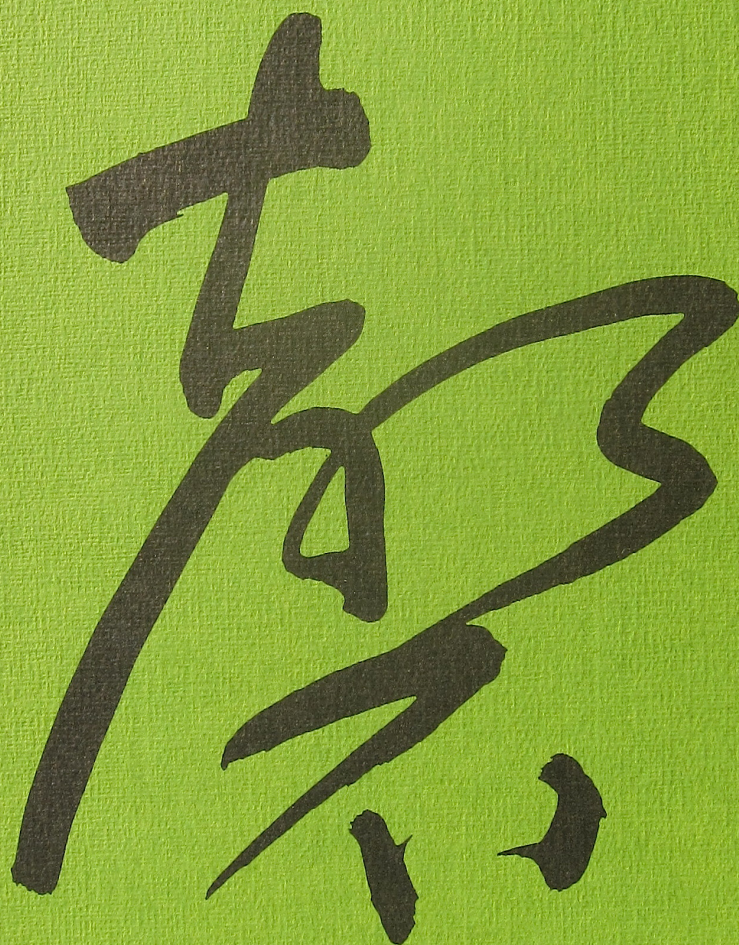


CHIME

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CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR	
Going there.....	3
ANTOINET SCHIMMELPENNINCK	
Hundred Years of Folk Song Studies in China.....	4
HAN KUO-HUANG	
Recent Developments in Minority Music Research.....	24
ROBIN RUIZENDAAL	
A Discovery in Fujian Province - Iron Stick puppet Theatre.....	28
WANG HONG	
A Collector of Narrative Song Reports on The Big Anthology.....	43
BELL YUNG	
Chinese Musical Journals.....	52
FRANK KOUWENHOVEN	
Mainland China's New Music (1) - Out of the Desert.....	58
ALAN R. THRASHER	
Chinese Minority Music Cultures: The Perspective from Northern Thailand.....	94
NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS	
People & Projects.....	96
News & Reports.....	99
Meetings	102
Publications	104
Journals.....	107
Concerts & Festivals	109
Sound Recordings.....	109
For our Chinese Readers.....	115

CHINESE MUSIC RESEARCH IN EUROPE (CHIME)

Major aims

CHIME is a foundation for the promotion of Chinese music research in Europe. Its major function is to create a European network of scholars of Chinese music who meet regularly to discuss their work in progress. CHIME takes an interest in Han Chinese music, but also in other native music traditions within the current geographical borders of China, and even in musical cultures of areas bordering China, if their traditions are closely related to those inside China and allow comparative study.

Meetings

CHIME co-operates closely with the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM). It organizes special, annual meetings, drawing together experts on Chinese music both from Europe and other parts of the world. It supports regular workshops on specific topics in the field of Chinese music.

Biannual Newsletter

CHIME publishes a Newsletter, which appears twice a year, supplemented with extra news bulletins if necessary. It contains articles about fieldwork and study experiences in China, information on books, records, scientific journals, concerts, seminars and meetings, current research projects, university programs and possibilities for scholarships. The newsletter functions as a platform for the exchange of ideas, news and information. Readers' contributions are welcomed. The Editors are Frank Kouwenhoven and Antoinet Schimmelpenninck. Correspondents: Wu Ben (Peking), Huang Bai (Shanghai), Wang Hong (Nanjing), Stephen Jones (United Kingdom), Helen Rees (United States). Proofreaders: Pauline Millington-Ward Goodbody, Rita Liang, Helen Rees, Gao Ying and Zhang Qinghui. Photography: Frank Kouwenhoven. Illustrations: Zhang Qinghui.

Subscription rates

Subscribers to the Newsletter are welcome to attend all scholarly meetings organized by CHIME, and receive both the Newsletter and Newsbulletins of the Foundation. Annual subscription in Europe: individuals: DFL 35 (US \$ 20); institutions and joint subscribers: DFL 40 (US \$ 25); students: DFL 25 (US \$ 15). Annual subscription outside Europe: Individuals: US \$ 30; institutions and joint subscribers: US \$ 35; students: US \$ 25. The amounts include postage, and are payable by giro or international money order. If you send a bank cheque, add US \$ 10 to cover Dutch bank commission, otherwise your remittance cannot be accepted. Those with standing orders will automatically have their subscription renewed at the end of the year.

Documentation Centre

At its office in Leiden, Holland, CHIME has started a documentation centre. It serves as a library and a depository for offprints of articles, papers, theses and dissertations on Chinese music. CHIME offers limited publishing facilities, and welcomes all theses and other writings on Chinese music. Only manuscripts in English, French or German can be considered for publication. The documentation centre includes a sound archive of commercial and field recordings.

Support for research

CHIME is financed mainly by private funds and by the contributions of subscribers to the Newsletter of the foundation. Donations by organizations or by private persons are welcomed. The foundation in turn can provide limited support for research projects on Chinese music carried out within Europe or by European based researchers in China. Priority is given to projects which are the result of some form of co-operation between various academic disciplines, such as musicology, sinology and anthropology.

Executive Board

CHIME was founded early in 1990 by European music scholars from four different countries. At present, its Board consists of Stephen Jones (London, UK), Frank Kouwenhoven (Leiden, Holland), Marlies Nuttebaum (Hagen, Germany), François Picard (Musicology, Sorbonne University, Paris, France), and Helen Rees (Ethnomusicology, Pittsburgh University, USA).

Address

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GOING THERE

In the wake of the Tiananmen events, Western scholars of Chinese music postponed their projected visits to the People's Republic. Some are still reluctant to go, either because they expect to find extra obstacles in their fieldwork, or because they want to protest against the Chinese government's handling of the demonstrators.

Judging from the reports which have reached us, fieldwork is still possible in China. Last year's events in the capital, and in other big cities, have not affected the general way of life in rural areas, nor the average prospects for fieldwork. Local party officials charged with cultural affairs are just as helpful or troublesome as before. Foreign students have found their way back to Music Conservatories and Universities, and for them, life has gone 'back to normal'.

Unfortunately, the same is not true for Chinese music researchers. The economic recession has dealt a serious blow to musicology in China. Less money means a further reduction of the already scant possibilities for scholars to do fieldwork and publish the results of their work. So far, in 1990, very few books on music and musicology have been published in China. This is also due to the government's decision to close a number of distinguished publishing houses. Hardly any studies in the field of rural folklore and religion, in particular, now find their way to a publisher.

In China, folklore rituals and religion are a continuous source of embarrassment to the government. On the one hand they are part of China's traditional culture which is respected and viewed as a great national treasure, but on the other they are seen as signs of backwardness: they are believed to slacken the pace of China's progress. Thus, at the same time that many buddhist monasteries are being advertised as landmarks of Chinese culture and as great tourist attractions, an important national festival of Buddhist music - to be held in Peking last summer - is summarily suppressed.

Recently, fresh anti-superstition campaigns have been started in rural areas in China. We have several reports from Shandong Province of religious ceremonies and folk music performances being disrupted by local police and party officials. It is said that local theatre libretti were burnt, and Buddhist worshippers beaten up. We believe that such events occur only sporadically, but nonetheless they are a matter of very serious concern. Last year's political events probably acted as an incentive to reinforce the anti-superstition campaigns.

There is little that Western scholars can do. But we can show our immense respect for the Chinese people who try to preserve their ancient traditions and religious cults in spite of government actions. Perhaps, we should also try to visit China again, spend more time on fieldwork and show our genuine appreciation of a culture which has again come under attack. Our interest in regional folklore will not alter the ways of the world, but it may provide some local officials with food for thought, and keep destruction at bay for a little longer- if only in a single village.

There is no cause for any optimism, but, at this moment, going to China may still be a more effective gesture than demonstratively staying away. ■

HUNDRED YEARS OF Folk Song Studies in China

ANTOINET SCHIMMELPENNINCK
(Leiden University, The Netherlands)

Among Western scholars, Chinese folk song is a rather neglected field of study, despite its central place in China's music culture. Both as textual and as musical sources, Chinese folk songs offer a very rewarding field of research. Many songs are miniature works of art, abundant in melodic invention and ornament. The subjects of the songs cover nearly every possible aspect of human life and Chinese history. A chronological presentation of folk song texts would most likely provide an accurate survey of social and political changes in the People's Republic. In this article, written in co-operation with Frank Kouwenhoven, the author gives a brief survey of what has been achieved in the field of folk song studies in China up till now.

In China, textual studies of folk song were initiated in the early 1920s by interested amateurs. Musicological research was introduced on a small scale in the 1930s, but only in recent years has it developed into a full-blown science. The relative neglect of Chinese folk song in the West cannot be solely ascribed to a lack of scholarly communication with China or of the opportunity to do fieldwork in the Chinese countryside. The authors of this article have been collecting folk songs in Jiangsu Province since 1986, without encountering any serious problems. More likely, the main reason for the absence of full-scale Western studies on Chinese folk song is the fact that such studies can only be conducted successfully through close co-operation between the widely diverging fields of sinology, anthropology, musicology, and archeomusicology. Only through an exchange of knowledge and the willingness to work together can useful results be obtained.

Until now, some individuals have from time to time made haphazard attempts at folk song collecting in China. They were missionaries, musicologists, anthropologists or simply China-enthusiasts with a passion for music. Sometimes their efforts were rewarded, but in general either a serious awareness of the problems connected with field research in China, or a proper musicological or methodological knowledge were lacking. As a result, songs were often collected without music, translations were published without the original Chinese texts, annotations were poor or inadequate and sound recordings were (and still are) very rare.

In China, the first substantial collection of folk melodies took place in the 1940s and 1950s, but it was mainly for political purposes - the tunes were borrowed to set propaganda texts to music. Nevertheless, an enormous quantity of important folk song materials was collected in this period, both texts and music transcriptions. Unfortunately, much of it disappeared again during the Cultural Revolution.



A folk song recording session in the countryside.

Genuine ethnomusicological research started only in the early 1980s, together with a prestigious, national folk music collecting project, initiated by the Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Musicians' Association. Most field recordings of folk songs also date from the last ten years.

With the growing contacts between China and the outside world, and the gradual disappearance of obstacles for field research, we can only hope for a closer interdisciplinary co-operation between Western and Chinese scholars, and for a renewed and shared interest in the rich legacy of Chinese folk song. This report summarizes research developments over the past hundred years. Of course, it by no means claims to be exhaustive on the subject.

EARLY COLLECTIONS OF FOLK SONGS

With the awakened interest in folklore in China during the early part of this century, a number of old collections of folk songs were republished or studied from new angles. The famous Confucian Classic *Shijing* (Book of Odes) won high praise from the Chinese folklorists for its pioneering efforts in collecting folk songs directly from the people. The 304 songs brought together in this book during the Zhou dynasty are no doubt for the greater part authentic folk songs.¹ They possibly stem from a much larger body of songs collected between 1000 and 600 BC by the so-called music masters of the imperial court. Apart from a short and ambiguous reference in the *Analects* there is no indication that it was indeed Confucius who edited the songs, but the fact that he expressed his admiration for them probably accounted for much of their later fame and their careful preservation throughout the ages.

The *Shijing* contains no musical notations. There is no way of knowing whether any of the music was actually noted down at all. The music masters relied heavily on oral tradition, and 'folk song collecting' in the early dynasties may well have meant collecting the folk singers themselves and bringing them to the court for live performances. The *Shijing* contains a considerable amount of love songs. To justify its inclusion in the Chinese Classics, Confucian scholars throughout the ages interpreted

the songs purely as political and ethical comments, for some reason or other wrapped in elaborate and amorous metaphors. The Chinese folklorists of the late 1910s and early 1920s designated many texts as downright love songs, and they would eventually draw attention to the general abundance of love songs in Chinese folk literature.

The *Yuefu* or Music Bureau of the Emperor Wudi, established in 125 BC, collected a large body of *yuefu shi* (both folk songs, temple hymns and sacrificial odes) which became popular in the Han and Jin dynasties, and of which a number of texts survived to the present age. Like the ones in the *Shijing*, they were probably collected for political purposes, namely to find out the people's opinions about their rulers.²

It should be made clear that all these ancient texts were written in classical Chinese, the language of the literati. Consequently, the folk songs lost much of their pristine form. The same goes for the folk songs from the Tang period manuscripts which were discovered in the Dunhuang caves at the beginning of the 20th century, and for a number of preserved or rediscovered folk song collections from the Ming and later dynasties. *Gujin Fengyao* (Old and New Folk Songs), compiled by Yang Sen (1488-1559) was labelled as the forerunner of all books on folk songs, although it only contained ancient songs copied from other books. Of far greater importance were *Yuefeng*, 11 folk songs from Guangxi edited by the Sichuanese Li Tiaoyuan (1734-1803)³, and *Shan'ge* (Mountain Songs), a collection of 383 folk songs from the Wu area compiled by Feng Menglong (1574-1646).

FENG MENGLONG

Feng Menglong clearly attached literary and artistic values to the folk songs of ordinary Chinese people. He lamented the fact that many of his scholarly contemporaries considered them vulgar or obscene and that they devoted their time only to high-brow Tang poetry. The accidental rediscovery of Feng's *Shan'ge* by a bookshop manager in 1934 created a great sensation among Chinese folklorists. They immediately recognized it as one of the most important treasures in the history of Chinese folk literature. They were surprised and delighted by the many songs containing explicit descriptions of sexual intercourse. In fact, the *Shan'ge* covered such delicate subjects as prostitution, impotence, defloration and menstruation, which were not mentioned, or not displayed with such openness and directness, in most other Chinese literary sources.⁴ A number of these songs were probably recorded from courtesans who entertained young men on the canals and lakes of Suzhou. They were not folk songs in the narrow sense of 'peasant songs'. The *Shan'ge* were printed in a modern edition in 1935, 300 years after Feng Menglong first collected them.⁵

Regrettably, of the music of all these songs not a single note has been preserved. A large number of melodies in Chinese opera, drama and court music is, with certainty, based on ancient folk songs, but they hardly give a clue to what the original songs really must have sounded like.

THE DAWN OF 20TH CENTURY FOLKLORE RESEARCH

In 1918, Liu Fu (1891-1934) and other scholars at Beijing University established a Bureau for Collecting Folk Songs (*Geyao Zhengjichu*). Two years later, a more formal Folk Song Research Society (*Geyao Yanjiuhui*) was founded. In 1922 the magazine *Geyao Zhoukan* (Folklore Weekly) was launched, with Zhou Zuoren (brother of the writer Lu Xun) as one of its editors.⁶

In the ensuing years, the Folk Song Research Society collected nearly 14,000 song texts, of which well over 2000 were printed. Most of the songs were contributions to *Geyao Zhoukan*, sent in by sympathetic readers. There were no organized, large-scale song collecting activities in the field, only private undertakings by interested individuals. Among them were the writer Shen Congwen and his army friends who collected 600 Miao minority songs, a selection of which Shen published in Beijing.⁷

The Chinese interest in folk song and in other genres of folk literature in the early part of this century was partly inspired by previous folklore movements in Russia and in the West, and partly by a search for new cultural and social values which might help to overcome China's innumerable problems. The country was wrecked by foreign exploitation, strikes, and civil wars. Many young intellectuals felt that only a radical cultural transformation could pave the way for the political and social changes which the country so badly needed. Consequently, they turned their back on Confucianism and other traditional values. Ideas and institutions of the past were now angrily rejected as the primary source of China's national ills. Romantic intellectuals like Gu Jiegang (1893-1980) saw the culture of the common people as China's last hope. Taking a highly romantic attitude towards rural life, Gu and his like-minded colleagues praised the unobtrusive, simple and virtuous life-style of the peasants, and promoted folk literature as a major alternative to China's classical literature. Folk songs once more became a source of inspiration for many Chinese poets, and in literature the use of vernacular language became popular.

RESEARCH BEFORE & DURING THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR

During two decades, Gu Jiegang occupied the foremost position in Chinese folklore studies. His book *Wuge Jiaji* (1926), a collection of 100 songs from the Wu area, and the first of the folk song series published by the Folk Song Research Society exerted a deep influence on the whole folklore movement. The songs were written down in the original dialect, without any attempt at embellishment. Gu's book was followed by a host of anthologies and comparative studies on folk song by other folklorists. It should be noted that all these publications dealt only with the texts, not with the music, which was hardly ever recorded.

In mid-1925, when the political situation in North China became increasingly dangerous, Gu Jiegang and others left Beijing and headed South. Gu joined the faculty of the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, where a new research centre was established: the Folklore Society (*Minsu Xuehui*), with a journal of its own, *Minsu Zhoukan* (Folklore Weekly). The new society carried out more systematic and more thorough research than its predecessor in Beijing. It organized special seminars on folk song and other fields of folklore, and issued a series of books.⁸ It also showed an increasing interest in the minority cultures of the Southwest.

In the wake of the Folklore Society in Guangzhou, other folklore societies and journals were founded in many parts of China. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, most of them came to a stand-still. The collecting of folk song texts was carried out haphazardly by individuals scattered over the whole country. Some folk song enthusiasts collected songs while actually on the run from the Japanese, as did students of the poet and scholar Wen Yiduo, who in 1938 travelled nearly 1200 miles on foot from Changsha to Kunming where a wartime university was established. One of Wen's students collected more than 2000 songs during the war and subsequently prepared them for publication.⁹

THE POSITION OF THE FOLKLORISTS

None of the folklorists of the 1920s and 1930s were professionals. They all had regular occupations and could spend only part of their time on the study of folk song, in which they encountered numerous difficulties. Their work was poorly funded, they lacked research experience and they only had a superficial understanding of Western folklore scholarship. The many folk dialects confronted them with transcription problems. In 1924, a special phonetic alphabet was created, but it never came into common use.¹⁰

The main obstacle, however, was the social opposition the folklorists encountered from many quarters. Conservative intellectuals frowned upon the sudden scholarly interest in vulgar folk songs which now flourished at such respected institutions as Beijing

University. The folklorists' emphasis on love songs as a remedy for social ills, their moral defense of obscene folk songs and attempts to publish them, and their general preoccupation with the 'superstitious beliefs and attitudes' of the peasantry repeatedly led to fierce public criticism. Guomindang government officials viewed the folklorists with growing suspicion.

Although the collecting of folk songs was not designed as a political activity (and did not initially show such fervent signs of nationalism as the rise of folklore in the West did), many Chinese folklorists bore in mind the possibility to use folklore as an instrument for social propaganda. Folk literature could serve to change the social attitudes of the urban Chinese. It would engender interest on the part of the intellectuals for the common people and inspire bonds of friendship. This was indeed Gu Jiegang's favorite topic.¹¹ But neither Gu nor those folklorists who held more sober views on rural life did foresee the rigorous way in which folk songs were eventually to be used for Communist propaganda.

COMMUNIST USE OF FOLK SONGS

The Chinese Communists were quick in recognizing the possibilities of music as a political and educational tool. The Taiping hymns and folk songs from the 19th century, and the many popular protest songs that circulated in China in the early years of the 20th century in defiance of the Manchu and warlord regimes, may have served as models for the Communist mass songs of the 1950s.¹² Group singing for educational purposes was already introduced in Chinese schools shortly after the 1911 Revolution, initially to Western tunes imported by foreign missionaries and educators. The group songs found their way from the schools to all kinds of civil gatherings, and they soon mingled with the local folk song idiom. As early as 1924, Mao Zedong included singing sessions in a political seminar in Guangdong, possibly after the model of Soviet Communist meetings. Five years later, he propagated the introduction of song teaching in army training programmes. When Edgar Snow visited Red Army territories in Shaanxi in 1936, he noticed that group singing was part of the daily training schedule of the soldiers.¹³ An elderly inhabitant of the area complained to him: "These people spend entirely too much time singing!" For want of original music, the army texts were often set to the melodies of local folk songs, which were then distributed again among the peasants in the areas occupied by the Communists.

Thus, already in the late 1930s, Chinese folk songs were intentionally used for Communist propaganda purposes. In a sense, Mao Zedong took up the threads of populism where the folklorists of the 1920s had left them, but under his guidance, the incentive of 'going to the people' gradually assumed rather awesome proportions. Not only did Mao propagate the songs and tales of the peasants as spiritual models and major sources of inspiration for bourgeois writers and artists; he also went to extremes in his adoption of Lenin's concept of art serving political functions in a socialist state.

In his 1942 Yan'an talks, Mao stated that all the arts should become a component part of 'the revolutionary machinery', and that they should serve as 'a powerful weapon in uniting and educating the people while attacking and annihilating the enemy'.¹⁴ In the 1940s, the main features of Chinese folk song were reformulated as 'resistance to oppression' and 'optimism of the people'. Such forms as the *yangge* (a kind of dance song) and *kuaiban* (a chanted narrative with castanet accompaniment) were specifically adapted for political education. The melodies and dance steps of the traditional *yangge* of North Shaanxi, though performed by uneducated peasants, were anything but simple. In order to incorporate *yangge* in the performances of the Red Army Theatre groups (very often consisting of people with little previous knowledge or experience of working with folk forms), they were substantially altered and simplified. In the music, Western elements were introduced. New *yangge* melodies were composed, the number of basic dance steps was drastically reduced, "lascivious postures" in the dance and

other sexual elements were eliminated, and the content of *yangge* plays (chanted stories performed on stage) was adapted to fit political aims.¹⁵

As a more positive consequence of Mao Zedong's call for a 'cultural army', the first modern trained Chinese musicians began to visit rural areas and started taking an interest in the music of the old folk songs. As early as in 1939, music teachers at the Lu Xun Academy of Art in Yan'an had begun to collect folk tunes. Their activities resulted in the founding of the Chinese Folk Music Research Society (1941).¹⁶ This society had its heyday after Mao's Yan'an talks, under the leadership of composers like Lü Ji (born 1909) and Ma Ke (1918). Both Lü and Ma used many folk tunes in their own compositions and wrote a considerable quantity of mass songs in praise of communism.

In these years the first substantial collection of folk melodies took place. The music was usually written down in number notation, which is still the most commonly used system of music notation in China. It should be noted, however, that the collecting was done in the first place by musicians, and to a far lesser extent by musicologists. Modern musicology had been introduced in China in the 1930s, notably by the German-trained scholar Wang Guangqi (1891-1936), but in its early phases it concentrated mainly on Chinese art music. From the 1950s onwards, another scholar, Yang Yinliu (1899-1984), was influential through his supervision of musicologists in their fieldwork and his critical studies and publications on all kinds of music.¹⁷

Communist propaganda teams continued to spread politically adapted folk songs and Western-influenced music in the countryside after the communist assumption of power in 1949. In the first year of the People's Republic the *All-China Association for the Improvement of Folk Songs and Balladry* was founded, soon put under supervision of the newly established Ministry of Culture.¹⁸ Local Bureaus of Culture were established

Buddhist worshippers burning incense. Folk rituals like these - and the songs that accompanied them - were suppressed by the Communists.



throughout the country. In 1951, local ballad singers in Guangxi were recruited to form Ballad Propaganda Teams. Many of the old style ballads, dealing with ancient romances, gods and goddesses, emperors and their favorites, were rejected and replaced by songs about labour models or Red Army heroes.¹⁹ Through local competitions and festivals, the peasants were stimulated to create folk songs in the new, political idiom. The first All-China Folk Music and Dance Festival took place in Beijing in 1953. The Central Conservatory of Beijing (founded in 1949 by Lü Ji, who became its first Director) started a folk music research department.

THE 1950S

In general, the drastic reorganization of cultural life in communist China had a nationwide stimulating effect on Chinese folklore and folklore research. At the same time, however, it implied the suppression or downright loss of many old folk texts, folk customs and forms of folk art which were somehow considered either backward or politically unfit. This tendency got worse in the late 1950s. In 1957, a longtime associate of Gu Jiegang, the folklorist Zhong Jingwen, was caught up in the backlash of Mao's short-lived campaign for open criticism of the party. His scholarship was denounced as contrary to the interests of the people, and he was impeached for insisting on the separation of scientific studies on folklore from its use as socialist propaganda. Gu Jiegang came to his rescue²⁰, but very soon, during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign, views like Zhong's were completely silenced.

A year later, the Great Leap Forward gave a new impetus to the mass-production of folk songs about tractors, agricultural heroes, shining steel factories and the graces and virtues of Chairman Mao. The poet Guo Moruo, who was one of the editors of the folk song anthology *Hongqi Geyao* (Songs of the Red Flag, 1959), praised the new songs for their combined "originality of ideological content and excellence of artistic form", and claimed that even the poems in the Book of Odes looked drab beside them.²¹

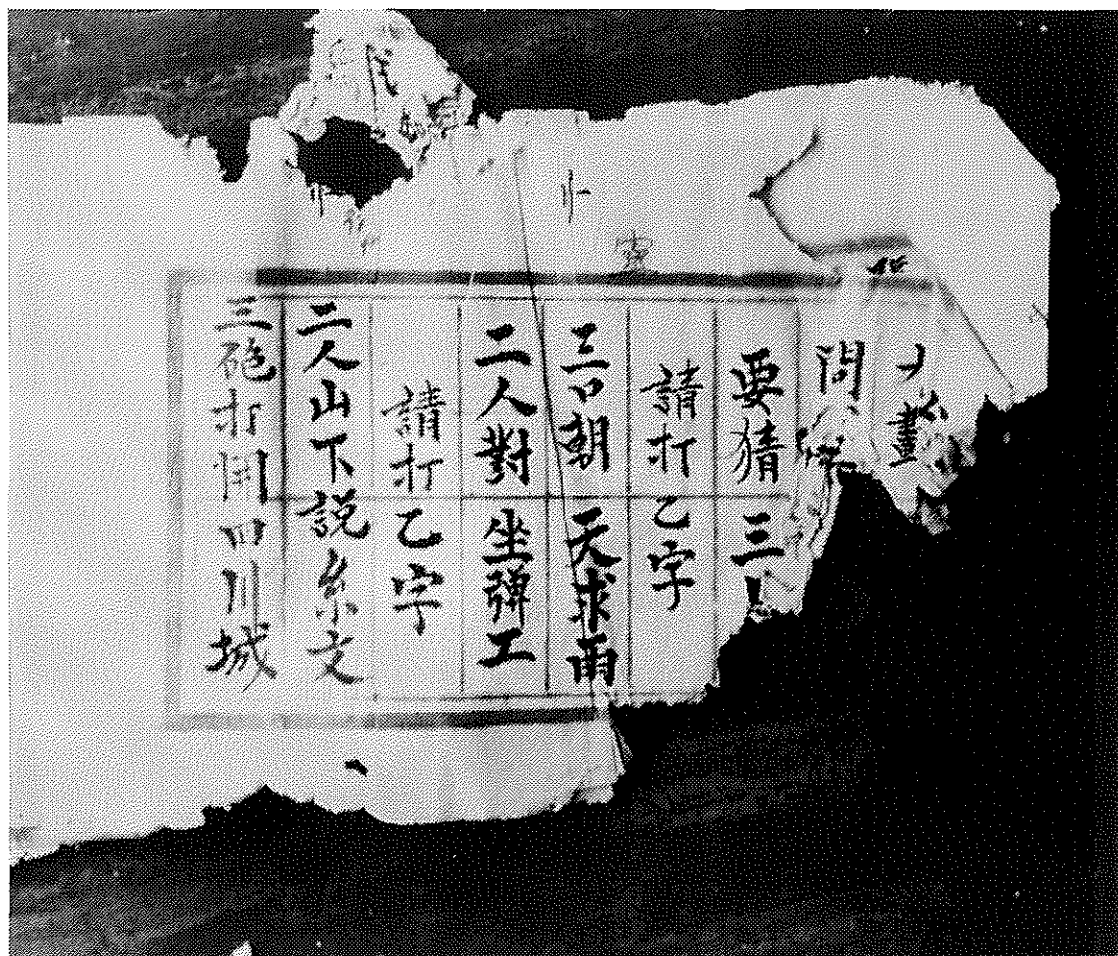
Not only in rural areas, but also in the larger cities music served as a major tool for political education. The Children's Palaces, the urban headquarters for the Young Pioneers, the Party's young people's organization, had their own orchestras and choirs, and group singing was now a universal activity in which children were involved from nursery school onwards.²²

Whereas the political songs aimed at peasants generally derived their tunes from folk music, those aimed at school children, students, soldier and workers had more Westernized tunes, often modelled on Russian revolutionary tunes. This music can still be heard today. The urban political songs are characterized by firm march rhythms and rather angular melodies in the major scale. The Chinese National Anthem (composed in 1945 by the Russian-trained composer Nie Er) is a case in point.

FIELDWORK SHORTLY BEFORE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Fieldwork during the Great Leap Forward and in the early 1960s was projected on a large scale and put into effect by the Bureaus of Culture in cooperation with provincial branches of the *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui* (Chinese Musicians' Association, founded in 1959). The work was inadequately organized and at times it had a rather chaotic character. At the lowest level, in the small villages a Bureau of Culture often consisted of no more than an elderly peasant entrusted with the task of selecting and gathering suitable singers. From time to time a team of musicians or musically inclined amateurs from an urban Bureau of Culture would visit the villages to listen to the singers and learn the local songs by heart.²³

For want of equipment, only few sound recordings of folk music were made in this period. The ones that were produced seldom recorded the performer in his natural surroundings. The musicologist Yang Yinliu was among the first to experiment with the medium. In 1950 he recorded *erhu* and *pipa* pieces played by the blind street musician A Bing.



One page from a handwritten collection of riddle songs which survived the Cultural Revolution.

In the early stages of fieldwork many mistakes were made in the notation of texts and melodies. In certain regions where folk culture was particularly rich, a great many people were involved in the work. Many of them had no more than a rudimentary knowledge of musical notation. The songs that were gathered were extensively 'edited' by local investigators, and then sent to a provincial bureau, where they were selected for publication. Love songs and erotic songs were carefully expurgated. Songs about the oppression of women were included as examples of the difficult life in pre-liberation China (although quite a few of them were actually composed after 1949). At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, folk song collecting became a dangerous activity. During a campaign against religious practices (and, eventually, against anything that was considered traditional), many previously accepted elements of folklore came under attack. Village museums were destroyed, and rural officials of the Bureaus of Culture, engaged in folklore research, were questioned and severely mutilated by Red Guards. The situation did not improve in the early 1970s. Not only collectors, but also many folk singers were caught up in the violence, the contradictions and political complexities of the time. There were moments when singing, unless on command, was dangerous. Not many folk songs were heard in this period, not even the old ones in praise of Mao or the propagandist yangge. Jiang Qing's dislike of folk song was well known. A new type of cultural official was sent to the rural areas to teach the peasants the urban song repertoire of the revolution, now narrowly confined to the optimism of four beats in a measure. The peasants did not like it, however, and they never learned to sing it well.²⁴

THE BUREAUS OF CULTURE TODAY

After the Cultural Revolution, the activities of the Bureaus of Culture were gradually resumed. Already in 1979, the work of collecting and editing folk songs was continued with a zeal and productivity which was reminiscent of the 1950s.

The Bureaus of Culture are organized today in much the same way as forty years ago, when they were founded. The central point of coordination is the Ministry of Culture (*Wenhua bu*) in Beijing. At the next highest level, every province in China has its Provincial Bureau of Culture (*Wenhua ting*), situated in the capital city. The *Wenhua ting* head a number of urban Bureaus of Culture (*Wenhua ju*), which cover restricted areas within a province. Within each area there are a number of Bureaus of Culture (*Wenhua guan*) operating in smaller towns, which supervise the local village Culture Posts (*Wenhua zhan*). The latter are usually occupied by one man. At all levels contact is kept with corresponding branches of the Chinese Musicians' Association. At country level, the Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Musicians' Association share responsibility and funds for all folk music research.

In 1979, the Ministry of Culture (newly set up after the Cultural Revolution) issued a list of demands with regard to all field research. From now on, photographs of all singers and performers were to be made; the songs had to be recorded on tape, the music should be written down more accurately, and in all provinces of China comprehensive collections of folk songs were to be published. The provincial Bureaus of Culture were assigned special budgets for this purpose. The final aim was to publish a big, national anthology of folk songs. The work for this anthology is not yet finished; it is one of the biggest projects ever undertaken in the field of Chinese musicology, and tens of thousands of (amateur) folk song collectors are involved in it.

THE BIG ANTHOLOGY

Early in the 1980s, the folk songs, narrative songs, local stage and opera songs, instrumental pieces, dance songs and religious music of Jiangsu (one of the provinces richest in folk music) were brought together in a series of bulky volumes. The same was achieved in other provinces. For the folk songs of Jiangsu alone, five separate volumes were needed.²⁵ They were compiled with some haste between 1976 and 1980. At the present moment, these books are not publicly available in China, but persuasive enthusiasts may get hold of them 'through the backdoor'. They are not publicly available, because they are only used as 'rough' material for the big, national anthology, and are considered as work in progress.

Nevertheless, a closer examination of these preliminary volumes may shed some light on the collecting and editing methods used by the compilers. The Jiangsu Folk Song Anthology contains twelve hundred songs, selected from a much larger body of twelve thousand. Regrettably, the criteria for inclusion have not been made clear. The Anthology comprises material from previously published collections (1959, 1978), and is supplemented with fresh material. The song texts are written down in Chinese characters, the tunes in number notation. (Of each song only the tune of the first verse is given, which makes a comparison between different verses impossible; ornamentation is kept to a minimum). The songs are sometimes classified according to their mood, sometimes according to their social function or according to their form, which is confusing. The classification is partly based on traditional concepts, of which the origins cannot always be traced. Thus the *shan'ge* (literally 'mountain songs', a term already used in Tang days) have nothing to do with mountains. Some of the *xiaodiao* ('short ditties') are considerably longer than many of the *changge* ('long songs'), and another category, the *zadiao* ('various ditties'), judging from its central place in the volumes, is not presented as a residual category but as a specific one.²⁶ The books contain some useful maps showing regions where particular dialects or types of song prevail. In spite of their shortcomings and frequent notation errors, these anthologies are of considerable value as sources of reference. In all China, hundreds of thousands of folk songs must have been recorded in this way.

The regional anthologies are sent to Beijing, to the central editing office of the anthology, where all the material is examined in detail, and re-edited, after which a final selection is made for the official publication. Recently, the first official volumes in the series were published: two books on songs from Hubei Province, with over fifteen hundred pages of transcriptions and texts. The material has indeed been more carefully edited than in the preliminary anthologies. Footnotes, comments and textual explanations have been added, and the books contain valuable maps, charts, tables and photographs. The Hubei volumes are the promising start of a very prestigious publication project, which will probably take many years to finish.

At the central office in Beijing, copies of the recordings of all the folk songs selected for the big anthology have been assembled in a national archive, which already comprises an imposing collection of both written documents and sound recordings. However, the bulk of the sound recordings made by local collectors is kept in the villages and local townships, either at the Cultural Bureaus, or in private possession.

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

The song collecting by members of the Chinese Musicians' Association, and the editing work by officials of the Bureaus of Culture is now carried out with considerably less political and ideological involvement than in the 1960s. The problems with which cultural officials in China are confronted are at present surprisingly similar to those in the West, bureaucracy and lack of funds being predominant. The annual budgets for field research in the provinces fluctuate in an unpredictable way, which makes planning difficult or downright impossible. Jiangsu, for example, was assigned a total budget for fieldwork of 450,000 *yuan* in 1985, but only 40,000 *yuan* in 1986.

Considering the magnitude of the big anthology, and the time and money that has already been spent on it, it is unfortunate that the researchers and song collectors who are co-operating in the work of collecting and editing folk songs have so many problems to contend with: none of them are properly trained for the job, they are paid very little for it, and they often have to record the songs with very poor sound equipment. In fact, the anthology can only be accomplished with the help of a great many local volunteers (frequently folk singers themselves), who assist in the work of collecting, but have had no musical training. They can write down the texts and help record the songs, but the music transcriptions have to be made by researchers at the provincial level, on the basis of the recordings. Contact between provincial and local researchers is limited to occasional meetings in the provincial capitals, and exchanges of letters. Moreover, the provincial researchers have little opportunity to get in touch with the singers directly. As a consequence, the material loses a considerable part of its reliability, in the course of being transferred from village collectors to provincial editors. Many mistakes occur in the transcriptions, which cannot always be checked, and the same applies to the texts.

