the cultural issue of the development of pop music in Taiwan and China from the late 1970s onward. Jarvis's background is in journalism, having written on both Chinese political and cultural topics for a variety of publications for more than ten years. She has had contact with Chinese musicians on both sides of the Strait (particularly pop musicians) since the late 1970s. (LJ)

GUEST LECTURES IN TAIPEI
The National Institute of the Arts (Taipei) continues to invite scholars from overseas to give guest lectures and conduct seminars for its graduate students in ethnomusicology. During the fall semester of 1991, Tran Van Khe was in residence, and this spring, for the second time, Jose Macedo. (Source: ACMR Newsletter, Vol.5, No.2, Summer 1992)
NEWS & REPORTS

REPORT ON THE CHIME FOUNDATION 1990–91
In the first year of its existence, the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research (CHIME) has rapidly established its position as a small but essential platform for scholars and students of Chinese music in the world of European ethnomusicology, sinology and anthropology. Although the foundation is definitely too small to offer substantial financial support either to research programs or to individual students, it can still stimulate on-going activities and fill certain gaps which may otherwise cause problems in research. The enthusiastic response to the CHIME newsletter (the number of subscribers in the first year quickly exceeded two hundred, although no special action was undertaken to promote our publication) shows that Chinese music studies are considered to be worthwhile by a much larger audience than we had expected. Subsequent communications – the CHIME office received more than six hundred letters over the past two years – made us aware of the actual extent of scholarly and artistic activities in the field of Chinese music, not only in Europe, but also in America, Australia and various Asian countries bordering on China.

Correspondents’ Network
The Foundation set up a network of correspondents, with major emphasis on correspondents inside China who could inform us about new publications and research activities inside the People’s Republic. We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation of all our correspondents, in particular those of our most ardent supporters in China, Wang Hong (Nanjing) and Wu Ben (Music Research Institute Beijing), whose assistance has been indispensable. In the forthcoming years, we hope to extend our network to Taiwan and Japan.

Chime Journal
From Vol. 4 onwards, our biannual publication has been entitled ‘Journal’, which more aptly covers its contents, although we also continue to widen the range and scope of our news & announcements section, and continue to attach great importance to direct field reports and practical information about research facilities, study grants, etc. At the moment, we are forming an editorial board to strengthen the academic appeal of our journal.

Lecture series and Concerts
Major activities of the CHIME Foundation, in its first year of existence, were an international lecture series on Chinese music at Leiden University in Holland (February–June 1991), with sixteen lecturers from America, Canada, China and various European countries participating; furthermore, nine concerts of folk song and instrumental music were held, as well as an international festival of guqin music in Amsterdam and Utrecht (May–August 1991) A European conference on Chinese music was held in Geneva (September 1991, as part of the annual meeting of the European Seminar of ethnomusicology), and was attended by 35 people. The lecture series in Leiden was supported by the Universities of Leiden and Amsterdam and by the Leiden University Fund (LUF).

Individual Research Projects
The Foundation also supported a number of individual research projects. Jonathan Stock in Belfast received a grant from the CHIME Foundation to support his fieldwork on local opera in Jiangsu in the spring of 1992. Professor Huang Bai and Ms Dai Xiaolian of the Shanghai Conservatory were invited to come to Holland to participate in various research and concert activities. Professor Huang received a grant from NWO, and Ms Dai was co-supported by the Foundation for the Advancement of the Cultural Relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and China. The CHIME Foundation arranged and paid accommodation for both scholars and paid for their participation in the Geneva seminar and for study trips to Great-Britain. In Holland, Ms Dai Xiaolian examined the guqin scores of the late Robert van Gulik in the library of the Sinological...
Institute in Leiden. Professor Huang supervised the research of a Dutch PhD student.

Sound Recordings
The CHIME Foundation participated or stimulated the publication of various compact discs. A CD of guqin music was published under the label 'Auvidis' in Paris (Ethnic B 8765, 1992). CHIME advised UNESCO about the publication of a CD of chudá wind and percussion music (Unesco Collection D 8208, 1992).

Contemporary Music Section
A CHIME 'contemporary music section' was founded in Amsterdam to prepare an international festival of new Chinese music and to co-operate in various concerts of Chinese avant-garde music in Holland, Germany and Italy. The proposed festival has been postponed various times but has now been scheduled for June 1994, as part of the Holland Festival.

The contemporary music section also supported a commission for an ensemble piece for Western instruments by a Chinese artist. Composer Mo Wuping from Beijing (b.1959) received a grant from the CHIME contemporary music section to write 'Fan I', a work which subsequently won the Composition Prize of the Asian Festival of Arts in Sendai (Japan), in June 1991.

Documentation Centre
At its office in Leiden, the Foundation has established a documentation centre which serves as a library for books, articles, papers, theses and dissertations on Chinese music.

Much of the library has not been catalogued yet, and most of its materials will not be publicly available before 1994, but a steady stream of students and scholars from all over Europe has already paid informal visits to the archive and has been able to make informal use of its facilities. So far, approximately one thousand books, one thousand cassettes, three hundred records, a hundred video tapes, and some five hundred scores - of the compositions of 20th-century Chinese artists have been collected. The Foundation subscribes to some fifty journals in the field of Chinese music and (general) ethnomusicology.

The rapid growth of materials puts increasing pressure on our capacities, both in terms of people and equipment. So far, we have been able to manage with volunteers and with relatively simple office equipment (two Macintosh computers, a laser printer and a xerox machine). In future we may have to professionalize our facilities and perhaps move to another building, the space for our library materials already becoming cramped.

Practical Courses
The CHIME Foundation is currently investigating the possibilities for co-operation with the Municipal Music School in Leiden in setting up theoretical and practical courses in the field of Chinese music. The Foundation hopes to extend its contacts to various Dutch university departments, the final aim being to establish an academically based research centre for Chinese music in Europe.

Future Projects
Other activities currently under review are (1) the second international CHIME seminar, to be held at the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London in 1994; (2) the publication of a general book on living music traditions in China, (3) support for various video documentaries and films about Chinese music and (4) a project to facilitate field research on rural instrumental music in northern China (supported by the Great Britain-China Centre in London).

SICHUAN OPERA IN PARIS
After a period of fieldwork in Chengdu, Sichuan province, Francois Picard (Sorbonne University) succeeded in inviting a group of Chuanju performers to come to Paris to present opera performances there in January and February 1993. The concerts are expected to present some of the best Chinese opera ever shown in Europe.

The orchestra of the Chuanju group has been limited to its core of percussion, oboes (or flutes) and voices. The instruments combine beautifullly with the superb voices. For further information, contact Dr. Francois Picard, 37 Rue Plat, 75020 Paris, France. Tel: (33)-1-48581845. (FP)

BEIJING OPERA PERCUSSION WORKSHOPS
Jo Riley (East Anglia University) is hoping to invite a group of Beijing Opera percussionists to participate in the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), to be held in the summer of 1993. There is a plan to organize special workshops to explain and teach special percussion techniques to the audience. For more information, contact Jo Riley, Prof. Pier Strasse 29, D-6506 Nackenheim, Germany. Tel: (49) 6135-8324. (JR)

COMPOSITION PRIZES
Composers Wang Ning and Fang Xiaomin won a shared first prize at the first 'Music From China' International Composition Competition recently held in New York.

Their winning works (Guo Feng, trio for di, erhu and zheng and 'Five Elements' for di, yangqin, zheng, pipa & erhu respectively) were performed at a concert at the Merkin Concert Hall in New York on October 3, 1992. (Source: Music from China Newsletter, Vol.2, No.2, Summer 1992)
CHINA RECORD COMPANY

The China Record Company publishes approximately four hundred commercial recordings of Chinese music per year. Most of these are cassettes, intended for sale inside (mainland) China, but there are also a growing number of CDs and a rapidly expanding export market which includes Europe, the United States, Australia and various other countries in the Pacific region. No less than forty per cent of the China Record Company's total production consists of recordings of traditional opera. Perhaps contrary to general expectations, tapes of Peking opera – supposedly the most popular genre of opera in China – do not sell very well; the genre is largely uneconomical. Tapes of local genres like Huangmeixi and Cantonese opera turn out to be extremely profitable, whereas the company is losing money on Peking opera. According to Liu Senmin, a senior official of the company, this is not due to miscalculations in production; it appears to be the result of a rapid decline in the popularity of Peking opera. Liu credits the success of various local opera genres partly to the contents of their stories, which he says are "closer to daily life and more recognizable to ordinary people". He adds that, unlike various local opera genres, Peking opera now mainly attracts audiences of very old people.

Until now, the final stages in the manufacturing of CDs have taken place abroad in Japanese or Korean laboratories, but in the near future the entire production process will be realized in laboratories inside China, to cut down on production costs.

The China Record Company has planned the publication of a king-sized encyclopedic series of recordings of traditional instruments, including historical recordings. Two volumes of pipa and zheng music (eight cassettes each) have already been published, while further volumes dealing with guqin...
and erhu music are now being prepared. (See under 'Sound Recordings.') (Source: Liu Senmin, general manager, China Rec. Co.)

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE DYING OUT

Women in some parts of China traditionally communicated in a secret language which they themselves developed. Chinese researchers are now about to publish an anthology of poems, stories and letters translated from nüshu. According to Chinese linguists, nüshu or 'female script' was developed more than a thousand years ago by women in Hunan Province. Unlike standard Chinese, it is a phonetic script which uses Chinese characters to indicate dialectal syllables. Chen Giguang, a retired professor in ethnic languages, thinks that women developed this script because they were excluded from education in standard Chinese. Over the years, the use of nüshu has declined severely, and the language is now virtually extinct. When the translation project started in 1980, linguists only found twelve older women in China who could read the script. Very few nüshu documents have survived because most women treasured them so much that they (literally) took them to their graves. Many women received booklets with songs and poems in nüshu as wedding presents from other women. The majority of the texts is sad, because marriage traditionally implied that the bride was to part from her friends. It was normal for a married woman to live with her in-laws and to be treated like a servant. A considerable part of the nüshu document legacy was probably lost in the 1950s and 1960s when the Communist Party organized many campaigns against tradition and superstition. According to the China Daily, nüshu was associated by many with witchcraft. (Source: China Daily; October 1991.)

WUTAI SHAN MONKS IN LONDON

In July 1992, audiences in London and Birmingham (England) had a rare opportunity to hear elderly monks from the mountain temples of Wutai Shan in Shanxi, performing their ritual music in the 'Spirit of the Earth' Festival. The festival, organized by BBC Radio 3, the South Bank Centre in London and 'Sounds like Birmingham', took place from 11 to 25 July and focussed on traditional music, dance and storytelling from four different continents. It was well-received by local audiences. Almost a thousand people attended the final concert of the Wutai Shan monks, on Thursday 23 July in London. The mountain range of Wutai Shan is in the northern province of Shanxi, some nine hours by train southwest of Beijing, followed by a further none-too-reassuring few hours' bus ride. It is one of the four sacred Buddhist mountain sites in China. It is also a popular tourist site for people trying to escape the summer heat. The mountains house a complex of magnificent temples, some of which were built in the Tang dynasty (618-906 AD).

Buddhism had been introduced to China by the first century A.D. On Wutai Shan it was thriving under the Tang, but the current ritual and its music can only be traced back with any certainty to around five hundred years ago. There are two types of Buddhism on Wutai Shan – the 'Black Temple' indigenous tradition – which was heard in Birmingham and London – and the 'Yellow Temple' (Geliupu) which is a Tibetan Lamaist sect.

Ritual music in China has weathered troubled times for over more than a century. War has been a major blow to local traditions. The Republican Period which followed the overthrow of the last imperial dynasty, the Qing, in 1911, was one of great instability, with rival warlord armies, the Japanese invasion, and the struggle between the Communists and the Nationalists all taking their toll.

When the Communists were victorious in 1949 they took still more pervasive steps to control religious practice than either the imperial or the republican governments had done. Many priests returned to the laity at this time, but some continued to perform as lay ritual specialists 'among the people'; an important part of the continuing energy of Chinese religion is observable in folk rural practice. Despite severe restrictions from about 1958 through the chaos of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the relative freedom and more peaceful conditions since around 1979 have allowed what amounts to a revival of religious practice.

A cultural gulf has opened up between the towns and the villages. While modernization has impoverished traditional cultural activity in the towns, village culture is more conservative, and the practice of ritual is still basic to everyday life, with the performing of ceremonies such as calendrical rituals for local deities, weddings and funerals. One major ritual performed by the Wutai Shan monks is the 'releasing of the flaming mouths' (fang yangkou). This is a nocturnal ritual for feeding the hungry ghosts, often at funerals, but also for the Chinese All Souls' Day in the 7th moon of the traditional lunar calendar, which is still observed by Chinese villagers. An excerpt from Fang Yangkou was performed by the Wutai Shan monks during their concerts in England.

The elderly monks all underwent the strict training found in Buddhist temples on Wutai Shan, from an early age. Some of those who returned to the laity soon after 1949 would have continued to practise among the people. After the Cultural Revolution, they had begun returning to the temples by around 1979, and have been practising there ever since.

The monks perform vocal liturgical pieces, both solo and choral, mainly consisting of hymns (zarı), gathas and incantations (dharanı) invoking the many buddha incarnations and bodhisattvas, and accompa-
MINORITY CULTURE RESCUE PROJECT

The Center for United States-China Arts Exchange (New York) is currently setting up a project to promote the continuation and development of the cultural traditions of minority nationalities in China's Yunnan Province. The organizers of this project are prompted by a sense of urgency which has emerged in Yunnan in recent times for the need to 'rescue' nationality cultures. Yunnan professionals in the field of minority culture and American and Asian specialists will co-operate in this project, and three major institutions in Kunming will be directly involved: the Nationalities Institute, the Institute of the Arts and the Prospective Nationalities Museum. Major goals of the project are (1) to provide Yunnan professionals with information on the concepts that shape modern culture; (2) to encourage the Chinese to evolve their own experiences and solutions to their own cultural problems; and (3) to develop, with the Chinese, models based on locally realized projects for similar endeavours elsewhere in Yunnan, as well as in other Chinese provinces with large nationality populations.

The Center has agreed, in principle, to collaborate with the Yunnan Nationalities Affairs Commission to carry out a 'joint plan on Yunnan Nationalities Cultures'. This plan will be designed in multiple-year cycles. It aims at an immediate participation of people in rural districts. The Center plans to draw upon relevant experiences in cultural development in countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and India. Specialists representing these countries will be sent to Yunnan, while Yunnan specialists will be sent to these Asian countries. For more information, contact the Center for US-China Arts Exchange, 423 West 118th Street, 1E, New York, NY 10027, USA. (CWG)

CHINA ANTHROPOLOGY NETWORK, EUROPE

In 1991, Professor Göran Aljmer (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) took the initiative to set up a network of European scholars involved in anthropological research in China. He wrote a letter which aroused the interest of more than fifty scholars who could be said to be active in this field. Although their work does not always take place within the narrow confines of institutionalized anthropology, they all share an interest in a local perspective on Chinese society and culture, an interest which they often pursue through personal fieldwork among the people they study.

The 'Göran Aljmer European China Anthropology
Network' was set up to provide a flexible mechanism to students of Chinese anthropology to exchange information, facilitate co-operation and take initiatives. A first, provisional meeting took place at the Sinological Institute in Leiden (The Netherlands) at the end of February 1992. Some 15 members attended this meeting. An inventory of the publications and current research projects of members was undertaken, followed by the publication of a newsletter. It was decided that the network would organize meetings on an annual basis.

The first formal meeting will take place at Cambridge University (UK) in November 1992. Apart from a business meeting, there will be two panels: (1) 'War as an Organizing Topic in Chinese Culture' (including one paper on exorcist ritual); Chairman: Dr Barend ter Haar, Leiden; (2) 'Formal and Informal Organization in Chinese Society' (covering the many different expressions of guanxi in Chinese society); Chairman: Dr Flemming Christiansen, Manchester. For more information, contact the office of the Network: c/o Dr Frank Pieke, Sinological Institute, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands. Telephone: (31) 71 272750; Fax (31) 71 272615; E-mail: sinology@hien.rri5.bitnet.

A WESTERN VIEW OF PEKING OPERA
The East-German musician Karsten Gündermann is currently in Beijing to compose a Chinese opera in traditional style. It is probably the first time that such a project is undertaken by any Western composer. Gündermann studied Chinese music with one of Europe's leading Peking opera experts, Professor Gerd Schönfelder in Dresden, before embarking on his project. At present, he continues his studies at the Institute for Traditional Chinese Opera in Beijing, where his opera may be performed by Chinese artists in the course of next year. (KG)

PACIFIC MUSIC FESTIVAL
The first annual Pacific Music Festival took place in the summer of 1990 in Art Park in Sapporo, Japan. The Festival brought together young instrumentalists and composers – aging from 18 to 29 – from regions bordering the Pacific Ocean, including China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and the West coast of the United States. The Festival was led by Leonard Bernstein and Michael Tilson Thomas. Its activities included concerts, rehearsals, classes, workshops and demonstrations. Among Chinese composers invited to the Festival were Bright Sheng, Chen Yi, Chen Yuanlin, He Xuntian, Lu Pei, Qu Xiaosong, Ye Xiaogang, Zhou Long and Zhu Shirui. Composers from Hong Kong and Taiwan included Victor Chan and Tzeng Shing-Kwel. There were performances of Zhou Long's 'Dhyana' for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano (1990), Qu Xiaosong's 'Mong Dong' for ensemble (1984), Chen Xiaoyong's 'String Trio' (1987-88), Melissa Hui's 'Tempered Glass' and Chou Wen-chung's 'Echoes from the Gorge', a quartet for percussion (1990).

Among participating senior composers were Chou Wen-chung (China/New York), Jose Maceda (The Philippines), Isang Yun (Korea/Germany), Eugene Lee (Korea/USA), Peter Sculthorpe (Australia), Chinary Ung (Cambodia/USA) and Joji Yuasa (Japan/USA).

As part of the Festival, a 'Pacific Composers Conference' was held, including a session on the future of Chinese music. The Festival was made possible through the efforts of Harry J. Kraw, Executive Director of Video Music Productions; Japan's New Art Service Agency (NASA) and the Center for US-China Arts Exchange (New York). (Source: Newsletter US-China Arts Exchange Center, Vol.10, 1992).

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY
'Eyes Across the Water', The Second Amsterdam Conference on Visual Sociology and Anthropology, was held from 24 to 27 June 1992 at the University of Amsterdam. It included various sessions on visual ethnography, a session on new storage systems such as laser discs, various documentaries on Asia made by Asian filmmakers and a number of presentations about the preserving and publishing of old ethnographic films. The organizers were Ton Guikling and Robert Boonzaier Flass of the Centre for Visual Anthropology. For more info, contact Guikling or Boonzaier at the University of Amsterdam, Oudezijds Achterburgwal 185, 1012 DK Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Phone: (31) 20 5252629. Fax: (31) 20 5253010.

PH.D PROGRAM HAWAII
The music department of the University of Hawaii at Manoa announces a new Ph.D program in music, which will begin spring 1993. This program will strengthen the department's research efforts, especially in areas unique to Hawaii's location and cultural mix. There are four areas of concentration: ethnomusicology, musicology, music education, and theory/composition. Each student's program includes an ethnomusicology component. Enrollment limited to 20 students. Financial assistance available. Deadlines: January 15 (foreign applicants) and March 1 (US applicants) for fall; August 1 (foreign applicants) and September 1 (US applicants) for spring. For further information, contact: Chairperson, Graduate Program in Ethnomusicology, Music Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2411 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI 96822. Tel: 808-956-7618; fax: 808-956-9657. (Source: SEM Newsletter Vol.25, No.3, May 1992.)
DING SHANDE FESTIVAL

Senior composer Ding Shande's 80th birthday was celebrated in China last year with a festival of his music in Shanghai. There were various radio broadcasts and concerts of Ding's music, and several essays and records were published in honour of his many years of service to Chinese musical culture. Ding Shande has lived in Shanghai for many years. Until his retirement, he worked as a music teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He was also a deputy director of the Conservatory.

In China, Ding Shande is known as an eminent composer, pianist, teacher and theorist. His popular romantic piano miniatures, particularly those for children, have found their way to the homes of thousands of middle-class families in urban China. One of his orchestral works, 'The Long March Symphony' (1959-62), which depicts the pursuit of the Communist Army by Nationalist Army units in the mid-1930s, won him a 'gold record' in Hong Kong.

Ding Shande mainly writes for Western Instruments, in an idiom inspired by Western 19th-century tonal music, particularly Russian romantic music. A strong Russian impact can easily be detected in some of his large-scale works, like the 'Long March Symphony', and the 'Huangpu River Cantata' (1959). His activities as a composer were interrupted in the early 1950s by political upheavals and the ensuing Cultural Revolution. His list of works up to 1952 showed seventeen opus numbers, the final work completed being the 'Long March Symphony'.

In 1978, after a silence of sixteen years, Ding Shande resumed composing at the age of 67. Over the past decade he extended his list of works to more than 35 opus numbers. It now includes an orchestral 'Overture' (1983), a 'Piano Concerto' (1985) and various studies, preludes and miniature pieces for piano. His style seems to have been affected only very slightly by the recent influx of 20th-century Western music in China: some of his pianoworks, like the Six Preludes (1969), are reminiscent of the music of Scriabin.

Ding Shande was born in Kunshan, Jiangsu Province, on 12 November 1911. As a child, he was confronted mainly with traditional instrumental music such as the 'silk-and-bamboo' ensembles of his native region.

"An uncle in our family played the pipa", the composer recollects. "When I was a small child, I was allowed to sit on the table so that I could watch him and the other players at work." At the age of fifteen Ding began to play in a middle-school music ensemble. "There was not much Western music to be heard at that time. I remember Western-type brass bands playing at funerals, and when I began to develop an ear for chords and harmonic relationships, I started experimenting with them on a harmonium which we had in our school. When I was sixteen years old, I went to Shanghai. I wanted to play piano or violin, but Xiaoyoumei, who was then the head of the school in Shanghai, was not enthusiastic. He said that he had noticed my talent -- I was able to play the pipa and other traditional instruments quite well -- but for some time I was put on some kind of waiting list."

Eventually, Ding Shande was fortunate enough to be accepted as a piano student. In the mid-1920s, the Music School -- later the Shanghai Conservatory -- was located on the Fuxing Lu, and numbered some fifty students and some twenty teachers. Among the foreign teachers, there were not only Russians but also Italians and Germans. Both Western and Chinese instruments were taught at the school, usually with the help of extremely simple lesson materials, or with no materials at all. Ding Shande remembers working his way through Karl Czerny's etudes. In 1929, the Russian pianist Boris Zakharov -- a one-time colleague of Prokofiev and Jascha Heifetz -- arrived in Shanghai, and Ding Shande began to study with him. Ding had only been playing the piano for one year, but was already thinking of a professional career as a piano player, and Zakharov -- who was to stay in Shanghai for the next fifteen years -- readily accepted him as a pupil. In the same year, 1929, the well-known Chinese composer Huangzi returned home from a trip to America. He became Ding's first teacher in composition.

Ding Shande: "I always felt very happy to be able to attend Huangzi's classes. I appreciated him so much. He was a very young and very polite teacher. He would never say, 'this is wrong', but always, 'this
can be done in a better way'. Huangzi apparently admired my talents and soon turned me into a teacher myself. I was only nineteen! At that time, I still didn't really think of becoming a composer. I went on to study piano with Zakharov. I studied with him for six full years. At my graduation exams, I played a Liszt rhapsody, Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' and Grieg's 'Piano Concerto.'

Ding Shande then went to Tianjin where he worked at Tianjin Girls' College of Education until the school was bombed by the Japanese in 1937. He immediately returned to Shanghai, where he began to study composition with Wolfgang Frankel in 1946. Frankel was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and a one-time student of Arnold Schoenberg.

Ding Shande: "No, Frankel didn’t teach me atonal music. He taught me traditional harmony. I had lessons from him for four years, and I remember paying four dollars for each lesson. After 1945, I briefly taught composition myself at the National Conservatory in Nanjing, together with Frankel, before travelling abroad. I took the opportunity to pursue my musical education in France. I went there on my own account. Others had done the same. One of my former fellow students, Li Xianming, a piano player, had married the Russian composer Tcherepnin and had gone to live with him in Paris." So Ding Shande went to Paris in 1947, where he studied for a two-year period at the National Conservatory with Noél Gallon, Tony Aubin and Nadia Boulanger.