A basic problem of the whole project is that many of the sound recordings give only extracts from the songs. In general, the provincial researchers consider one or two verses of a tune to be enough to base their music transcriptions on. It is highly unusual for them to study all the verses of one song and examine their musical differences. Such a comparison is necessary to make out what is impermanent and what is consistent in the contours of a folk tune, but most researchers hardly realize this. Many folk songs move in more than one mode, and the tunes do not always seem to favour one mode in particular. Moreover, the singers will sometimes insert notes which alter the whole impact of a tune. This is one of the basic charms of the whole art of folk song, but this aspect is lost in the transcriptions for the big Chinese anthology, which, in general, tend to oversimplify the contours of the songs. The problem becomes more serious if such transcriptions are used as primary source materials for studies on Chinese folk song. This happens quite often, because in China, scientific research and musicological studies of folk songs are usually carried out within the boundaries of the

music conservatories and a number of special institutes, rather than in the field. Most Chinese musicologists do not have the money to travel extensively and do fieldwork over longer periods of time, and some do not think it necessary.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN CHINA

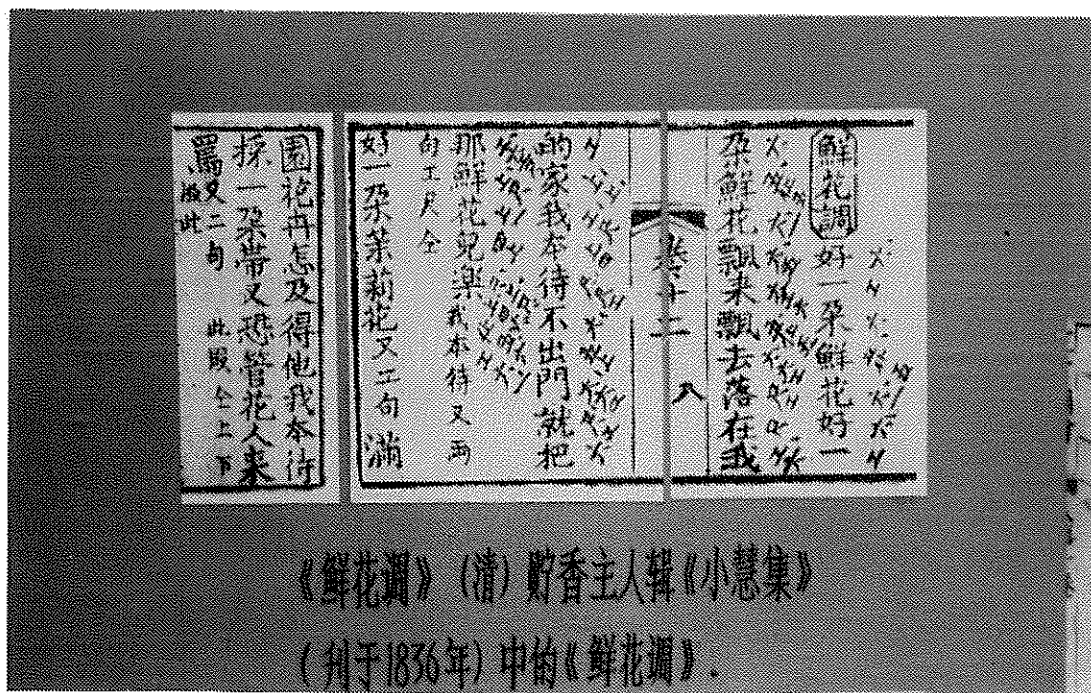
Academic institutes of musicology, such as they exist in the West, are rarely to be found in China. Instead, the conservatories of music, like those in Beijing and Shanghai, all have music research departments. The same goes for the urban Art Institutes, which combine elements of a theatre or music school, an academy for the visual arts and a research institute.

In the Nanjing Art Institute, some theory lessons on folk music are given to the students of music, but only as a subsidiary activity. Some of its staff members are engaged in research on folk music, for which they are allowed ample space and time, but no special budget. They frequently pay the costs of research themselves.

The main centre of music research in China is the *Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan - Yinyue yanjiusuo*, The Research Institute of Music of the Chinese Academy of Arts in Beijing, which started in 1956 as an offshoot of the Central Music Conservatory of Beijing. It is now an independent organization, headed directly by the Ministry of Culture. The institute owns five professional Sony TCD5M tape-recorders for fieldwork, which are used in turn by scholars of various departments. Several people in the institute are specialized in folk song, and they carry out fieldwork over longer periods of time. The institute offers no basic training courses in ethnomusicology. The basics of musicology are taught at the Art Institutes and the music conservatories.

At the nine conservatories in China²⁷, musical performance and theory are equally stressed in the educational programmes. Unfortunately, ethnomusicology (in the Western sense of 'scientific study of folk music') is not taught as an independent discipline. At the Conservatory of Shanghai, students have the possibility to take folk

An early music notation of a Chinese folk song, 'Xianhuadiao', published in 1836.



song singing lessons and get acquainted with various regional folk song styles. The singing course is of great, practical value, but unfortunately, most of the sound recordings used in the lessons are of folk song arrangements by professional singers, often to orchestral accompaniment. Genuine field recordings are rarely heard. Moreover, no systematic methods for folk song research are being taught, no proper textbooks are used, other than an anthology of some hundred songs from all over China. Most of the scholars who are now engaged in ethnomusicological studies in China have been educated at the conservatories, where they have eventually started working as staff members themselves. They are still in the course of developing methods and a theoretical basis appropriate for Chinese folk music. Considering the difficult circumstances with which Chinese researchers have to cope, both in terms of money and political obstacles, one can only respect their considerable achievements. The country's long-time isolation from the rest of the world has prevented Chinese researchers from getting into contact with their colleagues in the West. For this reason, it was extremely difficult for them to catch up with international developments in ethnomusicology. Nevertheless, a number of very important folk song studies have been published in China. Over the past few years, several ethnomusicological seminars have taken place, which underlines the growing importance which is now being attached to co-operation and exchange between scholars in this field.

PUBLICATIONS

Interesting musicological studies of folk song have been published as early as 1942²⁸, but most of the early studies were strongly politically biased. In the late 1940s, the Chinese Folk Music Research Society published a collection of thirteen articles, *Minjian yinyue lunwenji*, (Essays on Folk Music, Qiqiha'er, 1948), with contributions from Lü Ji (on the basic principles of folk music research, and on rhythm and metre in folk song), Zhang Lu (on how to collect folk music) and others. There were interesting research projects throughout the 1950s. The most important results of this period were published in the chapter on folk song in *Minzu yinyue gailun* (Introduction to Traditional Music), issued in Beijing in 1964 by the Music Research Institute.²⁹ This book introduced the principles of classification of Chinese folk songs, as they are still being used at present. The same institute also published various regional studies, such as *Hequ Minjian Gequ*, 'Folk Song in the Hequ Area' (1956, re-edited in 1962). In the journal *Music Research*, 1958 no.2, the musicologist Xiao Xing wrote an essay on *Shanqu*, a specific type of song from the Hequ area. In Xiao's article, folk songs were studied, for the first time, in anthropological perspective. A host of local anthologies was published in the late 1950s, some with elaborate introductory essays.

Major progress of folk song research in China has only become possible in recent years, in the wake of political relaxation and economic growth. There have been various exchanges with foreign scholars, and some Western theories and methods of ethnomusicology have been introduced to the country. Some writings by R. Vaughan Williams, Z. Kodály and others were already available in the 1950s, but in the 1980s, Chinese researchers were able, for the first time, to obtain an impression of what been achieved in the West by researchers such as Bartók, Ellis, Kunst, Sachs, Nettl, Lomax, Merriam and others. In the same period, the first, modern monographs on Chinese folk song appeared: Song Daneng's *Minjian gequ gailun*, 'Introduction to Folk Song', (Beijing, 1979) and Jiang Mingdun's *Hanzu min'ge gailun*, 'Introduction to Han Folk Song', (Shanghai, 1982). Important literary studies have been published in journals like *Minjian wenyi jikan*, 'Folk Literature and Art Quarterly', issued by the Folk Literature and Art Publishing House in Shanghai.

COLOUR AREAS AND TUNE FAMILIES

In the past few years, Chinese musicologists have paid much attention to the existence of so-called 'colour areas', referring to important stylistic differences between the folk

songs of various regions, which are thought to be visibly related to general, cultural differences: in colour area studies, the music of the songs is analyzed carefully in order to enable comparison of their various scales, modes, rhythmic features and performance characteristics, but the songs are also viewed against the historical, geographical, and linguistic differences between the areas from which they originate. Miao Jing and Qiao Jianzhong, two scholars of the Music Research Institute in Beijing, published an interesting study in this field: *Lun Hanzu min'ge jinsi secai qu de huafen*, 'The Division of Han Chinese Folk Songs in Various Colour Areas' (Beijing, 1987). Miao and Qiao propose a theoretical division of China in eleven areas on the basis of the different 'colours' of folk songs, but their study is controversial. Other Chinese researchers have proposed different divisions.



Prof. Jiang Mingdun, Shanghai Conservatory.

Geng Shenlian, a music scholar of the Central Conservatory, has made a division in nine colour areas, Jiang Mingdun of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music mentions only eight in his *Hanzu min'ge gailun*, and recently decided to bring down the number to seven.³⁰ The colour area studies are a good example of the very broad approach to folk song which is characteristic for most of the Chinese researchers at present.

In the field of local and regional studies, much attention is paid to the so-called 'tune families', referring to basic melodic patterns which are characteristic for certain areas in China. However, the fact that Chinese folk singers in various regions of the country limit their musical repertoire to only one basic melody, to which they sing hundreds of different texts, has hardly been studied. The author of this article observed the phenomenon during her fieldwork in the Wu area in Jiangsu, but it was also mentioned by the Hong Kong researcher Kenneth Yip in his thesis on Cantonese folk songs (1989).³¹ Apparently, folk singers in various parts of China have only a small repertoire of tunes, and sometimes a clear preference for one particular tune. Such a tune may be used indiscriminately to sing texts strongly varying in length, rhythm and stanza structure. Also, the same tune may serve to express very different moods; it can be used, for example, both for tragic love songs and bawdy verse. Only through variation and continuous adaptation of the music can the singers make all their texts fit the same basic melodic shape, and follow, to some extent, the speech tone inflections of the words. Nevertheless, the essence of the tunes seems to be in their overall melodic direction, rather than in their rhythm and tempo, which are surprisingly free. In China, the melodic flexibility of folk singers is underrated as a potential field of study. In fact, the art of variation (within a set and limited repertoire of tunes) is so much at the core of all Chinese music that it should be regarded as a key issue in Chinese music research.

A small repertoire of tunes is said to be a more common phenomenon in southern parts of China than in the north. However, in the far south, on Hainan Island (Hainandao), local folk song contests have been organized, in which the singers are expected to invent ever new tunes to an existing body of texts. The author has not been able to verify the reports on these annual contests, or to find out what kind of singers participate in it.³²

SEMINARS

An important event in the history of Chinese music research was the meeting of musicians and musicologists in Nanjing in June 1980, actually the first Symposium of Ethnomusicology since the founding of the People's Republic of China. It was initiated by Professor Gao Houyong and other scholars of the Nanjing Art Institute. About a hundred people attended the Symposium, and more than sixty papers were delivered. As a result, the *Minzu yinyuexue xuehui* (Ethnomusicological Society) was founded, and it was suggested that a meeting should be organized every other year.

In August 1982, the second Biennial Conference of the Ethnomusicological Society was held at the Conservatory of Chinese Music in Beijing, which had been revived in the same year. This time it was a nationwide gathering. Subsequent meetings have been held in Shenyang and Guizhou (1984), and in Beijing, Heilongjiang and Sichuan (1986). The number of participants was doubled in this period,³³ and the organization changed its name to Chinese Traditional Music Society (*Zhongguo chuantong yinyue xuehui*). The papers presented at the meetings dealt with such widely diverging subjects as *qin* music, narrative song, local opera, Buddhist chant, court music and dances, folk song etc., and they were discussed from a large variety of angles, including music sociology, history and aesthetics. An interesting fact was that for the first time, some attention was paid to folk music outside China, notably that of Africa and Latin America. There are few funds available for the support of Chinese ethnomusicologists in fieldwork outside their own country. For the time being, the study of foreign folk music by Chinese is limited mainly to books and sound recordings; and even these are hard to obtain.³⁴

At the present moment, there is no major musical journal in China which deals entirely with folk song, but there are some respectable journals on musicology which include articles on the subject. The most important ones are all quarterlies: *Zhongguo yinyuexue* (Musicology in China, published by the Music Research Institute in Beijing), *Yinyue yanjiu* (Music Research, formerly called Music Study, published by the Chinese Musicians' Association), *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing), *Yinyue yishu* (Music Arts, issued by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music), and *Zhongguo yinyue* (Chinese Music, published by the Conservatory of Chinese Music in Beijing).³⁵

CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION

In many respects, Chinese ethnomusicology is catching up fast with scientific standards and new developments in Western musicology. However, a number of problems remain that need to be pointed out here. In China there is a considerable confusion about the meaning of such terms as folk and traditional, as is reflected by the many discussions, debates, essays and articles devoted to their definitions. In China, 'folk music' may refer to all music in which some recognizable elements of a folk tune are maintained. Many light songs, sung by radio stars, are thus called 'folk songs'. 'Traditional' may refer to music played on traditional instruments, even if it is newly composed or played with an unusual combination of instruments. The large Chinese orchestras which were formed in the early 1950s are called 'traditional orchestras', although in size they are clearly modelled on the symphony orchestras of the West. At the core of all arguments there is probably a controversy on musical aesthetics which in China has a history of at least three thousand years. It is the question of which music is *su* and which music is *ya*. The terms refer to the Confucian distinction between 'vulgar' and 'pure', which had political connotations at the time of the early dynasties, as is clear from the *Liji* and other classical sources. The literati and music masters of the court spent considerable time in adapting and improving music which was considered impure. The tendency to improve music in accordance with current doctrines of politics and ethics may well have survived from Confucian days into the 20th Century. The massive collecting of folk songs from the mid-1950s onwards was (according to Zhou Yang, then the Vice-Minister of Culture) meant to 'scientifically

preserve and systematically organize this national treasure (i.e. folk songs), to revise (*gaizheng*) and enrich (*jiagong*) their contents in order to make them a fitting medium to entertain the people and to educate them at the same time'.³⁶ Thus, the Communists maintained the very ancient tradition of purifying what is 'vulgar'. It may also account for the fact that, although Chinese folk song is more than ever regarded as a national treasure, there is at present not a single music cassette available in the People's Republic offering a selection of authentically performed folk songs. Nor has one ever been produced. Folk songs are often regarded as rough materials: when it comes to public performance, a composer or a professional musician is first expected to 'do something with them'. For that reason, sound recordings of Chinese folk songs performed by enthusiastically vibrating opera sopranos or pathetic strings are available everywhere. The same is true, to some extent, for Chinese traditional music. Although it is usually played on traditional instruments, it is not always authentic in the Western sense. The present debate amongst Chinese musicologists on the boundaries of 'folk' and 'traditional' focuses on the question which music should be regarded as 'pure', or to what extent its purity should be preserved. The pros and cons in this discussion are often formulated in political phrases which are incomprehensible to a Western musicologist, but easily recognizable for anyone familiar with the selected works of Mao Zedong.³⁷ If nothing else, it is a very time-consuming debate.

There is one other point to be made. Although it is not unusual for a Chinese ethnomusicologist to visit the countryside, most of the fieldwork is carried out not by scholars but by local people. This separation of musicological research and fieldwork is unusual in Western ethnomusicology. In recent years, Chinese musicologists like Yang Yuye have emphasized the need for scholars to go to the peasants themselves to collect the songs and study them at first hand.³⁸ The difference might well be a shift of accent in the Chinese folk song collecting movement from 'quantity' to 'quality'.

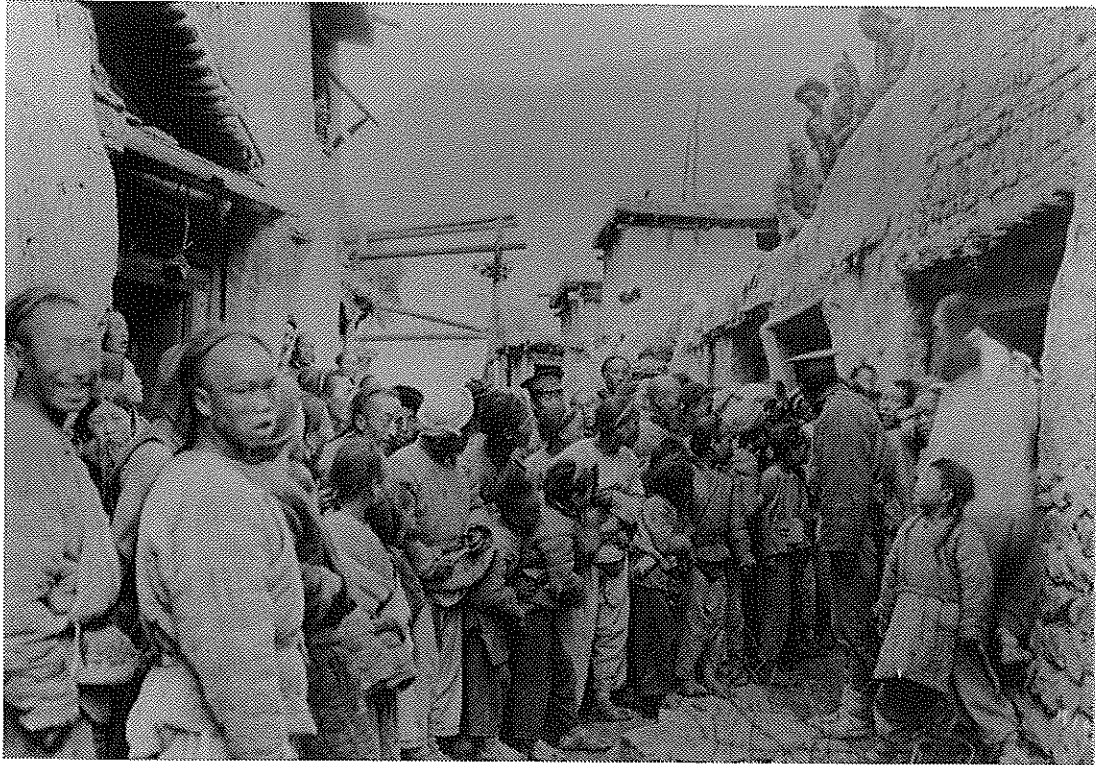
WESTERN RESEARCH AND FIELD RECORDINGS

We have not been able to find much information on previous folk song collecting activities by Westerners in China. To the best of our knowledge, there are no extensive collections of sound recordings of Chinese folk songs in Europe, unless they were made quite recently and thus escaped our notice. The national phonographic archives of Vienna and Berlin are in possession of a few early field recordings of purely historical value.

The first recordings of Chinese folk songs ever made date from the beginning of this century. In 1911, Marie du Bois-Reymond made many recordings of Buddhist songs.³⁹ In the same year, the Belgian missionary Father Joseph Van Oost recorded 32 folk songs in the border region of Shanxi and Inner Mongolia. Eventually he published a study on them in the Vienna journal *Anthropos*.⁴⁰

In 1912, the German Consul in Chengdu, Friedrich Weiss, recorded work songs of the Yangtze boatmen and corresponded about them with the ethnomusicologist Erich Moritz von Hornbostel, who was then in charge of the Berlin Phonogramm Archiv.⁴¹ Copies of Weiss' recordings have survived both World Wars, and they can still be found in the Berlin Archiv today. Not surprisingly, their sound quality is extremely poor. The same goes for what is left of Van Oost's recordings in the Vienna Phonogramm Archiv. Of his songs, all but one were lost through unknown causes.⁴² Listening to the one recording that survived (only a copy of the original), we could not help feeling impressed, in spite of all its squeaking and creaking: through all the mechanical noise seeped two minutes of living sounds from the turbulent last years of the Chinese Empire.

All recordings mentioned were produced on wax rolls. In later years, a number of sound recordings were made by various visitors to China. They were mainly private recordings, but a few were included on gramophone records, like a Taiwanese teapicking songs, collected in the 1930s, which was issued by the Rumanian



Villagers in Gansu Province listen in astonishment to a phonograph. (Photo: J.F.Rock, 1925).

ethnomusicologist Constantin Brailoiu in his Unesco series the World Collection of Recorded Folk Music (1951-1958). There were scattered recordings of Chinese folk song which were included on records featuring an anthology of Chinese music, especially those in the 1960s on the labels Lyricord, Folkway Records and Chant du Monde. There are few studies by Western folklorists on the subject of Chinese folk song. A number of textual anthologies has been published from the 1890s onwards, starting with Baron Guido Amedeo Vitale's *Pekinese Rhymes* (1896), a collection of 170 children's rhymes which eventually proved to be of major influence on the Chinese folklore movement. The book was very systematically edited, and it still serves as an important source book.⁴³ Later anthologies are Isaac Taylor Headland's *Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes* (1900), E.T.C. Werner's *Chinese Ditties* (1922), Wolfram Eberhard's "Pekinger Stampferlieder" from the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 67.Jhrg., and Antoine Mostaert's *Folklore Ordos* (1947).

The first anthologies of folk song paying attention to both texts and music were Father Joseph Van Oost's *Chansons populaires Chinoises de la région Sud des Ordos* (1912) and his *Notes sur le T'Oemet* (1922). The tunes are presented by Van Oost in Western music notation, again in unembellished form, i.e. without ornaments. Van Oost's comments on the music are rather superficial, but his elaborate annotation of the texts is excellent. A scholarly study of melodic features of Chinese music, mainly drawing material from folk music, is Fritz Kornfeld's *Die Tonale Struktur Chinesischer Musik* (Möding bei Wien, 1955).

In recent years, various fields of vocal musical folklore in China have gradually received wide attention from Western scholars, notably local opera, ballads and narrative song. In 1969, the American journal *Chinoperl* was launched, as a result of the first meeting of the *Conference on Chinese Oral and Performing Literature*, presided over by Professor Rulan Chao Pian of Harvard University. *Chinoperl* sometimes includes articles on folk song. Other journals, like *Asian Music*, have occasionally published articles on Chinese folk song.

CHINESE FIELD RECORDINGS

There were a number of field recordings made in China by the Chinese themselves. We have not been able to find out yet how much was actually recorded from the 1950s onwards (and how much of it was lost again during the Cultural Revolution). We did have the opportunity to listen to (and make copies of) some officially recorded tapes owned by the Folk Museum and the Municipal Bureau of Culture in Suzhou. The sound quality is poor, and the recordings are only fragments containing first verses or parts of first verses of songs.

In recent years, some of the richer peasants in Jiangsu have amassed sufficient wealth to be able to afford the purchase of a cassette tape. They frequently record their own songs (next to popular tunes sung on the radio by pop stars). The equipment is of a moderate quality, and it often suffers rough treatment. Yet these privately produced tapes are highly valuable documents.

FOLK SONGS IN CHINESE CINEMA

An interesting and hopeful development is the current use of authentic folk songs in film music, notably in the films of the 'fifth' and younger generations. Previously, folk songs in Chinese movies were often accompanied by invisible orchestras, or sung by operatic voices clearly unrelated to the faces mimicking the performance on the screen.

In Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth (Huang Tudi)*, produced in 1984, part of the lyrics are sung by professional singers and to orchestral accompaniment, but the film also features a genuine folk singer who performs a wedding song. *Yellow Earth* was a very influential film. It became the prototype of a new genre, in which rural life and the (often desolate) landscape of China's northwest were portrayed in a realistic and powerful way. Chen Kaige is now widely regarded as one of the most important film directors in China. At present, he is working on a film about the life of a Chinese folk ballad singer.

Folk songs have become an essential part in Chinese films about peasant life, not only for their beauty and poetical conception, but also because they serve as a means of emotional expression for the characters in the stories. Some examples are Yan Xueshu's *In the Wild Mountains (Ye Shan)* 1985, Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Horse Thief (Dao ma zei)*, 1986 and Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum (Hong Gaoliang)*, 1986.

In Li Xiaolong's *Love at the Drum Tower (Gulou Qinghua)*, 1987, Dong minority songs are used. The film is overtly romantic and cannot be compared with the more sophisticated achievements of such artists as Chen Kaige, but it is very interesting for its portrayal of Dong rituals and Dong culture. No doubt, Chinese cinema will have some influence on the general appreciation of folk song in the People's Republic, but the films of the fifth generation are distributed on a limited scale only, and some of them are never shown at all.

It will be most interesting to watch the future developments of folk song appreciation and research, both in China and in the West. Especially in the West, notwithstanding some excellent achievements by individual scholars, Chinese folk song has not yet received the amount of attention it deserves.

N.B. This article is a revised and extended version of 'Folk Song Collecting in China - A Short Survey', published in 'China Information', Vol. III, No. 1 (Summer 1988). The author apologizes for not adding a glossary of Chinese characters. A selective bibliography of publications on Chinese folk song is scheduled for inclusion in one of the next issues of CHIME, with Chinese characters.

NOTES

¹ The book is in four sections, the first of which is called *Guofeng*. This section contains 160 songs which are clearly folk songs, though they may have received some literary polish from the hands of the men who first compiled them. Cf. B. Watson, *Early Chinese Literature*, New York 1962, pp. 201-230.

² Cf. Kaufmann, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics*, Detroit 1976, pp. 25, 151, 155; and J. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, London 1865/1872, Prolegomena, pp. 23-26.

³ Translated into vernacular language in 1923.

⁴ With the possible exception of some 16th and 17th century erotic novels, notably the *Jinpingmei*. Feng Menglong was impressed by the *Jinpingmei* and nearly went bankrupt in an attempt to publish its manuscript in 1604. Cf. Cornelia Töpelmann, *Shan-ko von Feng Meng-lung, eine Volksliedersammlung aus der Ming-Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1973. Töpelmann translated the songs into German and did valuable research into their thematic contents.

⁵ Other collections which received renewed attention were *Guazhi'er* (Songs to the Tune of Guazhi'er, 1609), also by Feng Menglong; *Nishang Xupu* (A Supplementary Collection of Popular Songs, 1795) by Wang Tingshao; and *Baixue Yiyin* (A White Snow Song Book, 1828) by Hua Guangshen. The last two books contain songs from both high officials and common people.

⁶ Much vital information in this section was taken from C.T. Hung's study of Chinese intellectuals and folk literature in the period 1918-1937: *Going to the people*, Harvard UP, Cambridge (Mass.) 1985, particularly pp. 32-81 and 158-168.

⁷ Taken from J. Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly peace: the Chinese and their Revolution 1895-1980*, Penguin, London 1982, p.315.

⁸ Amongst which an anthology of studies on the famous story of the tragic heroine Meng Jiangnü, who featured in numerous folk songs, ballads and folk tales.

⁹ J. Spence, op.cit., p. 315.

¹⁰ Cf. Chao Wei-pang, "Modern Chinese Folklore Investigation", *Folklore Studies* (2 vols.) Beijing 1942 and 1943, p. 63.

¹¹ Cf. L.A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History*, Los Angeles 1971, pp. 121-181.

¹² A suggestion made by Isabel K.F. Wong in "Songs for the Education of the Masses", in: B. McDougall et.al., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979*, California 1984, pp. 112-143.

¹³ Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, (1937), Penguin ed. London 1972, pp. 99, 110, 292 and 322.

¹⁴ Cited in Bonnie S. McDougall (ed.), *Mao Zedong's Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art*, Michigan 1980, p. 58.

¹⁵ David Holm, "Folk art as Propaganda: the Yangge Movement in Yan'an", in: B. McDougall et.a., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979*, Michigan 1980, p. 58.

¹⁶ Cf. *Zhongguo yinyue cidian* (Chinese Dictionary of Music), Beijing 1985, entry on the Chinese Folk Music Research Society (*Zhongguo minjian yinyue yanjiuhui*), p. 507.

¹⁷ Yang Yinliu was active both as a musicologist and as a Christian. At some time during his life he worked on translating psalms into Chinese. He presided over the Beijing Music Research Institute for a number of years, was a leading member of the Chinese Musicians' Association and wrote many

excellent books and studies on musical subjects. His *Outline of Chinese Music History* (1944, rev. 1952) is one of his most important achievements. (From: *Chinese Dictionary of Music*, Beijing 1985, p. 453.)

¹⁸ Taken from *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, New York 1980, entry on China, p. 279.

¹⁹ Taken from "Ballad Singers of Kwangsi", in: *Folk Arts of New China*, Beijing 1954, pp. 47-49, author unknown.

²⁰ Cf. D.W. Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960*, The Hague 1965, p. 136.

²¹ Guo Moruo (ed.), *Songs of the Red Flag*, Beijing 1961, compiler's foreword, p.1.

²² Taken from *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, New York 1980, entry on China, p. 280.

²³ This, and most other information in this paragraph was gathered through interviews the authors had with several musicians and scholars (formerly) engaged in field work, and working and living in Nanjing.

²⁴ An impression of peasants unwilling or slow to learn the new repertoire is given in A.Chan, R. Madsen & J. Unger, *Chen Village: the Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao's China*, California 1984, p. 77.

²⁵ Shi Lin et al., *Zhongguo minjian gequ jicheng, Jiangsu juan* (Chinese Folk Song Anthology, Vol. Jiangsu 1-5), Nanjing 1982.

²⁶ A short survey of all the categories with explanation is given in A. Schimmelpenninck, *De Keizer en de Nachtegaal, over de invloed van de overheid op de volksliedcultuur in China* (The Emperor and the Nightingale, about government influence on Chinese folk song), unpublished, Leiden 1988.

²⁷ The nine conservatories are the Central Conservatory (Beijing, founded in 1950), the Chinese Music Conservatory (Beijing, founded in 1964), the Shanghai Conservatory (founded in 1956), the Tianjin Conservatory (founded in 1958), the Sichuan Conservatory (founded in 1959), the Xi'an Conservatory (founded in 1960), the Shenyang Conservatory (founded in 1958), the Wuhan Conservatory and the Xinghai Conservatory (both founded in 1985).

²⁸ In 1942, some issues of the short-lived journal *Minjian yinyue yanjiu* (Folk Music Research), an initiative of the Chinese Folk Music Research Society, were published. They were followed by collections of *Yangge* songs (1944), folk songs from the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border areas (1944-46), folk songs from Hebei (1945) and other anthologies, many of them edited by Huan Zhi and/or Ma Ke. A number of studies was brought together in *Minjian yinyue lunwenji* (Collected Essays on Folk Music), Yan'an 1948.

²⁹ A revised edition has been published by the Music Research Institute in 1980.

³⁰ For a short survey of colour area studies in China, see Miao Jing's article 'The Regional Division of Chinese Folk Songs by Their Local Colour', in: *Musicology in China*, English edition, 1989, no.1, pp. 100-105.

³¹ Cf. Kenneth Yip - A Study of the Folk Songs of Saikung and its Neighbouring Areas. Thesis, written in Chinese, 1989, Music Department of Hong Kong Chinese University. Unpublished.

³² The contests are called *diaosheng*, and they are annually held in Zhanxian, Hainandao. This information was provided to the author by Professor Huang Bai, of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She also recovered some written source material on the subject, but unfortunately these are unpublished mimeographs, sometimes without date or author, of which the origine cannot be traced.

³³ More information on the conferences of the Ethnomusicological Society can be found in Weihua Zhang, "Recent Developments of Ethnomusicology in China", in *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 29, no. 2, 1985, pp. 264-271.

³⁴ Zhang Weihua, former lecturer at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing (see note 28) conducted some field research in an Indian Chumash village in California in 1983. Chen Ziming, chairman of the Central Conservatory of Beijing, made visits to Ghana, Liberia and Somalia.

³⁵ Apart from these journals we can mention the monthly *Renmin Yinyue* (People's Music) issued by the Chinese Musicians' Association in Beijing, which is a popular magazine. Subjects range from classical to light music. Much emphasis is placed on nationalism and politics. Another monthly, published by the same association, is *Gequ* (Song). Formerly it paid much attention to revolutionary songs, at present it also deals with pop music.

³⁶ Cited from Isabel K.F. Wong, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

³⁷ Fang Kun's "Discussion on Chinese National Musical Traditions", in *Asian Music*, XII, 1982, no. 2, p. 1, is a case in point.

³⁸ Cf. Yang Yuye, "Wo dui minzu yinyuexue de kanfa" (My Views Concerning Ethnomusicology) in *Music Study*, 1985, no. 1, p. 33.

³⁹ Cf. K. Reinhard, *Chinesischer Musik*, Kassel 1956, pp. 155, 225 (notes 213-217 and 222) and the music examples on pp. 185-194, 196-198, 203-204, 217 and 219-220.

⁴⁰ J.P. Van Oost, "Chansons Populaires Chinoises de la Région Sud des Ortos", *Anthropos*, Tome VII, 1912.

⁴¹ See note 36.

⁴² It is possible that the recordings of Van Oost will be recovered, however. The *Museum für Volkerkunde* in (West-)Berlin is currently awaiting the return of a large collection of historical recordings which were confiscated by the Soviet forces during the War, and were unaccessible to Western researchers ever since. It is quite possible that the recordings of Van Oost, or other historical recordings from China are among them.

⁴³ *Folk Songs and Children's Songs from Peiping*, edited by Kinchen Johnson in Taipei in 1971, draws ample material from Vitale's collection.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN Minority Music Research

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In addition to the Han people (the majority of Chinese), there are as many as 55 national minorities in China, numbering 67 million people, and constituting about 6.7 percent of China's population of a billion. Most of these people live in the mountainous hinterland or remote areas bordering neighbouring countries. These minority groups range in size from about two thousand to over 13 million. While some of these groups have almost been assimilated into the Han culture, others still preserve their own distinctive language, customs, religion, and in many cases, physical appearance. The culture of some of them is closely related to those of neighbouring tribes in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Korea, etc. Unfortunately, very little is known about their musical traditions. At a recent meeting of the Association for Chinese Music Research (ACMR), held on 6 April 1990 in Chicago, the musicologist Han Kuo-Huang presented a survey of current developments in minority music research within China.

The interest in the music of National Minorities in China began in the 1950s, as part of a nation-wide governmental project to collect Chinese folk music. However, relatively few studies on minority music have been published in the ensuing years, because the main focus was on Han Chinese music. The few significant works in print are two volumes of Mukam of the Uygur of Xinjiang Province, and two volumes of the song and dance music of Tibet.

During the 1980s, there was a growing interest in the music of Chinese minorities and in research on this subject. In July 1984, a large conference on minority music was held in Guiyang, Guizhou Province. Approximately 200 scholars attended, and 130 papers were presented. Thereafter, minority research was regarded as an independent and important field of study.

In July 1986, the Society for Chinese Minority Music (Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yinyue hui) was founded. The initiative was taken in Qiqihaer, Heilongjiang Province, during a second meeting of researchers on Chinese minority music. The third conference on the subject was held in November 1988 in Yuxi, Yunnan Province and the fourth one recently, in August 1990 in Baotou, Inner Mongolia.

REGIONAL SOCIETIES

Currently, the Society for Chinese Minority Music has 400 members, of whom 48.2 percent come themselves from a minority people. The Society's headquarters is situated in the Central National Academy in Beijing. The Society's primary function is to

organize a large scale biennial conference. Recently, it started to publish a newsletter, the first issue of which gives the full programmes of the second and third conferences. In addition to the national Society, various regional societies have been founded to promote local minority music research. Thus, the Guizhou National Music Society was formed in 1987, and The Southwest China National Music Culture Society started its activities this year in Kunming, Yunnan.

In 1986, the first comprehensive dictionary of the musical instruments of Chinese minorities was published. This dictionary is the result of five years of fieldwork, research and editing by a large group of scholars under the joint-leadership of Yuan Bingchang and Mao Jizeng. The book was widely publicized nationally and it was also published in Taiwan with a copyright, two years later. The author wrote reviews of it in both Chinese and English; the Chinese review was first published in Taiwan and reprinted in the journal *Music Research*, No. 3, 1988, in Beijing; the English version was published in *Asian Music* (Han 1988-89). Unfortunately, there is not yet a dictionary of Han Chinese musical instruments with a similar, broad scope.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

An increasing number of books has been published lately on the subject of minority music. Analogous to the monumental project for Han music, *Zhongguo minzu yinyue jicheng* (Anthology of Chinese Folk Music), scholars have now started work on *Shaoshu minzu yinyuezhishi*, a Collection of Minority Music. The volumes for the *Bai*, *Tujia* and *Jinuo* minority peoples are due to be published in the course of the next few years, and volumes for the Tibetan, Mongolian, *Dong* and *Yi* minorities are in preparation. The production of scholarly video cassettes is part of the project. The one regret is that there are hardly any scholarly recordings of Chinese minority music available. Current research on minority music in China covers nearly all the tribes, and almost every conceivable aspect of the minority music traditions: history, theory, genres, instruments, etc. However, there is a strong emphasis on anthropological aspects, which is understandable, in view of the special function of music in these societies. According to Wu Guodong (1987), present research focuses on five fields in particular: 1. Cultural analysis. Scholars have recognized that the study of minority music cannot be separated from its environment, social structure, languages, psychology, customs, etc. Considerable attention is now paid to these aspects. 2. Religious music. Religion plays an important role in all minority societies. For a long time, religious practices were prohibited and scientific studies of religious music were not possible in China. At present, the governmental policies in this respect are more relaxed. 3. Comparative studies. Chinese scholars have realized that there are historical and cultural connections between various minority groups, also between tribes in certain border areas of China and its neighbouring countries. Various comparative studies on musical genres, instruments, etc. have been undertaken by scholars. 4. Problems of genre classification. Musical genres of the minorities do not necessarily fit into the general classifications applied to Han Chinese music. The subject is under deliberation, and some scholars have proposed new methods of classification. 5. Analysis of musical structure. Due to cultural diversity, the musical theories and models which are normally applied to Han Chinese music are not necessarily appropriate for minority music. New ways of analysis are now being discussed.

Generally speaking, there is healthy activity in the field of Chinese minority music research at present, even though the number of publications is still small and cannot be compared with the vast quantity of writings on Han Chinese music. The short bibliography below gives a selection of important and representative examples of recent publications. The exciting news is that ever more projects in this field are being started. However, there is an urgent need for scholars of minority music in China to contact researchers abroad: only then, will they be able to exchange and discuss their findings on an international level, and make a thorough comparison with similar, possibly related (minority) cultures in other parts of the world.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON MINORITY MUSIC (A SELECTIVE LIST)

A. Periodicals

Minzu Yishu Yanjiu (Study of National Art). Bimonthly. Published by the Yunnan Institute for Nationalities Art Research.

Xinjiang Yishu (Xinjiang Art). Bimonthly.

Zhongyang Minzu Xueyuan Xuebao (Journal of the Central Institute for Nationalities). Bimonthly.

B. Recent Books

Du Yaxiong - *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yinyue, I* (The Music of Chinese National Minorities, Vol. I). Beijing, Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1986.

Han Kuo-Huang - Review of Yuan Bingchang and Mao Jizeng, et.al., ed. *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yueqizhi* (The Musical Instruments of the Chinese National Minorities: A Dictionary). *Asian Music*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Fall-Winter) 1988-89: pp. 158-161.

Mao Jizeng - 'Shaoshu minzu yinyue yanjiu' (The Study of Minority Music). In: *China Music Yearbook 1988*. Beijing, Wenhua yishu chubanshe, pp. 161-170.

Mao Jizeng - *Dongbula yu Dongbula yinyue* (Dombra and Its Music). Beijing, Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1988.

Sichou zhi lu yuewu yishu (The Music and Dance Art of the Silk Road), ed. by the Xinjiang yishu bianjibu (Editorial board of Xinjiang art). Urumqi, Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1985. Collected essays.

Wu Guodong - 'Shaoshu minzu yinyue yanjiu' (The Study of Minority Music). In: *China Music Yearbook 1987*. Beijing, Wenhua yishu chubanshe, pp. 160-166.

Yuan Bingchang and Mao Jizeng, et., ed.- *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yueqizhi* (The Musical Instruments of the Chinese National Minorities - A Dictionary). Beijing, Xin shijie chubanshe, 1986. Taipei, Tangshan, 1988.
(N.B.: A new version including Han Chinese musical instruments is being edited now.)

Yunnan minzu qiyue huicui (Cream of Yunnan National Instrumental Music), ed. by the Yunnan yishu xueyuan (Yunnan Academy of Arts). Kunming, Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1990.

Yunnan minzu yinyue lunwenji (Collected essays of Yunnan National Music), ed. by the Yunnan minzu yishu yanjiusuo (Yunnan Institute for Nationalities Art Research). Kunming, Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1989.

Zhang xingrong - *Dianxi minzu minjian qiyuexuan* (Selected National and Folk Instrumental Music from Western Yunnan). Kunming, Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1986.

Zhongguo gudai tonggu (Ancient Bronze Drums of China), ed. by the Zhongguo gudai tonggu yanjiuhui (The Ancient Bronze Drum Society of China). Beijing, Wenwu chubanshe, 1988.

Zhou Qingbao - *Sichou zhi lu de yinyue wenhua* (The Musical Culture of the Silk Road). Urumqi, Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1987.

C. Planned publications

Zhongguo minzu yinyue daxi - Shaoshu minzu yinyue juan (Chinese National Music Series - Volume on National Minority Music), ed. by Dongfang yinyue xuehui (The Oriental Music Association). Shanghai, Shanghai yinyue chubanshe.

Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yinyue gaikuang (An Introduction to Chinese National Minority Music), ed. by the Zhongyang minzu xueyuan (Central Institute for Nationalities) and the Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan (Central Conservatory of Music). Shanghai, Shanghai yinyue chubanshe.

D. Video Programmes

Shen Qia and Zhang Xingrong, ed. - *Yueqi wangguo kaochalu* (Survey of the Kingdom of Musical Instruments). 3 vols., 180 min. each; English or Chinese narration; on musical instruments of the 24 minority groups of Yunnan.

Zhang Xingrong, ed. - *Yunnan minzu yueqi bolan* (Exhibition of Yunnan National Musical Instruments). 1 vol., 300 min., English or Chinese narration; a shorter version of the above.

A DISCOVERY IN FUJIAN PROVINCE

Iron-stick Puppet Theatre

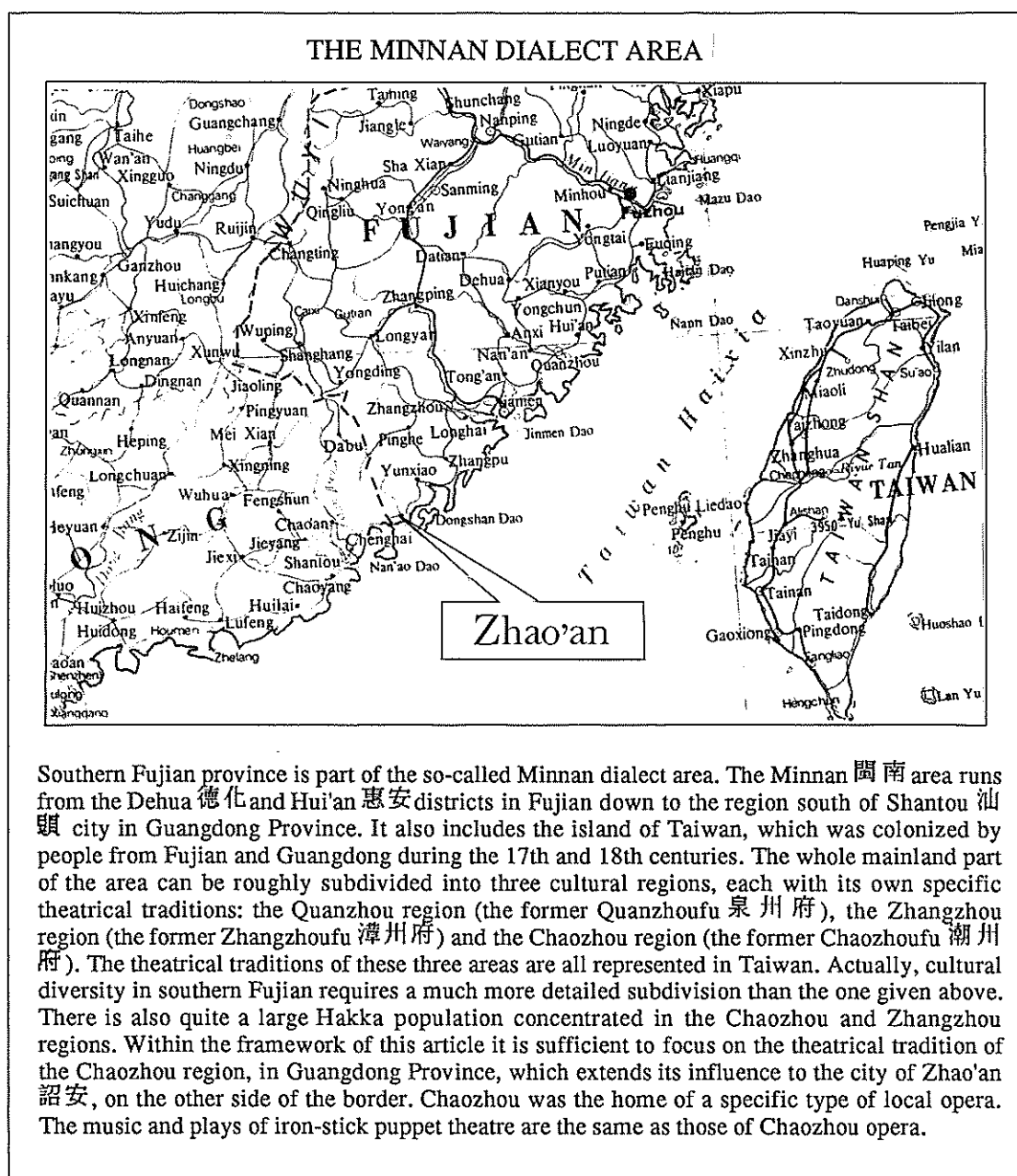
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Iron-stick puppet theatre is a specific genre of Chinese puppet theatre in which the puppets are manipulated with the help of sticks attached to their backs. Music plays a very important part in the performances. What is shown on the stage are, in fact, puppet theatre versions of local operas from the Chaozhou region. The performers are often highly skilled artists. They not only sing the various opera parts of the plays, but also manipulate the puppets with great technical virtuosity and energy, achieved after years of intensive training. The arms of the players are usually very muscular, because considerable power is needed to control the puppets' movements. Until recently, it was thought that the genre had completely disappeared from Mainland China by the end of the 1950s. Much to his surprise, the Dutch sinologist Robin Ruizendaal discovered an iron-stick puppet group in Zhao'an, a city in the southern border region of Fujian province. Four years ago he visited Zhao'an to study the group's performances. In this article, Ruizendaal tries to evoke the image of a fascinating puppet theatre tradition, which was once very popular and widespread in Southern Fujian and Northern Guangdong but now has a very uncertain future.

Iron-stick puppet theatre, *tiezhi kuileixi* 鐵枝傀儡戲, developed from the shadow theatre during the late Qing dynasty. Its manipulation techniques are very similar to those of shadow theatre, but instead of shadow puppets, three-dimensional puppets are used, and they are not manipulated behind a screen, but in front of one. At the end of the 19th century hundreds of groups were active in this genre in the Minnan area (Southern China). By that time iron-stick puppet theatre had already become a very popular form of entertainment and played an important role in religious rituals. Many puppeteers had a Taoist background or were Taoist priests themselves, and their performances were often aimed at exorcizing evil spirits. Iron-stick puppet theatre provided a living for hundreds of people, some of whom developed great technical virtuosity as musicians or puppeteers. Many were forced to seek various side-line occupations in order to earn enough to survive in the densely populated Minnan area. In general, living conditions were difficult for the puppeteers. Traditionally, they belonged to the lowest social strata.

From the early 1940s onwards, the communist government developed an active cultural policy in order to change theatrical traditions in China. It put an end to many unique performance practices, including those of the many genres of puppet theatre. By the end of the 1950s, iron-stick puppet theatre was believed to have disappeared from China.

In November 1986, I was therefore surprised to receive an invitation from a puppet enthusiast from Zhao'an 詔安 - who knew I was doing research on puppet theatre in Fujian - to visit Zhao'an and get to know the Wannianchun 萬年春 or Eternal Spring Theatre Group. This was a genuine iron-stick puppet group, still actively engaged in performances, probably the only one left in this genre in mainland China. (I knew there were some other groups, originally from the Chaozhou 潮州 area in northern Guangdong, still performing in Hong Kong. They fled China during the 1940s.) In December 1986, I went to Zhao'an. My stay in that city was carefully monitored by communist party officials; Zhao'an was actually forbidden for foreigners at the time. I was allowed to stay only one week, and, as it was a short, semi-official visit, I was not able to do any in-depth work and had to gather the information I needed very quickly. Thanks to the people of the puppet group I was able, all the same, to get a general impression of iron-stick puppet theatre in mainland China. In this article, I will discuss the development of the genre against the broad background of the theatrical tradition in Fujian. Most of my observations are based on my own field research and on extensive study of historical sources.



Southern Fujian province is part of the so-called Minnan dialect area. The Minnan 閩南 area runs from the Dehua 德化 and Hui'an 惠安 districts in Fujian down to the region south of Shantou 汕頭 city in Guangdong Province. It also includes the island of Taiwan, which was colonized by people from Fujian and Guangdong during the 17th and 18th centuries. The whole mainland part of the area can be roughly subdivided into three cultural regions, each with its own specific theatrical traditions: the Quanzhou region (the former Quanzhoufu 泉州府), the Zhangzhou region (the former Zhangzhoufu 漳州府) and the Chaozhou region (the former Chaozhoufu 潮州府). The theatrical traditions of these three areas are all represented in Taiwan. Actually, cultural diversity in southern Fujian requires a much more detailed subdivision than the one given above. There is also quite a large Hakka population concentrated in the Chaozhou and Zhangzhou regions. Within the framework of this article it is sufficient to focus on the theatrical tradition of the Chaozhou region, in Guangdong Province, which extends its influence to the city of Zhao'an 詔安, on the other side of the border. Chaozhou was the home of a specific type of local opera. The music and plays of iron-stick puppet theatre are the same as those of Chaozhou opera.

PUPPET THEATRE IN THE MINNAN AREA

The theatrical tradition of Fujian is famous for its diversity of genres and its artistic quality. Puppetry is only one of many genres which became popular and well-established in the area. Various historical sources give a clear picture of the rapid economic development in Fujian during the Tang and Song dynasties, and the related increase in population, which had a strong effect on cultural life. In Zeng Feng's 曾豐 *Yuanduji* 緣督記 the following statement is found: "Everywhere these days there are persons leaving agriculture to become scholars, Taoists, Buddhists or professional entertainers; but those from Fukien [Fujian] are the most numerous. The land of Fukien is cramped, and inadequate to feed and clothe them, so they scatter to all the four quarters."¹

In such an overcrowded country, only those who really excelled in their profession could make a proper living from it. There was strong competition in every field, including that of entertainment. This laid the basis for the rich theatrical heritage of the province, and performers from Fujian soon rose to fame, as illustrated by another quote from *Yuanduji*: "those Fukienese who are professional entertainers have no rivals when they tour the mansions of the great and the central markets".²

This was true for opera actors, ballad singers and jugglers. It was certainly true for performers of *mu'ouxi* 木偶戲 (the general Chinese term for puppet theatre), or *kuileixi* 傀儡戲, as it was called at the time.

The roots of puppetry can be traced as far back as the Western Han dynasty³. It was already quite popular in the Minnan area during the Southern Song dynasty⁴. The following types of puppet theatre are mentioned in various Southern Song sources, and all of them still exist in the area: the marionette theatre: *kuileixi* or *jialixi* 嘉禮戲, performed in the Quanzhou region and Taiwan (also in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia); the shadow theatre: *piyingxi* 皮影戲 or *houyingxi* 猴影戲, performed in Taiwan and remote villages in the Zhangzhou region; the rod-puppet theatre: *zhangtou kuilei* 杖頭傀儡, performed in the Quanzhou region⁵.

Other genres, notably the handpuppet theatre *budaixi* 布袋戲, which is popular all over Southern Fujian, and iron-stick puppet theatre, were from a later date. Iron-stick puppet theatre had its heyday at the end of the last century. Before discussing this particular genre in detail, however, I would like to take a closer look at various historical sources on puppetry in Fujian in general, and at the intricate relationship between puppet theatre and theatre with human actors, which in this article will be termed 'actors' theatre'.

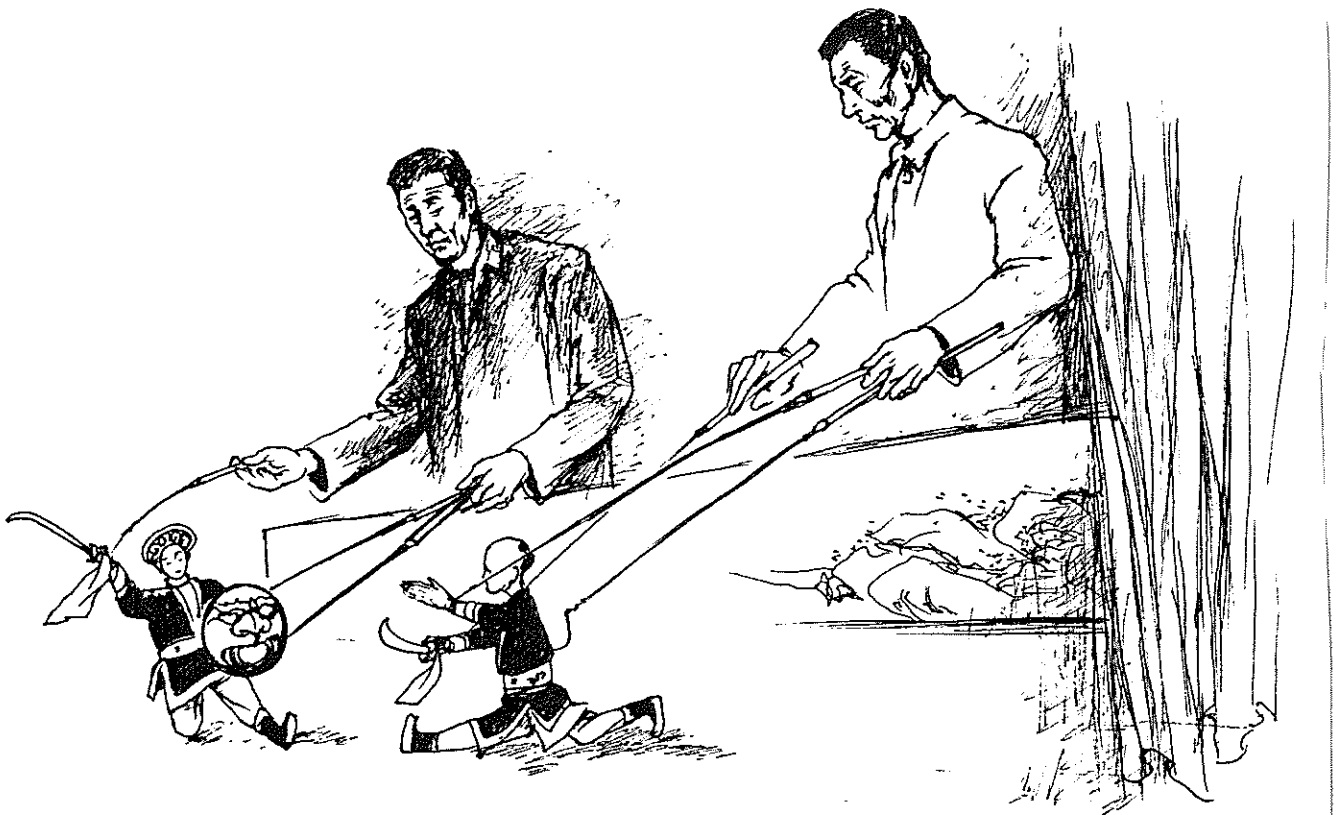
EARLY SOURCES ON PUPPETRY

Ancient sources on puppetry in Fujian are scarce but they nevertheless imply the existence of puppet groups in the area already in Song times. An early reference to puppetry can be found in a report by Chen Chun 陳淳 (1153-1217) on corrupting influences in the Zhangzhou area:

"To give an example of the vices of Zhangzhou: every spring and autumn a lot of young men from the hamlets move out and these vagabonds form groups; they call themselves 'theatre directors'. They collect money at every house and [with the money] they train actors to perform indecent plays, or perform with puppets. They erect their stages in densely populated areas without any restraint; this is called 'theatrical amusement' (...)."⁶

We do not know what kind of puppets were shown on the stage. An indication that they were marionettes can be found in a poem by Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269), a lyricist from Putian 莆田. In this poem, called 'Looking at village entertainment' (*Guan shexing* 觀社行), he describes the disappointment of the audience, apparently because a puppet theatre performance has ended:

"The strings of old Guo have been cut, and everything is over, no more smartly dressed puppets / Where has the master of the stage gone to ? / Some disappointed people stand, vainly, in front of the stage (...)"⁷



Impression of a rehearsal. (During the actual performance, the audience cannot see the players).

In another early source, the *Fanshenglu* 繁勝錄, there is a description of puppeteers from Fujian visiting Lin'an 臨安 (Hangzhou), the capital of the Southern Song, to perform during the Lantern Festival: "the group of Fujian puppeteers consisted of more than three hundred people; the group from Sichuan also consisted of more than one hundred people."⁸ Although the number of puppeteers taking part seems rather dubious, this text, again, confirms the existence of puppetry in Fujian during the Southern Song.

PUPPET THEATRE VERSUS ACTORS' THEATRE

Chinese puppet theatre often appears to be a miniature version of Chinese opera. In puppetry, live actors are replaced by puppets, but the contents of the plays, the music, the body movements, the costumes and the facial painting are all very similar. Also, there are similarities in performance practice. Both opera and puppet theatre groups are traditionally hired by families or local communities, and requested to play on similar occasions, such as religious festivals and traditional ceremonies.

As becomes evident from historical sources, puppet theatre is of an earlier date than actors' theatre. Some scholars even argue that actors' theatre in China actually originated and developed from puppet theatre, but that is an assumption which is hard to prove⁹. The relation between the two genres has not been studied in detail. Whereas some opera genres gradually acquired great popularity and became a respected art form, puppetry for a long time remained very much in the realm of folk entertainment. It is still regarded by most Chinese as rather a plebeian version of actors' theatre. To some extent this is true. In most cases the decisive factor in choosing whether to hire a puppet group or a theatre group for some special occasion is simply the budget of the family or community that engages the group: puppet theatre groups are cheaper.

Regardless of its social status, it is clear that puppet theatre in Southern Fujian exerted quite some influence upon actors' theatre. For example, the *Gaojia* opera 高甲戲 in Quanzhou has a character who moves like a puppet, 'the puppet clown' (*kuileichou* 傀儡丑). Likewise, the *Liyuan* opera 梨園戲 from Quanzhou was influenced by the body movements of marionette theatre; actors in this type of opera still study the movements of the marionettes. Along similar lines, the movements of the actors of the Chaozhou opera 潮劇 were influenced by the shadow puppet theatre of the Chaozhou region¹⁰. The close relation between puppet theatre and actors' theatre is further demonstrated by the important role which both genres traditionally play in Chinese religious practices.

EXORCIZING EVIL SPIRITS

Puppet theatre provides entertainment, but it also has a special place within Chinese liturgy, even more so than actors' theatre¹¹. The invocation of the gods or saints and the exorcism of evil influences is basically the same in both genres. It is expressed through the most obvious liturgical element of the theatre, the invocational preludes called *kaichang* 開場, through the religious contents of the plays, and through various related rituals, either performed by the players or by attending priests. The *kaichang* are short pieces which precede every main performance. They vary from only music to a short mime dance with one puppet, or even a short play involving various puppets, and are primarily intended as an invocation to the gods and a ceremony to welcome them. In the past, the invocational and exorcist powers of puppet theatre were considered to be far more powerful than that of actors' theatre. Performances always took place during events where exorcist rituals or blessings from the gods were required, such as temple festivals, funerals, weddings, and ceremonies in connection with the building of houses and temples¹².

The puppeteers themselves were related to various Taoist groups and puppet masters were often Taoist priests. (Even today, all marionette masters in the Quanzhou region are Taoist priests.) Noticeably, in the actors' theatre of the late Qing dynasty, a specific genre came into being, in which masked Taoist priests performed like puppets; it was known as *Daoshixi* 道士戲 (i.e. 'priest opera') or *Dachengxi* 打城戲 ('The Smashing of the Gates of Hell Opera')¹³.

In Qing dynasty China it was common practice that those of low-class status engaged themselves in religious ritual, as was regularly observed by the Dutch sinologist De Groot, who conducted extensive fieldwork in the Quanzhou and Zhangzhou regions at the end of the 19th century: "They [bearers in a procession in honour of Mazu 媽祖] always seem to come from the lowest classes, which seems to be common for those connected with Taoism; it is rather an obvious characteristic of that sect that any decent man seems to be ashamed to be present at the services and processions in honour of the idols."¹⁴

Since the average decent man apparently felt resentment at plebeian activities, including puppet theatre performances, it is no wonder that we have hardly any information on the life of the puppeteers. We can obtain only a rough picture of it, from the few scraps of historical sources and the material handed down by puppeteers who performed well before 1949. The recollections of these old artists, most of whom are now in their seventies and eighties, can be viewed as more or less reliable, I believe, at least where their own life stories are concerned.

THE LIFE OF THE PUPPETEERS

I already mentioned the fact that, at the end of the 19th century, hundreds of groups were active in the Minnan area. In the Quanzhou 泉州 region alone, no fewer than three hundred groups were performing. All were part of the highly developed religious and funeral tradition in the area¹⁵.

These groups could differ in size from the illiterate one-man handpuppeteer who roamed the countryside on his own, and who relied, perhaps, on a very small standard repertoire, to the highly skilled marionette groups with eight or more members, who possessed their own libretti and played an important part in religious ceremonies. Between these two extremes there were, of course, all kinds of groups in different settings. They mainly consisted of the members of one family. All groups honoured Tiandu Yuanshuai 田都沅帥, Marshal Tiandu, as their patron saint. He was a deafmute dancer and musician at the Tang court who became a legendary figure. Temples and shrines in his honour could be found in all main towns and puppet replicas of him were placed in the puppet booth during performances. There still exists a special invocational prelude in which Tiandu Yuanshuai himself features prominently¹⁶.

It was quite common for puppet theatre groups to take apprentices, and they often bought children to that purpose. This was the way in which, for example, an iron-stick puppeteer from Chaozhou called Wang Lishun 王理順 started his career¹⁷. In general, the training of apprentices began at a very young age, six or seven for example, and fierce competition demanded the utmost of the junior puppeteers. Most puppeteers were illiterate. It could take up to five years to learn all the texts by heart. The training of a master puppeteer could take five to ten years, depending on the type of puppet theatre. Some groups were able to earn a living from their performances, but for many it was not enough to feed and clothe themselves, and they had to take on other work as well, if there was any. Quite often, the musicians played not only in one of the puppet theatre groups, but gave separate music performances in tea houses or elsewhere to support themselves. Certain theatre groups were only active during part of the season, and were disbanded to take part in harvesting or other agricultural activities. Living conditions were very harsh in Fujian. In this respect, the position of iron-stick puppeteers was in no way different from that of other theatre performers in the area.

IRON-STICK PUPPET THEATRE

Iron-stick puppet theatre originated in the shadow theatre in the Chaozhou region during the end of the Qing. In both genres, the manipulation techniques were traditionally the same: one stick to support the body and two to move the arms of the puppet. The iron-stick puppets were three-dimensional versions of the shadow puppets, so to speak, introduced as a new genre. For a short while, performances even took place behind a glass pane, which replaced the opaque screen of shadow theatre. Hence the names which are still used for the two genres: the shadow play is called 'dark screen play' (*yinchuang youxi* 陰窗遊戲), as opposed to iron-stick puppet theatre 'light screen play' (*yangchuang youxi* 陽窗遊戲). ('Dark' refers to the fact that the screen in shadow theatre did not allow the light of the oil lamps behind it to pass through directly.)¹⁸ The shadow play was popular in Chaozhou and it is said still to exist in that area, but I have never seen it nor heard about any performances.

Both genres were based on the Chaozhou opera or the Han opera 漢劇 of the same region. The close affinity between puppet theatre and opera is further demonstrated by the fact that most puppeteers can still act in these operas. In former days, young students of opera sometimes first learned the basics of puppet theatre before going on stage.

Iron-stick puppet theatre originated in Chaozhou, but it quickly spread to southern Fujian, and the city of Zhao'an actually became the centre of this genre. There were many groups before 1949; a number of them (from Chaozhou) went to Hong Kong, where they still occasionally perform¹⁹. Many traditional puppet theatre groups, not only in Zhao'an but in the whole Minnan area, simply dissolved under mounting political pressures during the 1950s, after the communists had come to power in China. As far as iron-stick puppet theatre is concerned, the groups based on Han opera disappeared completely, and very few of those based on Chaozhou opera can be found performing in Southern China today.

I will come back to these 20th century developments later on. First, let me describe in detail the performance practices and the puppets which are used in this specific genre of Chinese puppetry.

THE PUPPETS

The puppets used in iron-stick puppet theatre are approximately 25 centimetres long. The heads (about 4 to 5 centimetres in height) are made of clay and are detachable. The facial painting is in standard regional opera fashion. Interestingly, the puppet heads are made by specialized sculptors, who produce similar heads for an entirely different purpose, namely for puppets placed in graves as part of local funeral paraphernalia (the so-called *yong* 俑)²⁰. (Such puppets are intended as symbolic escorts for the dead on their way to the next world.)

In iron-stick theatre the number of heads always exceeds the number of bodies; usually there are twice as many heads as torsos to attach them to. In this way, new characters can be created relatively fast just by changing the heads. The torso and limbs of a puppet are made of wire and the feet of wood. The hands are made of rolled paper with wire inside, and they are quite long (4 cm) so that they can be used for picking up things.

The puppets are traditionally divided into four basic categories: male (*sheng* 生), female (*dan* 旦), generals (*jing* 淨) and clowns (*chou* 丑). In the past decade, puppet horses have been added to the ensemble. They are made of papier-mâché and attached directly to the puppet. They have no separate stick to be manipulated with.

After every rehearsal or performance, the puppet heads and bodies are packed and kept separately: the heads in a box with drawers, the bodies together in another box. According to some people this is to prevent evil ghosts from entering and taking possession of any puppet.

All manipulation of a puppet during performances is done with the help of three sticks. One is attached to the puppet's back and held with the pink, ring and middle fingers of the performer's left hand. A second stick, attached to the left hand of the puppet, is held between the thumb and index finger of the performer's left hand. Finally, the third stick, attached to the right hand of the puppet, is held in the performer's right hand. Traditionally, these sticks have a length of about 30 centimetres, but during the 1950s, when a number of innovations were introduced in this genre, the sticks in Zhao'an became 60 centimetres long. This broadened the scope of the puppets' actions. Needless to say, the sticks are made of iron.

PLAYERS AND STAGE IN THE TRADITIONAL SETTING

Traditionally, there are two players who take care of the puppets: the master (*zheng shou* 正手), who stands on the right facing the audience, and his assistant (*fushou* 副手), who stands on the left (see diagram, p.38). In some cases an extra player is added, and he will be seated in the middle. Both the puppeteers and the musicians are seated when performing and remain invisible to the audience. Ideally there are twelve to fourteen people in every group and they huddle together on an elevated stage of one metre high with a surface of only 6 to 9 square metres. All performers are male, in accordance with Chinese theatrical tradition (although in most genres of puppetry and actors' theatre, female performers have been introduced since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949).

Now let us turn our attention to the part of the stage which the audience can actually see during the performance. The front of the stage is about two metres high and two metres wide and there are three embroidered curtains, two on the side and one over the stage to hide the puppeteers from view. Above the curtains a piece of cloth with the name of the group is displayed. The stage props are, invariably, two chairs and a table covered with a red cloth.



Remarkably, the actual opening in the curtains is only 0.25 square metre. This makes the performance area very small and limits the scope of movement. The puppets hang right behind the curtains on a horizontal line (as in handpuppet theatre) and the puppeteer can readily use them. During large battle scenes each puppeteer can manipulate three to four puppets at a time.

In the course of the action, the puppets can be seen making elaborate movements such as opening fans and writing characters. The manipulation of the puppets demands considerable power. The arms of the puppeteers are extremely muscular, once again the result of the years of intensive training needed to learn how to handle the puppets properly.

MUSICIANS AND MUSIC

In many genres of puppetry, the number of musicians is approximately the same as the number of puppet players, but in iron-stick theatre there can be up to four times as many, which results in a respectable orchestra.

The musicians are seated behind the players and are traditionally divided into a so-called literary and a martial section (*wenchang* 文場 and *wuchang* 武場 respectively, see page 38). 'Martial' refers to the percussionists, 'literary' (here in the sense of 'refined') to the string and wind players. The percussion master (*gushi* 鼓師) is the anchorman of the performance: he directs the speed of the action on stage through the pace of the percussion rhythms, which in turn set the tempo of the music. There is a very large percussion section, including both wooden and brass percussion instruments. In fact,

the total number of musical instruments used in iron-stick puppet theatre is the largest I have ever seen used in Chinese puppet theatre. (See the separate list, p. 40. It should be kept in mind that, in most cases, only a part of all the instruments mentioned in the list are employed in a single performance.)

Traditionally, both music and text were passed on orally by the puppeteers. I already mentioned the fact that many of the performers were illiterate. At present, however, musicians in Hong Kong as well as in Zhao'an use musical scores from Chaozhou opera²¹. The scores are written in number notation, according to a simple system which was probably introduced in China by Christian missionaries, and which is now widely used in the People's Republic.

The words of the plays are sung both by the puppeteers and the musicians in the so-called *banchang* 伴唱 or *bangqiang* 幫腔 form: the solo parts of the puppets are commonly sung by the puppet players, whereas the members of the orchestra only offer an occasional vocal contribution, with textual comments on the action that takes place on stage.

It is very interesting to observe the perfect timing of stage events and music, and the amazing co-operation between puppeteers and musicians. They are trained so well that they do not need to look at each other. In fact, some musicians play with their back to the stage, and the puppeteers themselves cannot actually see the movements of the puppets during the performance, because they manipulate them from behind a curtain. Nevertheless, action and music are one.

Not surprisingly, musicians and puppeteers do most of their training and rehearsals together, and the musicians, too, start their training at a very young age. In the course of the years, they learn to play all the instruments, and they may very well play a number of different instruments during one performance.

REPERTOIRE AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

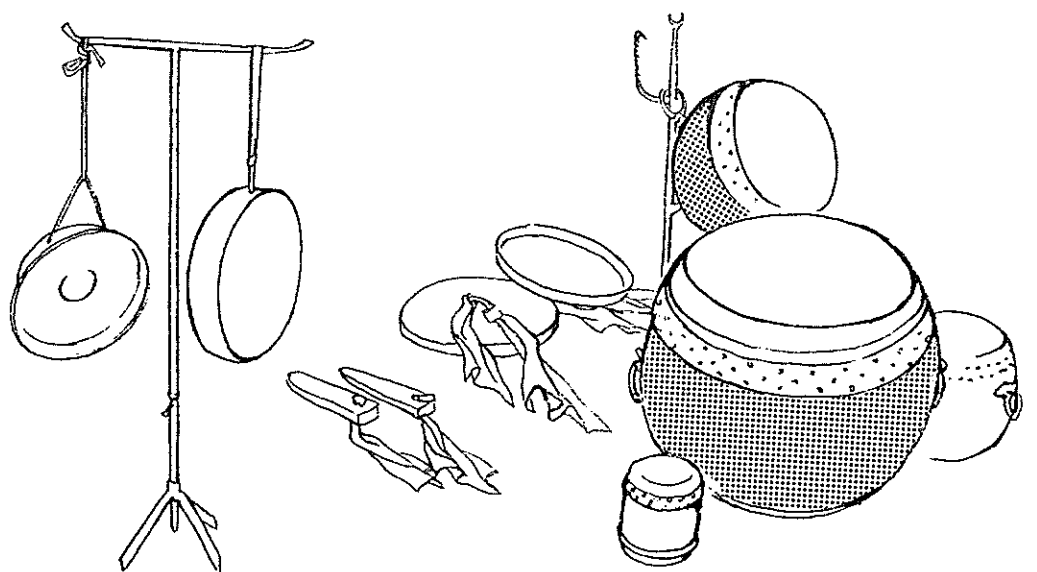
The repertoire of iron-stick puppet theatre is the same as that of the Chaozhou opera. The main stories shown on the stage are sequels taken from the Three Kingdoms, The Water Margin and other classical Chinese novels. Regional plays like Chen San Wu Niang 陳三五娘, originally from Quanzhou, are also performed. The invocational preludes which precede every main performance are also the same as in Chaozhou opera²².

Iron-stick puppet theatre groups are usually hired by a community to perform during a temple festival. In the past they also performed in private mansions. Traditionally, the busiest period of performing is during the *Pudu* 滂度 festival. According to popular belief, the gates of hell are opened in that period - on the last day of the sixth lunar month, to be precise - and hungry ghosts start roaming the earth. Then, during almost two months, the puppet groups perform night and day to exert their exorcist influence. But exorcist rituals can be performed at any time of the year. One such ritual is the 'cleaning of the shed' (*jing peng* 淨棚), 'shed' here referring to the theatre stage; before the beginning of the performance, the blood of a live cock is sprinkled over the stage and on the musical instruments in order to chase away evil spirits.

A typical performance of iron-stick puppet theatre consists of an afternoon and an evening programme and is preceded by some short invocational preludes, lasting 5 to 20 minutes. The afternoon programme can take up to one hour and is usually intended for children. The evening programme may last several hours and consists either of a whole opera or of a selection of scenes from different operas, depending on the wishes of the community that hires the group. During the performance there are offerings to the appropriate deity by members of the community, and priests perform various rituals.

COMMUNIST POLITICS

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, governmental policies concerning the theatre in the 1950s were often inconsistent, but basically aimed at the



following goals: concentration of the artists in state-controlled groups, obliteration of the religious function of the theatre, adaptation and revision of the plays and reform of the staging²³.

On the local level, these changes were implemented via so-called Opera Reform Groups (*Xigaihui* 戲改會), in which non-specialist party cadres and artists from the traditional theatre groups were brought together to carry out directives from Peking. The first task of these groups was to rewrite the plays to suit the new political order. Such reform groups were active in Chaozhou. They restructured a number of plays for the Chaozhou opera, i.e. they changed their 'feudal' contents, and these changes were in turn adopted by the iron-stick puppet theatre. Another task was the creation of new plays. This soon proved to be a failure, however; audiences did not appreciate all the changes and quickly lost interest. Eventually, the propaganda plays could only be imposed by force during the Cultural Revolution.

Under communist rule, the time-honoured tradition of training small children, a vital part of the Chaozhou opera tradition, was abolished. The communist party wanted Chinese theatre to become a folkloristic and political showcase: educational, and purged of bawdy or religious elements.

In the course of the 1950s, new, official theatre companies were founded in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, with special training courses for young puppeteers. The players and musicians for these companies were carefully selected from the traditional puppet theatre groups, and a party cadre was added to each company. These subsidized companies were intended to perform both in China and abroad, and they eventually became centres of innovation and excellence. For their income the performers depended on the state. They played regularly to entertain workers and peasants, but no longer received money from private sponsors. From then on, the training and performances of theatre groups were based on the Soviet model.

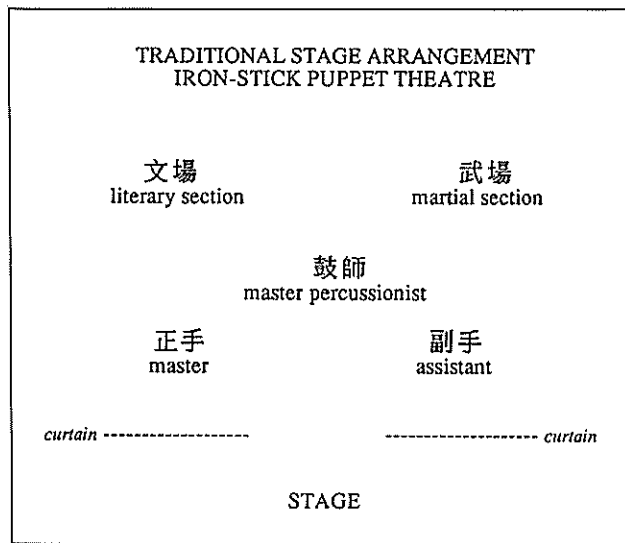
The hundreds of traditional theatre groups were branded 'folk' (*minjian* 民間), and they had to register with the Cultural Bureau of their area, which, henceforth, monitored their performances. The groups were banned from playing at religious occasions, and in this way they were stripped of an important social function.