"They confronted me with Franck, Fauré, Debussy and Ravel and taught me a lot about Western technique. I loved the Impressionists. Nadia Boulanger adapted herself very well to her students. If you did not like modern music, she did not expect you to study modern composers." In 1949, Ding Shande returned to China, curious to find out what the situation was like after the Communists had taken over. By now, many foreign teachers had left Shanghai, and the Conservatory leadership was very happy with the return of Ding Shande and other music specialists who could continue the curriculum. Early in 1950, the school had some hundred students, twenty of whom were composition students. Ding now began to earn a reputation as a serious composer. He wrote mass songs, art songs, piano works and some orchestral works. At present, Ding Shande is reluctant to discuss the artistic silence of sixteen years' which began in 1962 and ended in 1978. "We had all these political movements", he says. "It was simply not a good atmosphere to write music."

Did he have trouble in picking up his former profession again, in 1978? "Yes, it was difficult", he replies. "I first wrote a few songs. Then I got a commission from Hong Kong in 1983, and a year later another commission from America for a piano trio. That piece was subsequently performed in the United States. From Singapore I received a commission for an orchestral work. All of this helped me to find my way back into music."

In May 1991 Ding Shande was honoured with a Festival in Shanghai. His recent works include the symphonic poem 'Spring' (1984), a 'String Quartet' (1985) a 'Violin Sonata' (1988), various songs and numerous piano works. Some of his recent piano music for children was published on CD by Hugo Records in Hong Kong ('Plano Works by Ding Shande', 1991, HRT 736-2). In 1984, the China Record Company produced two cassettes with piano pieces (HL 250) and songs (HL-243). In the same year, his 'Mingpu River Cantata' was also issued on cassette (HL 292), and in 1985, his 'Plano Trio in C' (1984) was published on tape by Bailey Records (Hong Kong, NS-161). Various books about Ding Shande have been published. These include: Mao Yuru & Zhao Jiaqiu, Dongfang de xuanli - Zhongguo zhuming zuoqiu Ding Shande de yinyue shengya (Oriental Melody - The Musical Career of China’s Famous Composer Ding Shande), Shanghai Book Co. Ltd, Hong Kong, 1983; and: Zheng Bijing (ed.), Ding Shande de yinyue chuanguo - Huiyi yu fenxi (The Music of Ding Shande - Recollections and Analyses), Shanghái Wényì chubānshè, 1986. The latter is an anthology of essays, consisting partly of articles by Ding Shande about his own life, and partly of writings by Qian Yiping and various other musicologists about the qualities of Ding's music. Ding Shande himself has written a general book on composition: Ding Shande, Zuòqǔ jī fǎ tānsuō (Explorations of the Techniques of Musical Composition), Shanghai yínwǔ chuānshē, 1990, ISBN 7-60553-246-X.

(Symposium in Honour of Rulan Chao Pian)

Harvard University honoured the retirement of Professor Rulan Chao Pian with a weekend of festivities on April 10-11, 1992 on the Cambridge campus. A special dinner on Friday night at the Faculty Club was attended by her colleagues and friends of the Departments of Music and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. On Saturday, a one-day symposium with the topic 'Ways of Representing Music - A Symposium in Honour of Rulan Chao Pian' featured presentations by Nicholas Englund, David G. Hughes, Graeme Boone, Anne Dhu Shaprio, Amy Stillman, J. Wainwright Love, Bell Yung, John M. Ward, Joseph Lam, David McAllester, Margarita Mazo and David Lewin. The speakers discussed topics including 'Performance as Score', 'Notating the Unnotatable', 'Not Notating the Notatable: From Tablature to Performance' (by Bell Yung), 'Contextual Restraints' (on kunqu, by Joseph Lam), and 'With the Help of Science'. The symposium was...
followed by an evening performance featuring Siu-Wah Yu (erhu solo), Wang Di (qin solo and poetry chanting), Perry and Monica Link (xiangsheng), Luo Shen-Yi (folksongs), Li Huel and Wu Yun (kunqu), Loh Wai Fong (poetry chanting) and the Chinese Intercollegiate Choral Society of Greater Boston. The festivities continued afterwards at the Plan residence with the obligatory hongdong xifan as well as other goodies. In conjunction to these events, an exhibition in honour of Professor Plan was elegantly mounted at the Richford F. French Gallery of the Eola Kuhn Lobid Music Library. (Source: ACMR Newsletter Vol.5, No.2, Summer 1992.)

44th AAS MEETING

CHINOPERL
The Conference on Chinese Oral and Performing Literature held its annual meeting on April 2-3 1992 in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies. There were three sessions, which included the following papers: David Roitson - 'Nonrealistic uses of oral performing literature in Jin Ping Mei'; Chen Fan-Pen - 'Genre and eroticism in the Zhugongdiad'; Wei Hua - ‘Tang Xianzu's views on Qing in Zi Xiao Ji [The Purple Flute]; Du Yaxiong - 'Syllabication and melodic movement: the recitation of gongche notation'; Dana S. Bourgerie - 'Poetry and ritual: Hong Kong triad verse'; Wei Shu-Chu - 'Yuan and English Renaissance theatre staging'; Wu Qingyuan - 'Tanci fiction as a genre for women'; Marina Sung - 'Tanci for performance and tanci as written literature'; Meredith Fosque - 'Musical and verse forms in Yuan drama: Wang Shifu's Xiandang Ji’. There were also three video presentations: Du Wenwei - 'Peking opera TV series: vitalization of an old art tradition'; Robert Lee - 'Singing to Remember': a video documentary of a Chinese folksinger in New York'; and Shih Chung-Wen - 'Tang': A video program.
The Conference was concluded with a Dinner and Frolc In Honour of Professor Rulan Chao Plan.

12TH ACMR MEETING
The semi-annual meeting of the Association for Chinese Music Research took place on April 4, 1992 in Washington, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the AAS. Three talks were given: 'What is Heterophony in Chinese Instrumental Music?' by Ying-fai Tsai (Univ. of Pittsburgh); 'Harmonizing Chinese Tunes: A Recording Sampler' by Rulan Chao Plan (Harvard Univ.); and 'Travels of a Guqin Field Worker in China During the 1950s' by Wang Di (Music Research Institute Beijing/Harvard University).

CSE CONFERENCE HELD IN TAIPEI
A symposium co-sponsored by the Chinese Society for Ethnomusicology (Taipei) and the Executive Yuan's Mainland Affairs Commission was held on May 23-24 1992. Its theme was 'Musical, Operatic and Artistic Exchanges across the Taiwan Straits'. The papers delivered (which will be published later this year) discussed similarities, differences and recent exchanges or cross-influences between mainland China and Taiwan in the areas of music education (Hsu Tsang-Houei), modern guoyue or mingyue (Lin Gu-fang), music of minority peoples (Liu Ch'ien), traditional instrumental music (Wang Rui-yu, narrative song (Chou Ch'un-yi), traditional opera (Li Guo-chun) and kuo-a-hi opera (Wang Chen-yi).

7TH SCTM MEETING HELD IN BEIJING
The 7th annual conference of the Society of Chinese Traditional Music (Zhongguo chuantaong yinyue xuehui) was held in Beijing, 21-25 July 1992. The meeting was attended by 140 people. The central topics were an evaluation of ten years of research in the various fields of traditional music and an estimation of future prospects. Almost a hundred proposals were submitted to the Conference, of which some eighty papers were read in the course of the meeting, touching upon fields like methodology, morphology, categorization, religious music, minority music, cross-cultural comparative studies, regional music studies, music education, etc.

After the conference, the second general assembly of the Society's membership was held, on which some rules of the constitution were amended, and the council was re-elected. Professor Huang Xiang-ping will continue his work as president of the Society. Prof. Shen Qia is vice-president in charge of day-to-day business, and Ms. Xiao Mel is Secretary. Major themes of the next conference will be comparative studies of traditional music and research on Hakka folk music. (JJ)
CHIME JOURNAL, NO. 5, SPRING, 1992

A WEEKEND OF QIN MUSIC

The Shanghai-based guqin association Yujin qinshe staged an outing for its members in the weekend of 25-26 April 1992. Approximately fifty qin lovers, foreign and Chinese, travelled to Wuxi by bus, where an informal concert of qin solo music and Jiangnan sizhu (silk and bamboo music) took place in the Kajyuanshi Buddhist temple in Meiyan garden. The concert featured ad hoc ensemble performances of Pu’an zhous and Meihua san nong as well as solo pieces by members of the association. Yao Gongbai, Dai Shuhong, Chen Leiji and Gong Yi, who is the current president of the association, all played a number of pieces. A very special vocal style of performing qin songs was demonstrated by Fan Boyan, who sang Qing zhong ci in a manner reminiscent of Kunqu opera. After a walking tour in the park and the temple complex, a vegetarian meal and a night in the temple, the participants in the meeting travelled to Changshu on Sunday to visit the memorial stone of Yan Tianchi, one of the great qin performers of the Ming dynasty. The monument had been erected in 1936. It was ‘lost’ during the Cultural Revolution, but quite recently it was rediscovered and put back into its former place. The stone itself is shaped like a guqin (see photo). The members of the Yujin qinshe held a brief ceremony in commemoration of the great qin master. In Changshu, local members of the association joined the group, and another concert was held, followed by a splendid party. All participants expressed their satisfaction about this first ‘informal outing’ of the association, and the association hopes to repeat such activities in future. One of its plans for the coming autumn is to organize a guqin competition in Shanghai.

For further information about the Yujin qinshe, contact: Gong Yi, 338 Xinhua road, Shanghai, tel. (86) 21-5255830 or 525561 (work), or (86) 21-5255644 (home). (DX/AS)

CHOU WEN-CHUNG AWARDED

Professor Chou Wen-chung, founder and director of the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange, has been honoured by a John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award, ‘for making a significant contribution to the understanding, practice and study of the (...) performing arts of Asia’. The Center brought together Mainland and Taiwanese composers for the first time in a conference on ‘The Tradition and the Future of Chinese Music’ at Columbia University in New York in 1988 and organized the Pacific Composers Conference at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan in 1990. (Source: Music from China Newsletter Vol.2, No.2, Summer 1992)

EUROPEAN SEMINAR IN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM) is a meeting place for professional ethnomusicologists, accepting advanced students in its ranks, most of whom live and work in Europe, or whose advanced studies were made in Europe. Membership is also available to ethnomusicologists living outside Europe, especially those who have a professional interest in the conduct and development of the discipline of ethnomusicology as practised within Europe – whether on theoretical, fieldwork, methodological or other basis. There are no formal tests of eligibility, the Seminar considers the quality of the membership as self-selecting by the nature of its forum.

Over 300 scholars have attended at least one major Seminar or shown practical support to ESEM in its first decade of existence. Members’ fieldwork is conducted in all corners of the globe; for every continent and for most archipelagoes there is someone among the ESEM membership with expert ethnomusicological knowledge gained from personal experience. A number of Members also have expertise in archives and documentation, in all forms. The life of ESEM is above all during the annual Seminars, the highly-prized time to meet colleagues. Languages are predominantly English, French and German, but these days there is plenty of Russian,
STREET SINGERS

In the wake of the catastrophic floods of vast areas along the Yangtze in 1991, beggars from the Dingyuan district in Anhui Province come to Nanjing (Jiangsu) to earn money with street performances. This picture was taken by the musicologist Wang Hong, 18 August 1981. The woman in the middle sang popular folk songs like Mengjiangnû, with the accompaniment of erhu and cipper. It is a tradition for inhabitants of backward regions in Anhui to go on begging tours in neighbouring provinces if harvests are falling short of expectations or if natural disasters strike the area. In some parts of Jiangsu, Mengjiangnû is known as a begging song from Anhui, and folk singers in Jiangsu may actually refuse to sing it.

Spanish and Italian to be heard too. ESEM began with a meeting chaired by John Blacking (1929-1990) at Belfast in 1981. In 1991, the inaugural John Blacking Memorial Lecture was given by John Bally. Full Seminars were held at Köln in 1983, Belfast 1985, London 1986, Paris 1987, Poland 1988, Siena 1989, Berlin 1990, and Geneva 1991. They last 4-5 days each, usually in September. A regional ESEM series was begun with SEEM à València in 1991. In 1993 ESEM shall be meeting at Barcelona. Since many ESEM members live in countries suffering severe economic difficulties, the active policy is to keep the Seminars inexpensive and to conduct affairs with a minimum of bureaucracy. Occasional bulletins have been published (INFO No. 19 has just come out), and Directories of Members appeared in 1984, 1986 and 1989. Proceedings of the different Seminars have appeared in various forms, but ESEM is now actively looking for a more consistent publication policy, including a journal and/or a Yearbook - to be sent to members as part of their annual subscriptions.

The Secretariat is always happy to answer enquiries and to effect contacts on behalf of members and the interested public. About half the ESEM membership also belongs to ICTM (which is heartily encouraged).