As a result of all these developments, many performers turned to more profitable and less conspicuous occupations. A substantial number of puppeteers returned to farming or other trades and, with the beginning of the communist collectivization campaigns in the late 1950s, a large number of groups must have disappeared.

THE ETERNAL SPRING THEATRE

The Eternal Spring (*Wannianchun* 萬年春) group was already actively engaged in performances during the late Qing. It was originally one of the professional groups in the Zhao'an area, a well-organized ensemble with regular performances and a guaranteed income for its members. According to the players and according to various other sources there were many iron-stick and shadow puppet groups in Zhao'an before 1949²⁴. In that period, all the players and musicians of the present Eternal Spring group were just in their twenties, and they earned a living from their performances. They were not directly affiliated with any Taoist group. Most players were illiterate.

Political pressure on the Eternal Spring group mounted during the 1950s, as it did on most theatrical companies in that period; they were stigmatized for being related to religion and had their repertoire rewritten and changed. No new puppeteers were trained after 1949. There was no state-run group founded in Zhao'an, but local authorities did feel concern about the future of the local puppet theatre and implemented some innovations. New theatre texts were adopted and, as in handpuppet and marionette theatre, there were various experiments in staging.



The puppeteers would stand instead of being seated, in order to give them greater freedom of movement. The stage was enlarged and the traditional three curtains were replaced by one big semi-transparent curtain which made the whole stage opening about 2 square metres as opposed to the 0.25 square metre of the traditional stage. As a result of this new stage, the sticks to manipulate the puppets had to be made longer so as to broaden their scope of action. The puppets were now easier to manipulate. The players themselves were satisfied with this innovation, which did not affect the manipulation technique but improved the performance as a whole.

Consequently, the Eternal Spring group today performs on an enlarged stage (with a surface of 100 by 50 centimetres), which can easily be taken apart and transported, and with longer sticks. One cultural worker confided to me that the puppets were also enlarged in the process of innovation during the 1950s, but, as far as I can see, the puppets used at present are of the same size as the traditional ones²⁵.

THE GREAT LEAP

Developments in Zhao'an during the late 1950s and following years remain unclear. During the Great Leap Forward, the whole town (population in 1985: 50,000) was reorganized into a commune which was called the 'Satellite Commune' (*Weixing Gongshe* 衛星公社)²⁶. From that time onwards, there were hardly any traditional puppet theatre performances, and the Cultural Revolution completely banned traditional puppetry. Only the state groups could perform, and they played the narrow standard repertoire of the period: the 'model operas' approved by Jiang Qing (the whole set of 'revolutionary' puppets is still kept by the Quanzhou group).

On the whole, the intimidation of puppeteers, as representatives of a traditional and allegedly 'backward' culture, was enormous in this period, and eventually all playing became impossible. Puppets, stages and texts were destroyed on a large scale. Some

texts and puppets were saved but they are no more than remnants of the earlier tradition. Basically there were no performances until 1979. By that time, the official groups had begun to recover, and started playing some of the revised traditional plays. Not until the early 1980s, after the consolidation of Deng Xiaoping's reform policy, did dozens of puppet theatre groups gradually resume their performances: there was an increasing demand for puppet theatre programmes and a strong revival of religious practices in the countryside of Fujian. According to my own estimate there are currently about two hundred groups active in the Minnan area.

THE SITUATION AT PRESENT

In 1985, an 'Eternal Spring Puppet Research Group' was founded in Zhao'an on the basis of the old theatre group, under the supervision of some cultural workers. After almost twenty-five years of inactivity, the iron-stick puppet theatre group was able to perform again. It is no longer a professional group, but mainly performs for pleasure. All its current members have occupations outside the field of puppetry.

In my view one of the main goals of the present group is to transform iron-stick puppet theatre into a less 'backward' genre and preferably turn the group into a state-sponsored enterprise. The Eternal Spring Puppet Research Group, like the current state groups in the field of puppetry, is working towards further artistic innovations, such as enlargement of the puppets and the construction of horses. It may nevertheless take some time before the group acquires an official status, since Zhao'an is a rather isolated city on the border with Guangdong.

Performances are no longer monitored by the Cultural Bureau of the Zhangzhou region, and sponsors can directly contact the group now through local cultural workers in Zhao'an. At present, the group performs regularly in the countryside during religious events. It also plays invocational preludes again, and the whole performance is in traditional style.

One nightly performance in the local library of Zhao'an (formerly a Confucian temple), a performance which I witnessed in the winter of 1986, was apparently intended as an official demonstration of the vitality and viability of the new group. For this special occasion, four female opera singers were added to the usual ensemble, and they did the additional choir singing (*banchang*). Apart from this special programme, all regular performances of the Eternal Spring Puppet Theatre follow the standard pattern. The audience now usually consists of older people, however; young people prefer to watch films or television.

I have heard that other groups in Zhao'an have meanwhile resumed their performances on an amateur basis, as the Eternal Spring group has done.

The demand for more theatre in a religious context will have a major influence on puppet theatre over the next decade. If we look at the Zhangzhou and Quanzhou area, together with Xiamen known as the 'Golden Triangle' because of its rapidly improved standard of living, we find a *hausse* in religious ritual and (puppet) theatre performances today. In some ways, economic development in the area (Xiamen is a Special Economic Zone) and increasing contact with the outside world stimulate the revival of local cultural traditions. Many overseas Chinese who have relatives or friends in the area offer financial support to help revive religious rituals and theatre performances. Some would like to have their relatives re-buried according to traditional, religious ceremonies.

Yet, in the long run, the rapidly expanding economy may very well lead to the disappearance or fossilization of traditional theatre, as we can see happening with the *Kabuki* and *No* theatre in Japan. In the next few years we will see a sharp rise in religious activities and an increase in theatrical performances in Fujian, but when the generation that is now fifty years or older has died, the tradition as it existed at the beginning of the century will have died with them. ■

Comparison of instruments used in Chaozhou Opera and in Iron-Stick
Puppet Theatre in Zhao'an (Taken from: *Chaoju Yinyue*, p. 26-27)

CHAOZHOU OPERA	IRON STICK THEATRE
Literary section 文場	Literary section 文場
Bowed String Section	Bowed String Section
erxian 二弦 1	zhuxian 主弦 1
huxian 胡弦 1	huxian 胡弦 1
erhu 二胡 1	erhu 二胡 1
da huxian 大胡弦 1	
Wind Section	Wind Section
da suona 大嗩吶 unsp	da suona 大嗩吶 1
xiao suona 小嗩吶 unsp	xiao suona 小嗩吶 1
zhuchui 竹吹 unsp	
di, xiao, zhudi 笛, 簫, 竹笛 unsp	
Plucked String Section	Plucked String Section
yangqin 揚琴 1	yangqin 揚琴 1
qinqin 秦琴 1	
yueqin 月琴 1	
sanxuan 三弦 1	
pipa 琵琶 1	
Martial Section 武場	Martial Section 武場
Percussion Masters:	Percussion Masters:
a. Wooden Percussion	a. Wooden Percussion
muban 木板 1	muban 木板 1
muyu 木魚 1	muyu 木魚 1
fuban 輔板 1	
b. Drums	b. Drums
zhonggu 中鼓 unsp	qugu 曲鼓 1
zhegu 哲鼓 unsp	zhan'gu 戰鼓 1
zhan'gu 戰鼓 unsp	sugu 蘇鼓 1
shibinggu 柿餅鼓 unsp	dagu 大鼓 1
dagu 大鼓 unsp	
Brass Percussion	Brass Percussion
tongzhong 銅鍾 1	*qin 欵 1
qinzai 欵仔 1	quluo 曲鑼 2
douluo 斗鑼 2	
jiuzailuo 九仔鑼 1	dabo 大鈸 1
dabo 大鈸 1	xiaobo 小鈸 1
xiaobo 小鈸 1	yueluo 月鑼 5
dadouluo 大斗鑼 4	*pingluo 平鑼
luozai 鑼仔 1	shenbo 深波 1
shenbo 深波 1	suluo 蘇鑼 1
suluo 蘇鑼 1	brass trumpet
brass trumpet	haotou 號頭 2
haotou 號頭 1	

unsp = number of instruments unspecified. / * The author of the article is not quite sure whether these instruments are exactly the same as the ones used in the Chaozhou opera.

NOTES

- ¹ Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, (transl. Mark Elvin) Ann Arbor 1970, p. 186, Taken from Zeng Feng's *Yuanduji*, juan 17.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ The sources on puppetry from before the Yuan have been studied in detail; see Sun Kaidi, *Kuileixi Kaoyuan* (Research into the origins of the puppet theatre), Shanghai 1952, and William Dolby, "The Origins of Chinese Puppetry", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41/1, 1978.
- ⁴ *ibid.* Dolby, pp. 97-120.
- ⁵ *Fujian Xiqu Juxhong* (Types of opera in Fujian), Fuzhou 1981.
- ⁶ *Fujianxi shilu* (Record on the history of Fujian opera) Fuzhou 1983, pp. 21.
- ⁷ *ibid.* p. 23.
- ⁸ Xihulaoren, *Fanshenglu* (Record of abundance) Beijing 1962.
- ⁹ Sun, pp. 72-123. On the ritual origins of the actors theatre see P. van der Loon, "Les Origines Rituelles du Théâtre Chinois", *Journal Asiatique*, 1977.
- ¹⁰ Helga Werle, "Swatow (Ch'aochow) Horizontal Stick Puppets", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1973, pp. 73-84.
- ¹¹ Huang Xigou, "Quanzhou Jiali Gujintan" (Talks on the past and present of Quanzhou marionette theatre) in *Quanzhou Mu'ou Yishu*, Xiamen 1986, pp. 27-51. Also see Qiu Kunliang (ed.) *Kuilei zhuanji* (Special issue on marionettes), *Minsu Quyì* XXIII / XXIV, Taipei 1983.
- ¹² *ibid.* Huang. Also see Allan Lloyd Kagan, *Cantonese Puppet Theatre: An Operatic Tradition and Its Role in the Chinese Belief System*. Ann Arbor 1982. Kagan gives a detailed description of ritual puppet theatre in Hong Kong.
- ¹³ Li Hanfei, *Zhongguo Xiqu Juzhong Shouce* (Manual for the different types of Chinese opera) Beijing 1985, see pp. 545-548.
- ¹⁴ J.J.M. de Groot, *Jaarlijksche Feesten en Gebruiken der Emoy-Chineezzen I*, Leyden 1884, p.214.
- ¹⁵ J.J.M. de Groot, *The Religious Belief System of China I & II*, Leyden, 1894.
- ¹⁶ Descriptions of the different myths concerning Tiandu Yuanshuai can be found in : Huang Xigou, "Quanzhou Tixian Mu'ou Xishen Xiang Gongye" (Lord Xiang, the patron-saint of the Quanzhou marionette theatre), *Nanxi Lunji*, Beijing 1988, pp. 469-480 and K.M. Schipper, "The Divine Jester", *Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Minzuxue Yanjiusuo*, Vol. XXI, 1966.
- ¹⁷ Tsao Pen-yeh, *Puppet Theatres in Hong Kong and Their Origins*, (bi-lingual edition Chinese-English), Urban Council 1987, p. 69.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 49.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.* pp. 49-53.
- ²⁰ Berthold Laufer, *Chinese Clay Figures, Part I*, Chicago 1914.

²¹ The music of the Chaozhou opera has been described in great detail in *Chaoju Yinyue I & II* (The music of the Chaozhou opera, Vol I & II), compiled by the Guangdongsheng xiqu yanjiuhui Shantou-zhuanqu fenhui, Shantou 1981.

²² *ibid.* Vol. I, p. 3.

²³ Zhao Cong, *Zhongguo Dalu Xiqugaige 1942-1967* (Opera reform in Mainland China 1942-1967), Hong Kong 1969.

²⁴ Han Chao, *Chaozhou Fengwu* (Customs of Chaozhou), Hong Kong 1970, pp. 30-33.

²⁵ The 'Kwok On' museum in Paris for Asian puppetry has got a complete collection of iron-stick puppets.

²⁶ *Fujian shi, xianchengqu tuce* (Maps of towns and district-cities in Fujian) Fuzhou 1986, p. 25.

A COLLECTOR OF NARRATIVE SONG REPORTS ON

The Big Anthology

WANG HONG

(Jiangsu Province Research Institute of Culture and Arts, China)

In 1979, a large-scale folk music collecting project was initiated in China. It is expected to continue into the next century, and will culminate in the biggest anthology of music transcriptions ever published in China: a series of over two hundred, bulky volumes. Hundreds of scholars are co-operating in the work. One of them is Wang Hong, a young music researcher from Nanjing. His own fieldwork focuses on a music genre called quyi (narrative singing). In this article, he explains how the collecting and editing of the national anthology is organized, from the highest levels down to the actual villages where the fieldwork takes place. Two important facts emerge from his report: one is that the bulk of the materials collected (especially sound recordings) remains in the villages or local townships - only a small part is sent to the central editors in Peking. The other is that local Chinese researchers face an almost impossible task in this project: they have little training, have to work with poor sound equipment and receive very little money. Only strongly motivated people are up to the job. The final reward will, however, be an anthology of unsurpassed dimensions in world ethnomusicology.

Before discussing the national project on Chinese folk music, and the place of *quyi* in it, let me briefly introduce myself. In 1982 I graduated from the Music Department of the Nanjing Teachers' College (*Nanjing shifan daxue*). During my four years there, I attended classes on music theory and composition, and learned to play the oboe. Later, I taught myself to play various Chinese instruments (notably *erhu*, *xun*, *bawu*, *ruan* and *guqin*) and also some additional Western ones (saxophone and recorder).

In 1986 I was recommended by a friend to participate in the editing work of the "Anthology of Chinese *Quyi* Music, Volume on Jiangsu Province". This was how I started my research on Jiangsu narrative singing. For that purpose I was transferred, in June 1987, from a teachers' school to the Jiangsu Province Research Institute of Culture and Arts.

In the past few years I have been travelling extensively in the northern part of Jiangsu to record *quyi* performances in local villages and township communities. The performers are mostly elderly people, peasants or craftsmen who learned the art of narrative singing through oral transmission. In general, they are kind, most willing to perform in front of my microphone, and sometimes helpful with noting down the texts. At the research institute in Nanjing I have been spending countless hours in the small office which I share with three other people, working out material and editing and correcting music transcriptions. My task there is still unfinished.

In this article, I will focus on the general organization of the *quyi* collecting project, and on the basic problems which researchers of *quyi*, in China, are currently confronting. In a later article, I hope to write more extensively about my personal experiences, but I feel that a short, general survey is needed, first.

THE ART OF QUYI

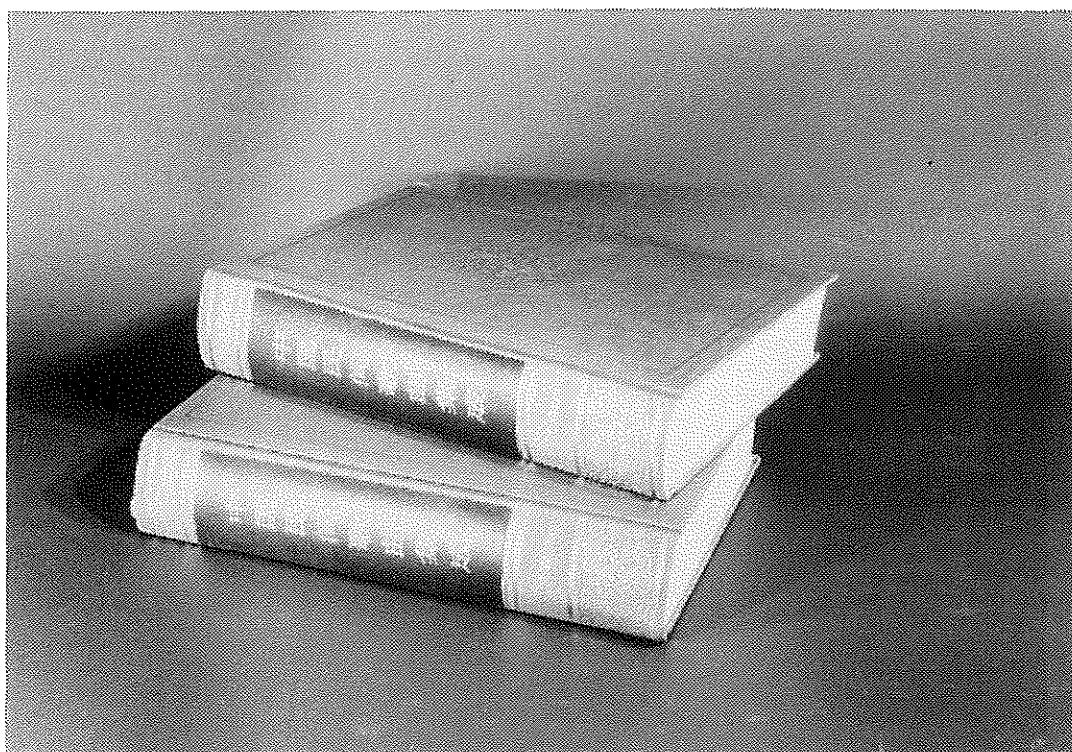
Naturally, I owe the reader a short explanation of what *quyi* is. The term has only recently come into use¹, as a very broad concept covering all existing genres of storytelling in China. In musicology, it usually refers to those genres in which music plays a part. According to a study conducted in 1982², there are as many as 341 different kinds of *quyi*, currently practised in China.³ In the course of the national work of collecting, probably many more will be discovered. In this article, I will be dealing strictly with *quyi* forms in which music plays a part.

The most obvious artistic elements in *quyi* are speaking and singing. Some genres are a combination of both, others are either limited to speaking or to singing. A common sight is the solo storyteller, accompanying himself on the *sanxian* (the three-stringed lute), or playing instrumental interludes to underline his statements. The action is usually limited to small gestures or facial expressions. Performances take place out in the open or on a simple stage, which may have a table and one or two chairs. Sometimes, some other simple props are used, for example a fan to make gestures with. Since *quyi* is mainly an auditive art, the visual element is generally considered to be of secondary importance. The texts and the language of *quyi* performances often have literary qualities and something to offer both for refined and popular tastes.

The music varies from simple percussion beats, marking time, to elaborate ensemble playing. String instruments, such as *sanxian*, *erhu* (Chinese fiddle) or *pipa* (Chinese lute) are used more commonly than wind instruments. The stories of *quyi* performances are taken from daily life, or from Chinese history and legends.

Li Y unlong (61), a quyi performer in Liuhe (north of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province).





Recently, the first set of books on folk songs was produced, focusing on Hubei Province.

Among Chinese scholars there is no agreement on the origin of the music. Some of it can be traced back to the Tang dynasty, but its relations with various other music genres in China are very complex. Part of the musical repertoire and some of the performance practices are related to opera⁴, but there are also very close links to Chinese folk song, from which the whole *quyi* tradition is ultimately believed to have developed.

THE GENERAL ANTHOLOGY

Quyi is one of the many genres of folk music which are now being investigated as part of a national research project which was initiated in 1979 by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Musicians' Association. The project aims at collecting and editing a very broad selection of folk music pieces from all over China.⁵ The music transcriptions (in number notation) are to be published, eventually, in four series of books, each dealing with a particular field of Chinese music. The four fields are: opera, *quyi*, folk songs, and instrumental music.⁶ The sound recordings on which the music notations are based, will be kept in a central archive in Peking. For each field, there will be a series of anthologies in sets of two volumes per province or autonomous region. This means that, in sum total, over two hundred volumes will be published. Recently, the first set of books on folk songs was produced, focusing exclusively on Hubei Province⁷: two volumes in a respectable format (27 x 20 centimetres), containing a total of more than fifteen hundred pages of folk song texts, music transcriptions in *jianpu* (number notation), maps, photographs, commentaries, a splendid and unsurpassed achievement which is very promising for the future of the whole project.

The general editors of the series reside in Peking, under the auspices of the Chinese Musicians' Association and the Ministry of Culture. To give the publication of the series a wider 'authority', and to organize the work efficiently, separate editing offices have been established in each province or autonomous region for each of the four fields

mentioned. Thus, small groups of full-time editors are now in charge of the collecting and editing of the respective genres of music each within their own province. They are also responsible for the selection of the most representative pieces which will be sent to the central editing office of the Chinese Music Anthology in Peking.

It should be realized that the provincial editors cannot do all the collecting work within their own area themselves, the provinces are far too big for that. They, in turn, depend on whatever material is sent to them by folk music collectors and specialists on regional (city) level. The specialists on city level, in turn, receive their material from local collectors who carry out fieldwork in the villages. On each level, the people involved in the project take part in the work of editing and selecting. The choice of material that eventually arrives in Peking is expected to be representative for the folk music culture of each province. In Peking, after further editing and improvement of the music notations and textual explanations, a final selection is made and sent to the publisher.

According to the original plan, the preliminary work of collecting and editing for all volumes should have been completed in 1990. However, due to lack of money and manpower, and to various technical problems, the work on provincial level will not be finished until the end of 1991. The actual publication of the whole series is expected to take more than ten years. The work will continue into the next century.

THE WORK ON QUYI - THEORETICAL PROBLEMS

Over the past ten years, a great deal of work has been done by the editors in the various provinces and autonomous regions, in their efforts to collect *quyi* materials. In the process of selecting and editing, four major problems have emerged, which I want to discuss here briefly. The first problem is the overlapping of repertoire in various provinces: certain *quyi* pieces, and even certain entire genres as a whole are popular in more than one province. In order to avoid duplications or omissions, a close contact between the editors and collectors from the various provinces and municipalities is necessary. Otherwise, there will be the risk of people doing double work, or, more seriously, provincial collectors neglecting part of the local repertoire because they assume it will be dealt with in another area. Solving this problem is not just a matter of arbitrarily dividing material among various provinces. A thorough study of the historical development of the specific genres is needed to make proper decisions.⁸

A second problem is the overlapping of music in different genres of folk music: for example, many *qupai* (fixed melodic patterns) in *quyi* are not only used in narrative singing, but also in opera, folk song and instrumental folk music. To what extent should such overlapping be avoided? Obviously, some duplication of material in the respective anthologies is inevitable, if a tune or a *qupai* cuts across the various classified genres of Chinese folk music. In fact, it is even desirable, because it enables comparative research and sheds some light on the mutual exchange between *quyi* and other folk music genres.

A third question is: how to decide, on historical grounds, which *quyi* pieces should be included? Naturally, all editors work according to the general guidelines for the anthology. According to these guidelines, the most important selection criteria are artistic quality and representativeness: only the most representative parts of the most beautiful pieces will be included. In practice, this means that the repertoire of new *quyi* pieces, developed over the past few decades, will hardly stand a chance of being included, because it is not widely known yet and not yet very influential.

The fourth and last problem is the distinction between professional and amateur performers. I have already said that, in the process of selection, there is major emphasis on the artistic value of the music, and on its representativeness. *Quyi* performers are, for the most part, amateurs, and among those who are now professional, many started off as amateurs. In fact, the ranks of amateurs feature many outstanding performers. Therefore, the editors of the *quyi* anthology have decided not to make a distinction between one group and the other, and not to classify them separately.

THE WORK ON QUYI - PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

Because of the limited scope of this article, I cannot discuss all aspects of the big *quyi* project extensively. I want to focus now on some important practical problems which I encountered in my research for the Jiangsu *quyi* anthology, and which, I believe are of a general nature. In this way I also hope to provide the reader with some idea of how the work is being carried out in practice.

One of the major problems is money. The funds for each provincial anthology are provided by the so-called Cultural Bureaus (*wenhuating* or *wenhuaaju*) and by governmental finance offices on provincial level (*caizhengju* or *caizhengting*).

The funds that they provide have to pay not only the work for the four big folk music anthologies, but also the work for another six smaller anthologies, dealing with folk stories, folk dance, folk rhymes and sayings, *guqin* (Chinese zither) music, text documents on *guqin* music, and text documents on *quyi* respectively. As a consequence, the funds available for each separate anthology are highly limited. Also, the amount of money allotted to each is not the same. On regional or city level, there is indeed very little money for conducting actual field work.

The money is meant for buying recording equipment, cassettes, cameras, as well as for paying the performers, collectors and editors for their work, and for covering administrative expenses. In practice, the allotted funds are simply not sufficient to cover all that. In general, it is impossible to buy recording equipment of high quality. The most commonly used equipment consists of Chinese brand walkmans, or tape recorders designed for domestic use, not for ethnomusicological fieldwork. Very few regions use professional tape recorders. Some recording is done in local broadcasting stations.

Under such circumstances, a good sound quality of the folk music recordings can hardly be guaranteed. The recordings sent to the provincial editing office are usually full of noise because they have already been copied several times. As a consequence, it is difficult to write down or check the texts and prepare the music transcriptions. Needless to say, the poor quality of the sound recordings seriously affects the overall quality and value of the big anthology.

I wonder if there is a good way to improve the situation by trying to find sponsors. In present-day China, it has become fashionable to organize large-scale cultural festivals or competitions with financial support from big enterprises. Usually, it concerns festivals for light and popular music. But why would it not be possible to use a similar method of fundraising for the big anthologies of Chinese folklore? After all, the preserving and developing of China's traditional culture should be viewed as a matter of major, national significance.

LACK OF TRAINING

I have already explained that the collecting and editing work takes place on four levels: the national level (Peking), the provincial level, the city level and the regional (*xian*) level. The sound recordings and the actual fieldwork are often the responsibility of music editors on regional or city level. The editors on provincial level, together with some specially invited music experts, have to proof-read the transcriptions sent in by the cities; they also have to write introductions or explanations where needed, and classify the material before it is sent to Peking. In many cases, the provincial editors also have to do fieldwork themselves, in areas where no local researchers are available.

All these people, on regional and provincial level, have different backgrounds. Many of them are key people in local music organizations, some are composers working for professional music ensembles, or music teachers from middle schools or universities. The problem is that practically none of them has had any proper, systematic training in ethnomusicological fieldwork. They can only 'learn while collecting, and collect while learning'. In practice, the quality of many of the music transcriptions is average to poor. This is sometimes due to poor sound recordings or indistinct performances, but it is also a result of the editors' lack of proper training.



Wei Kenian, a Yangzhou qingqu performer from Zhoutu region. (Photo: Wang Hong).

The general level of music education in China is still not very high, and few music institutes or schools have classes on musicology or ethnomusicology. This seriously hampers the work on the folk music anthology. Over the past decade, many young Chinese have gone to America, Japan and Europe to study music and new musicological research methods. I regard this as a positive development because, in the end, it will improve music education at home and enhance the mutual understanding between Western and Eastern music cultures. However, only a small number of the students studying abroad are following courses on ethnomusicology. Hopefully, there will be more in future who decide to specialize in that direction. It will help to give Chinese music culture a vital position in world musicology, and it will bring to the attention of many more people (also Western scholars) the great and sometimes unexpected treasures of Chinese traditional music.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

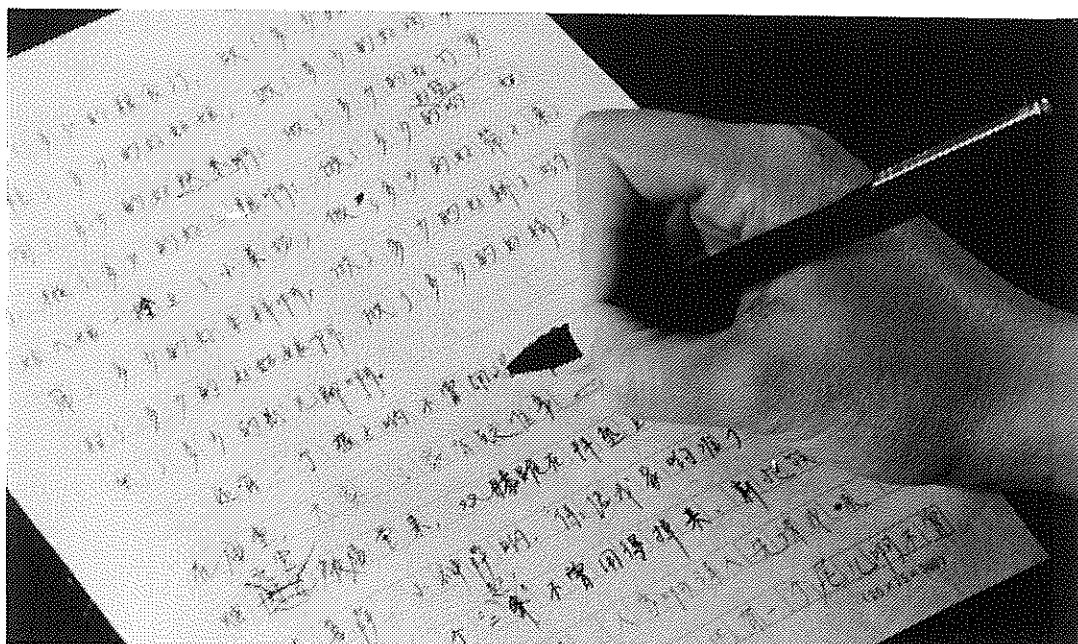
To commit a music tradition of at least hundreds or possibly even thousands of years old to paper is not an easy task - how should one go about translating living folk sound into numbered rhythms and fixed pitches anyhow?

And especially, how should one do it in a period when we are still trying to work out the basic characteristics of the music? It is not enough to have some basic knowledge of music theory. Not even musicologists who have graduated from conservatories or music institutes are necessarily fit for the job. What is needed, first of all, is a very broad musical knowledge: this evidently includes being familiar with folk instruments and playing techniques (one must be able to play at least some of the instruments oneself), and having a more than superficial knowledge of how to read ancient scores in various notation systems.

Apart from these specific requirements, one should know how to analyze and interpret music structures, how to solve all the problems that turn up in the course of uncovering their anatomy. Naturally, in the course of the work, most scholars will learn from their own experience and try to improve their methods.

As long as Chinese music education does not offer sufficient possibilities to gain all the knowledge that is needed, the only thing local editors can do is get in touch with each other as often as possible, to compare problems and exchange views.

In April 1986, the Peking office of the national anthology organized a special meeting on transcription problems. It was held in Taiyuan, in Shanxi Province. During this meeting, there were thorough debates on a wide range of problems, and various papers were presented on specific subjects, such as the traditional Chinese notation system called *gonchepu*. Three or four music editors attended from each province or autonomous region in China.⁹ The exchange between researchers from many parts of



How to commit an oral music tradition of thousands of years old to paper?

the country proved to be very fruitful, indeed. At least part of the problems concerning the notation of special ways of singing (especially in minority music) were solved. Moreover, new notation signs were designed, in addition to the already existing signs for transcribing Chinese music. This was of immediate practical significance.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF GENRES

The central editing office of the anthology has not yet organized a special meeting on classification, but various music specialists have already drawn the attention to the problem. Most of the important Chinese music journals have published special articles on the subject. Apparently, a great many scholars in China have reservations about the existing (Chinese) classifications of folk music genres. Research on classification methodology is, in itself, a very important activity, and it would probably be of direct practical significance to the editing work for the anthology of Chinese folk music.

There is, moreover, the problem of how to decide on a classification that suits the current situation of Chinese folk music best. This is a hardly a question to be solved by a handful of scholars alone. China is a vast country with more than fifty different nationalities, and an incredible variety of musical forms and traditions. Probably, the work that is now being done for the separate anthologies will provide a basis for more accurate and better applicable classification systems in future. Since musical traditions are different in every province and autonomous region, the classification systems used per province are not exactly the same either. They may even reflect the special characteristics of each local style and genre better than a very broad, national classification system can do.

STORAGE AND EXCHANGE OF MATERIAL

Most of the original sound-recordings made for the anthologies are kept at the Cultural Bureaus, on regional or city level, or they stay in the hands of the collectors. The people who participate in the collecting work generally prefer to keep the original tapes and are not eager to lend them to others.

The provincial and central editing offices only get copies, if they receive any recordings

at all, and these are often of very poor quality, as I already mentioned. Local collectors have no high quality equipment for copying tapes, and the cassettes and tape-recorders used for fieldwork are often of a deplorable quality.

Other materials, such as privately collected ancient scores in *gongchepu* notation or handwritten texts are even harder to get hold of. Sometimes it is impossible even to get a copy of such materials.

As far as I know, no proper archives have been set up by the urban and regional Cultural Bureaus to store these valuable materials effectively. This is a very regrettable situation, and it may very well lead, eventually, to the loss of unique sources, which have been collected and brought together through years of toil and painstaking research. When it comes to storage, the sound materials are perhaps even more vulnerable than the written sources, but in the cities and local townships no special measures have been taken to protect them. In view of the present economic situation in China, it is probably not possible to establish well-equipped archives in every city, but at least the archives on provincial level should be enlarged and improved, to enable store the regional material. This would also facilitate further research, and offer scholars from other provinces and from abroad interesting possibilities for comparative study.

CONCLUSION

The big anthology is still under way; the work of editing and publishing is still in progress. Evidently, more problems than the few I mentioned in this article will have to be solved. Problems of a methodological or technical nature, problems with people, bureaucratic problems, difficulties in the contacts between young and old researchers, between scholars and administrative personnel, problems with funds and equipment.....

Let us face it: China is a huge country with an enormous population. It is a developing country, with many social, economic and organizational problems, and with an education system that offers no genuine training in the field of practical ethnomusicology. Fieldwork on folk music is hardly a way for people here to earn big money or make any personal gains. If, under such circumstances, Chinese researchers accept the challenge of collecting and preserving folk music, and even devote their whole lives to it, there must be some truly great people among them.

Chinese traditional culture is, obviously, a part of world culture. It belongs to China but, more significantly, it belongs to humanity. For the future, I can only hope that Chinese folk music will receive more and more attention both from ethnomusicologists at home and abroad, and that many will go and visit the countryside to collect recordings and written materials personally. After all, the biggest Chinese music archive can still be found out there, in the open, and that is where the most important part of the work has to be done!

NOTES

¹ According to *Quyí gailun* ('An Introduction to *Quyí*'), ed. Hou Baolin et.al., the term was first used at the First Meeting of the Chinese Congress of Literature and Art (*Zhongguo di yi ci wenxue yishu gongzuozhe daibiao dahui*), which was held in Beijing in 1949. *Quyí gailun* was published in 1980 by the Beijing University publishing house (Beijing daxue chubanshe).

² Cf. *Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu* (Encyclopedia of China), vol. on opera and *quyí*.

³ [Editor's note:] 'different kinds' refers not only to local varieties, but also to genres of storytelling with a totally different social and historical background and a totally different performance practice. Next to the many folk genres of storytelling, performed by illiterate people in the countryside, there are also various highly developed, professional art forms of storytelling, such as *Suzhou Tanci* and *Nanguan*, which all have their own training courses and leading master performers. The history and background of these genres is obviously different, and in Western musicology they would probably not be placed together in one category. However, in China, they are all considered as part of the national *quyí* repertoire. Later on in his article, the author explains that this approach is based on aesthetic principles: it is meant to emphasize that both 'amateur' (i.e. folk) and professional storytellers, regardless of their background and performance setting, can be worthy of a closer study, and should therefore be brought together in one category.

⁴ On the basis of my own research, I would like to mention just one example: *Gongqu*, a *quyí* piece from Yancheng city in Jiangsu Province, of which the melodies and singing style are in many ways reminiscent of *Kunqu* opera.

⁵ [Editor's note]: 'folk music' here refers to traditional music in a broad sense, including music by urban performers who have established their own training schools in the field of opera and storytelling.

⁶ [Editor's note]: originally, a fifth series was planned, dealing with Buddhist and Taoist music. For reasons of economy, religious music will be included as a sub-category in the volumes on instrumental music and folk song. The editors of the anthology are themselves not very happy with this solution, but their budget leaves them no alternative.

⁷ [Editor's note]: *Zhongguo minjian gequ jicheng, Hubei juan* ('Anthology of Chinese Folk Songs, section Hubei'), Peking, 1988, 2 Vols. The date of publication is 1988, but the volumes were only released late last year. They can be ordered from the *Renmin yinyue chubanshe* (People's Music Publishing House) in Peking.

⁸ To give an obvious example: *Suzhou tanci*, a *quyí* genre from Jiangsu Province, can be heard also in Zhejiang Province and in the Shanghai District. In fact, many famous *tanci* performers began their careers and established schools in Shanghai, although the genre as a whole originates in the city of Suzhou (Jiangsu Province) and is spoken and sung in the Suzhou dialect. To make sure that there would be no duplication in the work of collecting *Suzhou tanci*, the *quyí* editors from Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai have held a special meeting in Hangzhou to divide the work amongst them: now, each area will only collect the *Suzhou tanci* repertoire dating from a certain period; all three together cover the whole history of development of the genre.

⁹ The author of this article was also present at the meeting.