Annual fees are 150 FFrs at the moment (compared with 100 FFrs in 1981), with half rates for students (max. 3 years) and 'conjoint'. Members in countries without access to 'hard' currencies may benefit from special arrangements and receive assistance to come to Seminars in the West, as far as can be arranged.

The Constitution of ESEM designates rotating presidencies, with an executive committee known as 'CORD'. It is implicit in ESEM's ideals that they work by consensus as far as possible, and that they be actively democratic. There is high pride of scholarship within ESEM, but at the same time it endeavours to be supple over academic 'rules'. What ESEM offers is a flexible structure to pursue ethnomusicology in Europe itself: regular chances to meet colleagues, an amiable forum devoid of excessive academic competitiveness, sensitivity to the social architecture of multi-cultural meetings, and sharing a feeling that members are indeed participating - in a modest way - in the creation of a new European identity.

Please address all enquiries to Peter Crowe, Secretary-General of ESEM, 29 Rue Roquevaire, 31000 Toulouse, France. Tel: (33) 61623507.

GREAT BRITAIN–CHINA CENTRE

The Great Britain–China Centre in London promotes closer cultural, academic, economic, professional and other relations between Britain and China, and encourages mutual knowledge and understanding.

The Centre was opened in July, 1974. Its predecessor, the Great Britain–China Committee co-operated with Times Newspapers to organise the highly successful exhibition of Chinese archeological finds, 'The Genius of China' at the Royal Academy in 1973. The profits from the exhibition were used to set up the Centre and an Educational Trust.

The Centre is an independent organisation. It receives an annual grant-in-aid from the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and also raises funds from the private sector for projects. The Centre is run by a small permanent staff of Chinese speakers. Membership of the Centre is open to individuals and organisations. Monthly lectures on different aspects
of Chinese current affairs, society and culture are held at the Centre for members as well as a regular programme of seminars and briefings of special interest to corporate members. The Newsletter "Britain China" published three times a year keeps members up-to-date with developments in Sino-British relations and professional and academic exchanges.

Over the years the Centre has initiated many exchanges of exhibitions, writers, artists and performers. The spin-offs from these activities have often led to other joint creative endeavours. The Centre's own experience makes it well placed to guide others towards successful collaborations in the arts. Furthermore, the Centre offers Chinese professionals a period of work experience in Britain. These placements represent a practical contribution to China's need for trained personnel. Future plans envisage more Chinese participants and an opportunity for British to take their expertise to China.

The Centre's staff can advise companies, institutions and individuals in Britain wanting to establish contacts with China, and provide predeparture briefings on political, economic and social developments in China. A computer database of individual and institutional contacts in both Britain and China is being developed to meet the demand for detailed information required by business people, academics, journalists and researchers.

For further information, contact Nicola Macbean or Anna Johnston at the Great Britain-China Centre, 15 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PS, England. Tel: (071)235 6696 or (071)235 9216.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INTERVIEW PICKEN (CHIME 4)

I was delighted to see how the interview had turned out, and I wish to thank you warmly for all the trouble to which you put yourself in revising revisions and producing the final result. I would be grateful if a small notice could be published in Chime, rectifying the statement in note 5, p.57, about Marett playing the *kayagum*. It was Condit, not Marett, who played *kayagum*.

There is one other statement which needs rectification. On p.57, the printed text ("PICKEN'S STUDENTS", paragraph 2, line 5 down) reads, in regard to Professor Wolpert, "was trying to bring ancient lute-scores back to life on a Chinese lute." There was never a moment at which 'trying to' was appropriate to what was achieved. Excellent musician, outstanding (and indeed diplomierten) cellist as he is (of the Munich Conservatory), as well as being one of Professor Herbert Frankie's most able Sinological pupils, he had only to take one glance at the *gaku-biwa-tu* - using his returnet cello (before ever we had a *hiba* of any kind to hand), and play *pizzicato* straight off what the manuscript indicated. He and I, using *gaku-biwa-tu* and *shō-ru*, had given first-ever 'performances' of ten or more shorter items of *Tōgaku* (I using piano as a vast pair of octave-pitched sheng), in Münich, a year before he became (at Professor Frankie's suggestion) my doctoral pupil.

Dr. Laurence Picken,
Cambridge UK

CUI JIAN (CHIME 4)

I am an electric guitarist and composer based in Seattle, Washington. Since 1989, I have visited China many times and I have co-operated with various Chinese pop musicians. In 1990-1991 I formed a group called *Identity Crisis*, mainly consisting of foreigners. The band was invited by Cui Jian to come to Beijing and perform. We went to China and Cui Jian joined in some of our performances. Autumn 1991, I returned to China with my American group *The Vagaries*. I have some observations about the article in Chime 4 on Cui Jian.

P.5, concerning the cancellation of CuiJian's tour in Chengdu: a videotape of the final concert exists, and can be obtained if there is sufficient interest. The Vagaries also possess video footage (broadcast quality) of Cui Jian's October 1991 Concert in Zhubai, as well as performance footage of Ado, Cobra, Self-education, The Yellow Race, and others.

P. 5, footnote 12: Eddie was indeed an employee of the Madagascar Embassy, as he told me himself. He quit the job because playing music, especially recording sessions, became far more lucrative. He presently has a manager in Beijing and supports himself in this way.

P. 5, footnote 14: the concert that Stefan Landsberger witnessed was a combined show of *Identity Crisis* and Ado. It was the first public appearance of Ado since their split with Cui Jian. The American sax player was Kenny Bloom, owner of *Kenny Bloom Music Enterprises*, a joint-venture enterprise dealing in the import and export of Western and Chinese tapes respectively. Bloom also acted, until recently, as Cui Jian's manager and as producer of the 'Solution' album. Others joining Ado in that concert included Liang Heping, Andreas Vath and myself. We have the show on videotape. Balasz has since returned to Hungary.

With the reports of Cui Jian's recent large-scale concerts in Nanjing, perhaps we can hope that things are looking up for him now.

Dennis Rea,
Taipei, Taiwan
MEETINGS

5TH ICE IN TAIPEI, SEPT 1992
The Fifth International Conference of Ethnomusicology will be held on September 14-19 in Taipei. The Conference is organized and sponsored by the Council for Cultural Planning and Development, and is coordinated by the Graduate Institute of Music of National Taiwan Normal University and the Chinese Society for Ethnomusicology (Taiwan). The Preparatory Committee for the conference consists of Honorary Chairman Dr. Kuo Wei-Fan, Chairman Dr. Liang Shang-Yung, Vice Chairman Prof. Hsu Tsang-Houei and Dr. Yu Yuh-Chao, and Secretary General Prof. Chien Shan-Hua. The major topics of this conference are: The Functional Aspect of a Center of Traditional Music in Relation to the Modern Society, and Comparative Ethnomusicological Studies on the Organization and Research Methods between Different Countries. For information, contact: prof. Hsu Tsang-houei, Dept. of Music, National Taiwan Normal University, East Ho-Ping Road, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. NB: this is also the new address of the CSE! (Source: ACMR Newsletter, Vol.5, No.2, Summer 1992.)

SEM CONFERENCE, OCT. 1992
The 37th annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) will convene October 22-25, 1992 at the Hyatt Regency in Bellevue, Washington. The University of Washington will host the conference. The following themes will be included: Circum-Pacific Music (with special sessions on the People’s Republic and on East Asian Musical Processes); Music, Dance and Sexuality; Critical Theory and Fieldwork; New Perspectives on Textual Analysis; Music, Ritual and Metaphysics (with a special session on Music and Ritual in Southeast Asia); and other topics. In conjunction with this conference, the Association for Chinese Music (ACMR) will hold its semi-annual meeting on the evening of 22 October, and the Society for Asian Music will meet briefly on Saturday 24 October. For further information, contact: SEM Local Arrangements Committee, Sercombe/Watmeran, School of Music, DN-10, Seattle, Washington 98195, USA. The following papers on music in China will be presented at the SEM conference:
'Deconstructing a Reconstruction: Confucian Ritual Music in Qufu, China 1990.' Joseph Lam (University of California, Santa Barbara).
'Beyond Onomatopoeia: Semiotics and Notation of the Luogu Jing of Beijing Opera.' Li Guangming (University of California, Los Angeles).
'The Musicality of Oral Literature: The Case of Tiamlm Shidiida and the Expression of Urban Identity.' Francesca Rebollo-Sborgi (University of California, Berkeley).

'Formation of Text and Tune in Performance in a Narrative Tradition of Northern China.' Junko Iguchi (Osaka University).
'Continuity and Transformation In San Francisco’s Cantonese Opera Clubs: 50 Years of Hoy Fung (1943-1993).’ Valerie Samson (University of California, Los Angeles).
'Songs of the Sixth Dalai Lama: Traditions of Music and Social Practice from Central Tibet,’ Nins Eger (University of California, Berkeley).
'The Shaanxi Hanyuan: Mechanisms of Inclusion and Resistance and the Predication of Cantonese Identity Through Cantonese Opera.’ Daniel Ferguson (University of California, Davis).
'Academic Ignorance or Political Taboo? Some Issues in the Study of China’s Folk Song Culture.’ Yang Mu (Monash University, Australia).
'Internal Organization and the Function of Percussion Music: The Belgian Ensemble of Taiwan.’ Li Huling (University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras).
'Heterophony in Cantonese Ensembles: A Study of the Relationship Between Improvised Melodies and the Nature of Instruments.’ Tsui Ying-Fai (University of Pittsburgh).
'Sources of Early 20th Century Dizi Music.’ Frederick Lau (California Polytechnic State University).

13TH ACMR MEETING, OCT 1992
The thirteenth semi-annual meeting of ACMR will be held in Seattle, Washington, October 22, 1992, in conjunction with the 37th annual meeting of SEM. The Society for Ethnomusicology, ACMR encourages graduate students to participate and solicits reports on research in progress, fieldwork experiences, and in-depth discussion of narrowly focussed subjects. For further information, contact Professor Bell Yung, Music Department, Univ. of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; Fax: 412-624-4180; e-mail: byun@pitnet.

SILK ROAD MUSIC MEETING XI’AN
The Xi’an Conservatory of Music will hold the 1992 Xi’an International Silk Road Music Symposium at the Conservatory. The fee for attending the symposium is US$ 100. The symposium will be held in English. For more information, contact Professor Lu Rirong, Vice President of the Xi’an Conservatory of Music, Chang’an Zhonglu No.18, 710061 Xi’an,

3RD EMAS MEETING NOV-DEC 1992
The third meeting of the Dongfang yinyue xuehui (Eastern Music Association, Shanghai) will be held on Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 1992 at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Main theme of the conference is ‘Chinese Music and Eastern Culture’. Abstracts of papers should be sent before the end of September. Attendees are also invited to join in the celebrations for the 65th Anniversary of the Shanghai Conservatory, which will take place on 28-30 November. Information: Dongfang yinyue xuehui, P.O. Box 47, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 20 Fangjyang Road, 200031 Shanghai, People’s Republic of China.

ASIA PACIFIC FESTIVAL, NOV-DEC 1992
The Asia Pacific Festival and Conference will be held from 27 November to 6 December 1992 in Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand. The festival will feature thirty-one concerts, presented by more than two hundred performers. The conference will consist of twenty seminars and workshops. The Asia Pacific Festival brings together composers, musicians and scholars of diverse backgrounds to share their music and cultures. A diverse array of outstanding traditional performances has been planned, including some which are rarely presented outside their traditional setting. Contemporary and traditional music will be represented by composers and performers from Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, USA, and the host country, Aotearoa (New Zealand). The conference includes panels on Music in China, Music in Hong Kong, Music in Taiwan, ‘Chinese Music from a Distance’, Australia Pacific Concepts in music, Music in Korea, Music in Japan (and many more Asian countries). There are several concerts of traditional and of contemporary Chinese music. For more information, contact: Asia Pacific Festival and Conference, C/- Composers Association of New Zealand, P.O. Box 4065, Wellington, New Zealand. Fax: (0664)-4-495 5157.

(A)AMERICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC, FEB. 1993
The Sonneck Society for American Music will hold a conference at Asilomar, on the Monterey Peninsula, California, February 12-16, 1993. Proposals for papers or performances concerning Hispanic-American music, Asian-American music, the 20th century West Coast avant-garde, nineteenth-century music in the far west, film music, songs of the farm labor movement, etc. are invited. Send 5 copies of the following: a brief abstract, background material on proposal and the proposer, and a non-returnable cassette tape (for performers) to Daniel Kingman, Sonneck Program Chair, 600 Shangri Lane, Sacramento, California 95825 by August 31, 1992. Tel: 301-990-1933.