CHINESE MUSIC JOURNALS (1)

Musical Works

*In the early 1980s, a large number of new music journals and magazines appeared in China and several older journals, which had been started in the 1950s, but were suppressed during the Cultural Revolution, resumed publication. Serious students of Chinese music in the West cannot afford to ignore this immensely rich source of scholarship as well as primary source material on contemporary musical life in China. Many of these journals now accept direct subscriptions from overseas and accept foreign currency. CHIME hopes to give regular regular information about them. Below, the journal *Yinyue chuanguo* (Musical Works) is briefly introduced. It is followed by a list, compiled by Professor Bell Yung (University of Pittsburgh), of more than thirty music journals and newspapers currently available in China.*

The quarterly *Yinyue chuanguo* was founded in the late 1950s in Peking, under the auspices of the Chinese Musicians' Association. During the Cultural Revolution, no music journals appeared in China. Publication of *Yinyue chuanguo* was resumed ten years ago, in 1980, and some 145 issues have now been published. The journal is a broad anthology of scores (in staff notation) of Chinese art music, mainly choral music

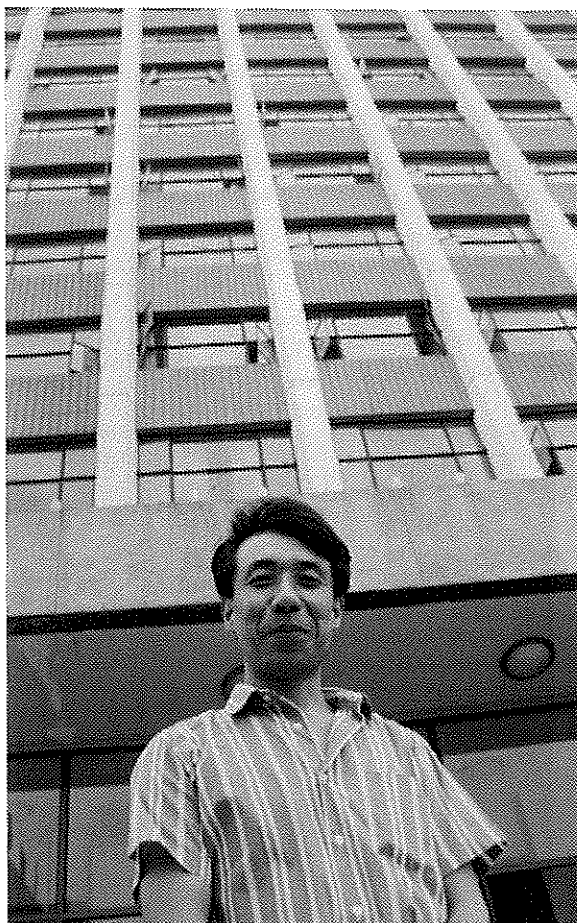


and chamber works, such as songs, piano pieces, string quartets and works written for Chinese traditional instruments. It offers an excellent opportunity for Chinese composers to have the scores of their new works published, which would otherwise not be accessible to the public.

MUSIC PUBLISHERS

Currently there are only two publishing companies in China which focus entirely on music: *Renmin yinyue chubanshe* (The People's Music Publishing House) in Peking, and *Shanghai yinyue chubanshe* (The Shanghai Music Publishing House). There are various other companies which issue books on music, but the number of scores published in China is very small, and they are, in general, poorly distributed. For that reason, the journal 'Musical Works' fills an important gap.

Each issue of *Yinyue chuangzuo* has approximately a hundred pages and, is divided into various sections, such as 'Favourite Songs of the Masses', 'Works Picked from the Past', 'New Works by Young New Talents', 'Contributions from Composition Students Abroad', and 'Foreign Contemporary Works'.



Duan Wuyi (Composition Committee, Chinese Musicians' Association) assists with selecting compositions for Yinyue Chuangzuo.

The last-mentioned section is unique, because it offers composition students in China an opportunity to become acquainted with the works of Webern, Berio, Cage, Messiaen and many other 20th century foreign composers. On average, some twenty different works are included in every volume.

EDITORS

A Board of Editors presided over by Wang Zhenya is responsible for the selection of the music. Co-Editors are Deng Erjing and Gong Yaonian. Regrettably, no biographical information about the composers nor any information whatsoever about the music itself is included. The scores are published entirely without comment.

Many young Chinese composers have been able to introduce their chamber works to the public in the section on 'New Works'. Over the past few years, pieces by Qu Xiaosong, Tan Dun, Mo Wuping, Su Cong, Chen Qigang, Wu Shaoxiong, Han Lankui, Yao Henglu, Zhu Shirui, Rao Yuyan and many others have been published in the journal. *Yinyue chuangzuo* is also an important platform for reviving the interest in Chinese composers of previous generations, such as Tan Xiaolin.

The journal is published by the Chinese Musicians' Association, Editing Office *Yinyue chuangzuo*, 10 Nong zhan'guan nanli, 100026 Peking, and appears four times a year.

LIST OF 36 MUSIC JOURNALS IN CHINA

COMPILED BY PROF. BELL YUNG

Each entry gives the journal's title, the sponsoring organization, frequency of publication, date of first publication, price per copy (in China), address, names of the editors, and sometimes a brief note on the nature of the journal. The information is primarily taken from 'The Annual of Chinese Music' (*Zhongguo yinyue nianjian* 中國音樂年鑒), 1989, compiled by the Music Research Institute of the Academy of Arts in Peking (*Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan, Yinyue yanjiusuo*) and published by *Wenhua yishu chubanshe*, Peking, 1989. The list is further supplemented by information received from Dai Penghai, Qiao Jianzhong, Wang Zengwan, and various other Chinese music scholars. The compiler has also consulted the latest issues of several journals accessible to him. The whole list was previously published in the *Newsletter of the Association for Chinese Music Research* (ACMR, Vol. 3 No.2, summer 1990, issued in Pittsburgh, USA).

The publications are grouped into five categories: 1. Scholarly and influential journals, with contributions from scholars from all over the country, including the official journals of the Central Conservatory (Beijing), China Conservatory (Beijing), and Shanghai Conservatory. 2. Official journals of major music conservatories and provincial musicians' associations in other cities. 3. Music magazines catering mainly to a general and popular readership; their contents tend to be less research-oriented and more journalistic and of an introductory nature. 4. Related journals with material on music and miscellaneous items. 5. Newspaper format publications on music for a general readership. The compiler welcomes additions and corrections for a future edition.

1. SCHOLARLY JOURNALS, PUBLISHED IN PEKING & SHANGHAI

Yinyue yanjiu 音樂研究

[Music Research]. *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui* [Chinese Musicians' Association]. Quarterly; established 1958, interrupted during Cultural Revolution, resumed 1979; RMB 2.20 Y. Address: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 2 Cuiwei Road, Beijing. Editors: Zhao Feng, Li Yedao, Huang Xiangpeng, Mao Jizeng, Shen Qia. Note: lengthy and in-depth studies, news and book reviews; table of content (selective) in English.

Zhongguo yinyuexue 中國音樂學

[Musicology in China]. *Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan, Yinyue yanjiusuo* [Institute of Music Research, Academy of Arts]. Quarterly, established in 1985; RMB 2.50 Y. Address: Yinyue yanjiusuo, 1st Floor, West Building, Xin Yuan Li, Dongzhimen Wai, Beijing. Editors: Guo Nai'an, Wu Yuqing, Ju Qihong. Advisor: Miao Tianrui. Note: lengthy and in-depth studies, occasionally translated work on Western music, student term papers and theses; table of content (selective) in English.

Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao 中央音樂學院學報

[Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music]. *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan* [Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing]. Quarterly; established in 1980; RMB 1.50 Y. Address: Central Conservatory of Music, 43 Baojia Road, Xicheng, Beijing. Editors: Yu Renyang, Huang Yudong. Note: on both Chinese and Western music, music teaching, news; table of content in English.

Yinyue yishu 音樂藝術

[Art of Music]. *Shanghai yinyue xueyuan* [Shanghai Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1979; RMB 1.60 Y. Address: Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 20 Fenyang Road, Shanghai. Editors: He Luding, Ni Ruilin, Qian Yuan. Note: on both Chinese and Western music, news; table of content (selected) in English.

Zhongguo yinyue 中國音樂

[Chinese Music]. Zhongguo yinyue xueyuan [China Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1981; RMB 1.00 Y. Address: China Conservatory of Music, 17 Qianhai West Street, Beijing, 100009. Editors: Li Xi'an, Xue Liang. Advisors: Li Ling, Zhang Xiaohu, Zhang Quan, Li Yinghai. Note: a large number of articles, mostly tend to be short or medium length, occasional translated articles.

2. SCHOLARLY JOURNALS, PUBLISHED IN THE PROVINCES

Yiyuan, Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao 藝苑 - 南京藝術學院學報

[Journal of the Nanjing Institute of Arts], Music Edition. Nanjing yishu xueyuan [Nanjing Institute of Arts]. Quarterly; established in 1986; RMB 0.90 Y. Address: Nanjing yishu xueyuan, Nanjing. Editors: Zhou Zhiyin, Mao Yuan, Hu Guorui. Note: occasional article on Western music, occasional original compositions.

Yinyue xuexi yu yanjiu 音樂學習與研究

[Music Study and News]. Tianjin yinyue xueyuan [Tianjin Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1985. Tianjin Conservatory of Music, 5 Shiyijing Road, Hedongqu, Tianjin. Editors: Yang Jinhao, Xu Yongshan. Advisor: Miao Tianrui. Note: emphasis on Western music.

Xinghai yinyue xueyuan xuebao 星海音樂學院學報

[Journal of Xinghai Conservatory]. Xinghai yinyue xueyuan [Xinghai Conservatory of Music, formerly Canton Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1985; RMB 0.80 Y. Xinghai Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao, 48 Xianlie Dongheng Road, Shaheding, Guangzhou. Editors: Zhao Songguan, Tong Hua, Lao Yuanxu, Luo Decai, Cai Songqi. Advisors: Lu Renzhong, Ye Su, Huang Jinpei. Note: emphasis on Chinese regional music, particularly that of Guangdong and Guangxi province.

Yinyue tansuo 音樂探索

[Music Search]. Sichuan yinyue xueyuan [Sichuan Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1983. Address: Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Xin Nanmenwai, Chengdu, Sichuan. Editors: Chang Sumin, Song Daneng, Li Zhongyong. Note: includes both Chinese and Western music, with focus on music education on both college, middle school and primary school levels.

Yuefu xinsheng 樂府新聲

[New Voice of Music]. Shenyang yinyue xueyuan [Shenyang Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1983. Address: No. 1, Sec. 2, Sanhao Street, Hepingqu, Shenyang. Editors: Qin Yongcheng, Sun Xuewu. Advisor: Ding Ming.

Jiaoxiang 交響

[Symphonic]. Xi'an yinyue xueyuan [Xi'an Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1982. Address: Xi'an Conservatory of Music, 2 Chang'an Zhonglu, Xi'an. Editors: Liu Dadong, Rao Yuyan, Gao Shijie, Lei Jiaxian. Note: Emphasis on the Northwestern regional music of China, archeology, and some Western music (mostly translated material).

Huangzhong 黃鐘

[Yellow Bell]. Wuhan yinyue xueyuan [Wuhan Conservatory of Music]. Quarterly; established in 1987. Address: Wuhan Conservatory of Music, 255 Jiefang Road, Wuhan. Editors: Kuang Xuefei, Wang Shenshen. Note: both Chinese and Western music.

Minzu yinyue 民族音樂

[Ethnic music]. Yunnan minzu yishu yanjiuyuan yinyue yanjiu shi [Institute of music research of Yunnan province]. Quarterly. Address: 16 Dongfeng Road, Kunmin, Yunnan.

Minzu minjian yinyue 民族民間音樂

[Folk and Ethnic Music]. Guangdong minjian yinyue yanjiushi [Folk Music Research Center of Guangdong Province]. Quarterly. Address: 4/F, 79 Wende Road, Guangzhou. Editor: Lin Yun.

Yueyuan 樂苑

[Music Garden]. Sichuan yinxie [Sichuan Province Musicians' Association], Quarterly. Address: Sichuan yinxie, Chengdu.

Yishu tansuo 藝術探索

[Arts Search]. Guangxi yishu xueyuan [Guangxi Institute of Arts]. Semi-annual. Address: Guangxi yishu xueyuan, Jiaoyu Road, Nanning, Guangxi

Yipu 藝圃

[Arts Garden]. Jilin yishu xueyuan [Jilin Institute of Arts]. Quarterly. Editorial Board, Jilin Institute of Arts, Changcun, Jilin

Zhongxiaoxue yinyue jiaoyu 中小學 音樂教育

[Music Education in Secondary and Primary Schools]. Zhejiang yinxie [Zhejiang Province Musicians' Association]. Bi-monthly. Address: P.O.box 540, Hangzhou, Zhejiang. Editor: Zhou Dafeng.

Qilu yiyuan 齊魯藝苑

[Arts of Shandong]. Shandong yishu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of the Shandong Institute of Arts]. (Incomplete information).

Qilu yueyuan 齊魯樂苑

[Music Garden of Shandong]. Shandong yinxie [Shandong Province Musicians' Association]. (Incomplete information).

3. POPULAR JOURNALS

Renmin yinyue 人民音樂

[People's Music]. Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui [Chinese Musicians' Association]. Monthly; established in 1950, interrupted during the Cultural Revolution, resumed in 1977 (changed to bi-monthly in 1990). Address: 10 Nongzhanguan Nanli, Beijing. Editors: Li Xi'an, Zhang Xian. Advisors: Li Huanzhi, Sun Shen, Li Ling, Wu Zuqiang, Sang Tong, Li Zehou. Note: probably the best known and served as the official voice on musical policy and issues for many years; articles tend to be short, journalistic, and of general interest.

Yinyue aihaozhe 音樂愛好者

[Music Lover]. Institutional affiliation unknown. Bi-monthly; established in 1986; RMB 1.05 Y. Address: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 74 Shaoxing Road, Shanghai. Editor: Chen Xueya. Note: a magazine catering to general taste with comprehensive news and short articles on a great variety of music, including Chinese, Western classical, and popular music.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

Xinjiang yishu 新疆藝術

[Arts of Xinjiang]. Quarterly; RMB 1.20 Y. Address: Editorial Board, Xinjiang yishu, Urumuqi Main Road, Urumuqi, Xinjiang. Contact person: Zhou Ji.

Yueqi 樂器

[Musical Instruments]. Bi-monthly. Address: 6 Huangmuchang, Jiulongshan, Dongjiao, Beijing.

Yinyue xueshu xinxi 音樂學術信息

[Musicology Newsletter]. Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan, yinyue yanjiusuo [Institute of Music Research, Academy of Arts]. Bi-monthly; RMB 0.50 Y. Address: Yinyue yanjiusuo, 1st Floor, West Building, Xin Yuan Li, Dongzhimen Wai, Beijing. Contact person: Qiao Jianzhong.

Geju yishu 歌劇藝術

[Arts of Opera (Western style)]. Bi-monthly. Address: No. 10, Lane 100, Changshu Road, Shanghai.

Quyì 曲藝

[Art of Song]. Zhongguo quyijia xiehui [Chinese Quyì Artists' Association]. Monthly; RMB 1.25 Y. Address: Quyì zazhishe, No.10, Nongzhanguan Nanli, Beijing 100026. Editors: Luo Yang, Zhao Richeng.

Wudào 舞蹈

[Dance]. Institutional affiliation unknown. Bi-monthly; RMB 1.70 Y. Address: Wudào zazhishe, No. 10, Nongzhan Nanli, Beijing, 100026. Editors: Wang Manli, Hu Ke.

5. NEWSPAPER FORMAT PUBLICATIONS (GENERAL READERSHIP)

Gongren yinyuebao 工人音樂報

[Workers' Music Newspaper]. Bi-weekly. Address: 234 Shuangxin Road, Changsha

Zhongguo yinyuebao 中國音樂報

[China Music Newspaper]. Weekly. Address: Zhongguo yinyuebao, Editorial Board, Xin Yuan Li, Dongzhimen Wai, Beijing.

Yinyue zhoubao 音樂周報

[Music Weekly]. Weekly. Address: P.O. Box 503, Beijing.

Yinyue bolan 音樂博覽

[Comprehensive View of Music] of Zhengzhou. [Incomplete information].

Yinyue tiandi 音樂天地

[World of Music] of Xi'an. [Incomplete information].

Yinyue shenghuo 音樂生活

[Music Life] of Shenyang. [Incomplete information].

Yinyue shijie 音樂世界

[Music World] of Chengdu. [Incomplete information].

Shidai yinyue 時代音樂

[Contemporary Music] of Wuhan. [Incomplete information].

MAINLAND CHINA'S NEW MUSIC (1)

Out of the Desert

FRANK KOUWENHOVEN
(Leiden, The Netherlands)

In the early 1980s, mainland China saw the emergence of a group of highly talented young composers of avant-garde music. After decades of musical stagnation and violent reaction against western modern music, China all of a sudden (and much to its own surprise) found itself in the very heart of the international avant-garde circuit. Composers like Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong and He Xuntian rapidly established themselves as key innovators in twentieth century Asian music. How could China, actually still such a stronghold of musical conservatism, make this formidable leap? And what are the chances for the survival of China's new music in the long run? In this article, the first of two articles on the Chinese mainland avant-garde, the author tries to overlook the whole field and to formulate some cautious answers. He bases himself on Chinese articles and newspaper clippings about new music, on recent interviews with a great many Chinese composers from the mainland, and on a thorough study of their major musical works.

The new generation of composers in mainland China first embarked upon the path of music during the turbulent period of the Cultural Revolution: in the midst of fierce smear campaigns against both western and traditional music, in the heart of a civil war. A China torn apart by political feuds, mass movements, streetfights between youth gangs, witch-hunts against intellectuals, and a national suicide wave... It was all but a likely backdrop for the birth of a new music culture. Yet this very harsh period in China's history did contain the seeds of an important new era in Chinese art.

How to write on this subject without damaging people? How, from a purely Western perspective, to make an objective assessment of the various artistic options and possible routes which only now begin to take shape in Chinese modern music?

This article is no more than a tentative search for order and direction in new music in China, with all the limitations a Western author is forced to accept in such an undertaking. Naturally, I have tried to place major emphasis on the facts and not allow myself rash judgments. If, in spite of that, my readers chance upon any errors or misrepresentations, I must take full blame.

In this essay, attention is focused exclusively on mainland composers. After all, they have a position and a background which is quite different from those of their Chinese colleagues in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia and America. I feel that, as a consequence, their music has also taken a different path.



*Tan Dun with ceramic instruments created in collaboration with potter Ragnar Naess.
(Photo: Beatriz Schiller, 1989).*

The whole adventure of avant-garde music in the People's Republic and the sudden development from insipid romanticism to a modern and surprisingly muscular language can hardly be summarized in a few lines. This first article is just a cursory walk across the whole territory, a kind of fever chart, so to speak, of the composers' world after Mao: only the peaks, the most characteristic moments, will be shown and discussed.

A COMPOSITION CLASS IN PEKING

In 1978, two years after the Cultural Revolution, seventeen thousand Chinese students applied for one hundred places in the Central Conservatory in Beijing. The days of red heroism belonged to the past, the schools and universities had reopened their gates, and many Chinese city youths felt a strong urge to learn something, to *be* something. However, in the late 1970s, of all the hundreds of thousands who had spent compulsory years in the countryside, only a handful were given the possibility to take part in higher education.

This was also true for the group that entered the Central Conservatory of Music in 1978, and whose names were not widely familiar, then, in music circles: Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Guo Wenjing, Chen Qigang, Chen Yuanlin, Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Zhang Xiaofu... All of them were in their early twenties when they embarked upon their study, and all of them shared composition lessons in Peking.

Some of the youths who went to Peking were accepted at the Conservatory without any examinations, in line with the view that not only the musically gifted but also 'ordinary' students should get a (limited) chance to enter higher education programmes. It meant that the level of the new students was rather at variance, but most of them had had previous (practical) experiences with music, and most of them did after all pass an examination before they were admitted. In 1978, it was still impossible to foresee that, within a few years, a few composers in this small class in Peking would totally surpass their teachers and bring about a landslide in China's musical culture. From the beginning it was clear, however, that social and artistic life in China was at a watershed.

A CROSS-ROADS OF TWO WORLDS

The teachers who stood in front of the conservatory class were respectable older composers like Du Mingxin and Wu Zuqiang. They had earned a high reputation with their symphonic works written in nineteenth century Western romantic style. Their knowledge was based on what they had learned in the late 1950s during their studies in Moscow, or had gleaned from the scarce musicological textbooks available in China in that same period. Of twentieth century Western music they knew little or nothing. Their careers were punctuated by the political bickering, persecution of intellectuals and state interference in art that epitomized the whole era, and which impeded any free development of music. Especially from the end of the 1950s onwards, there was fierce criticism in China of Western music: first, innovators like Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Richard Strauss and Debussy were attacked, and then, in the Cultural Revolution, also romantic composers like Beethoven or Tchaikovsky. Performances of their music were eventually prohibited.

Western music was increasingly viewed as a typical expression of the bourgeois mind, of cosmopolitan airs and intellectual élitism. The art music of the former colonial invaders of China was, from its very roots, a despicable, anti-socialist art, an anti-Chinese art even, so it was believed. The apparent threat that Western culture posed to the Chinese took on monstrous dimensions during the Cultural Revolution, when even Western clothes and haircut were no longer accepted. At that time, paradoxically, Chinese folk culture was seriously under fire as well, in a campaign directed against religion, backward traditions and superstitious beliefs and rituals in the countryside.

In the early 1970s, the art world in China slowly started regaining its breath. Foreign symphony orchestras began visiting China as early as 1973, even during the Cultural Revolution, and they played music that had been forbidden for years, music which the Chinese themselves still dared not perform in public: Elgar, Brahms, Dvorak, etc. At private gatherings or during travels abroad, Chinese musicians would cautiously start including foreign pieces again in their programmes, but it was not easily done. In 1973, conservative musicians launched another campaign of criticism against (in particular) music without titles, such as sonatas, string quartets and symphonies: these were branded as utterances of nihilism and anti-socialist spirit. The campaign kept Western music at a distance for some more time, but gradually more voices were heard pleading for a normalization of China's culture life. The ban on various politically suspicious art forms and on Western music was eventually lifted. In the middle of the 1970s, one could occasionally hear Beethoven symphonies again on the Chinese radio, although formal permission was needed from the Ministry of Culture for every single symphony before it could be transmitted. It was only from 1978 onwards, after Deng

Xiaoping consolidated his power as top leader of the Chinese government, that cultural life in China stood on the brink of genuine change, and ready to escape from its long-time isolation.

WESTERN MUSIC IN CHINA

It is important to realize that, in the China of the late 1970s, the acquaintance with Western art music was only half a century old. Admittedly, foreign missionaries brought in keyboard instruments and church songs from the seventeenth century onwards, and military forces in the nineteenth century entered China to the clanging and banging of western army bands. That was a far cry, however, from civilized Western concert life, and there was no Chinese awareness of the existence of a European culture of classical or popular music in those days. Only some of the rich would catch an occasional glimpse of it.

The first jazz bands and symphony orchestras were introduced into China in the 1920s, and consisted of Westerners only, as did most of the audience that came to watch. A number of wealthy and high-ranking Chinese could eventually afford to attend the concerts of (for example) the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, on Saturday evenings in the *Lanxin* ('Blue Heart') Theatre, but the vast majority of the Chinese population of Shanghai was never confronted with Beethoven or Mozart. It is true that, in the same period, some schools for higher music education were established for Chinese students, but the level of education was poor, the students hardly had any material to study from, and they, too, were barred from the concert hall.

The Chinese music conservatories (where only Western music was taught) reached a somewhat more professional level in the late 1940s, but this quickly foundered after the forced departure of the foreign (particularly Jewish and Russian) teachers.

In communist China, politics became all-powerful. After relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated, Chinese composers like Du Mingxin, Wu Zuqiang and Zhu Jian'er, who returned at the end of their student days from Moscow, were not even allowed to bring their newly gained knowledge of Russian orchestral technique into practice. A colourful orchestration à la Rimski-Korsakov was deeply suspect. The Central Philharmonic Society, established in Peking in 1956, was urged to play ever more Chinese pieces, usually of inferior quality, instead of the highlights of the Western symphonic repertoire.

As a consequence, knowledge of Western music only trickled in very slowly. Not many people could afford to buy records or books, and concerts were hampered by growing bureaucracy and by an appalling lack of technique among the musicians. The première of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in an all-Chinese performance took place only in 1959. For Western chamber music there was little or no interest. Composers like Hindemith and Bartók were known and appreciated in progressive music circles, but their music (apart from some stray piano pieces) was hardly performed. Almost nobody had heard of the names of other modern composers like Varese, Messiaen and Boulez. They were first introduced into China after 1978.

In that year, 1978, they were sitting opposite each other at the conservatories of Peking, Shanghai and Chengdu: on one side the teachers, the older composers, a harassed, persecuted generation with only a sketchy knowledge of western (romantic) musical technique, and a strong feeling of uncertainty about the future possibilities for musical life in China. On the other side, the students, mostly young and unexperienced artists, who had spent the prime of their youth with peasants in the countryside. Nevertheless, some of them would, quite soon, find their way onto the international avant-garde stage, and surprise audiences in Paris, New York, Berlin, Chicago, Moscow, Amsterdam, London and other places.

SENSUOUS CHILDREN OF NATURE

Many young composers who started their career in Peking, in 1978, were originally not from the north but from the south-west of China. It seems as if the wild and less hospitable regions of the People's Republic, where Han Chinese are mixed up with local minorities like the Dong and the Miao, are the home of extraordinary talents.

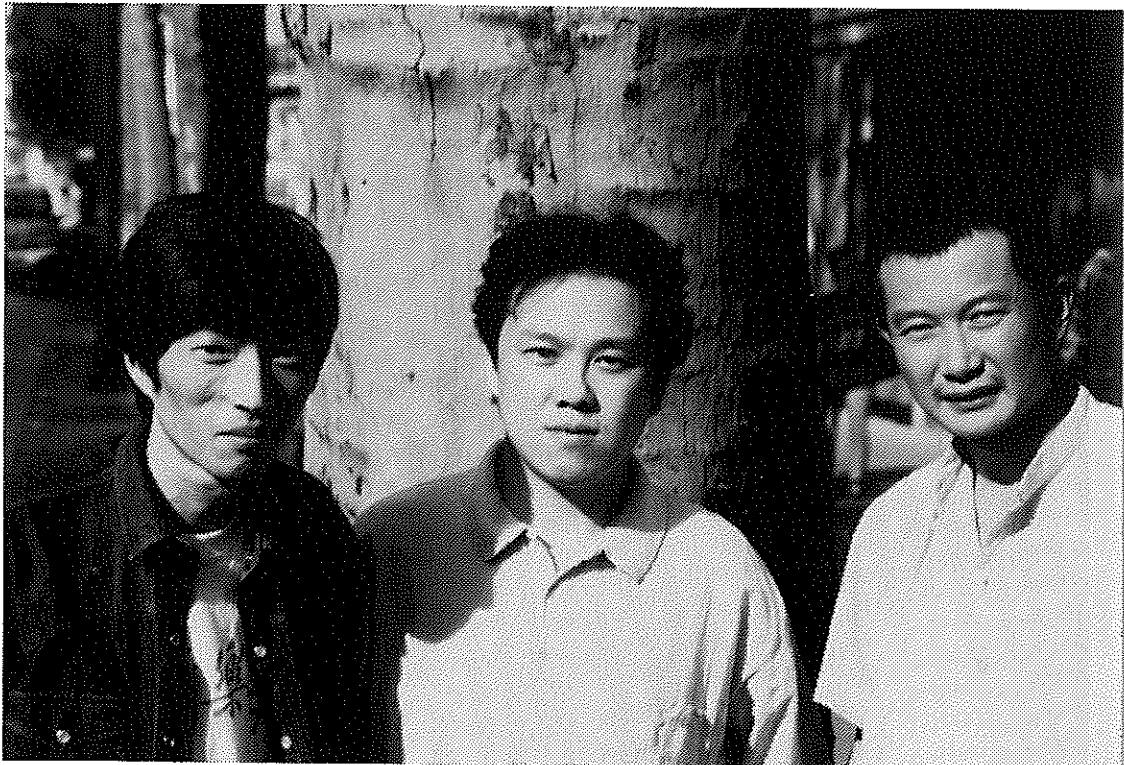
In China, the southern minorities are often viewed as sensuous children of nature, because of their many rituals and wild and primitive ways of life.

'Children of nature' is a name which could also describe very aptly the artistic point of departure of Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong and some other young (Han) Chinese composers who were born and bred in the south. They cultivate the scent of the earth and of primitive, tribal life in their music, and often propagate a 'back to nature' philosophy which, in its naïvety and directness, may remind one of the romantic ideas of Béla Bartók. His glorification of peasant life and strong ties to his native soil appealed to the older generation of composers in China as well, but for them the main motive was communist ideology.

It was Mao Zedong who, in his notorious Yan'an talks of 1942, admonished the artist-intellectuals to denounce their bourgeois habits and elitist behaviour and go to the peasants to study their local culture.

It was not the first time that Chinese intellectuals took part in a massive folklore study movement, but the situation was different from all previous occasions. China was at war with Japan, and the Japanese invasion threatened to destroy whatever was left of China's sovereignty. The Chinese people were suffering serious losses. In the communist camp, artists and intellectuals were required to take up arms: if not literally, then by providing patriotic songs and stories for the masses, to inspire and encourage them in their fight against fascism. There was no time for elitist principles like *l'art pour l'art*, when thousands of people were dying from violence and starvation. Mao felt that only a popular art, modelled on the folklore of the peasants themselves, could serve as a propaganda weapon against the Japanese invaders and, eventually, against the Chinese nationalists under Chiang Kaishek.

Three young Chinese composers meet in Paris: Mo Wuping, Xu Shuya and Tan Dun.



NATIONAL MUSIC

Mao's call was taken seriously, and it continued to be heard, even long after the war was over and the communists had founded the People's Republic in 1949. Under communism, daily life in China continued to be a war, a fight of classes, of populists against cosmopolitans, of communists against former Guomindang sympathizers, of ordinary people against the new upper class, which was now formed by the Party.

The militant line was never abandoned, and soon, the Chinese people were summoned to take part massively in a myth-creating economical programme called the Great Leap Forward. In 1958-59, the whole country seemed to be on a gigantic production spree, in which workers and peasants were urged daily to increase their output of steel and grain. Here again, art was needed as a means of propaganda to support a war, an ideological and economic war this time, directed against the non-communist nations of the world. The Great Leap eventually ended in disaster and famine.



Title page of Zhu Lixi's 'Huo' (1990).

Mao's call for the artists to study peasant culture was taken seriously, but only according to the artistic measures of those days. Chinese composers of the 1950s and 1960s took relatively little trouble to study the nature of folk music, at least in a thorough and objective way.

Neither could they be blamed for it, because there was hardly any serious tradition of ethnomusicological research. They incorporated folk melodies in their national compositions, but only superficially: the pentatonic tunes were taken over, but typical elements like vocal timbre, microtones, free rhythms and the powerful dynamics in folk song and local opera were disregarded, often deliberately, because they were felt to be uncivilized and rough. In fact, interest in authentic folk music was rather limited. In his Yan'an talks, Mao Zedong had said that intellectuals should take folk art as their example, but also that folk art had to be developed and brought onto a higher cultural level through the works of the urban artists. Most composers had only one way of interpreting that message: the tunes of folk music were squeezed into the ill-fitting harness of Western metre and tonality, and then harmonized and orchestrated after the model of nineteenth-century Western symphonic music.

The final result was a national music comparable to the 'Hungarian' music of Liszt or Brahms, a bastardized music. What composers like He Luding, Qu Wei, Ding Shande, He Zhanhao, Chen Gang and others created was, in fact, a diluted extract of Western romanticism and Chinese pentatonicism and rhythms, in which little of the original flavour of the folk music was preserved. Of course, some of the music was interesting in its own right, but it was basically imitative of a language that had been exploited already to the very bottom by the majority of Western composers, half a century before. It seems that Chinese artists had nothing new to add.

For the young composers, the whole situation was different: they detected, in the rough and powerful music of the Chinese countryside, a spirit that happily and

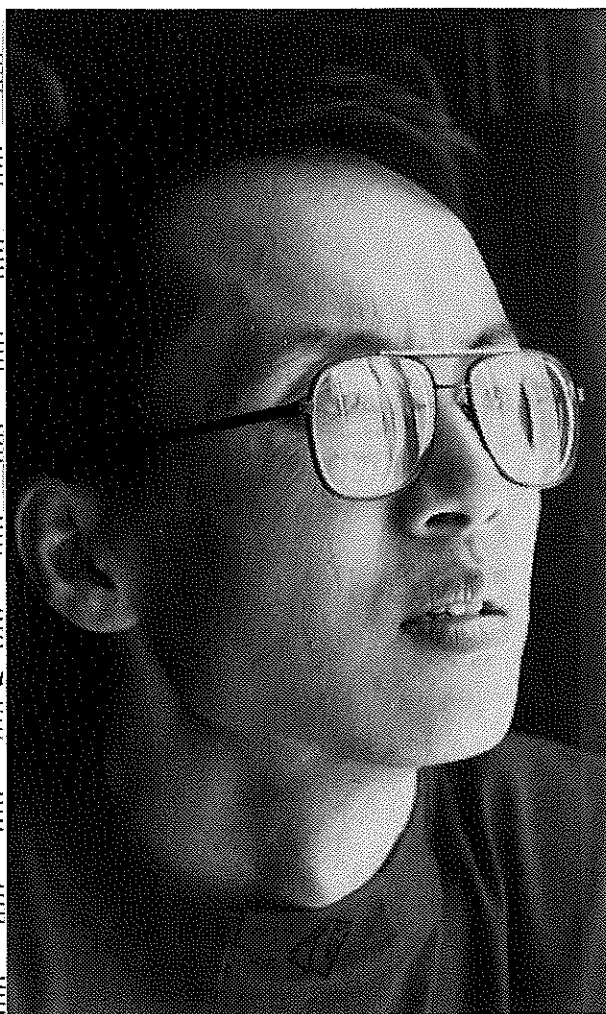
genuinely infected many of them: the mountain cries of the peasants, the deep humming and bell ringing of Buddhist worshippers, the battering on gongs and drums in village bands, the intricate rhythms hidden beneath the deafening surface of that music, the special vocal colours of southern dialects, the vocal acrobatics of Sichuan opera. All of these were possibilities to embroider on and all together seemed to offer the basis for a new musical language. It was only the Chinese avant-garde of the 1980s that began to take a more than superficial artistic interest in China's folk music.

WITH OR WITHOUT TITLE ?

After the Cultural Revolution, not only folk music but all of China's traditional culture was gradually rediscovered. Some young artists derived inspiration from ancient Chinese sources of literature and philosophy. The rich poetry of the Sui and Tang dynasties, the magical stories of Zhuangzi and other philosophers, the mysticism and earthiness of the Book of Songs... All this had spun a thread through centuries of Chinese art, and, in as far as the older composers had not been forced under communism to limit themselves completely to political and revolutionary themes, they, too, loved to resort to the Chinese classics for inspiration.

The younger composers, however, even if they wrote music inspired by ancient poems or classical philosophies, no longer felt the need to present an explicit story or detailed

Chen Qigang (b. 1955), a student of Messiaen. (Photo: Yves de Kermel).



programme, as had been the case in the Chinese heroic symphonies and tone poems of the 1960s. The youth showed little interest in programme music; at best they were fascinated by the intrinsic values of traditional sources: the special atmosphere created by a poem or painting or rock-carving, the mental attitude behind the tale that was told... Many composers preferred, in fact, not to give explanatory titles to their work any longer, or perhaps only a fancy name, because they believed that the music should speak for itself. It was a risky step, not only from a political point of view, (it was only a few years previously that music without titles had been attacked), but also because, traditionally, great importance had always been attached to the use of titles in Chinese art.

Titles were more than a simple explanation or passing reference to the inner meaning of a work of art; they showed where the artist stood, and gave the audience a vital key to the whole work. Even if they did not understand the exact meaning of a title, it would be evocative enough, or sufficiently conventional to give them an idea. However, what should ordinary people think, now that they were suddenly being confronted with enigmatic titles like 'piece for seven performers'? Nothing like that had ever happened in China before. Music without a story could actually not be judged very well.

The younger generation did not yield. The world of their personal interests was a complicated mixture of strongly diverging matters: Taoism and Confucianism, mystical worship of nature and shamanism, but also nationalism, feelings of love and hatred towards the native soil, the burden of an undigested, stigmatized past, the dark weight of Chinese history...

No doubt, their music was imbued with many of these elements, but a considerable number of composers began to support the view that music primarily expresses only itself, and is not, of necessity, a vehicle for story-telling or social reform. They were not prepared to go much further than, for example, the exaltation of nature and the soil (as in the works of Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong), and many had no special message to express at all, other than music.

Mao Zedong had denounced art for art's sake. 'All culture or literature and art belongs to a definite class and party, and has a definite political line' was one of his sweeping statements. However, the disastrous effects of Mao's views on the life of artists from the 1940s onwards had convinced even many of the older composers that there was no way back, and should be no way back to the policies of former days. The youth should be given room for development.

In the words of one older composer: 'We felt great anxiety... We thought: let this generation not be destroyed again, as had happened to our own.'

INFLUENCES OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Nearly all young Chinese composers began to employ instruments or sounds from Chinese traditional music in their compositions. Not only folk music, but also, for example, the music of the *guqin*, the seven-stringed Chinese zither. In fact, only at the beginning of the 1980s, did it become possible in China to get a thorough picture of traditional music: only then were large-scale research projects in the field of ethnomusicology started, and urban Chinese musicians and music scholars began, albeit hesitantly, to reassess the aesthetic qualities of their own native folk music.

The motif for the composers was not primarily that they wanted to create a new 'national music'; most of them were simply fascinated by Chinese music because they had encountered it along their artistic path, and many had indulged in local opera and other folk music during their compulsory stay in the countryside and now wanted to experiment with it.

As a consequence, the new generation developed special affinities: with the raw tone of the *erhu* (Chinese fiddle), for example, with the colour of southern opera voices, with the invisible accents on the Chinese *qin*-zither, with the cackling of Chinese percussion...

In the act of composing, they strove for a process to enrich those indigenous sounds with Western technique. It was, in fact, the road that most modern composers in other Asian countries had taken.

In China, the major gains of the East-West synthesis seemed to be new shades of colour, a unique exploitation of space (both in terms of pitch and duration), enriched vocal techniques and (sometimes) a more prominent role for percussion and a return to primitive rhythms. Here, too, there was little difference with colleague-composers in, for example, Japan or Korea.

THE ORIENTAL CONCEPT OF SOUND

However, there are many paths leading to accomplishment: the landscape along the way will offer a different adventure for every journey, and the final aims are lost beyond the horizon; there are countless formulas for a merging of East and West, everyone adheres to his own alchemy, and the result will be different and unpredictable each time.

The gradual, aesthetic refinement and technical sophistication of Chen Qigang's instrumental works has little or nothing in common with the ever more earthy and direct sounds of the orchestra in Tan Dun's music. The happily shrieking *suonas* and primal shouts in Qu Xiaosong's works seem to stem from another universe from the sheer nightmare sounds of He Xuntian. The sturdy, gloomy orchestral timbre of Guo Wenjing is a far cry from the intimate, classical gestures in Mo Wuping's chamber music. Ye Xiaogang's brazenly romantic evocations of Tibet originate in a world entirely different from the stern, mathematical spirit of Jia Daqun's latest works.

Yet all this music sprouts from the new Chinese soil. Moreover, all the composers seem to share certain principles which have determined the face of Oriental, traditional music for thousands of years already, and which, essentially, have remained intact. Idiosyncratic principles, because they are half sound, half philosophy. For example, the assumption that the essence of all music is embodied in the vibration (or fierce plucking) of a single string and, more particularly, in the audible silence that follows it.

Decades ago, the oriental concept of sound already put many Western composers, from John Cage to Giacinto Scelsi, on a new track. The cradle of their music, however, is the West. In the case of the Chinese composers, the experiments with oriental sound led to totally different results.

A SYMPHONY TO END ALL (CHINESE) SYMPHONIES

In Beijing, in 1979, a young composer from Hunan (in South China) put his mind to writing a symphony. He had only returned a year ago from the countryside, where he had worked barefoot in the rice paddies like so many youths, but he had also spent a considerable part of his time composing music for a local opera troupe. His symphony, an ambitious work in four movements, set for large orchestra, was given the title *Li Sao* 離騷, after a threnody by the fourth century Chinese poet Qu Yuan. The composer was called Tan Dun, he was twenty-two years old and had never written an orchestral work before.

Tan Dun completed *Li Sao* in 1980. By current Western standards, the piece would perhaps be judged as uninteresting or relying too much on nineteenth century romanticism, but in China it turned upside down the existing symphonic traditions completely.

For one thing, Tan Dun's piece was less imitative, technically more advanced and more personal than any of the symphonies produced by composers of the older generations. Like its predecessors, Tan Dun's piece had many Chinese ditties, Chinese accelerations of rhythm, a lot of theatrical rumpus, impulsive gestures, and perhaps a somewhat nonchalant form. At the same time, however, *Li Sao* radiated a remarkable self-

confidence and unprecedented relish in experimenting with the expressive possibilities of the Western symphony orchestra, which made it stand out against the conventional romanticism of the older generation. Quite remarkable was the lucidity of the score, in which neither solos nor accompanying parts were in danger of losing out against tutti. Chen Qigang, a classmate of Tan Dun, has a vivid recollection of the way in which the piece came into being: 'In 1980, we heard of a competition that was to be organized in Peking for writing symphonies. Nobody of us young students, had had any decent instruction or lessons in orchestration. Tan Dun, very much against the wish of his teachers and colleagues, wrote a symphony. He was a rather rebellious and incongruous pupil, but his example did inspire others. Teachers stayed away ostentatiously during the premiere of *Li Sao*, but the piece was successful, Tan Dun was awarded an incentive prize and this encouraged him to go on. His music made a very modern impression on us. Now, no-one would consider the symphony to be avant-garde any more, but what did we know at that time ?'

The work was recorded by the Chinese Record Company in 1983, in a revised version performed by the Peking Central Philharmonic Society. *Li Sao* always remained dear to Tan Dun, although he chose a different direction, afterwards. The symphony generated a long trail of followers: in the early 1980s, Chen Yi, Li Binyang, Qu Xiaosong, Ye Xiaogang and many others tried their fortune in turn, and wrote symphonies with an increasingly modern idiom and gradually more satisfying technique. Yet none of these works seemed to challenge the key position of Tan Dun's orchestral maiden work: his evocation of the Chinese poet Qu Yuan's sorrows of parting is, except for a tribute to Chinese valedictory poetry and a musical look ahead, also a comment on the past, a literal parting: it is a farewell to romanticism, an era in Chinese music which, as a consequence of political censorship and cultural isolation, never matured, and never reached any international recognition.

WASHING THEIR EARS

In the years that followed, Tan Dun's music remained the flagship of new music; both student colleagues and teachers kept a close watch on him. In 1983, he was awarded a prize abroad for his string quartet *Feng-Ya-Song* 風雅頌 and could no longer be neglected, even in the most conservative art circles in China. The Weber International Chamber Music Contest in Dresden was perhaps not a very prestigious event, but that made no difference: China's music world was pretty much a culture of prizes and competitions, and a prize from abroad was viewed as a double catch, because of the diplomatic mission which artists had to fulfil.

Tan's string quartet, vaguely inspired by a great classic of ancient poetry, was one of the first (and for quite some time also one of the last) works of avant-garde music of which a (separate) score was published.

The musical language of this quartet is bolder and more economical than that of the *Li Sao* symphony, at times very modern, and it shows great advance in contrapuntal writing. In this work, Tan totally surpassed the idiom of his teachers. But who had taught him that ?

At this time already, the Chinese music conservatories were no longer comparable to the music schools of before the Cultural Revolution. The teachers, in as far as they had survived the witch-hunts of the Red Guards, were the same, but not the text books, nor the libraries, nor the students!

In 1980, the British composer Alexander Goehr was the first Westerner to come to China and teach modern Western music for some time. He brought many records and scores to Peking and, in a few months, led the young students through almost a century of musical innovation in the West. From Schoenberg to Messiaen, from twelve-tone music to complete serialism, from Boulez to Stockhausen, the whole twentieth century was poured out over the Chinese heads. It was almost too much, but the classroom students were culturally famished: they had lived too long on a meagre diet of revolutionary marches and model operas. Gradually, more scores and

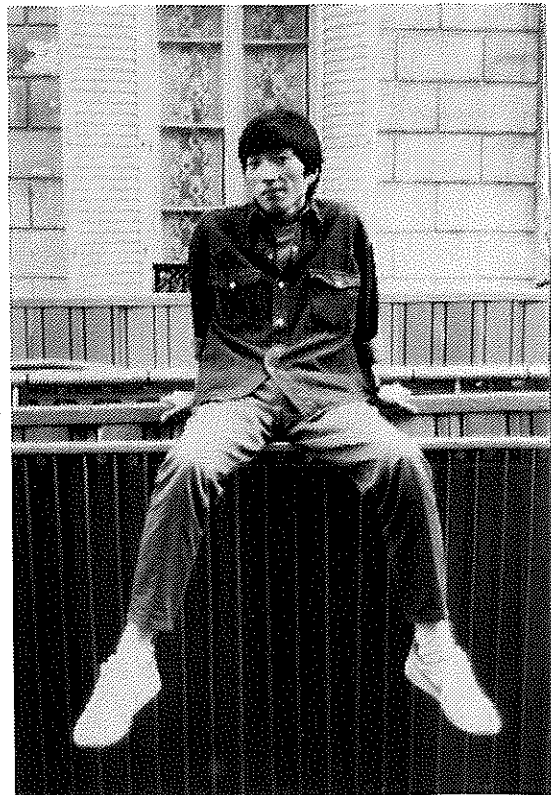
recordings arrived from the West, and the sketchy picture of the Western avant-garde could be further filled in. Chen Qigang, who currently lives in France, recalls the excitement of those days, when the composition class made new discoveries nearly every day: 'Qu Xiaosong wrote a string quartet, a kind of mixture of the first and third string quartets of Bartók. It had lots of dissonance in it. Every time after we had listened to it, we felt a need to wash our ears with something pleasant and romantic... We had little experience, so we just went to the library and sat down with scores of Bartók, Messiaen, Boulez and others. We showed to each other whatever struck our eye or genuinely impressed us, and we took things home and tried to incorporate them in our own music. It was quite a natural process. From there, various people managed, eventually, to discover their own direction. Others got stuck in the process of imitation.'

THE BIG EXODUS

In the early 1980s, the first composers of the young generation left their country for study abroad. Professor Chou Wen-chung, an emigrant who departed from China in 1946 and eventually became a music lecturer in America, surrounded himself with young Chinese talent at Columbia University (New York), where he had established a Sino-American Arts Exchange Centre in the late 1970s. Chou himself had achieved some fame as a composition student and friend of Edgar Varèse, and later became his literary executor. He was the only Chinese Mainland composer of the older generation whose works were widely appreciated and regularly performed in the West, in the period 1949-1979.

America became a resort for a growing number of Chinese artists, not only from Peking but also from Shanghai and other big cities. By now, young composers fully realized the isolation and serious lack of knowledge they had had to cope with in China, and jumped at every opportunity offered, through growing contact with the

Composers Xu Shuya (Shanghai) and Mo Wuping (Peking), now both resident in Paris.



Action called for to stem art brain drain

By CHRIS YEUNG

CHINA'S art groups have urged the Government to take effective measures to stop the worsening mass exodus of artists overseas.

State-level art performing groups told a symposium in Beijing recently the problem of brain drain in the cultural circles in

the Chinese Central Ballet said 131 members had emigrated to 18 overseas countries such as the United States, Canada and Japan as well as Hongkong in the past 12 years.

"Our top ballet dancers have all gone. Sometimes we have to cancel some shows because of the lack of sufficient dancers. This is unprecedented.

"We get nervous over every performance now. We

not worrying about how to improve our standard but whether we've got sufficient dancers when the curtain is raised," the official said at the symposium organised by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference's Education and Cultural Committee.

The Central Repertory Group and the Central Music Academy are also "heavily-affected areas" with a total of 133

members seeking greener pastures in Western countries in the past decade respectively, the *People's Consultative Journal* said.

Frustrated art groups leaders put the blame of the mass exodus on the lack of funds to enhance professional standard by, say, performing new plays.

"In the past few years, we have only relied on Swan Lake. The

they have a chance to pursue their careers?

"There are also the problems such as meals subsidy, salary and accommodation."

They also lamented that the public was yet to develop an interest and have a better understanding and appreciation of serious art.

The social influence of the Central Orchestra far below that

A report in the South China Morning Post, 24 May 1990.

West, to travel abroad. So there they went, with grants and with private savings or without. Some were lucky and had possibilities to start at a university or music school right away. Others arrived penniless, and had to play music in the streets to earn a living and make it through the first period. Most of them finally settled and managed to take lessons, often at the best music schools in the Western world.

Ge Ganru, Sheng Zhongliang ('Bright Chen'), Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Ye Xiaogang, Zhao Xiaosheng and many others went to the United States. Europe was an alternative: Su Cong, Chen Xiaoyong, Chen Qigang, and Yang Liqing, amongst others, departed for France, or for Germany. Some students seized the chance to study with great masters like Ligeti and Messiaen. In Paris, the *Ecole Normale de Musique* provided first shelter for many Chinese, with the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique* as the next stop. Composers like Taira and Malec, for various reasons, showed affinity with the Asian newcomers. Malec initiated a number of them into the art of electronic music, and helped them to have their works performed. Still others, like Yu Jingjun (Julian Yu) departed for Australia.

Few students left China with the intention to stay away forever, but once they had settled in the West, they often tried to extend their study periods time after time. Their future in China could not exactly be called bright. There were the poor career prospects for composers, the absence of a genuine modern music scene, the lack of opportunities for performances, the unpredictable political climate... All these factors were not really tempting as long as the West had more knowledge and more chances to offer.

THE BIG INFLUX

This is not to say that studying in the West was like being in paradise. Some artists ended up in a Kafka-like situation, where they gained some respect as composers, had their works performed for politely interested foreign audiences, but, at the same time, noticed that their music was misunderstood or neglected in China by the people they had actually intended to write it for. Some felt they were not really being understood by foreigners either. A number of composers were unable to find funds for a prolonged stay and had to break off their studies early.

Already in 1983 various students had begun to return to the People's Republic. Some had been away on a one year scholarship only. They re-entered their country with bags full of scores, new ideas, perhaps also considerable amounts of courage, good faith and idealism.

Zhao Xiaosheng, a gifted piano player and composer from Shanghai, then in his late thirties, brought with him from the United States piles of records and documentation, which he used at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to pass on his fresh knowledge about computer music and modern composition to his younger students.



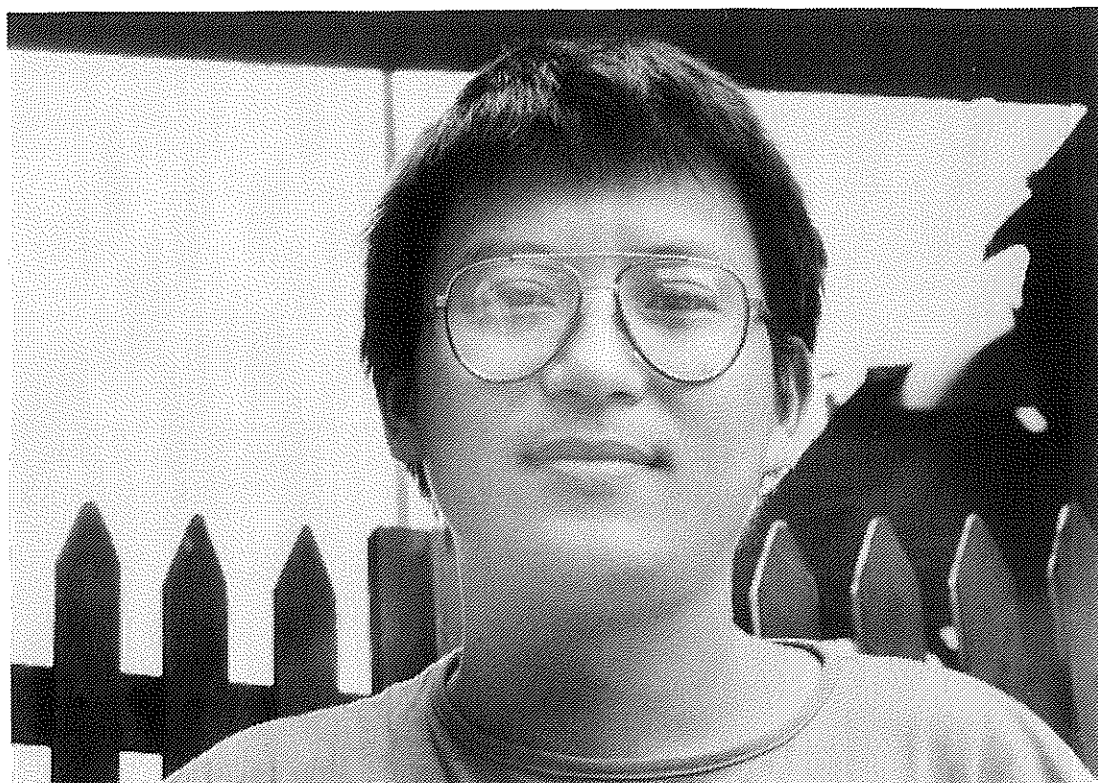
Zhao Xiaosheng in Shanghai. On his right: one of his students, Zhu Lixi.

Ives, Cage, Crumb, Webern, Boulez, Stockhausen: soon these names were no longer unknown, and Zhao kindled genuine enthusiasm in his pupils for new music. In the meantime, he was working on a compositional system of his own, a method in the stern tradition of Schoenberg, but not twelve-tone music; more likely it was going to be a system based on ancient Chinese music theory.

In the same year, composer Yang Liqing also returned to his home-town Shanghai, from a stay at the Musikhochschule in Hannover (Germany). He, too, brought tapes and scores to show to his students. Yang was three years older than Zhao, and he had developed a special interest in the music of Messiaen. Eventually he published a book about Messiaen, the first book written by a Chinese on a Western avant-garde composer.

For the composition students, the confrontation with Western music was no longer confined to scores or studio recordings. A growing number of foreigners visited China for guest-lectures and courses: Toru Takemitsu, Yasushi Akutagawa, Isang Yun, Ivo Malec, Alfred Koerppen, George Crumb, Leland Smith. They all stimulated interest in new music in China. For older Chinese composers, their names were largely unfamiliar, but for the young generation these men signified a magical future.

In 1983, Xu Shuya graduated from the composition department of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music: 'I took full advantage of all the materials that arrived from abroad. I was an avid collector of modern music myself and tried to get hold of everything: books, tapes, records. I met Takemitsu when he lectured in Shanghai, and decided to let him listen to my violin concerto. In exchange, Takemitsu let me listen to his own violin concerto. It struck me that he had absorbed a great many Western elements in his music, but had been able, all the same, to develop his own style. Because of its Western aspects, Takemitsu's music was of interest to Western listeners too, and could be understood by a much wider audience. That gave me food for thought.'



Guo Wenjing, composer of 'Suspended Ancient Coffins...'

DISCOVERED ABROAD

The new music from the West set most Chinese composers on a new track. Young and old, conservative and progressive factions, all were influenced to some degree. Among the older generation, this led to certain improvements in orchestral technique, and to the absorption of Stravinskian rhythms and Ravellian instrumental colours in a musical idiom that was still basically romantic. Among the young composers, it gave rise to a completely new musical language, one that was more open to traditional Chinese influences than ever, but at the same time showed great ingenuity and innovative power, and refrained from blatant chauvinism and political propaganda.

This development did not pass unnoticed abroad.

The Shanghai-born artist Ye Xiaogang, who started his studies at the Central Conservatory in Peking in 1979, a year later than Tan Dun, was the first mainland Chinese composer (even before Tan Dun) to attract wide attention in foreign circles of avant-garde music. In 1984, when his chamber orchestral work *Xi Jiang Yue* 西江月 (Moon over the West River - the title refers to *ci*-poetry) was performed at the Asian Pacific Festival and Composers' Conference in Wellington, New Zealand, many foreign musicians noticed for the first time that there was something like an avant-garde movement in Chinese music. This work, with its contemplative beginning and cool, subdued dance rhythms which seem to conceal an interior fire, was received enthusiastically. It was music for Western instruments, but its impact was new and surprising.

The same year, another work for Western instruments by another student from Peking, Guo Wenjing, had its premiere in Berkeley, California: 'Suspended Ancient Coffins on the Cliffs in Sichuan', for two pianos and orchestra. This piece evokes the mystery of a burial site on a cliff high over a river gorge in Sichuan province. In austere, economic gestures, short but exuberant orchestral outbursts and fierce piano chords which are hammered out in the midst of silence, Guo Wenjing builds up an extraordinary tension. His orchestral sound is close to that of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*, but it is



Jia Daqun (Sichuan Province): inspired by Allen Forte's pitch set theories.

certainly no mere imitation of Bartók's style. *Suspended Ancient Coffins* was also performed in Peking (1987) and in Glasgow (1988) and earned Guo the reputation of being a composer of considerable talent. Like Ye Xiaogang, he had managed to elicit a new and personal sound from a classical, Western medium.

The exciting new talent on the mainland offered an extra stimulus to avant-garde artists in Hong Kong to organize the First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival, which was held in June 1986. There, for the first time, Chinese modern composers from all over the world were brought together: from the mainland, but also from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Australia, Canada and the United States. The meeting was a unique opportunity not only to get to know each other's music, but also each other's artistic concepts and ideas on nationalism and internationalism. Especially for some mainland composers, who were still in a very isolated position, this was an important occasion.

The final concert of this festival featured two key works of modern Chinese music: Tan Dun's *On Taoism*, for voice and orchestra (1985), a piece which since then has triumphed on the international concert stage everywhere, and Qu Xiaosong's *Mong Dong* (1986), for voices and chamber orchestra.

MONG DONG AND ON TAOISM

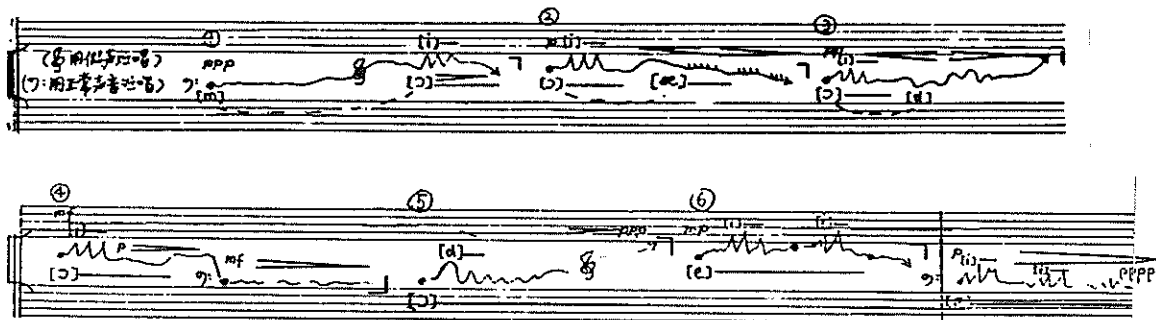
In China, *Mong Dong* is still regarded as one of the most significant and most controversial works ever written by a Chinese composer. The piece begins with a voice vocalizing weirdly into a piano, and soon bursts out in an orgy of battering and shouting which seems to evoke the joyful, wild dance of some primitive tribe. The orchestra used in *Mong Dong* combines Western and Chinese instruments, and various instrumentalists also have vocal parts, in which the composer dispenses with established singing techniques and concentrates instead on natural vocalization. The lyrics consist of unrelated sounds borrowed from southern dialects, or even syllables

invented by Qu Xiaosong. This also goes for the title: the words *Mong Dong* have no meaning in themselves. Musically, the work can best be described as an exuberant exploration of timbre and rhythm. The pace and energy of *Mong Dong* are impressive, but its underlying mood is peaceful, even contemplative.

In this respect it is very close to *On Taoism*, the piece by Tan Dun, which was written for Western orchestra. Here, too, frightening shouts and agitated drum rolls can be heard, but the undercurrent of the music is, again, calm and peaceful, and the tempo is slower. Originally, the composer called this work 'Orchestral Music with Intermezzi in Three Colours', referring to the three solo contributions: human voice, bass clarinet and double bassoon. The allusion to Taoism seems to be an afterthought, but an entirely satisfying one: the mood of the music is a strange mixture of fearful excitement and peacefulness; the listener may be reminded of the calm otherworldliness which reigns inside certain Taoist temples, but which seems somehow connected with the frightening, grotesque and wrathful sculptures that guard its doorsteps.

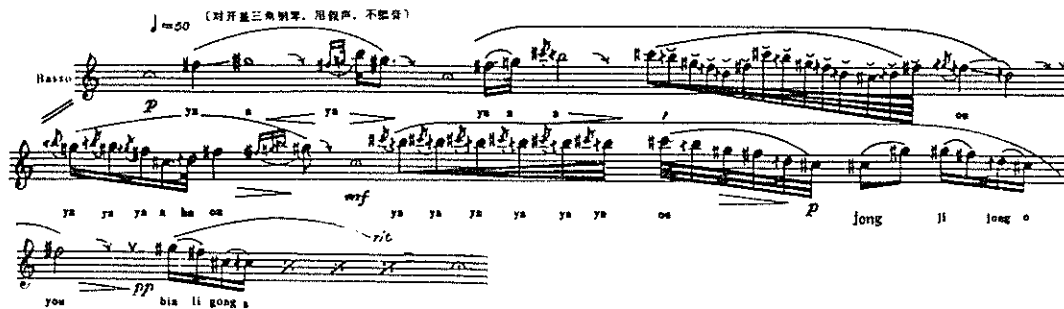
Mong Dong and *On Taoism* both start with textless hymnal chanting for solo voice. The opening bars of the two pieces are, in fact, so much alike that they could easily be confused. Ex.1 shows the beginning of *On Taoism*: a high-pitched tenor voice marks a point in space, moves softly forward in wavering glissandi until it lowers into a dog's whisper and seems to fade out. Then, without effort, it flares up again and blends back into falsetto, finally to dissolve against a quiet tremolo on the glockenspiel.

A whole universe of sound is materialized here in what seems to be but one, soft breath passing the human vocal cords:



In the course of the piece, Tan Dun evokes a vast space by introducing the sonorously droning double bassoon and the cool, dark timbre of the bass clarinet. In this way, both the highest (the solo voice) and the deepest regions of the music are marked. In between, there is a void in which the string orchestra spins its web of gossamer. If the three contrasting tone-colours in this music are regarded as a play of light and darkness, and the sound of the strings as a canvas, then *On Taoism* is a Chinese painting or calligraphy: there, too, a single stroke of the brush (a fisherman's boat, a crane), immediately evokes a vast space, a huge lake or the sky.

Here, for comparison, is the beginning of *Mong Dong*:



A DOUBLE STAR

On Taoism and *Mong Dong* are not very 'difficult' pieces. There is no complex concurrence of events, no microscopic exploration of tone shades, no entanglement of layers to challenge the listener. Both works are more in the nature of primeval rituals, dances around a totem pole, eerie sounds of cave-dwellers, monks and ghosts, but translated into a contemporary, orchestral idiom. Both Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong aim for simplicity and directness. They try to write music which is directly accessible to the listener and could almost be danced or reproduced in song. In America, both composers are now viewed as part of what is somewhat disparagingly called the 'downtown' direction in avant-garde, recognizable by its frequent tonal flirtations and catchy rhythms: the 'new simplicity' of Glass, Reich and Adams, for example. The 'uptown' direction, as opposed to the 'downtown' one, refers to the brilliantly constructed, allegedly more sophisticated music of many contemporary serialists or 'new complexity' composers like Ferneyhough.

The distinction is a relative one, of course, for in both camps one can find skilled craftsmen as well as bunglers, and it is an open question how difficult a complex piece of music really is, or how simple a simple one.

Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong have followed the same path since the mid-1980s. They might be called the naturists, or the snake charmers or the ritual fire dancers of the new Chinese music. Or, just considering the fact that they have taken such surprisingly parallel roads as artists: a musical double star, in this particular respect comparable to stylistically related composers such as Debussy and Ravel, or Kódały and Bartók.

THE 'NEW TIDE'

How did the Chinese audience and press react to the young composers who were so successful abroad? How were the artists received in their own country?

Music that created a pleasant surprise in the West often produced a great shock in Chinese concert halls. Within a short time, composers like Tan Dun and Qu Xiaosong became the heroes of a new generation: they brought China back on the international music stage, more so than any Chinese virtuoso piano players or violinists had been able to do. But their achievements also elicited sharp criticism, and in the years that followed this criticism did not abate.

The critics reproached the avant-garde composers for lack of form, empty gestures and stylistic mimicry; *Mong Dong* was said to be modelled too literally on George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children*. More disconcertingly, some watchdogs of national culture complained about the lack of socialist fervour in the new music of the youth. What was the world coming to?, they wondered. China could hardly have opened its doors to the West with the intention of being saddled with the morbid decadence of avant-garde music?

The columns of journals like *People's Music* and *Music Research* were soon flooded again with aesthetic and political polemics, just as they had been in the 1960s. There was no musicological focus in these articles, no discussion about notes and technique, only an ongoing discourse on 'expression': the major question was whether or not the young composers expressed ideas and feelings in their music which were in line with the spirit of socialism.

Chinese avant-garde composers had to stand by and watch their future being subordinated to superficial debates in music journals. A new label was introduced for avant-garde music in China: the 'new tide'. This term was propagated by, amongst others, the musicologist Wang An'guo, who wrote an apologia for modern Chinese music in the journal *Musicology in China* (1986 no.1). Unfortunately the word 'tide' had unintended connotations of 'fashion' or 'boom', of something that was volatile and superficial and would probably pass away, or was perhaps even destined to pass. The term was eventually taken over by others, both with positive and negative intentions.

THE SOCIALIST ROAD

Lü Ji (born 1909) is the most powerful member of the Chinese Musicians' Association, a composer of revolutionary mass songs and an ardent Maoist. In the journal *Theory and Criticism of Literature and Art* (1987, no.4), he formulated the *cri de coeur* of his generation: 'musical art must follow the socialist road'.

Lü Ji felt that the youth, with their preference for things modern, were following a blind alley. Other elder composers agreed. They had discovered nothing of value in avant-garde music, nothing that reminded them of the solidarity and revolutionary spirit of former days. Some were not exactly happy with the call for a downright restoration of a 'Marxist music'. They looked for artistic freedom, but at the same time regarded avant-garde music as an inappropriate kow-tow to Western culture.

In the journal *Musicology in China* (1988, no.2), the Beijing music researcher Qiao Jianzhong tried to formulate a cautious answer under the title, 'What is the only way to develop modern music?' His purpose was to demonstrate that there were many ways of strengthening people's social and political awareness through music. (Qiao took it for granted that music existed primarily to improve people's political awareness). He argued that musical pluralism was a good thing, because it facilitated the task of the artists in this respect.

Those who publicly discussed avant-garde music were in a very difficult position. While young composers were more or less exempt from direct political attacks, since nobody was able to point out 'non-socialist' notes in their music - who could read those complicated scores anyway? -, defenders of new music like Wang An'guo and Liang Maochun had a very hard time. They had to write about music in political terms, because Chinese musicology was completely dominated by socialist aesthetics. But by doing so, they were skating on thin ice. Liang Maochun expressed doubts, in a very discreet way, about some of Mao Zedong's bold Yan'an statements. He wondered, for instance, whether music was important in its own right, free from all political implications. This position elicited a furious response from various Maoist musicologists who were (and still are) very powerful in Chinese music circles.

'YES' TO MUSICAL PLURALISM

In the meantime, Chinese audiences had no doubts whatsoever about the new musical pluralism: it was seen as a healthy development. In Peking, foreign music from rock 'n roll to disco was received with great enthusiasm. In pubs and societies, but also in the army, musical life underwent a total metamorphosis: in one evening's entertainment by the People's Liberation Army, it was suddenly possible to hear Spanish tangos next to patriotic songs, schlagers and pop songs next to revolutionary marches, and even jazz. All of this was a far cry from the claustrophobic repertory of eight model operas and a handful of army marches broadcast repeatedly by Radio Peking until the mid-1970s! Pop music, especially, became very popular among the youth and China was soon launching its own rock stars. These rose to quick fame and played to full houses. Traditional Chinese music was also under reconsideration. Many societies for *guqin* music and other traditional genres which had led a low life in the late 1950s, witnessed a steady influx of new members.

What about avant-garde music?

For his first concert in Peking in 1986, a concert dedicated completely to his own works, Qu Xiaosong had to distribute tickets himself in order to ensure there would be no empty chairs. When the concert was repeated, it was sold out. Not only the Peking clique of modern artists, not only friends and colleagues of the composer, but also many ordinary citizens were apparently interested in this new music. Tan Dun, Guo Wenjing, Qu Xiaosong and He Xuntian in turn all had full houses for their concerts. Each audience reacted enthusiastically.

In China, as in the West, there is clearly not such a large audience for avant-garde music as there is for pop music or Beethoven. This may very well change: in the West, too, interest in romantic music is waning. At present, Chinese avant-garde music is only appreciated by a small elite. Noticeably, this elite not only consists of people with higher education, but also includes factory workers and street sellers; people come from a great many social strata: they form an elite only from the point of view of musical interests.

It will not come as a surprise that avant-garde music is appreciated most by the youth. Whether they always appreciate music for its purely artistic values is an open question (they are eager to sympathize with anything that goes against the establishment), but at least their support is of major importance to the survival of China's avant-garde. After all, they are the audience of the future.

MORE INNOVATORS

In spite of all the criticism and heated discussions in the early 1980s, Chinese avant-garde music pushed on. New names appeared in the limelight, and it seemed that everyone had something new to say. Audiences looked forward to first performances of new pieces, and experimental daredevils were assured of success.

*He Xuntian (Sichuan Province) invented new instruments for his piece *Sounds of Nature*.*

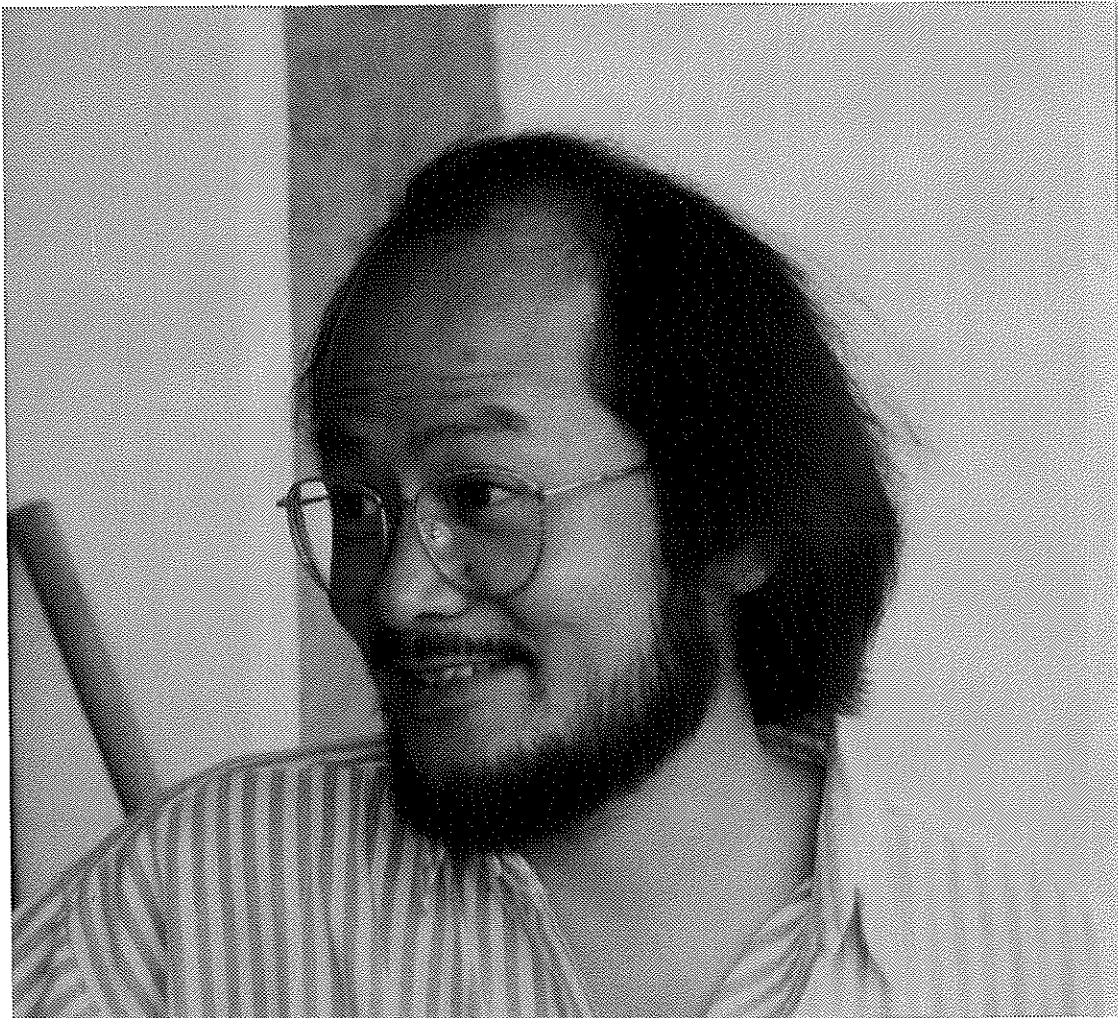


Already in 1979, Luo Zhongrong, a composer of the older generation, wrote the first Chinese composition in strict twelve-tone technique: a song for soprano and piano called Picking Lotus. Later he wrote more works in serial technique, amongst others a suite of piano pieces and a string quartet (1985), which was first performed in Germany.

Chen Yi, a young female composer originally from Guangzhou, wrote China's first viola concerto (1983), basically a romantic piece, but with many modern effects. Chen Yuanlin and Zhu Shirui, again two Southerners who had found their proper place in the heart of Beijing, were frolicking about at the Central Conservatory with synthesizers, computers, electronic music.

In Shanghai, Zhao Xiaosheng was one of the first Chinese composers to launch a composition system of his own. He called it *taiji* 太極, referring to the well-known yin and yang symbol, and for the fun of it he also designed one of his musical scores graphically in the form of the yin and yang sign. Zhao began to travel extensively in China, not only touring as a concert pianist, but also trying to propagate his composition system, which was a hybrid of serial techniques and ancient Chinese musical theory. In his piano recitals, he frequently inserted improvisations in avant-garde style. They were inspired mostly by modern Chinese paintings, which Zhao sometimes brought onto the stage to show the audience.

Qu Xiaosong, composer of 'Mong Dong', an exuberant exploration of timbre and rhythm.



CONTESTS, PRIZES AND JURIES

The most appropriate occasions for new music to manifest itself were, no doubt, the national music competitions. China was literally flooded by music competitions in the 1980s. Only after winning a prize would a young composer be able to start his long and weary climb towards fame. Participating in contests, however, did mean competing with older (more powerful) composers, and with an enormous quantity of works in conservative and romantic styles.

In 1980, Peking had a national contest for 'the most beautiful mass songs', followed a year later by a symphonic music competition. They were the beginning of a whole series of national contests supervised by the Chinese Musicians' Association. The third one took place in Wuxi in 1983, focusing on pieces for Chinese instruments; the fourth one was in Kunming, 1985 (piano solo and Western chamber instruments); the fifth in Changsha, 1986 (choral music) and the sixth in Shenyang, 1988 (pieces for Chinese instruments). Moreover, the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Record Company and various music conservatories also started organizing composition contests, and the city of Shanghai started a biennial Spring Festival of modern music.

A complete list of the prizes awarded in China in the course of a decade could easily fill a whole book and reveal nothing. Chinese juries are too generous (78 prizes in the Wuxi competition), too big (twenty or thirty people is not exceptional), too biased (teachers judging their own students) and often so strongly divided that rather curious combinations of criteria are used.