RMA SOUTHAMPTON, MARCH 1993
The 28th Annual Conference of the Royal Musical Association will be held in conjunction with the 5th British Music Analysis Conference. It will be held at the University of Southampton, 26-28 March 1993. The Royal Musical Association invites proposals for papers and sessions for its 28th Annual Conference. The Programme Committee consists of Mark Everist (chair), Tim Carter and Roger Parker. The conference will be multithematic, with groups of papers centred on themes of musicological or critical interest. Non-European and popular music will be represented alongside Western art music. Suggestions for papers that cross disciplinary boundaries or that exploit extra-musicological methods are encouraged. Abstracts (no more than 200 words) by 1 September 1992 to Mark Everist, Dept. of Music, King’s College London, 152-3 Strand, London WC2R 2LX, UK. Fax: 071-836 1799. Email: m.everist@uk.ac.kcl.cc.oak.

The 5th British Music Analysis Conference (SoToMAC) also invites proposals for papers and sessions. The Programme Committee consists of Nicholas Cook (chair), William Drabkin, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and Alan Moore. The following topics are considered: Analysis of oral traditions, Analysis of recorded music, Analysis and chronology, Analysis, transcription and editing, The future of analysis teaching. Contributions to these topics relating to popular and non-Western music as well as those relating to the Western art tradition are welcomed. Free papers will also be accepted. Abstracts (no more than 200 words) by 1 September 1992 to: Nicholas Cook, Dept. of Music, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO9 5NH, UK. Fax: 0703 559197. Email: mcl003@uk.ac.soton. For programme details, booking form and other information, contact Nicholas Cook.

STUDY GROUP OCEANIA, JUNE 1993
The Study Group on Oceania of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) will meet in Berlin in June 1993. The theme of the meeting will be: ‘Historical Sources of Pacific Islands Music’. Artur Simon will act as chairman. For further information, see below.

32ND ICTM MEETING, BERLIN, JUNE '93
The International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) will hold its 32nd World Conference in Berlin, Germany, 16 to 22 June, 1993. The conference dates coincide with a festival of Indonesian music which
will be held in the conference venue, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, situated in the Tiergarten. The International Institute for Traditional Music (IITM) in Berlin will act as a host. The Program Committee for this meeting consists of: Dr. Krister Malm (chairman), Dr. Max Peter Baumann, Dr. David Hughes, Dr. Stephen Wild, Dr. Artur Simon (film/video) and Dr. Dieter Christensen. The local arrangements committee is chaired by Dr. Max Peter Baumann. Registration fees are 70 US $ for ordinary ICTM members, 40 US $ for student members, 100 US $ for joint members and 100 US $ for non-members. The meeting will focus on the following main themes: (1) Ethnomusicology and Society Today: Power Structures, Environments, Technologies; (2) Ethnomusicology at Home; (3) Music and Dance in a Changing Europe; (4) Other Current Research. For more information about the program, contact Dr. Krister Malm, ICTM, c/o Musikmuseet, Box 16326, S-10326 Stockholm, Sweden. Proposals for papers can be sent to Dr. Malm (before October 1st, 1992). Presentations are limited to a maximum of 20 minutes. For all inquiries concerning conference registration, conference organization as well as hotel accommodations, contact Dr. M.P. Baumann, International Institute for Traditional Music, Winklerstrasse 20, D-1000 Berlin 33, Germany. Phone: 30 826 2853 or 30 826 1899. Fax: 30 825 9991.

PUBLICATIONS

MISCELLANEOUS

AKIKO, Higashi - 'Taiwa Haika senka no senritsu no doitsuju: Genko seiho no senritsu no kanki o chushin ni shite [Melodic identity in the mountain song of the Haika of Taiwan: Centering of the relationship between linguistic tone and melody].' Tōyō Gakuzai Kenkyū 52, Nov. 1987, pp.79-98. (Bibl., map, music, tables. English summary: pp.8-10.)


CAMPBELL, Patrician Sheran and William M. Anderson - 'Southeast Asia.' W.M. Anderson and P.S. Campbell, eds., Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education, pp.281-317. (Bibl., diagrs., illus., music, photos)


CHIEN, George Shan-hua - '[The Mayasvi ritual music of the Taou tribe].' Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica 57 (Spring 1989), pp. 29-52. (Bibl., music, English Summary)

HAN Kuo-Huang, Ricardo Trillillos, and William M. Anderson - 'East Asia' W.M. Anderson and P.S.Campbell, eds., Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education, pp.239-276. (Bibl., diagrs., illus., music, photos)


KOJUWENHOVEN, Frank - 'Redonner vie aux mélo


LEMER, Lin - 'Lingdro Dechen Rolmo: A Tibetan Ritual Dance in Mandalic Form.' L.A. Wallen and J. Acocella, eds., A Spectrum of World Dance, pp.31-34. (Bibl.)


1986-92. Fifty-five essays including a kaleidoscopic range of perspectives by Chinese scholars, music historians, musicologists, composers and musicians from China's mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas. For information, contact: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong; tel: 859-2463, fax: (852)559-5684.


WU Wenguang - Wu Jinglue's Qin Music in its Context (1991). Diss. Publication No.: 9027983; School: 0255 WES. Order at University Microfilms Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, USA.


ZHANG, Wei-hua - Music in Ming Daily Life, as Portrayed in the Narrative Jin Ping Mei.' Asian Music Vol XXIII, No.2, Spring/Summer 1992, pp.105-134 (photos, glossary, bibliogr., appendix)


MUSICIANS

MAGICAL MUSICIANS

An ensemble of five professional players of traditional Chinese instruments was recently selected by the China Record Company to make a concert tour
Dong Ya, *pipa* player of the Gu Feng Ensemble in Frankfurt (Germany).

The group visited Europe in June-July 1992 and gave successful performances in Holland, Denmark and Germany. The ensemble consisted of Zhang Weiliang (flutes), Li Lingling (*yangqin*), Yang Jing (*pipa*), Cao Demei (*erhu*) and Guo Yazhi (*suona*, *guanzi*). The group was supervised by art director Liu Senmin. The ensemble recorded a CD 'Ancient Chinese Famous Melodies' (China Rec. Co. CCD 92/162, 1992) which features popular Chinese ensemble pieces in virtuoso style. (ZW)

**THE GU FENG ENSEMBLE**

The newly formed Chinese music group 'Gu Feng Ensemble' gave its debut concert in Frankfurt (Germany) in September 1991 and has since toured several German cities. Founded by four musicians from China who now live in Germany – Rao Lan (soprano), Dong Ya (*pipa*), Guan Jia (*zheng*) and Lu Jianguo (*erhu*) – the group performs a repertoire of traditional Chinese music and plans to include works by contemporary Chinese composers in future performances. The address of the group is: Gu Feng Ensemble, Ahrweg 1, 6074 Rödermark, Frankfurt, Germany.

Dong Ya, the *pipa* player of the ensemble, has also been active in Germany as a solo performer. In 1990, she produced a CD with *pipa* solo music (published by Network Verlag, Hallgartenstrasse 65, 6000 FrankfurtM 60, Germany), containing her own arrangements of a number of traditional pieces.

Dong Ya started playing *pipa* when she was 6 years old and gave her first public recital at the age of 13. Before coming to Europe, she worked as a teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. (DY)

**DISABLED PEOPLE'S ART TROUPE**

In July-August 1992, the China Disabled People's Performing Art Troupe visited Holland, Austria and Norway for performances in the framework of the final ceremonies of the "United Nations Decade of the Disabled". The group was founded in 1987 in the People's Republic of China. At present, it consists of 31 physically handicapped amateur singers, dancers and musicians from various parts of China. Its youngest member is 8 years old, its oldest 47. They have a broad repertoire of instrumental and vocal music – ranging from traditional to popular music – opera, dance and even acrobatics. The orchestra of the group consists of blind musicians. Two of its dancers are one-legged. They perform, amongst other things, the 'Eagle Disco', a pantomime intended as an imitation of the wing-action of an eagle. This is partly carried out with the help of crutches. Two other dancers are deaf and perform opera dances with the help of a conductor using sign language to convey the rhythms of the music. The Troupe's visit to Holland was partly sponsored and guided by Recreational Sports Development and Stimulation Disabled International, an organization founded in 1990 with the aim of demonstrating that
disability people are capable of many activities in the field of sports and culture. (Source: NRC)

LI XIANGTING (GUQIN SOLOIST)
Li Xiangting, one of the most respected guqin players of China, recently performed for an audience of more than 1,000 people at the Théatre de la Ville in the centre of Paris. Li's recital took place 13 January 1992 and was enthusiastically received by the audience and by French critics. It is probably the first time that such a large audience attended a concert of guqin music in Europe (or anywhere in the world for that matter). The success of the concert underlines the rapidly growing interest in guqin in the Western world. The instrument is now recognised as one of the most important solo instruments of Asian music. Needless to say, the surroundings of a large concert hall hardly do full justice to the intimate nature of guqin music. No doubt, the instrument is best heard in small concert rooms, (in the absence of still better alternatives such as Chinese temple sites, bamboo groves or players' homes)! All the same, Li's recital – in the series Musiques du Monde – was one of the major events of the latest concert season in Paris. Next to a number of traditional pieces, Li included in his program some improvisations on guqin and xiao (vertical bamboo flute), as well as a vocal improvisation (to a Chinese classical poem). Li is a very skilled singer of guqin songs.

Li Xiangting was born in 1940 in Jilin Province. In 1957 he began playing the guqin, and took lessons from famous guqin masters like Zha Fuxi and Wu Jingli. He also studied at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, where he was appointed as a teacher in 1983. At present, Li belongs to the most important guqin players of his own generation, and he has undertaken much to propagate the instrument and its music abroad. Since 1989, he has carried out research on the element of improvisation in guqin music, at the University of Cambridge. In the past three decades, Li Xiangting gave solo recitals in France, Germany, England, Italy, Singapore, Holland, and Hong Kong. The French, Swedish, Danish and British Radio all paid attention to his performances. He made several recordings, the most recent one being a compact disc, issued on the label Ocora in France (L'art du Qm, Ocora C 560001 HM 83, Paris, 1990). Li also studied traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy and exhibited his works of art in Beijing, London and Taiwan. He has also been active writing poetry. In 1987, he was appointed Vice-President of the Research Society for Guqin Music in Beijing. In June 1991, Li Xiangting visited New Zealand on the invitation of the School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington, for a concert tour organized by Karen Chang and Jack Body. He was an Associate of the Centre of Music Studies of the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London in 1990-91. He currently lives in London and continues to be active as a performer. For more
PAN JING (PIPA) & CUI JUNZHI (KONGHOU)

Pan Jing was born in 1963 in Tianjin (eastern China). She is widely acclaimed as a pipa player. She was taught by two masters of the instrument, Liu Gang and Chen Zong, and began to give concerts at the age of ten. From 1979 to 1983, she studied at the Tianjin High School of Music. At the age of 16, she won the first prize in a national pipa players’ competition during the Shanghai Spring Festival. She continued her studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and graduated in 1987. For two years, she was a soloist member of the Central Dance and Song Nationalities’ Ensemble in Beijing. In August 1989, she moved to Germany.

Pan Jing often gives recitals together with Cui Junzhi, a konghou (Chinese harp) player. For many years, Cui Junzhi was a konghou soloist in the above-mentioned ensemble. She graduated from the Chinese Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1969, where she majored in piano, erhu, and matouqin (horse-head fiddle). She mastered the harp while working with the Hebei Song and Dance Troupe, in the 1970s, and eventually became the first konghou virtuoso of modern China. She invented a broad range of new playing techniques for the instrument and wrote various teaching materials and études. She has given concerts in China, Hong Kong and Japan and produced a cassette of konghou solo pieces, published in 1987 by the China Record Company (The Konghou World, EL-172).

For more information, contact Pan Jing, Otto Goertzstrasse 1, 8520 Erlangen, Germany; tel: (49) 9131-29598. (PJ)

ZHAO BEN, INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMER

Zhao Ben (b. 1955, Beijing) has studied various traditional Chinese instruments with renowned performers like Lan Yusong, Zhou Yuekun, Liu Dehai and Li Xiangting. He was a student of the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing and became a professional performer in 1977, playing pipa, sheng, xun, various two-stringed lutes (erhu, tiao and gaoqin), as well as guqin, xiao and ruan. He travelled to Europe with the Beijing Yishultuan in 1978, and gave a concert tour in the United States in 1988. Zhao speaks English. He has taught Chinese music to foreign students at the Foreign Language Institute in Beijing. At present, he is a professional member of the Beijing Gewuquetian Minyuedui. Zhao Ben also hopes to continue his concert and lecture activities in the West. His repertoire includes major pieces on the instruments mentioned above, and he is capable of presenting lectures on the history and development of various Chinese instruments, the structure and characteristics of various instruments, the historical and cultural background of well-known instrumental pieces and various other topics. For more information, please contact: 中国北京 100088 西城区北齐街路 14 号 杨生先生收（ZB）

PIPA PLAYER

Ding Mingyu (38) is a pipa player at the Arts Institute of the Nanjing Municipal Cultural Bureau (Nanjingshi wenhuaju yishu chuangzuoji) who has been giving performances and lectures on the pipa in English to foreigners for many years. He is interested in giving lectures and playing his music at universities and institutes abroad. For further information contact: Arts Institute of the Nanjing Municipal Cultural Bureau, 4th Floor, 136 East Zhong Shan Rd. Nanjing 210002, PRC. Tel: (86) 25-414318 雨 - 中国南京市中山东路 136 号四楼 南京市文化艺术创作中心 艺术研究室（DM）

SOUND RECORDINGS

ANTHOLOGY OF PIPA MUSIC


This series consists of:

Vol. 1. Traditional pipa solo pieces played by Liu Dehai (plus one new arrangement);
Vol. 2. Traditional pieces and new arrangements for pipa solo played by Wang Fandl;
Vol. 3. Traditional pieces and new arrangements for pipa solo played by Lin Shicheng and Li Guangzu;
Vol. 4. Compositions for pipa solo and for pipa and Chinese orchestra, played by younger generation pipa performers Liu Guifan, Wu Man, Yang Wei, Xu Hong, Chen Yin and Pan Eqing;
Vol. 5. Two pipa concertos in Western romantic style: Caoyuan yingxiong xiao jiemai, composed by Wu Ziqiang and Liu Dehai (played by Liu Dehai and the Symphony Orchestra of the Zhongliang yuetuan conducted by Li Delun) and Hua Mulin, composed by Gu Guanren (played by Tang Liangxing and the Shanghii minzu yuetuan conducted by Qu Chun-quan);
In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the China Record Company has planned the publication of a vast and ambitious encyclopaedic collection of tape recordings of traditional instruments. So far, two volumes of this collection have appeared, one with zheng music (6 cassettes) and one with pipa music (6 cassettes). The inclusion of historical recordings is an important aspect. Although the sound quality of the tapes is rather at variance, they still deserve full attention from students and general lovers of Chinese instrumental music. The accompanying notes are sadly lacking in detail, but the tapes offer a splendid chance to hear some of China's greatest instrumental players of this century play their favourite pieces. Serious scholars of Chinese music will view these tapes as sound documents of great historical value, but they are also highly enjoyable because of the fine music which they contain. The project is a good initiative, and a welcome change in the steady stream of tapes and CDs of plastic fantastic music spit up by the Chinese recording industry.

The pipa series contains solo and orchestral pieces played by 19 different pipa players. Tape 6 features historical recordings. Most of the famous pipa masters on that tape are no longer alive. The series as a whole offers a marvellous variety of playing styles and of different genres of pipa music. Some of the titles appear more than once in the series, allowing for comparisons.

The programme notes are brief and unspecific. They give some general historical information about the pipa, and every individual piece is described in one or two lines, but that is really all. There is no attempt to put the recordings into any perspective, nor dates or places of performances are mentioned, nothing about the background of the players, no biographies, only names.

Proper documentation is an art in its own right, but in this case the lack of information is surprising because the anthology claims to provide an insight into the playing styles of different schools, regions and players. If we do not know to which schools or regions these players belong, how are we to distinguish between them?

A recent article by the pipa player Tang Liangxing, published in the Music from China Newsletter (Vol. 1, no. 2, Summer 1991) may be of some help. It is called 'Pipa Anthology: Impressions and Recollections' and offers a detailed discussion of the pipa series by a major Chinese pipa performer now in America. Tang is clearly an insider. He gives a lot of information about the players heard in this series, many of whom were his colleagues or students. Some of the older players were his teachers. Tang's article actually helped me to find the rarest biographical data of most of the players on the historic tape: when they were born, and when they died.

Not surprisingly, Tang's discussion is mainly focused on tape 6, the most valuable tape in the series. The publication of historical recordings is still quite an exceptional event in China. Most of the time, historical recordings remain unpublished because they sound poor and because they have been poorly preserved, which makes them sound still worse. The compiler of the programme notes of the pipa series apologizes for the poor sound quality of the historical takes, but in fact they sound fairly acceptable, while some of the other recordings of more recent date sound far less agreeable. I am afraid this is partly due to cheap tape reproduction techniques and not so much to the quality of the studio recordings.

Listening to the historical pipa performances, I was struck by the overall plainness of the playing, which is in stark contrast to the lavishly ornamentated virtuoso style of modern pipa performances. In general, I find all this perfect virtuosic playing rather boring. The plain and unaffected interpretations of the old players really comes as a pleasant surprise - it is a totally different world of music, a different spirit. The intonation and the very timbre of the pipa appear to be different in these old recordings. The colours and rhythms of the instrument often remind me of the sanxian as played in (for example) Suzhou tanci.

Tang observes that it is far more easy to distinguish individual playing styles with the old players than with the younger ones, and I certainly agree with him. Young generation pipa players often play with great technical perfection, but it is very hard to tell them apart. There is a certain sameness in their performances, no doubt due to the shift from master-pupil transmission to conservatory training. Increasing possibilities of communication and exchange - radio, television, modern transport - have led to the disappearance of typical regional 'schools' or styles of playing. It is actually a general development in the instrumental traditions of present-day China.

This is not to say that the performances by younger generation players (tape 4) are always virtuoso demonstrations void of genuine musical interest. In fact, Wu Man's interpretation of Chen Sui struck me as one of the most delicate and moving pieces of the whole collection of pipa recordings. The profound tranquillity of her playing is impressive. It certainly makes me eager to hear more of Wu Man. I understand that she is currently living in America. Her interpretation of Chen Sui is in remarkable contrast to Sun Yude's fast, energetic, pointed and rhythmically powerful performance featured on tape 6. Both interpretations of Chen Sui are attractive, but at first I found it hard to believe that I was really listening to the same piece in two different guises!

Nevertheless, I feel that the contrast between 'old' and 'new' is best revealed by a comparison of traditional pieces with modern arrangements and compositions. To put it in a simple way, the trascional
pieces are usually plain, refined and restrained in character. Not many notes are needed to express what the performer wants to express in the music. He may linger on some of the tones and give them a live of their own, as if they were small pieces of music inside the bigger piece. By contrast, many of the modern compositions suffer from blatant sentimentality and an overkill of rapid runs, tedious embellishments and dazzling tricks probably inspired by Western 19th century concert music. To include one pipa concerto with orchestral accompaniment on these tapes would have been sufficient. Wu Zuqiang's concerto contains some attractive passages, but it remains a curiosity, as far as I am concerned. The other concerto is slightly horrible. Strangely, there is no mention in the programme notes of the fact that side B of tape 4 mainly contains pieces for pipa and orchestra. The only genuine solo piece in that section, composed by Chen Gang, was arranged and played by Chen Yin, is the summit of bad taste. It should have been played on a violin, or perhaps on a flamenco guitar, but the pipa is not suited for this kind of ill-treatment. One can still hear that Chen Yin is a talented player, but what has induced him to play this work?

One interesting recording which should be mentioned is that of Lin Shicheng, playing San Liu together with himself. It is a double recording (tape 3, last item). San Liu is a Jiangnan shizhu piece which really needs more than one performer to do justice. Lin has found an original solution, but there is no mention of his dubbing in the programme notes.

The pipa collection is really a very interesting series. One can only hope for it to be published on compact disc in the near future. That would be a much better way of preserving these recordings. It would also offer an opportunity to add serious programme notes and sufficient background information, which is really indispensable in a project of this size and stature. (AS)

NEW RECORDINGS OF GUQIN MUSIC


2) 'Yaomen Qin Music'. Guqin solo pieces by Yao Bingyan (two historical recordings from 1957) and his sons Yao Gongbai and Yao Gongjing, rec. June-December 1989 at the Shanghai Conservatory of music. 1 CD, total playing time 73'10". Booklet of 14 pages with brief notes in Chinese and English, 3 small photographs.


This is only the most recent harvest of commercial recordings in the field of guqin music, and there is much more to come, so we've been told. The China Record Company is currently preparing a whole series of guqin recordings, including historical recordings. Are we finally entering the golden era of guqin revival? The instrument still deserves to be better known, and so do some of its greatest champions - musical talents on a par with the greatest masters of instrumental music in any field. What Pablo Casals achieves on cello or Ravi Shankar on sitar, is matched by the magic of guqin masters like Wu Zhaoji, Lin Youren, Gong Yi or Dai Xiaolian. Indeed, the artistic status of the seven-stringed Chinese zither might be compared to that of the Indian sitar, although it represents an entirely different sound world, and although its intimate sound probably makes it less suitable for the Western concert hall. In the absence
of regular guqin concerts in the West, listeners will have to resort, for some more time, to tapes and CDs of the music. Recordings 1-4 listed above are of good sound quality and provide some excellent opportunities to hear more of the instrument. The two CDs with Dai Xiaolian and the Yao family, as well as Lin Youren's cassette, are especially recommended. Dai's interpretations are beautiful, superbly controlled, with a feminine streak and weightless energy that make her playing unique. Some of Dai's rapid tempos may offend purists of the ancient schools, but they must be a positive delight to people with an open ear for music and a strong sense of rhythm. The sound quality of the recording is impeccable. For those familiar with the 20th-century guqin performance traditions, Yao Bingyan hardly needs an introduction. The powerful tranquility of his playing is not quite matched by that of his sons Yao Gongbai (b.1948) and Yao Gongjing (b.1955), but Yao Gongbai certainly comes close to it. Yao Gongbai's uncommon version of Liu Shui ('Flowing Waters') deserves special mention.

Lin Youren, a teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory, is one of the very few qin players in China who has remained faithful to silk strings instead of metal ones. His fine interpretations of a number of classical pieces mainly stress the lyrical and contemplative aspects of the music, which places him close to the older generation players. All the works on his tape are with xiao (bamboo flute) accompaniment. The xiao player is Du Cong (for some reason shown on the sleeve jacket playing a dizi). Du Cong's playing is fine, but I prefer that of Dai Shuhong, who can be heard on the Gong Yi tape.

Gong Yi's style is powerful and masculine, but his latest tape is tainted by the inclusion of a number of rather tasteless arrangements for qin and Chinese orchestra. Moreover, the sound of his recording is too spatial, occasionally turning the guqin into something resembling a drunken bass guitar. In general, the sound quality of both Lin Youren's and Gong Yi's tapes is still acceptable, though marred by occasional distortions due to peak level transgressions.

By contrast, the sound of Guqin quji (5, listed above) is so appalling that buyers would do better to avoid this tape. It sounds as if its recordings were made under water. The origin of the compilation is unclear, anyway: the recordings were probably pirated. Guqin freaks may still be interested in it as a collector's item, if only for Wu Zhaoli's fine interpretation of Pu'an zhou (which is not included in Wu's separate anthology, under the Hugo label).

Needless to say, of the five recordings listed above, only the two CDs (1 and 2) will generally be available in record shops in Western countries. The tapes (3, 4, 5) were published in China and are off limits to general record- and CD-buyers in the West, though an occasional copy may be found in some special bookshops like Ming Ya in Amsterdam, Le Phénix and You-Feng in Paris, or The Great Wall in Brussels.

The programs on all these recordings are perhaps not spectacular—most items being famous and well-known pieces which have been recorded many times before—but some less familiar pieces on the CD of 'Yaomen qin music' as well as Dai Xiaolian's recording of an attractive qin song discovered in Robert van Gulik's archive, are of special interest. It should be noted that the order of the pieces as given on Dai's CD does not correspond with the order of the actual recording. The timings are in correct order, but some of them should go with different titles. The actual program of the CD should be as follows:

1. Chuge (5'58)
2. Daya (6'04)
3. Huaxu yin (2'05)
4. Wu ye ti (7'02)
5. Ao ai (6'21)
6. Shenren chang (4'20)
7. Yi guren (7'03)
8. Kai gu yin (2'48)
9. Yangguan san die (4'46)
10. Qiu feng ci (1'05)
11. Liushui (6'45)

Dai produces a particularly enchanting interpretation of Wu ye ti, arguably one of the highlights of her CD, though her passionate renditions of Yi guren and Liushui are worthwhile, too. It is interesting to compare her interpretations with those of Lin Youren (who was one of Dai's teachers). In Liushui, Dai Xiaolian's river occasionally flows twice as fast as Lin Youren's, while it is also more dynamic and lighter in spirit. Lin's performance has the weight of
centuries behind it – ravishly beautiful, but very different.