Technical skill, originality and vision are certainly not always the guiding principles. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain, for example, why Jia Daqun's *Sanzhong qizhi* 三 种 气 质, 'The Three Temperaments' (1986) was never awarded a national prize. This piece for unaccompanied choir, an elegant excursion in Eastern vocalization styles, beautiful in its simplicity and clarity, cannot be performed in China, because not a single Chinese choir is technically professional enough to be able to sing it. After judging the music solely on the basis of the score, it was brushed aside as 'an extreme piece', but the inadequacy of Chinese choral societies was not taken into consideration. And what about Zhao Xiaosheng's piano work *Taiji*, which *did* receive an award in 1987, in a competition of piano works in national style? A very intelligent piece, certainly deserving a prize, but not exactly for its 'national style': it relies so strongly on Debussy, Bartók and Hindemith that it could be used as lesson material about those composers.

All in all, the contests in which modern music is included give a confusing (and therefore realistic) picture of the position of avant-garde music in China, while providing evidence of the growing appreciation for the genre. In the year in which Tan Dun received his incentive prize for the *Li Sao* symphony, most prizes were awarded for far more conservative works, like Wang Yiping's Sketches of the Yangtze Gorges, Zhong Xinmin's Scenes of the Yangtze River and Huang Anlun's Prelude and Dance. The classical, tonal style remained a constant factor also in the later competitions, but innovative composers gradually came to be more appreciated and received prizes more often.

That it is possible to have broadminded and genuinely international competitions, is shown clearly in the 1985 Shanghai contest for works in Chinese style, in which composers from abroad were allowed to participate: in that competition, a first prize was awarded, not to a mainland composer, but to Lam Bunching, a talented female composer originally from Macao and now living in the United States).

WOULD THE MASSES UNDERSTAND IT ?

From the early 1980s onwards, composers of the older generation have disagreed about new music, which they do not understand and shall have to come to terms with. Often fulfilling the tasks of jury members, they seldom agree with each other, and in some instances have failed to respond to historical chances.

They did so on that memorable night in Shanghai, 8 November 1986, when the prizes were awarded following the first composition contest of the Chinese Record Company. Guo Wenjing's *Suspended Ancient Coffins* (category: 'small symphonic works'), and especially He Xuntian's *Tianlai* 天籁, 'Sounds of Nature' (category: 'pieces for Chinese ensembles') were apparently so controversial that the jury, presided over by Ding Shande, only managed, with great difficulty, to reach an agreement and award them each a second prize. In the two categories mentioned, no first prizes were awarded, much to the surprise of the audience.

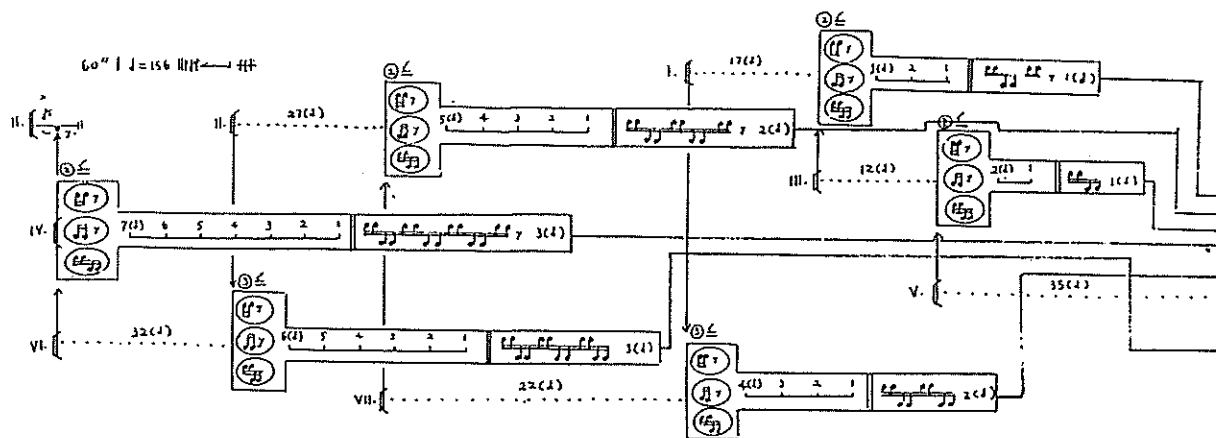
Here is the amusing story of how the decision was reached on He Xuntian's piece: it was judged solely on the basis of the score (which nobody in the jury was able to read) and on some bits and pieces from it, which the jury members had heard during a rehearsal in Chengdu. The music had sounded so strange to their ears that their first reaction was not to award it any prize at all: they were afraid that 'the masses' would not understand it. There was fear, moreover, that the music had actually been stolen (or imitated) from a foreign composer, but they did not know how to check, none of them being at home in contemporary Western music. They decided to investigate the matter: some young Chinese composers who had just returned from abroad were asked to take a critical look at the music. Only after they had assured the jury that He Xuntian's piece was indeed something new, did its members decide to award He a second prize. During the concert performance, led by the composer, on 8 November 1986, in the Concert Hall of Shanghai, the audience reacted very strongly and emotionally to the music. Many were moved and felt that the piece had captured the depths of the Chinese soul. Some felt there was a special message in this music, an outcry for human justice, perhaps, or a reflection of the great burden that their history presents for so many Chinese. He Xuntian's piece had the same strong impact when it was repeated the following day, and on subsequent occasions. It proved to be a landmark in the development of Chinese avant-garde music, and immediately established the reputation of He Xuntian as one of the key innovators of Chinese music.

IMAGINARY INSTRUMENTS

Reflecting on his music, He Xuntian recollects a specific episode from his boyhood: 'When I was a child, our family was living in the Sichuanese countryside. My father was branded a rightist and had to live in another village, some twenty miles away. He earned only thirty yuan per month, for a family of six people, and he was not allowed to visit us. I had to go and collect the money at the end of every month because my father was afraid it would get lost if he sent it by post.'

The composer's memories of his compulsory walks through a frightening landscape were to provide the basis for *Sounds of Nature*, a piece written two decades later. 'I followed the mountain trails, for hours on end, and during the summer I went at night, with a torch, because it was too hot during the day. The air and the darkness were full of eerie sounds, there were ghosts out there, I could see my own shadow dancing...' He Xuntian's nightmares materialized in his music. *Sounds of Nature* is a strongly evocative and haunting piece: the listener hears dark glissandos in *xun*-like instruments (Chinese ocarinas), a shrill flute suddenly soaring high, echos of plucked tones on the *qin*-zither, tom-tom rhythms like frightened heart-beats, but also calm passages, with thin, piping tones floating high over droning basses. To some, the music may evoke a rain forest, perhaps, although the title of the piece was not He's own choice: his teacher Gao Weijie suggested it to him. The composer had just planned to call it 'Piece for Seven Performers'.

Interestingly, the ghosts in this piece are just as imaginary as the instruments which are heard: there is no *xun* and no *guqin* to be found in the score. The actual instruments used in the piece (over thirty in all) have been designed by the composer. Sometimes they have a deliberate 'Chinese' sound, but they were designed primarily to realize the special atmosphere that He Xuntian had in mind. There are bamboo pipes, pieces of



A page from the score of *Sounds of Nature*, written by He Xuntian in 1986.

wood or metal, drums deliberately damaged to change the timbre, a large arsenal of flutes specially tuned, ceramic pots with holes in them: *Sounds of Nature* was another experiment in sound colour, no less sophisticated than *Mong Dong*. It took He Xuntian two months to instruct local musicians of the Sichuan Music Conservatory how to play his instruments, and how to read the complex score.

From *Sounds of Nature* onwards, He Xuntian preferred newly invented instruments to existing ones, and further developed his one-line notation system, which he preferred to the conventional Western staff-notation.

'The adherence to twelve fixed tones has impoverished music', He Xuntian argues. 'In folk and minority music there is a tremendous melodic flexibility, it is impossible to express that type of music properly in a twelve-tone scale. Using a one-line notation, it is possible either to be hyper-exact with the help of pitch frequency numbers, or very flexible, depending on what you want.'

Like Zhao Xiaosheng, He Xuntian invented a composition system of his own. Quite often, his progressive ideas are not practically feasible, however. It will be very difficult for him, as a composer, to continue along the lines of *Sounds of Nature*.

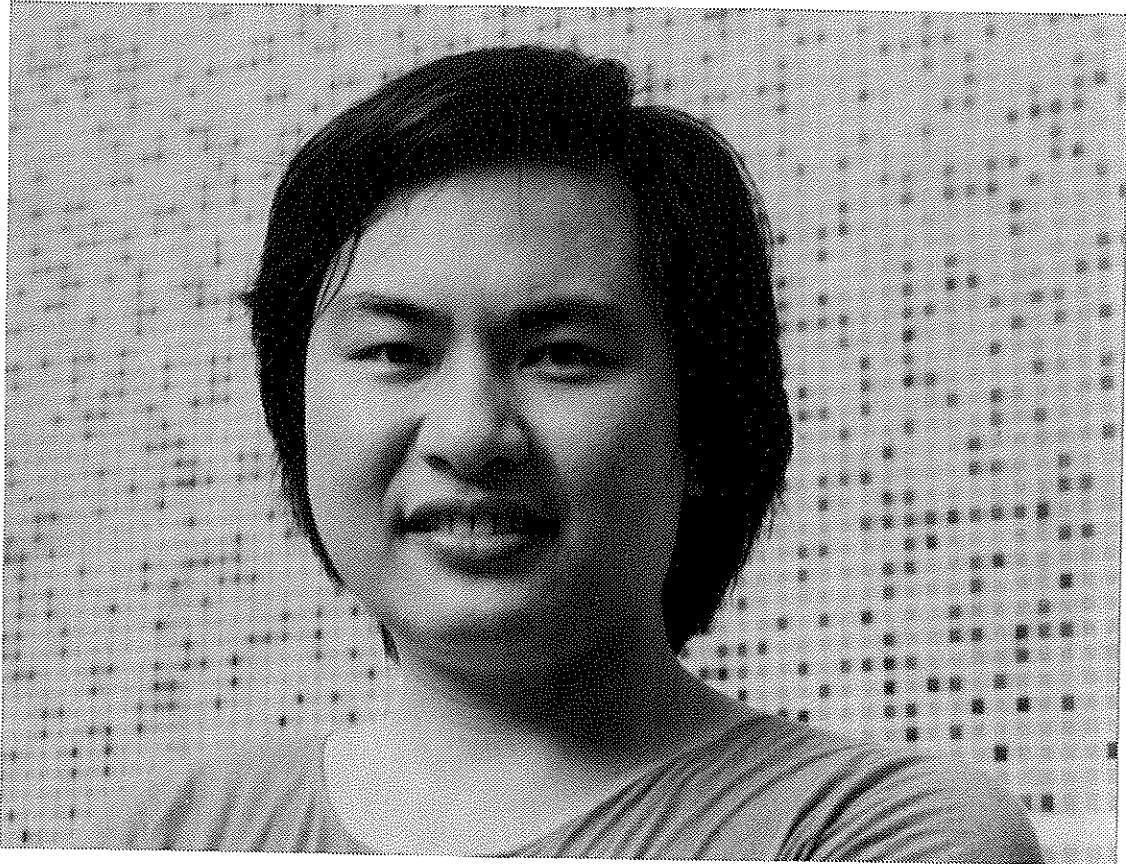
He himself admits that 'an unusual notation is not always very practical, because you first have to teach it to the performers. It takes a lot of time, and you may find that the musicians are not prepared to co-operate. The same is true if you want to introduce special instruments. So, from necessity, I have also continued to write pieces in staff-notation and for conventional instruments. I have to, otherwise I would never get any commissions here in China.'

MORE SOUND EXPLORATIONS

He Xuntian's example inspired many Chinese composers to similar experiments. Hu Ping, a pupil of He Xuntian in Chengdu, wrote his piece *Xuan tong* 玄通 for seven performers (1988) clearly after the model of *Sounds of Nature*. Lu Pei, a composer in Shanghai, decided to use only simple objects like cola tins, cups and saucers in his experimental music for a cartoon film, called *Qu huo ji* 取火记, 'The Making of Fire'. He created a bare five minutes of very witty and brilliant music. His one-line notation looks very similar to that of He Xuntian.

No one seems to have been more inspired by He Xuntian's sound explorations than Tan Dun. Over the past few years, in New York, Tan has experimented with ever more unusual musical instruments, culminating in his piece *Soundshape* (1989), written for an ensemble of pottery instruments designed by him and ceramist Ragnar Naess.

Not only are exploited the conventional possibilities of traditional Chinese instruments



Lu Pei (Shanghai Conservatory of Music): affinity with Webern's linear textures.

more fully than before, but composers also discover the many unorthodox sounds which can be extracted from them. In 1987, He Xuntian wrote *Meng si ze* 夢四則, 'Four Dreams', a concerto for *erhu* (Chinese fiddle) and western orchestra, which is in no way comparable to the Western-type virtuoso concertos now fashionable for that instrument in China. In this piece, the sound of the *erhu* is altered by attaching pieces of twisted iron to the bridge (analogous to the iron spirals which certain folk musicians use, but very much bigger), and the composer seems to concentrate all the force of his modified instrument into a single vibrato which hovers like a threatening insect, or cloud of insects, over the whole piece. (The vibrato can be heard both in the *erhu* solo and in the orchestra). The impact is very strong; the 'dreams' of the title do not have any well-defined content, but the music is basically dark and gloomy, and ends with a very dramatic gesture: fast panting from two human throats, as if people were simultaneously waking up from a nightmare. In the hands of a less skilled composer, this might be a mere effect; at the end of He Xuntian's piece, it is a stroke of genius.

CHINESE INSTRUMENTS MODIFIED AND CHANGED

From the 1930s onwards, there has been a general tendency in China to improve the sound quality of Chinese instruments. Very often this has meant that they were made to sound more Western and were tuned in equal temperament. There was a general attempt to elicit a fuller sound from the instruments. If necessary, they were completely rebuilt to that end. By adding (more) frets, replacing silk strings by metal ones, enlarging resonance-chambers, increasing the number of valves etc. a whole new range of Chinese instruments was created.

The changes allowed for an extension of the musical repertory, and many pieces could now be played in the 'right pitch'. In practice, this meant that Western tonality was gradually adopted as a standard.

The instruments tuned in equal temperament prepared the way for the Chinese counterpart of the Western symphony orchestra, the so-called Chinese orchestras, founded in the 1950s in Peking, Shanghai and some other large cities. They are perfect imitations of the Western orchestra, but instead of fourteen violins they have fourteen *erhus* playing, instead of violas, celli and basses, they feature various king-size-fiddle groups, instead of woodwind and brass they have *dizis*, *guans*, *suonas*, *labas*, etc. A conductor in Western tails usually completes the ensemble. The repertoire of the Chinese orchestras was, and still is, a hotchpotch of Chinoiserie and Western 19th century orchestral music. It is not unusual to find Schubert or Rossini on the programme, next to Chinese composers. The concerts of these orchestras can perhaps be considered as a Chinese variety of the Boston Pops. One cannot object to the medium, but it is definitely not suitable for playing Schubert, and the lack of technique in many Chinese compositions written for the orchestra is appalling. The basic problem is that the heterophonic qualities of Chinese traditional ensembles are incompatible with the need for the Western orchestra to sound 'symphonic', to make its many voices sound like one.

Chinese ensembles are usually reluctant to sound like one voice, even though the individual tones readily blend into a beautiful, mellow harmony of timbres. In the one melodic line that all the instruments share, one still hears a free gathering of individual voices, and at best there is just about an overall agreement on the direction of tone. This mixture of lines, not contrapuntal, neither dependent on chords, may sound like musical imperfection to the untrained western ear. In fact, it is one of the major charms and distinct qualities of Chinese instrumental music. In the large (and uncharacteristic) setting of a large Chinese orchestra, it may easily lead to unwanted tone-clusters, dissonants, and loss of clarity.

Romantic Chinese composers, in writing for the medium, seem to underestimate this specific difficulty. Some contemporary pieces for Chinese orchestra are quite convincing, though: they freely explore the potential of the ensemble, and also take into account its special nature.

Of course, Westernized Chinese instruments offer many new possibilities. They can indeed be played in a great many keys, their sound is fuller, they allow for all sorts of interesting combinations, and some of them may indeed be treated like Western instruments, if that is what is required. Some excellent music was also written for improved Chinese instruments in chamber settings (both traditional and modern music). Zhao Xiaosheng's *Huan feng* 喚鳳 (Calling the Phenix) is a brilliant solo piece with many polytonal passages, composed for a 36-valve concert *sheng* (Chinese mouth-organ). It cannot be played on an ordinary *sheng*.

Certainly no less exciting are the recent attempts by Tan Dun to make Western instruments sound Chinese. The timbral versatility of, for example, violin, piccolo or harp amply allows for such experiments. For a Chinese artist, searching for the *erhu* in the violin may well be a psychologically more satisfying task than searching for the violin inside the *erhu*. Putting new (Chinese) demands to Western instruments means making them serve Chinese aims. Basically, this is just an alternative exploration of the possibilities of Chinese music, but in this case Western instruments are only a medium, and no longer the ultimate goal.

Good examples are Tan Dun's *In the Distance* (1988), for piccolo, harp and bass drum, and also one of his latest pieces, *Orchestral Theatre* (1990). In the latter work, the orchestral performers are not only required to play their instruments in an atypical (Chinese) manner, but also to sing and to shout. The piece had its world premiere in Glasgow by the BBC Scottish Orchestra, an ensemble with which Tan Dun developed close ties over the past few years. Perhaps because of his special relationship with the members of the orchestra, Tan was able to ask them for such an unusual, vocal contribution.



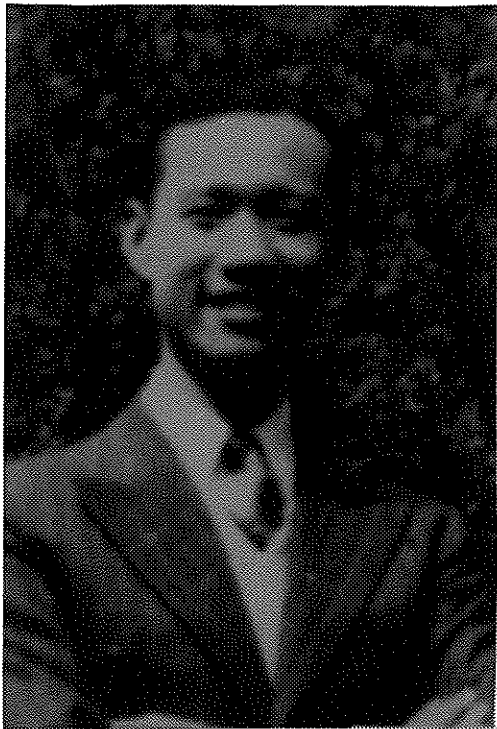
Past glories: Xian Xinghai (second from right) in 1935 in Paris, as a composition student of Paul Dukas (centre). [Source: 'Xian Xinghai', ed. Qi Yuyi et al., Music Research Inst., Beijing, 1983].

REVEALING THE PAST

By now, most people in music circles in China had heard of Tan Dun's successes abroad. News of the activities of other Chinese composers in the outside world sometimes hardly reached the People's Republic, even if those activities had a considerable impact on foreign audiences. Take the example of Chen Qigang, a composer who studied with Messiaen; his new works went almost unnoticed in China, even after he had won several prizes in festivals in Trieste, Darmstadt, Hong Kong and the United States. (Admittedly, he was elected 'Chinese musician of the year' in China in 1989, but very few Chinese are familiar with his music).

There was, moreover, so much more to discover for the Chinese in their own culture: not only in contemporary music, but also in the recent past. Talented composers and interesting musical works from the 1940s and 1950s, which had been overwhelmed by revolutions or spirited out of sight by politics, were gradually rehabilitated. The whole chapter on Chinese 20th century music history would have to be rewritten.

Officially, Xian Xinghai and Nie Er are still regarded in China as the greatest Chinese composers of the century, equal to Western giants such as Beethoven or Brahms. Both are virtually unknown outside China, but in their own country they are famous for their revolutionary mass songs. In fact, Nie Er, creator of the Chinese national anthem, died at the age of 23 and wrote only some thirty pieces, most of them choral unisono tunes with simple piano accompaniment. He had little formal music education. Xian Xinghai studied a few months in Paris with d'Indy and Dukas, and later went to study in Moscow. He poured out hundreds of mass songs with political contents, but actually had aspirations to become a great symphonic composer. His dream was deliberately ignored by the political world in China, because it disturbed the ideal image of Xian as a 'composer for the masses'. For several decades, Xian Xinghai's two symphonies



Tan Xiaolin: China's 'minor poet'.

were not played. Recent performances, in versions edited and arranged by Qu Wei, make clear that Xian was not a genius, not even a very skilled craftsman, but in his last symphony, dedicated to Stalin, he showed more enthusiasm and fire than most of his contemporaries. None of the Chinese symphonists of the 1940s and 50s showed more than a superficial understanding of Western tonality and the function of keys, Xian Xinghai included, but at least Xian made his orchestra play with great energy and conviction, he attacked the medium almost like Don Quixote attacked the windmills, which gives his *magnum opus* a certain charm.

Other composers from the past were rediscovered or re-accepted, like Ma Sicong (Ma Sitson) and Jiang Wenye; the former never completely lost the imprint of French romanticism (Lalo style) which he acquired in France in his youth; the latter was fond of Bartók and Stravinsky, but neither freed himself from classical tonality and overt romanticism. More interesting and probably far less pretentious was the music of Tan Xiaolin, a pupil of Hindemith in the late 1940s.

FOLLOWERS OF HINDEMITH AND SCHOENBERG

For some time, Tan Xiaolin was China's minor poet of music. He died at the age of 37, and his music was immediately forgotten because he had always refrained from artistic braggadocio and political activities. In 1988, musicians in Shanghai and Peking recovered whatever was left of Tan's scores and organized a memorial concert. A thorough search in music libraries resulted in less than eighty minutes of music, mainly chamber pieces and songs. Tan was among the first to experiment with Western tonality in Chinese ensembles. He was a gifted *pipa* and *erhu* player and probably had a better understanding both of Chinese traditional and Western classical music than most of his contemporaries. His String Trio and his Duet for Violin and Viola are elegant blends of Chinese melodic flavour and Hindemith harmony, but they carry too much the imprint of his German teacher.

Zhu Jingqing, better known under his pseudonym Sang Tong, was more progressive. His story is tragic and a classic example of the life most Chinese composers were forced to live after 1949. Sang Tong was originally a Red Army soldier, and active in underground communist party circles of the 1940s. In Shanghai, he became a music pupil of Frankel and Schlose, two Jewish scholars who had fled Hitler's Germany. They were former students of Schoenberg and Alban Berg respectively. Under his teachers' guidance, Sang Tong developed a superb feeling for counterpoint and harmony and a passion for atonal music. Technically, he surpassed all his contemporaries. Sang was more than an average talent and he might have become the first Chinese composer of international stature, if history had allowed him. In 1947 he wrote *Zai na yaoyuan de difang* 在那遙遠的地方, 'From Far Away', for piano, a year later *Ye jing* 夜景, 'Night Scenery', for violin and piano, probably the only Chinese atonal works of that period produced on the mainland. Western atonal music was

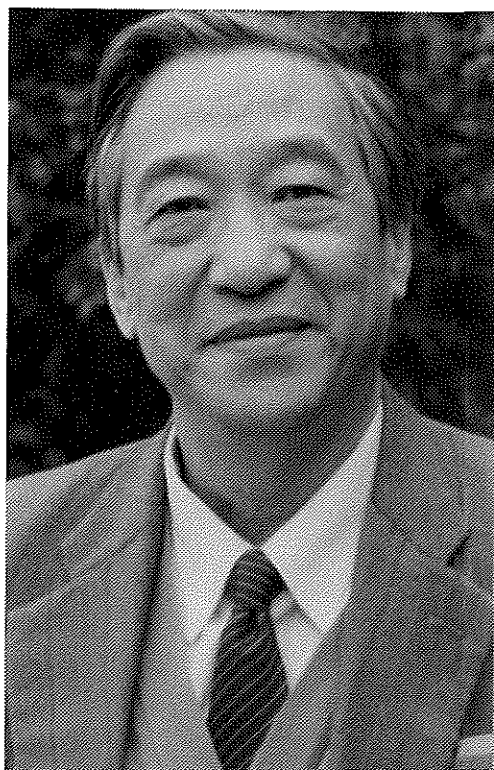
hardly known in China, although it had been introduced there as early as 1934 by Qing Zhu in an article entitled 'Reactionary music?' in the first issue of *Music Journal*, published in Shanghai. Sang Tong's audiences were puzzled and did not accept his music. It was only performed again and published in 1980. For the new generation it was a big surprise to discover, in their own music history, phrases like these: (the beginning of 'From Far Away'):

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system is marked 'Lento molto' and 'con espressivo'. It begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes markings for 'ppp' and 'pp'. The second system continues with dynamics from 'pp' to 'mf'. The third system is marked 'più mosso' and includes dynamics from 'sf' to 'mp'. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and various articulations.

When he wrote this piece, in 1947, Sang was only at the beginning of his career. After 1949, he was not allowed to pursue his atonal adventures. Under political pressure, his idiom gradually became more romantic. His *Mongolian Folk Songs* (1953), for piano, are sometimes reminiscent of the transparent beauty of Bartók's pieces for children, and his *Caprice* (1959), also for piano, had a Prokofievian brutality, but he was criticized for it, and had to distance himself from virtually everything he had learned in the field of technique. During the Cultural Revolution he wrote music for the masses, no longer distinguishable from what others did in the same period. In the 1980s, when it became possible for composers to create individual directions in music, and the Chinese radio suddenly started broadcasting Schoenberg and Stockhausen, Sang Tong had lost his creative powers. He could no longer take up the thread of forty years ago, and henceforth devoted his time to administrative work and writing essays on new music. He is now the director of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

BOOKS AND LECTURES

Sang Tong wrote on twelve-tone music and contemporary composition theory. Zheng Yinglie, a colleague from Wuhan, devoted a book to the same subject. Luo Zhongrong finally saw his Chinese translation of Hindemith's *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*



Sang Tong, a composer who wrote atonal music in China in the 1940s.

published, after having worked on it, in secret, during his ten years of imprisonment at the time of the Cultural Revolution... All of a sudden, the music section of Chinese bookshops was filled with many writings on contemporary music, pirate editions of Boulez' piano sonatas or other contemporary scores brought in from the West.

Mahler's symphonies were now available for a few *yuan*. An anthology with works by Bartók, Webern, Carter, Powell, Schuller and others was published. Wang Zhenya, Su Cong, Zhao Xiaosheng and Yang Liqing wrote influential articles on 20th century music in Chinese music journals. Yang published his book on Messiaen, by far the best book on any Western composer written by a Chinese. Various Western sources - both important and unimportant - were translated: Peter Hansen's 'Introduction to Twentieth Century Music', Paul Henry Lang's 'Music in Western Civilization', but also Mosco Carner's 'Study of Twentieth Century Harmony' (1944) and George Perle's 'Serial Composition and Atonality: an Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern' (1962). Chinese record shops suddenly offered a ragbag of Western classical recordings, with always some Nono, Boulez, Ligeti or other new music, in between the endless piles of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies.

Interestingly, Chinese consumers took home the Western contemporary music records. They knew that Chinese shops rarely offered a precious thing twice. They could not listen to the music in the shops, but they still had some possibility of hearing what it sounded like, because Radio Peking had started a regular programme on avant-garde: *Xiandai yinyue zhi chuang* 現代音樂之窗, 'Window on Contemporary Music'.

Times were really changing. Older Chinese composers with an interest in new music started giving lectures on Western contemporary music themselves. Ye Chunzhi and Chen Mingzhi did so in Shanghai, and among their audience they discovered their colleague Qu Wei, co-composer of 'The White-haired Girl', a man of undisputed revolutionary calibre, who did not like twelve-tone music but was generous and broadminded enough to come and listen to what others had to say about it.

In 1989, Volkov's 'Memoirs of Shostakovich' were published in a (heavily censored) Chinese translation. The book enabled Chinese composers to compare their own, politically biased past with that of the Soviet composers. At least in one respect, the Chinese artists' tragedy was felt to be bigger than that of the Soviet's: in both countries, numerous talents had suffered from persecution and political attacks, but in China it had happened at a time when modern art music had not yet established itself. China had no composers like Prokofiev or Shostakovich, not even second-rate ones like Kabalevsky. When governmental policies started taking their toll, the Chinese composers had no way of defending themselves, they had no international reputation to use as a shield, and their technical knowledge was so poor that it hardly provided a basis for continuation.

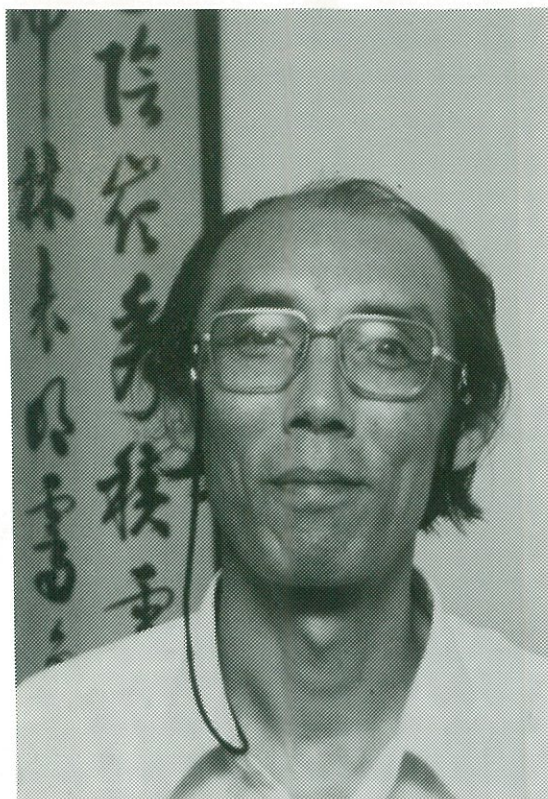
SIX CENTRES

In the course of the 1980s, various centres of contemporary music sprang up in Mainland China. Interestingly, the first one was started not in Peking but in China's far West. At the Sichuan Conservatory in Chengdu, the composer Gao Weijie (born in 1938) surrounded himself with young talent and, in 1980, initiated an unofficial study group which gradually worked its way through Hindemith, Schoenberg and Messiaen towards serialism and the contemporary experiments of Stockhausen and others. From 1985 onwards, the group called itself *Zuoqujia chuanguo tansuo hui* 作曲家創作探索會 (Exploratory Society for Musical Compositions). The most distinguished exponents of the group were He Xuntian and Jia Daqun. Between 1984 and 1989, the Sichuan Conservatory was visited by various foreign experts, one of whom introduced Allen Forte's pitch set theories, which immediately became an artistic point of departure for several Sichuanese composers. The initiator of the group, Gao Weijie, later moved to Peking. At the Music Conservatory of Wuhan, the musicologist Peng Zhimin started a second modern composers' group, with strong theoretical interests.

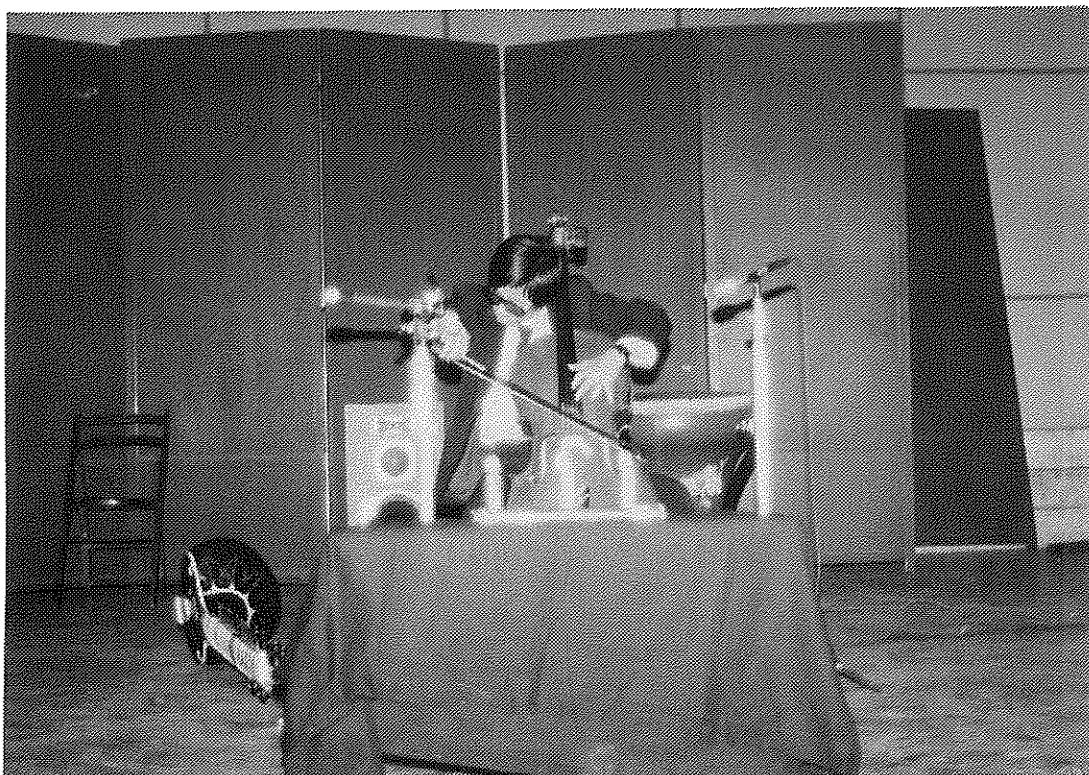
Peng, although a composer himself, is mainly influential as a theoretician of contemporary music. He writes in various journals. At the Xinghai Conservatory in Guangdong, another group (of four or five composers only) was founded, led by the composer Cao Guangping.

Shanghai and Peking followed suit only in the second half of the 1980s. The idea for a Shanghai group started at a banquet, where five contemporary composers decided that a special organization was needed to advance the interests of their music. The Shanghai Modern Music Society (*Xiandai yinyue xuehui* 現代音樂學會) was founded in 1987 and held its first annual meeting in the same year. It was presided over by a rather conservative artist, Ding Shande, and most of its members were actually middle-aged, established composers. Nevertheless, the Society held study sessions on, for example, Boulez and Stockhausen, and promoted a genuine interest in new Chinese music. Regrettably, the group had a rather formal character and membership was reserved to graduates of the Conservatory. As one young composer remarked ironically: 'In China, old people apparently only like old people'.

In 1988, fifteen young students of the Shanghai Conservatory started their own Society, next to the senior one. It was led by Xu Shuya, but after his departure to Paris, its activities ceased. The most important exponents of the Shanghai scene at present are Zhao Xiaosheng, Yang Liqing, Lu Pei and Liu Yuan, but musically they do not belong to a specific 'school' or direction, and have very different artistic viewpoints. Among the students, Zhu Lixi has distinguished himself as a promising artist. He is particularly interested in combining contemporary music with elements of both pop and traditional music, and has even founded his own group to study the



Composer Gao Weijie started a contemporary music group in Sichuan.



Zhu Lixi (Shanghai), singing, playing the cello and the Indian sitar in candlelight.

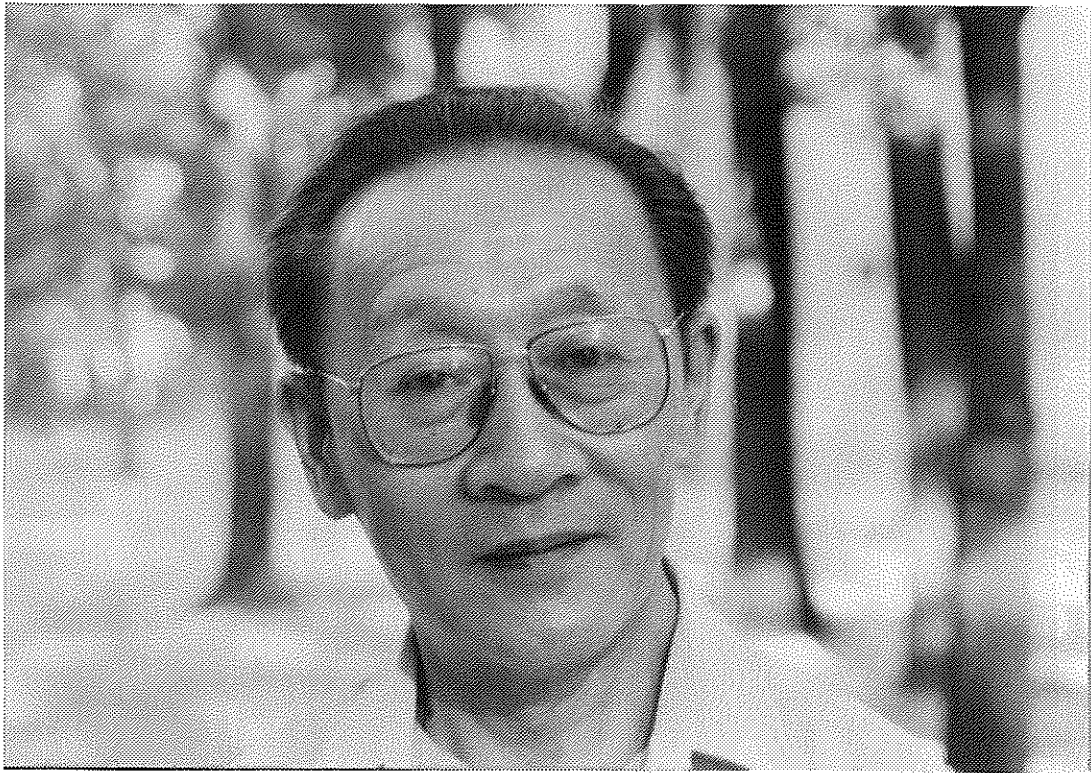
subject. Recently, a performance of his chamberpiece, *Ben* 本 (Roots), was greeted in Shanghai with a standing ovation. Zhu took part in that performance, singing, but also playing the cello and the Indian *sitar*.