It is an encouraging sign that the Hong Kong label Hugo has included two historic recordings on its most recent CD of qin music, as a tribute to the great guqin master Yao Bingyan. Perhaps it will be possible one day to publish a whole set of historic recordings. The changes in playing between the older players and the young ones are so remarkable that historic recordings which document the past are immensely important. ‘Yaomen qin music’ contains the following items:

1. Gu feng cao (3'48")
2. Qiu xiao bu yue (3'43")
3. Jiu Kuang (2'46")
4. Qu Yuan wen du (5'13")
5. Huaxu yin (2'18")
6. Yang chun (7'08")
7. Liu Shui (10'35")
8. Xiao Huji (12'43")
9. Da huji (7'39")
10. Gao Shan (12'17")

Only items 9 and 10 are played by Yao Bingyan. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are by his brother Yao Gongjing. The accompanying booklet provides ample information about Yao Bingyan’s achievements as a guqin scholar and master performer and about the careers of his two sons. Amongst other things, we learn that Yao Bingyan once taught Yao Gongjing to play on a table which he had to pretend was a guqin. This was in Yunnan, during the Cultural Revolution, when no real instrument was available. It was, in fact, a common practice in those days. The program notes by Lin Youren and Yao Gongbai give brief and factual information about every individual piece, including a reference to the original scores on which the performances are based. (These essential references are also given in the notes accompanying the recordings by Gong Yi, Lin Youren and Dai Xiaolian.)

Lin Youren’s tape contains the following pieces, all played by guqin and xiao duet (the title of one piece, Ping sha luo yan, is written as Yan luo ping sha, which is apparently an acceptable alternative):

1. Yi gu ren (8'20")
2. Yan luo ping sha (7'54")
3. Yu qiao wen da (9'10")
4. Pu’an zhui (10'25")
5. Liang xiao xin (4'12")
6. Liu shui (10'16")

I must admit that I prefer Lin’s playing to that of Gong Yi because of its greater intimacy, but some listeners may give priority to the power and vitality of Gong Yi’s style. The pieces on Gong Yi’s tape are:

1. Yu ge (14'52")
2. Zui yu chang wan (4'54")
3. Ping sha luo yan (7'33")
4. Han jie cao (guqin) (9'50")
5. Yu qiao wen da (10'12")
6. Jiu Kuang (4'02")
7. Ao ai (8'46")

The first two pieces are for guqin solo. Yu qiao wen da is played as a duet for guqin and xiao (Dai Shuhong being the xiao player). In these three works, Gong Yi proves his superb control of the instrument and displays the magnificent timbral sonorities of his own qin. Jiu kuang (The Drunken) is played in a deliberately very unstable rhythm – too unstable, really. The actual fun of the piece is lost in such exaggeration. Gong Yi’s long association with the Shanghai Traditional Instruments Orchestra has led him to include on this recording a number of blatantly sentimental arrangements in which the guqin is accompanied by a Chinese orchestra. It works relatively well in Ao ai, where the accompaniment is limited to a mouth-organ and some small percussion instruments, but in Ping sha luo yan and in Han jie cao (a qin song sung by a tenor) we end up in the realm of B-films and shampoo advertisements. A saddening experience.

With respect to the compilation of guqin music called Guqin quji, let me just provide a list of titles and players here for those who are interested:

1. Xiao Xiang shui yun (Gong Yi)
2. Gao Shan (Weng Shoucheng)
3. Liu Shui (Li Yuxian)
4. Pu’an zhui (Wu Zaohui)
5. Guang ling san (Zhou Jiatai)
6. Gou ye du yu (Mel Ricjiang)

No time indications are given, but I estimate the total duration of the tape to be approximately 40 minutes. The tape was published recently, but the actual dates of the recordings are unknown. (FK)

CHINESE PERCUSSION MUSIC


2) ’Drums – Chinese Percussion Music’. Compositions and arrangements for Chinese orchestra by Li Minxiong and An Zhishun. Traditional Orchestra of the Shanghai Music Conservatory

It is hardly a secret that ritual music everywhere in Asia - 'ritual' in the broadest possible sense - is dominated primarily by percussion. Even the extraordinary numeric scores of Tibetan ritual music, while looking as though they are presenting a highly melismatic melodic style, are actually detailed and complex percussion scores, in which the single sounds, even when they are blown sounds, are treated exactly as if they were sounds from a gong or a drum. Percussion ensembles are also at the very core of many traditional Chinese opera forms. It should hardly come as a surprise, that a considerable part of the program of François Picard's recent CD of Chinese 'wind and percussive' music is played by an opera ensemble - an ensemble from Quanzhou, in this case. In Chinese opera, percussionists are often the real conductors and leaders of the musical performance. A deeper understanding of Chinese instrumental music and of its historical connotations should really start with a thorough study of the role and the structure of its percussion parts. It is therefore rather surprising that so very, very little of real substance has been written on this particular aspect of China's musical traditions, and that so very few sound recordings of percussion music are available. Picard's CD is an important first step in the right direction, although of course it can show only the tip of the iceberg. The CD consists of recordings made during the compiler's stay in Shanghai in 1987: five pieces played by the 'Pear tree Orchard Opera Troupe' (Liuyuan xi) from Quanzhou, and four pieces played by a village band from Bainigan, a small community in eastern Zhejiang. These recordings are complemented by two pieces of Jiangnan sizhu ('silk-and-bamboo' music) with
ture. We often read about straightforward and simple binary rhythms and occasional rhythmic shifts – the accent moving from the first to the second beat, this becoming the new main beat – but during a recent visit to China I was able to hear local tapes of Zhoushan luogu which display astonishingly intricate rhythmic structures, as I had never heard them played by Chinese percussion ensembles before. Unfortunately, local percussion bands are sometimes very secretive about their traditions and are reluctant to have them recorded or studied. This is certainly true for the percussion players of Zhoushan island. Therefore, I suspect that the Zhoushan luogu music presented on Li Minxiong's recent CD, ‘Drums – Chinese Percussion Music’, borrows its tunes from Zhoushan, but not its rhythms. The whole recording – fourteen pieces of percussion music played by the Chinese Orchestra of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music – represents an entirely different side of Chinese music: we are not listening to local or traditional repertoires, but to attractive and polished modern compositions, realized by academically trained musicians in (Western-style virtuoso) performances. (Note, for example, the use of Chinese timpani in 'The Rumbling Ocean', which is clearly Western in style.) An Zhishun's very popular piece, 'Squabbling Ducks' has been included. Li Minxiong is a knowledgeable scholar of rural instrumental music, but here he also demonstrates his talents as a composer. Some of his pieces and arrangements would fit almost perfectly into a Tan Dun opera, although I expect they would be performed in a far more lively way under Li's own baton: conductor Xia Feiyun is striving for rhythmic perfection and for a dazzle of instrumental colours, but one does have the impression that his players are sweating over the scores and are actually still in the process of reading them. The real swing is often missing. Perhaps the conservatory should include a few folk percussionists in its ensemble? (FK)

CONFUCIAN TEMPLE MUSIC


As Wolfgang Laade remarks in his elaborate notes accompanying this CD, it is quite unrealistic to say, as some books do, that the music of the Confucian temples is over two thousand years old. However, to suggest that the Confucian temple music heard today in Taiwan is directly related to court ceremonial traditions in Ming China is almost as unrealistic. While scores and other evidence of that period have survived, they are in themselves a (largely artificial) reconstruction of the practices of previous centuries. Quite apart from that, there is much controversy about the question of how even these scores should be interpreted. The Confucian temple music that was being played in Beijing in the final days of Chinese imperialism, echoes of which could be heard in ritual music up until the early 1950s, was in itself a reconstruction of a reconstruction. The music that is being performed in Confucian temples today is in fact a reconstruction of a reconstruction – and that is also what it sounds like, most unfortunately. With all due respect for the energy and enthusiasm of Taiwanese musicologists like Chuang Pen-li and others who have tried to help restore and revive the tradition, one cannot possibly rely on historical evidence and historical notions alone. Even by that confined standard I would have expected the outcome to be quite different from what we hear on this particular CD. The idea that Confucian ritual music must be boring because it is solemn and liturgical in nature does no justice to this music nor to the true nature of Confucianism. To revive any musical tradition, one needs skilled musicians, people who try to grasp the true essence of a given repertoire, who are sensitive to its real beauty and are keen to really bring it back to life. If any Western witnesses of Confucian temple music such as A.C. Moule or J.A. van Aalst had the impression that the participants in late 19th century Confucian rituals were 'innocent of musical gifts', they were most certainly misled by their own musical innocence. Besides, the original Confucian ceremonies of the Han dynasty most probably involved huge numbers of professional musicians who were true masters in the field of vocal or instrumental music. A solemn and élite repertoire, yes, but not dead music. The Chinese Confucianists in the temple of Qufu (described by Herbert Müller in 1913) stood silently before their ancient instruments, not producing a sound. By doing so – by acknowledging that they simply did not know what to play or how to play
it—they were probably more respectful of the past than their modern colleagues in Tainan.
If we accept the Confucian rites of the last few centuries as a new tradition, in its own right, there might be still more enjoyment in the performances than we hear in the recording of this ceremony made in 1988, in Taiwan. There is no doubt about some basic features of Confucian hymns: for instance the long drawn-out notes, played and sung unisono, very slowly, with intermittent solemn percussive beats struck according to an established pattern. But how different these hymns sounded on a historical recording, allegedly from the 1920s (more likely from the 1940s), which I was able to hear in Beijing in 1987! Slow tunes, performed by one of the few ensembles of Confucian music remaining in republican times, with a wonderfully disorganized percussion section which might have offered a major inspiration to John Cage—or to local folk percussionists, for that matter.
All this is not to say that Wolfgang Laege's recording is without merit. It is 'authentic' in its own right, complete with the ubiquitous firecrackers, sounds of shuffling feet of on-lookers and participants and someone holding an official speech in putonghua, through a megaphone, to thank the local mayor for his help in making this ceremony possible: the familiar atmosphere of a 20th century official Chinese gathering to pay tribute to the past. Laege's notes are excellent and include an elaborate bibliograpy and some scores. For anyone interested in the continuing story of Chinese Confucianism or, more generally, in Chinese attempts to revive historical repertoires, this CD is certainly worthwhile. People interested in Chinese ritual music (with emphasis on music), however, might have to wait for future revival attempts of what was once a great and impressive tradition of Chinese ceremonial court music. (FK)

MUSIC IN XINJIANG

1) 'Turkestan Chinois/Xinjiang - Music Ouigours'. Classical muqam and popular music of the Uyghurs, field recordings made from May 1988 to February 1989 in Xinjiang province, China, by Sabine Trebinjac and Jean During. Set of 2 CDs, total recording time 70'58" and 73'10"**, resp. With booklet, 52 pages with notes in French, English, German and Spanish, 8 pictures and a small map. Ocora Radio France, C 559092-93 HM 83x2, Paris, 1990.

2) 'La Route de la Soie, Chine - Xinjiang'. Uyghur folk songs, popular instrumental pieces and muqam. Field recordings made in 1986 and 1987 in Xinjiang Province by Anderson Bakewell. 1 CD, total playing time 47’35". Booklet, 14 pages, notes in French and English.

These are two excellent, complementary recordings of Islamic music traditions in Xinjiang, China's largest province, in the extreme north-west of the country. Both offer a varied and attractive compilation of classical and popular music of the minorities of Turkic descent living in this vast region, which covers one sixth of the total surface area of China. The main emphasis in both recordings is on vocal music.

Xinjiang has some 14 million inhabitants. Its 6 million Uyghurs form the vast majority of a very heterogeneous population. Sabine Trebinjac and Jean During examine some previously unexplored areas of Uyghur musical culture, including the *muqam* repertoire of the Dolan, an ethnic subgroup of the Uyghur not officially recognized as such in the People's Republic. They have unearthed some very beautiful music. The quality of their field recordings is excellent. The first CD mainly offers a series of 5 to 10 minute excerpts from Uyghur *muqam*, including examples of true classical beauty and grandeur, while the second CD concentrates on Dolan *muqam* and on Uyghur popular folk songs.

The term *muqam* originally referred to modal categories, but has now become a general term, designating song cycles in 'suite' form, incorporating religious and epic verse, romantic narrative, folk song and instrumental and vocal improvisation. Of the 31 pieces of the double CD collection, only 4 items are instrumental, the others being vocal to the accompaniment of lutes, cithers, viole and drums. Some of the popular pieces are based on traditions which go back to antiquity, while the *muqam* tradition can be confidently traced back to at least the 15th century.

The recordings are interesting not only because they offer a broad impression of a rich culture of classical and popular music in a little-explored region of the People's Republic, but also as documents introducing musical traditions which, in the past, had a major impact on China's classical court.
music. No doubt the answers to many questions about music in the Tang period are still waiting to be dug up in present-day Xinjiang. During the Tang, when the Silk Road was a flourishing trade route, many instruments of Central Asia and the Middle East found their way to China, including various types of shawm and lute. The music played on these instruments was also introduced to the Tang court.

The compilation of Trebinjac and During is accompanied by elaborate notes with major emphasis on musicological information (scales, rhythms): excellent documentation, the only serious flaw being the absence of lyrics (with one exception). Unfortunately, the compilers seem to regard the lyrics as a totally subordinate aspect of this vocal tradition. They give the scales or tonal centres for almost every song but hardly comment on the textual contents. The idea that the singers want to convey a story or a message, and that their words actually help to determine the musical form and help to give life and sense to the whole performance, is hard to accept for some musicologists! (It is not sufficient to know that most of the songs are love songs, which is true for 90 per cent of the vocal repertoire of musical cultures all over the world.)

In this respect, Anderson Bekwell performs slightly better, with at least partial translations or brief explanations of the lyrics of every song. His background information about the music is sometimes a little bit more down-to-earth than that of Trebinjac and During, but less detailed, musicologically. The core of his CD is formed by two muqam excerpts, a (Dolani) vocal piece and an instrumental piece, the latter a satar (lute) solo of great beauty. Ten shorter items complete the collection. There is more instrumental music on this CD than on the CDs of Trebinjac and During, but its vocal pieces are again the most important ones. Bekwell has recorded some ravishingly beautiful folk songs. I was particularly impressed by some of the female singers, whose style immediately reminded me of the unorthodox interpretations of Western medieval songs by John Becket's Musica Reservata, in the late 1960s.

Both recordings discussed here are highly recommended for anyone interested in Central Asian music or in unfamiliar aspects of musical culture in the People's Republic. People with a limited purse may well prefer to buy the single CD of Bakwell, taking into the bargain a slightly higher noise level. Bekwell's compilation is very attractive, and makes an excellent introduction to music in Xinjiang. But of course the double CD recorded by Trebinjac and During offers both more music and more documentation, and its impeccable sound quality is an added plus. A hard choice to make! (FK)

MINORITY PIPES IN THE STUDIO


This CD with instrumental solo pieces for xun (clay pipe), sheng (Chinese mouth-organ), various types of bamboo flutes and other Chinese wind instruments was previously released as 'Fantastic Pipes of China' (Ethnic Sound Series no.9, Victor VDP-1117). It has apparently sold well enough to deserve a second edition, but apart from the fact that this CD offers good technical demonstrations of a number of typical solo instruments, there is very little to praise it for. The recording quality is good, and Liu Hongjun's technical skills are evident in all the ten pieces on the CD. But instead of minority music – as the title of this recording might suggest – we are listening to modern arrangements of Chinese tunes or even new compositions, accompanied by unnamed
musicians (in one instance by a synthesizer), and performed in a studio. While most of the arrangements are fine and delicate, the ‘fantastic’ pipes never really manage to leave the earth and to come alive in actual performance. Some of the music sounds like New Age, and only one piece (the final one) is faintly reminiscent of minority music. Most of the playing sounds curiously flat, as if these musicians know to perfection how to produce notes on their instruments but have never produced any real music. Occasionally there is a flash of true inspiration, an incidential passage of real beauty, but on the whole the achievements of Liu Hengyun (a native Chinese now living in Japan) and his group are rather disappointing. (FK)

ANCIENT MUSIC FROM CHANG’AN


Maison des culture du monde recently published a very interesting compilation of modern reconstructions of Chinese ceremonial pieces from the Qing, Ming and earlier historical periods. Chang’an was one of China’s major cities in the Zhou dynasty and the capital of Imperial China from the Western Han until the end of the Tang in 907. Under Manchu rule, the city was renamed Xi’an, and it still exists under that name today. Xi’an is one of China’s most interesting cities from an historical point of view, and much of its glorious past is awaiting further discovery in unexplored or only partly excavated burial sites. The musicians who perform on this CD are all professional players from the Xi’an conservatory. They visited Europe in 1991 to introduce to audiences in Germany and France a broad repertoire of traditional music which they call Chang’an gyou–ancient music of Chang’an. Much of what we hear on this CD probably bears no relation to Xi’an’s urban musical traditions of the past, and the gathering under one name of the broad variety of musical genres presented here is perhaps questionable. There is certainly little reason to believe that we are listening to faithful reconstructions of Tang music. But the music played by the Xi’an musicians is very attractive and its players have undertaken genuine efforts to play it in versions which are authentic at least in the sense that they correspond to genuine village traditions or urban elite repertoires that could still be heard in China in the early 1950s. From 1965 onwards, the members of the ensemble have attempted to preserve and recreate this music, partly with the help of old folk musicians who were able to assist in deciphering ancient scores. It would be very interesting to hear more about the precise way in which these performances came into being. The program notes, otherwise very informative, do not provide much information on this subject. The resulting music pieces are certainly a far cry from the pretentious and bombastic ‘recreations’ of Tang music by the Hubei Song and Dance Troupe which were published on gramophone records in China only a few years ago. The beautiful processional music heard at the beginning of the CD is clearly related to local Buddhist and Taoist music, and the very fine pipa solo which follows seems perfectly in style with classical pipa traditions, by now a rare phenomenon in China. Here, no proud display of dazzling arpeggios and brilliantly fast runs, but a plain and delicate style in which almost every single sound produced on the pipa strings receives full attention. (The player is called Qu Wenjun – a name to remember). There is more to enjoy: a very fine guanqin solo, a lovely piece for three plucked instruments which sounds almost like Indian music, a number of Buddhist ritual chants performed in a plain and unaffected style and a hilarious 18-minute percussion piece which seems to evoke all the pots and pans of the Kitchen god. (FK)

THE YELLOW RIVER ENSEMBLE


The Yellow River Ensemble was founded in 1984 by Chinese singers, dancers, instrumental musicians and acrobats from China living in Paris. The group
SOUTH SIBERIAN FOLK SONG

'Tuva - Voices from the Center of Asia.' Field recordings of folk songs in Tuva, recorded in the summer of 1987 in southern Siberia by Ted Levin, Eduard Alekseev and Zoya Kirgiz. 1 CD, total playing time 41'00". Leaflet with notes, illustrations and lyrics (in English translation) inserted. Smithsonian Folkways, SF 40017, Cambridge Mass., 1990.

This recording of 33 short songs and instrumental pieces from Tuva, a vast region to the north of Mongolia, is a marvellous treasure of vocal music in southern Siberia. When the music was recorded, Tuva, with its population of Turkic origin, was still a part of the Soviet Union. The CD pays major attention to the practice of overtone singing, more commonly referred to by the Tuvans as kholmor or 'throat singing' but also contains many examples of other styles and genres of singing in the region. This varies from shamanic ritual to imitations of animal sounds by hunters.

The basic principle of kholmor is that a single vocalist produces two, and occasionally three, distinct notes simultaneously. By precise movements of the lips, tongue, jaw, velum and larynx, singers can selectively intensify vocally produced harmonics. Throat-singing in Tuva is almost exclusively the province of men, though women are physiologically able to produce the same sounds, albeit at higher pitch levels. Traditionally, there was a taboo against women throat-singers in Tuva, based on the belief that such singing might cause infertility, but this is gradually being abandoned. Throat-singing is also a familiar practice across the border in Western Mongolia, and there are unconfirmed reports about the occurrence of this style of singing in Inner Mongolia in China. Apparently it was part of local traditions in some parts of Inner Mongolia in the past, but it can no longer be found in the People's Republic

is flexible in size and occasionally includes Western members. For the present recording, the erhu player Wu Suhua was invited to perform a number of solo pieces, while the French scholar of Chinese music François Picard participates as a xiao player in some of the ensemble pieces. The programme, performed by eight instrumental performers of the ensemble, is a cozy mixture of popular pieces in a virtuoso style now firmly established among conservatory-trained performers of traditional music in China and fairly classical interpretations of guqin and pipa music. Huang He is definitely at its best in lively ensemble pieces like Guzheng, Sizhu diao and Jinse kuang wu, especially if dizi player Wang Lisheng takes the leading part. He is one of the real stars of the group. The arrangements are neat and not hindered by any academic prohibitions; (notice the Western-type of bass line of the Chinese guitar in Guzheng). Much of what we hear on this CD is just fine music, unpretentious and fit for 'easy listening'. The pipa and erhu solo pieces are delicate, sometimes a bit on the careful side. The guqin solos are far less convincing and are occasionally hampered by intonation problems.

To my knowledge, this is the first CD published by a Chinese ensemble living and working in Europe. Its initiator, conductor (and singer) Shi Kelong must be happy with the results, although we know from the live concerts of Huang He that the group can perform still better.

Huang He is very active in promoting Chinese music in Europe. The ensemble accompanied Gilbert Tsai's theatre production 'Journey through inner China' in Avignon in 1986. It recorded music by composer Chen Qiqiang for Dai Shijie's film 'China my sadness'. In June 1989 the group formed the centre of the concert 'China I will not forget you', organized in Paris in response to the massacre of demonstrators in favour of democracy in China. Huang He has also performed on Radio France and at various festivals in France.
BUDDHIST (AND TAOIST) MUSIC

The following list of sound recordings of buddhist and taoist music was recently compiled by François Picard (Sorbonne University, Paris).

1. Liturgical music.


2. Para-liturgical music. (The recordings listed below only contain instrumental pieces and songs, no recitation of sutras etc.)

*Ceremonial Music played by Buddhist monks from the Zhihua temple.* HKCD 8.26948, Hong Kong, 1988. Instrumental music from Ming dynasty scores played by an ensemble including professional musicians such as Hu Zhihou.

*Chinese Buddhist Music.* A Series of nine CDs published by Wind Records (5 Alley, 23 Lane, 24 Sec., 4 Roosevelt Road, Taipei, Taiwan ROC). TCD-2001 to 2009. Publ. In 1990. The most awful movie-music is placed on the same level as some of the most venerable and beautiful instrumental music, Jingyue of the Beijing Zhihua temple (vol. 8 and 9, TCD-2006 and 2009). Vol. 7 (TCD-2007) is just nice Jiangnan sizhu music. On the cover of the CD we read, that “According the result of experiments this kind of music is good for lowering down blood pressure and promoting calmness and peace in spirit.”


*Fanqiu qingzha.* Notes by Yan Hancheng. Shanghai yousheng gongsi, cassette Y-2052, Shanghai, 1987. Recorded at the Guanghua temple in Putian (Fujian Province), at the Zhihua temple in Beijing and at Wutai shan.

*Jian gu fanyin.* Notes by Tian Qing. Shanghai yinxiang gongsi, cassettes YAF-6 and 7, Shanghai, 1989. Features some of the best instrumental music ever recorded.

*Wutai shan Foyue.* Notes by Tian Qing. Shanghai yinxiang gongsi, cassettes YAF-1 to 5, Shanghai, 1989. Includes tantric rites.


CD SERIES FROM TAIWAN

The Council for Cultural Planning and Development in Taipei has recently published a series of 12 CDs with Chinese traditional music, grouped in six volumes.

The contents are as follows:

Vol. 1: Hou yu-zung Percussion for Peking Opera; Vol. 2: Lai Pi-hsia Taiwanese Hakka Mountain Songs; Vol. 3: Pan Yu-chiao sings Luan-Tan Opera; Vol. 4: The Chin Playing of Sun Yu-chin; Vol. 5: Chen Kuan-hua, Taiwanese Fu-lao Folk Music; Vol. 6: Yang Hsiu-ching, Taiwanese fable chanting. The series is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated booklet. The photos in this booklet seem to indicate that most of the recordings were made in a recording studio, by urban artists.

A copy of the series is kept at the ethnomusicology department of the Musée de l’Homme (Paris, France). (MH)
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