The Peking Contemporary Music Society (*Beijing xiandai yinyue xuehui* 北京現代音樂學會) started in 1988, with Luo Zhongrong as director. Luo, now aged 68, is often seen as the 'grand old man' of contemporary music in China. His own style fluctuates between mild, Debussian romanticism and serialism with a distinct pentatonic flavour, but he encourages the youth to take bolder steps. He has privately tutored various composition students of the Central Conservatory and promotes good craftsmanship rather than theoretical ideas. He is appreciated as a spiritual father by many young composers both in Peking and Shanghai. Luo is one of the people responsible for the Peking radio series 'Window on Contemporary Music', together with Yang Tongba, Gao Weijie and others.

The Peking Contemporary Music Society has had only a few meetings before 1989, and has a low profile at present, partly due to the tense, political climate in the Chinese capital. Some of its members are now working on contributions for a king-size anthology on Western and Asian avant-garde, *Xiandai yinyue zuopin xinshang zhinan* 現代音樂作品欣賞指南, (Guidebook for the Appreciation of Contemporary Music), to be published in 1992. The best-known younger composers in Peking (who are still resident there) are probably Guo Wenjing, Chen Yuanlin and Zhu Shirui, and two promising students at the Conservatory on whom one should keep an eye are Hao Weiya and Fang Quanyi.

Finally, the Music Conservatory of Xi'an must be mentioned as a contemporary music centre. In Xian, the composer Rao Yuyan and his former pupil Zhang Dalong started a *Xiandai yinyue xiaozu* 現代音樂小組 (Small Group for Contemporary Music).

The aforementioned groups have been active mainly in organizing study-meetings and,



Luo Zhongrong (Peking): spiritual father of the new generation.

to a lesser extent, concerts. It is very difficult to raise money for avant-garde concerts in China. Some composers indeed managed to raise funds for an occasional performance of their own music, but it can easily cost 30,000 *Renminbi* (US \$ 5,000) or more to hire an orchestra, which, in China, is an astronomical sum that few can afford. There is little or no governmental support for concert activities, and the Ministry of Culture seems to discourage performances of contemporary music. The avant-garde would have probably got nowhere without the generous help of Chinese businessmen, who regularly act as sponsors.

APPRECIATION IN THE WEST

In the West, Tan Dun is currently viewed as the most important of the new Chinese Mainland composers. But various others - notably Qu Xiaosong, Su Cong and Chen Qigang - are rapidly achieving international fame, and at various big festivals of contemporary music, Chinese avant-garde has clearly won a place of its own. Every year, new names and new talents can be found in the programmes. Two female Chinese composers, Chen Yi and Xu Yi, have won wide acclaim; the latter was especially praised for her chamber piece *Han shan si* 寒山寺 (1985), for soprano voice, *dizi* and *guqin*. At the World Music Days of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) in October 1988 in Hong Kong, organized in co-operation with the Asian Composers' League (ACL), no fewer than twelve Chinese composers presented new works. From an artistic point of view, the harvest was less spectacular than two years before, during the First Chinese Composers' Festival, but again there were some surprises. The young composer Mo Wuping, for example, who was awarded a prize for his exquisite string quartet, *Cun ji* 村祭, 'Sacrificial Rite in the Village'. This piece was repeated at the ICSM Festival of 1989 in Amsterdam, and again at the Asian Music Festival, March 1990 in Tokyo. At the Tokyo concerts, six other pieces by contemporary Chinese composers were performed, but, in the wake of the Tiananmen

events, unfortunately, not a single Mainland composer obtained permission to attend the performances in Japan.

New festivals, focusing entirely on new Chinese music, are now in preparation in Britain and Holland. International interest in Chinese avant-garde is definitely growing, but after the political turbulence of last year, China's musical culture has arrived at a critical stage. It is widely felt that communist politics can still seriously damage the future of China's new music. The present climate must not deteriorate any further.

CHINESE AVANT-GARDE AFTER 4 JUNE 1989

The massacre in Peking last year, and the nationwide crackdown on the democracy movement that followed, crushed the hopes of many young composers for a gradual relaxation of the artistic climate in China. Some conservative musicians seized the opportunity to strengthen their own position in music circles, others with too liberal views were ousted from important posts. There were reshuffles in the Chinese Musicians' Association (CMA) and on higher levels: the Minister of Culture, Wang Meng, and the popular Vice-Minister, Ying Ruocheng, were both replaced by orthodox bureaucrats. In the last week of June, 1990, the CMA organized a national meeting in the Peking district to criticize pop and avant-garde music for their lack of socialist spirit. Apparently, no one became a real victim of that meeting, although a number of musicologists who had defended contemporary music were personally attacked. The impact of the meeting on the future is not yet clear, however. Li Ruihuan, the Politburo member for ideology and propaganda, is said to have issued a soft warning to the dogmatists in the CMA that it was dangerous to criticize pop music, because too many young people are fond of it.

Noticeably, the most recent composition contest, organized this autumn by the CMA, focused on military march music.

Some of the older composers see their position or artistic integrity threatened by a young generation which prefers to write abstract works in a technically superior idiom and which apparently elicits an enthusiastic response from both Western and Chinese audiences.

Recently, there have been some appeals in China to place art back 'in the hands of real Marxists'. If the clock is really put back to the 1960s, China will squander and destroy one of its most potent sources of artistic talent. Not only music, but also literature and the visual arts will be seriously effected, and Chinese avant-garde will become - to an even larger extent than today - an 'art in exile'.

Many Chinese composers have not completely given up hope. They regard their own skills and achievements as the most convincing arguments for liberalization, and speculate on the possibility of another change of climate in the near future. They feel that Chinese avant-garde should flourish in China itself and should draw a positive response from Chinese audiences in the first place. They think their artistic mission will have succeeded only if their works can be performed and accepted at home.

One artist angrily complains: 'In the present situation, we only write for foreigners. At home, we are not allowed to have our own style; they simply cannot accept that we all have our own voice, our own face.'

THE DEBATE ON NATIONAL STYLE

Both in China and abroad, the future of Chinese music is a topic of heated debate. In New York, ten Taiwanese and ten Mainland Chinese composers met in August 1988 for a special conference on the subject.

In China, most of the discussion is focused on how to preserve and improve the 'national style' of Chinese music without relying too much on Western techniques. However, Chinese composers studying abroad give an interesting twist to that question. They have a growing conviction that the aesthetics of Chinese music ought to be accepted in international music circles and become an integrated part of it. The

problem is not how 'national' Chinese music tradition should be, but in what way its treasures can best be exploited in order to have the widest possible impact on new music in the twenty-first century. Discussing national style, within national borders, becomes a rather vain activity: China will have to look beyond its own territory to be able to estimate its future role in world musical culture.

Chou Wen-chung likes to compare China's present period with the era that led to the culturally abundant Sui and Tang dynasties. In those days, Chinese art was strongly influenced by foreign art, be it from Persia, India, Mongolia, Tibet, Korea, Cambodia or Japan, but at the same time, China left its mark on the cultures of these surrounding countries.

At present, there are renewed opportunities for China to export its cultural heritage. Fortunately, cultural world hegemony seems out of reach for any country: neither Asia, nor the West can be granted an exclusive patent on the music of the future. There is a growing conviction in the world that any future cross-fertilization between different countries will only succeed if it occurs peacefully: not to a cadence of gunfire and rumbling tanks, but only through economic and cultural competition. In the two fields of culture and economy, the West has already left a formidable mark on China. The Chinese youth feels that it is now China's turn to make a move. Economically, the country is potentially strong, but it will first have to escape from the current paralyzing grip of bureaucracy and state corruption. In the field of culture, as in the field of sports, China has already raised its voice, loud and clear, and far beyond its national borders. If the political climate improves, the country is probably heading for a period of great musical innovation, not only in its own music culture, but also in the international music circles on which it will exert a growing influence.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

I have not yet provided an answer to a number of questions. How is it possible that new music has taken such an enormous flight in a country where individuality and innovation hardly seem to be an essential part of traditional culture? Is not avant-garde in China rather a forced rupture with ancient tradition? Can contemporary music really be considered as a Chinese art, with Chinese roots? Is it not an imported culture with imported values which bear no relation to those honoured on Chinese soil? Are musical serialism, electronic music and the modern concert-stage really compatible with the age-old face of China?

I certainly think they are. The opening to the outside world, at the end of the 1970s, naturally produced a shock, but it should be kept in mind that the circumstances which led to this shock were created by the Chinese themselves, and that the musical adventure of the young composers, which followed from it, did not occur totally out of the blue.

The artistic firework, the suddenly flourishing talent, and the musical idiosyncrasies of China's new generation, can only be understood against the background of the Cultural Revolution, a period that is widely misunderstood in the West, and which I will have to discuss to some detail. Furthermore, the continuation or discontinuation of musical tradition can only be studied and judged with the help of musical analysis. Only a closer look at the works of some individual, Chinese composers can illustrate where they really stand. However, there is no space left to discuss these matters here. I will have to keep them for my second article on Mainland China's new music, which is scheduled to appear in the April 1991 issue of this journal. ■

FOR A GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES: SEE PAGE 92.

'OUT OF THE DESERT' - GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES

N.B. Bold page numbers refer to a photograph.

Cao Guangping (b.1942 Shanghai)	曹光平	87
Chen Gang (b.1935, Shanghai)	陳鋼	63
Chen Mingzhi (b.1940, Shanghai)	陳銘志	86
Chen Qigang (b.1955, Shanghai)	陳其鋼	60, 64 , 66-69, 83, 89
Chen Xiaoyong (b.1955, Peking)	陳曉勇	69
Chen Yi (b.1953, Guangzhou)	陳怡	60, 67, 69, 77 , 89
Chen Yuanlin (b.1957, Guizhou)	陳遠林	60, 77 , 88
Chou Wen-chung (b.1923, Chefoo)	周文中	68, 91
Ding Shande (b.1911, Jiangsu)	丁善德	63, 79 , 87
Du Mingxin (b.1928, Hubei)	杜鳴心	60, 61
Fang Quanyi	方權一	88
Gao Weijie (b.1938, Shanghai)	高為杰	79, 87 , 88
Ge Ganru	葛甘如	69
Guo Wenjing (b.1956, Chongqing)	郭文景	60, 71 , 75, 79, 88
Hao Weiya	郝維亞	88
He Luding (b.1903, Hunan)	賀綠汀	63
He Xuntian (b.1954, Sichuan)	何訓田	58, 75 , 76 , 79-81, 87
He Zhanhao (b.1933, Zhejiang)	何占豪	63
Hu Ping (b.1959, Chongqing)	胡平	80
Huang Anlun (b.1949, Guangdong)	黃安倫	78
Jia Daqun (b.1955, Chongqing)	賈達群	72 , 78, 87
Jiang Wenye (1910-1983)	江文也	84
Lam Bunching (b.1954, Macau)	林品晶	78
Li Binyang	李濱揚	67, 79
Liang Maochun	梁茂春	75
Liu Yuan (b.1959, Zhejiang)	劉湲	87
Lü Ji (b.1909, Hunan)	呂驥	75
Lu Pei (1956, Guangxi)	陸培	80, 81 , 87
Luo Zhongrong (b.1924, Sichuan)	羅忠鎔	77, 85, 88, 89
Ma Sitson (b.1912-1987)	馬思聰	84
Mo Wuping (b.1959, Hunan)	莫五平	62 , 68 , 89
Nie Er (1912-1935)	聶耳	83
Peng Zhimin (b.1953)	彭志敏	87
Qiao Jianzhong	喬建中	75
Qing Zhu (1893-1959)	青主	85
Qu Xiaosong (b.1952, Guizhou)	瞿小松	58, 62, 66-69, 72-75, 77
Qu Wei (b.1917, Jiangsu)	瞿維	63
Rao Yuyan	饒余燕	88
Sang Tong (b.1923, Jiangsu)	桑桐	84, 85, 86
Sheng Zhongliang (b.1957)	盛中亮	69
Su Cong (b.1957)	蘇聰	69, 86, 89
Tan Dun (b.1957, Hunan)	譚盾	58, 59 , 60, 62 , 66-69, 71-75, 80, 82
Tan Xiaolin (1911-1948)	譚小麟	84
Wang An'guo	王安國	74
Wang Yiping	王義平	78
Wang Zhenya	王震亞	86
Wu Zuqiang (b.1927, Peking)	吳祖強	60, 61
Xian Xinghai (1905-1945)	冼星海	83, 84
Xu Shuya (b.1959, Chengchun)	許舒亞	62 , 68 , 70, 87
Xu Yi (b.1963, Nanjing)	徐儀	89
Yang Liqing (b.1942, Sichuan)	楊立青	69, 70, 79, 86, 87
Yang Tongba	楊通八	88
Ye Chunzhi (b.Shanghai)	葉純之	86

Ye Xiaogang (b.1955, Shanghai)	葉小鋼	67, 69, 71, 72
Yu Jingjun (b.1957, Peking)		69
Zhang Dalong (b.1955, Shanxi)	張大龍	88
Zhang Xiaofu (b.1959, Jilin)	張小夫	60
Zhao Xiaosheng (b.1945, Shanghai)	趙曉生	69, 70, 77, 78, 80, 82, 86, 87
Zheng Yinglie	鄭英烈	85
Zhong Xinmin	鍾信民	78
Zhou Long (b.1953, Peking)	周龍	60, 69
Zhu Jian'Er (b.1922, Tianjin)	朱踐耳	61
Zhu Jingqing (b.1923, Jiangsu)	朱鏡清	84, 85, 86
Zhu Lixi (b.1961, Shanghai)	朱立熹	63, 70, 87, 88
Zhu Shirui (b.1954, Sichuan)	朱世瑞	77, 88

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CHINESE MINORITY MUSIC CULTURES

The Perspective from Northern Thailand

ALAN R. THRASHER
University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Northern Thailand presents excellent opportunities for the study of Southeast Asian tribal music cultures, particularly traditions which have originated in Southwest China. There are more than half a dozen 'hill tribes' living in numerous villages within easy drive from Chiang Mai. Alan Thrasher reports.

Most of the tribes living in the Chiang Mai area have migrated from China during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and some older members understand Chinese language. These cultures include Akha (Chinese: Hani), Hmong (Chinese: Miao), Lahu, Lisu and Yao; the Karen are known to have come from eastern Burma. Somewhat surprisingly, the Yi (or Lolo) culture - which is the dominant minority culture of Yunnan province and related in language and musical traits to the Akha, Lahu and Lisu - is absent from this area.

The tribal villages are poor, though often quite colourful. They do not necessarily represent a cross-section of their respective locations in China, but musical activity can be found and the villages are *all accessible*.

THE TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The primary centre of minority culture research in Northern Thailand is the Tribal Research Institute, formerly the Tribal Research Centre (Chiang Mai University Campus, Chiang Mai, 50002). Many scholars are active at the Institute and some have written articles on tribal music and instruments. A few have a basic knowledge of Chinese language and the library holds a selection of books published in China (though little is available on music). Very curiously, the Institute appears to have no contact with its Chinese counterpart in Kunming, the Yunnan Nationalities' Arts Research Institute (*Yunnan sheng minzu yishu yanjiusuo*), though it recognizes the importance of establishing this contact. The Chinese institute (located in the Culture and Science Building, 13th floor, Nantai qiao, Kunming, Yunnan Province) has a department specifically dealing with music.

The city of Chiang Mai itself is a 'crossroads' of tribal music and dance. The Old Chiang Mai Cultural Centre (185/3 Wualai Rd., Chiang Mai, 50000), which is located on the southwestern edge of the city, is primarily a tourist spot where bus loads of groups arrive nightly for an elegant northern Tai *khantoke* banquet. After the meal there

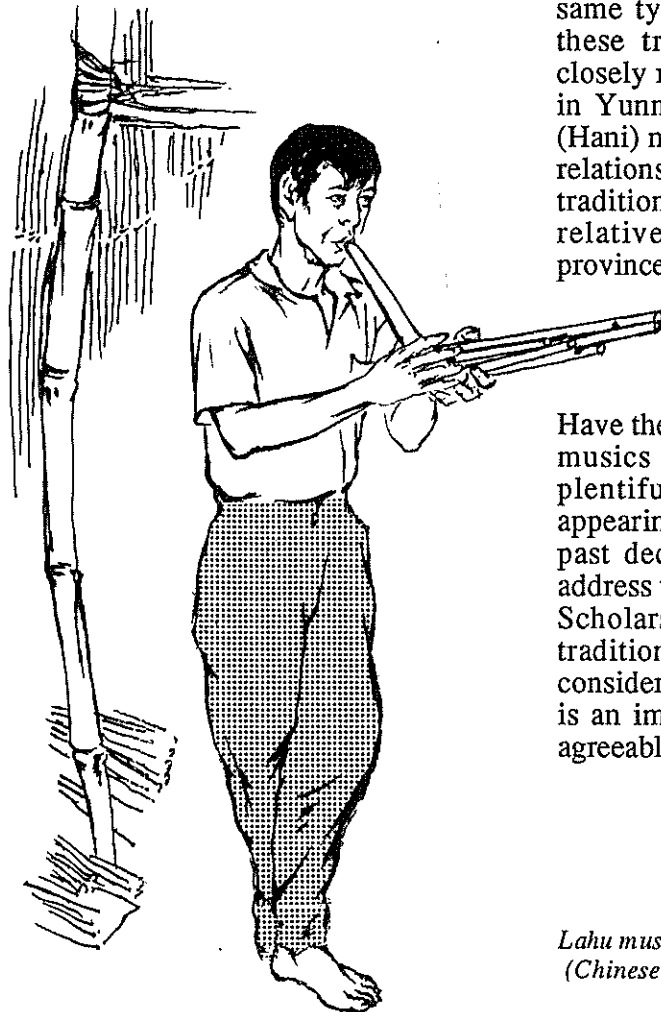
is a performance of both Thai and tribal music and dance. The reason for mentioning the Cultural Centre is not for this 'potpourri' performance, but rather for the fact that the performers are chosen from the best talents of their tribal communities. Furthermore, they live together in an adjoining 'Performers' Village', a seldom-visited multi-tribal village of thatched-roof huts. I spent one afternoon with a Lahu maker/performer of the *naw* mouth-organ (Chinese: *hulu sheng*), studying construction and performance techniques. While this community offers little on music within its older social context, it does offer great possibilities for comparative research.

TRIBAL ITEMS

Another fascinating area of Chiang Mai is the Night Market (Chang Klan Rd.), a huge covered market area with hundreds of small stalls selling art-work, clothes, opium scales, jewelry, antiques, and musical instruments. The instruments for sale include both old cultural treasures and 'new antiques' (a category actually seen), an astonishing variety of tribal items from far and near: all types of Tibetan religious instruments, Burmese harps, Karen folk harps, lutes of various types, new and old 'bronze drums', every type of mouth-organ (except *sheng*), reed-pipes, cow horns with free reeds, 'elephant-foot drums' and wooden elephant bells, bamboo Jew's harps, and many others. For instrument collection, this market is one of the best I have seen.

Much work needs to be done in comparative studies, especially among the numerous Asian musical traditions. A number of questions is still waiting for an answer, such as:

What are the melodic relationships among cultures which share instruments of the same type, such as Lahu and Lisu? Are these traditions of northern Thailand closely related to Lahu and Lisu traditions in Yunnan province? What of the Akha (Hani) musics of both areas? What musical relationship exists between Hmong (Miao) traditions of northern Thailand and their relatives in Guizhou and Guangxi provinces?



Have there been changes in function in the musics of these travellers? With the plentiful outpouring of scholarship appearing in Chinese publications over the past decade, it would be appropriate to address these and so many other questions. Scholars planning to work on the tribal traditions of southwestern China should consider stopping at Chiang Mai as well. It is an important centre of activity and an agreeable place to spend time. ■

*Lahu musician-dancer playing the naw
(Chinese: hulu sheng).*

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PEOPLE & PROJECTS

MD STUDENTS IN HONG KONG

At the Music Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, ten students are currently following graduate courses in musicology, four of whom are working on a thesis in the field of Chinese music. In addition Tsui Ying-fai 徐英輝 has just finished his thesis on 'Amateur Modernised Chinese Orchestras in Hong Kong in the 1970s'. It is written in English. The study was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Larry Witzleben. Tsui will continue his Chinese music studies at the University of Pittsburgh in the United States. Wilma Tang Wai-man 登慧敏 is working on a thesis in Chinese, 'Cheng Repertoire from 1949 to 1985: A Discussion of How the Traditional Elements are Reflected in the Cheng Compositions of the Twentieth Century'. Three other students have just started their graduate programme: Lau Ngai Man 劉艾文, a music teacher at a secondary school in Hong Kong and Sharon Liu Sau Wah 廖秀華, a part-time student, will both be writing on various aspects of Cantonese popular music. Lee Wan Hip 李允協 is planning to write a thesis on concepts of harmony in traditional zheng and pipa music.

FOLK SONGS OF SAI KUNG

Kenneth Yip 葉賜光, a music researcher and staff member of the government Music Office in Hong Kong, graduated in November 1989 from the Music Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His thesis, written in Chinese, is titled, 'A Study on the Folk Songs of Sai Kung and its Neighbouring Areas' 香港西貢及其鄰近地區歌謠研究. Kenneth Yip has worked on his thesis for three years, under the supervision of Professor Tsao Pen-yeh. He did extensive fieldwork in Saikung (a region in the New Territories), but referred to materials from Chinese music journals for his research on folk songs in parts of Fujian, Zhejiang and Guangdong, where, (being a Hong Kong governmental worker) he had no possibility of carrying out fieldwork himself. In his study, Yip concentrates mainly on three types of songs: Hakka folk songs, Cantonese boat people songs, and She minority songs. He has investigated both the texts and the music of the songs, and also looked for possible relationships between songs from different areas, which might give indications of (for example) historic migration of She people from middle China to the south. Kenneth Yip's thesis has not (yet) been published, but can be consulted at the HK Chinese University. One can also contact the author: Kenneth Yip, Laurel Court 6A, Worldwide Garden, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.

VAN GULIK GUQIN SCORES

Ms Dai Xiaolian 戴曉蓮 (27), a researcher of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, is expected to visit The Netherlands early in 1991, for an eight month period of lecturing activities and research. She is invited on behalf of the CHIME Foundation. Dai Xiaolian is a performer and researcher of guqin music. She will study the guqin scores brought to Holland by the late Professor Robert H. van Gulik, now in the possession of the Sinological Institute in Leiden. Only part of these scores have been described and researched previously by scholars from China and Japan. The library of the Institute is currently making an inventory of the material, and hopes to preserve the scores on microfiche, so that they become available for public use. Only three weeks ago it turned out that the collection in Leiden was not complete: some extra scores of Van Gulik were discovered at his family home. These have now been put at the disposal of the Sinological Institute for a closer examination. Dai Xiaolian will work on the material under the supervision of Professor R. Wolpert (University of Amsterdam). She will also participate in a lecture series on Chinese music organized jointly by the Musicology Institute of the University of Amsterdam and the Sinological Institute in Leiden, and is expected to cooperate in a number of concerts of Chinese classical and folk music during her stay in Holland.

GUQIN BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recently, three scholars of Chinese music started collecting materials for a comprehensive bibliography of twentieth century sources on guqin music. They have divided the work among them: Bell Yung, of Pittsburgh University, collects sources published in English, Lin Youren 林友仁, of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, focuses on mainland Chinese sources, and Lau Chor-wah 劉楚華 of Baptist College in Hong Kong collects information on sources from Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as western sources in languages other than English. Articles, books, dissertations, but also collections of transcriptions (in Chinese or Western notation) will be included in the bibliography. The project is a private initiative. The bibliography will be published in the course of the next few years.

NUOXI (EXORCISM THEATRE)

Jo Riley, a researcher from Great Britain, has spent several years studying traditional and contemporary Chinese theatre and is currently doing a dissertation study at the University of East Anglia on 'exorcism' theatre. In February and March of this year she visited some twenty-five villages in Anshun 安順

county, Guizhou province to observe the rare form of local theatre known as *dixi* 地戲. She wrote a general article on her recent experiences in Vol.43, Spring 1990, of *Britain-China*, Newsletter of the Great Britain-China Centre in London. (The Newsletter can be obtained from this centre, 15 Belgrave Square, London SW 1X 8PG, UK).

FIELD RESEARCH ON YUE OPERA

Marlies Nuttebaum (24), sinologist, and Jens Ferber (27), musicologist, both from Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany, have returned home from a three month visit to China (July-September). They carried out field research on Yue opera 越劇 in Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province), and visited various music research institutes in Beijing and Shanghai to collect information on the same subject. Jens Ferber, a student of Professor C.Ahrens, is now preparing a dissertation study on the music of Yue opera, while Marlies Nuttebaum will write a M.A. thesis on the textual material they collected.

DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT NAXI MUSICIAN

The Dutch filmmaker Jelle Nesna (30) is currently preparing the production of a documentary film about the musician and musicologist Xuan Ke (Hsuen Ke) 宣科, and the music traditions of Xuan's native tribe, the Naxi (Nakhi) 納西. The film will be made in the early spring of 1991, in Lijiang 麗江 (Yunnan Province), where Xuan Ke started his own orchestra of Naxi musicians in the early 1980s. Xuan Ke spent more than twenty years in a Chinese prison, after he was branded a 'rightist' in 1957. His strong memories of certain Naxi exorcist rituals, and the hymns that were part of those rituals, helped him overcome the mental and physical hardships of his long-term imprisonment. He was set free and rehabilitated in 1978, and soon developed a broad, scientific interest in the ceremonial music of the Naxi people which had previously saved his life. The film will show Xuan Ke carrying out ethnomusicological research in Himalaya villages near Lijiang, and conducting his orchestra of Naxi musicians, who are now all in their eighties. Jelle Nesna's film project is supported by the Dutch government and various foundations.

LOCAL OPERA & DANCE IN ANHUI

Professor Dr. Marianne Bröcker, a musicologist of the Otto-Friedrich University in Bamberg, did field research in 1988 and 1989 in Anhui Province. Her special interests are local opera and dance tradition in that region. In northern Anhui there is a strong tradition of Luogu 鑼鼓 (drums & gongs) groups. Ms. Bröcker is currently studying their repertoire, which covers both opera music (花鼓戲 Huagu xi) and the accompaniment of dragon and lion dances and regional dances such as Huagu deng 花鼓燈

and Huagu wu 花鼓舞. She is also interested to know more about Luogu groups with a similar repertoire in neighbouring Henan, Shandong, Hubei and Jiangsu Provinces, and even further to the south, because there may very well be mutual influences and contacts between these groups.

LAURENCE PICKEN VISITS CHINA

Dr. Laurence Picken (81), a former Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, will visit China and other Far-Eastern countries in October of this year. In Shanghai, the Chinese Ancient Music Ensemble will perform several of his famous transcriptions of Tang dynasty pieces. Picken's visit to China is partly the result of Professor Chen Yingshi's 陳應時 scholarly visit to Britain in 1989-90 with Drs. Wolpert and Picken. Prof. Chen, director of the Shanghai ensemble and researcher of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, is himself a scholar of Tang notation; other scholars who have begun to transcribe this repertory include He Changlin 何昌林 (Chinese Conservatory of Music) and the lately deceased Ye Dong 葉棟 (Shanghai Conservatory). Professor Chen is currently working on a Chinese version of the ongoing magnum opus of Dr. Picken, 'Music from the Tang Court', (of which fascicle 5 has just been issued by Cambridge University Press).

It is the first time in a great many years that Dr. Picken visits China again. His research into Asian music dates from 1944 when, as a member of the British Council Scientific Mission to China, he had the opportunity of studying the *guqin* (Chinese zither) with various Chinese master performers. His studies of Chinese music concentrate particularly on the music of the Tang and Song dynasties. (SJ)

STORIES ABOUT GUQIN MUSIC

Dorothee Schaab-Hanke (28), a sinologist from Hamburg (Germany), finished a master's thesis in December 1988 on 'The Qincao - Formation of an Ideology'. This study (written in German) contains an analysis of the Qincao 琴操, the oldest surviving collection of stories connected with pieces for the qin-zither, as well as a complete translation of this text. Authorship of the Qincao has been ascribed to a scholar called Cai Yong 蔡邕. The thesis has not been published, but copies can be ordered directly from the author: Ms Dorothee Schaab-Hanke, Finkenwerder Norderdeich 114 A, 2103 Hamburg 95, Phone (040) 742 7999.

Ms. Schaab-Hanke is an active *guqin* player, who studied the instrument with Professor Cheng Gongliang 成公亮 in Nanjing. As a sinologist, she is currently working on a dissertation about the development of the Chinese theatre in the Tang and Five Dynasties periods. Her study is supported by Hamburg University with a two year scholarship and is supervised by Professor Stumpfeldt.

DISSERTATION ON NEW CHINESE MUSIC

Barbara Mittler, a sinology graduate from Oxford University, is currently preparing a Ph.D. program at Heidelberg University under the supervision of Professor R. Wagner.

She has developed an interest in modern Chinese music from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and hopes to concentrate her study on the question of how the different political and hence also intellectual climates in these three parts of China have influenced China's music.

1000 CHINESE INSTRUMENTS CLASSIFIED

A large project called 'A General Record of Chinese Musical Instruments' 中國樂器誌 is currently in progress at the Research Institute of Music of the Chinese Academy of Arts in Beijing. Professor Guo Nai-an 郭乃安 (70), editor-in-chief of the journal *Musicology In China*, is the leader of a group of researchers which is carrying out this project. Other members of the group are Qiao Jianzhong 喬建中 (48), director of the Research Institute of Music, Xue Yibing 薛藝兵 (40), Zeng Suljin 曾遂今 (42), Wu Ben 吳奔 (40), and a photographer, Dong Jianguo 董建國 (37).

'Chinese instruments' here refers to all musical instruments found in China, both in ancient and modern times, and both from Han Chinese and ethnic minority traditions. The only exception is, not surprisingly, Western instruments introduced in China in modern times, such as the piano and the violin, although they have become quite popular in modern China.

The project started approximately a year ago. The General Record is intended as a scientific, systematic, comprehensive and complete survey of Chinese musical instruments, surpassing all previous publications in this field. Various excellent books on Chinese instruments have been published in recent times, but there was no previous attempt to present such a comprehensive survey. The General Record will include some thousand varieties of instruments, to be classified according to the Sachs-Hornbostel system, and it will be published in four volumes, dealing with Idiophones, Membranophones, Chordophones and Aerophones respectively.

Each volume will roughly contain information on 200 varieties of instruments, completed with several hundreds of pictures. The volume on Idiophones is expected to deal with over three hundred varieties.

The first volume is due out in 1994 and the other volumes will be published one by one in the years that follow, provided the Research Institute of Music can find sufficient financial support to complete the project. (WB)

CHINESE MUSICAL RELICS

'A Great Series on Chinese Musical Relics' 中國音樂文物大系 is the title of a large-scale project in the field of Chinese music history. The project started in 1988 and is a joint venture of three Chinese research institutes in Beijing. Its major aim is the publication of a large series of books about Chinese musical relics which were unearthed or handed down through generations (such as musical instruments, scores, books on music), as well as musical imagery (sculptures, paintings, carved stones, handicraft articles etc.), important to the understanding of Chinese music history. The series will consist of a great many volumes, one for each province in China.

The project is carried out by the Music Research Institute (Chinese Academy of Arts) in full co-operation with the Archeology Institute (Academy of Social Sciences) and the Acoustics Institute (Academy of Sciences). The editorial committee of the series is headed by Professor Huang Xiangpeng 黃翔鵬 (63), ex-director of the Music Research Institute. Six experts, including Professors Li Chunyi 李純一 and Yin Falu 陰法魯, are appointed as special advisors, and various researchers of the Music Research Institute co-operate in the project.

The first batch of books will be completed soon, and publication of the following volumes is expected within two or three years from now, (in arbitrary order): the Hunan Volume (Editor-in-chief: Qin Xu 秦序), the Shanxi Volume (Editor-in-chief: Qiao Jianzhong), the Hubei Volume (Editor-in-chief: Wang Zichu 王子初), the Beijing Volume (Editor-in-chief: Yuan Quanyou 袁堃猷), and the Shandong Volume (Editor-in-chief: Jiang Dingsui 蔣定穗), and the Shaanxi Volume (Editor-in-chief: Fang Jianjun 放建軍), and the Gansu Volume (Editor-in-chief: Li Zhihe 李志和). (WB)

RESEARCH ON PIPA MUSIC

Wu Ben 吳奔 (40), a research associate in the Music Research Institute in Beijing, is actively engaged in research on the pipa, the Chinese four-stringed lute. He was already a pipa player when he was still a college student. After he began working at the Music Research Institute, he published several elaborate articles on pipa music, such as 'Special Frets of the Pipa and their Influence on Pipa Pieces' 傳統琵琶的特殊品位對樂曲的影響 (In: *Chinese Music* 中國音樂, no.22, 1986), 'A Study of the Yu He Xuan Collection of Pipa Pieces' 對《玉鶴軒琵琶譜》的初步研究 (In: *Symphony* 交響, no.3, 1986), 'A Study of Traditional Pipa Tunes' 傳統琵琶小曲研究 (In: *Music Research* 音樂研究 no.3, 1987), and so on. After carrying out research on a peasant music group in northern China, the 'Qu Jia Ying Music Society' 屈家營音樂會 (in co-operation with Xue Yibing 薛藝兵) and a one year study of ethnomusicology in the United King-

dom, he came to realize that his studies until that time had focussed entirely on the music itself, largely disregarding the social context and various anthropological problems of the pipa tradition. He then decided to pay more attention to such aspects. Recently, he finished an article which will be published in *Musicology in China* 中國音樂學 (the forthcoming volume, no.3, 1990): 'An examination of tune sources and early forms of traditional long pipa pieces to study the way in which they were composed' 從傳統琵琶大曲的曲調素材和早期結構看其創作方式. Currently, he is working on another paper, 'Pipa music and its Social Context' 琵琶音樂及其社會背景, as an individual project. This paper will be based mainly on his studies of historical sources on the pipa, and on fieldwork which he carried out in 1983-84. During that period, he was preparing an M.A. thesis; he visited many veteran pipa players in various parts of China and collected both musical and anthropological data. The paper is expected to be finished and published some time next year. (WB)

FOLK SONG RESEARCH

Professor Huang Bai 黃白 (51) of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music is an expert on Chinese folk song. She is invited by the CHIME Foundation to visit The Netherlands early in 1991, for an eight month period of lecturing activities and research. She will assist Ms Antoinet Schimmelpenninck at the Leiden Centre for Non-Western Studies (CNWS) in her current research on folk songs from Jiangsu Province. She will also participate in a lecture series on Chinese music organized jointly by the Musicology Institute of the University of Amsterdam and the Sinological Institute in Leiden, and is expected to cooperate in a number of concerts of Chinese classical and folk music during her stay in Holland.

NEWS & REPORTS

CHINESE MUSIC STUDIES IN HONG KONG

The Chinese University of Hong Kong welcomes graduate and undergraduate students from abroad to take courses in (Chinese) music at its Music Department. Those who wish to follow the regular curriculum (four years undergraduate programme, two more years for a master's degree) can apply directly to the Music Department. Entrance requirements are a good command of both Chinese and English, and successful participation in an entrance exam. It is also possible to apply via the Office of the International Studies Programme (OISD). In that case, a letter of reference may be sufficient to be accepted as a student - also for shorter courses. At present, the Music Department has no facilities

for PhD students, but it hopes to realize a PhD programme within the next two years.

The Chinese University campus is situated on the green hills of Shatin in the New Territories, fifteen minutes by train from the centre of Hong Kong, and looking out on the South China Sea. Currently, there are some 120 undergraduate students majoring in music, who may follow either the day or evening programme. There are two possibilities for specialization in these first four years of the study: Chinese music and Western music. However, all students must follow some courses in Chinese music before they start specializing, and study a Chinese instrument for at least one year. This practical education is considered to be of vital importance, especially for those who continue with Chinese music studies. The graduate programme of the Music Department again has two possibilities for specialization: ethnomusicology and historical musicology, the latter dealing mainly with Western music. For ethnomusicology, the coursework concentrates on the history, ideas and methodology of the field of ethnomusicology, and the study of music in world cultures. Obviously, much attention is paid to Chinese music. The ethnomusicology students come under the Chinese Music Archive, headed by Dr. Pen-Yeh Tsao. There are four full-time teachers to instruct the students: Pen-Yeh himself, Dr. Joseph Lam, Dr. Sau Chan and Dr. Larry Witzleben, (all of whom graduated in the United States). They are responsible for the theoretical part of the programme. There are also ten part-time teachers, who concentrate mainly on practical instruction (musical instruments).

Currently, the Music Department has ten graduate students, preparing a master's thesis. (See also: section 'People and Projects'). So far, all ethnomusicology students of the graduate programme of the Music Department have written theses on Chinese music. In the recent past, several people doing graduate research for degrees in the United States (Kyle Heide from Indiana, Mercedes Dujunco from Seattle, and Larry Witzleben about ten years ago) have come to Hong Kong as research students in the International Studies Programme, and they have been able to do course work and directed studies in the Music Department and other departments, as well as take language courses (Mandarin, Cantonese, and directed studies on other dialects) at the Yale in China Language Center affiliated to the University.

For all further information, please write to: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Music Department, Professor Pen-Yeh Tsao, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong.

The Music Department of the University of Hong Kong (on Hong Kong Island) also offers some possibilities to study Chinese music, but its regular programme focuses almost entirely on Western music. (In a music course on twentieth century art

music, special attention is paid, however, to developments in Asia, and Hong Kong, in particular). For more information, write to: The University of Hong Kong, Dr. Malcolm Buttler, Music Department, Pok Fulam Road, Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong.

CHINESE MUSIC RESEARCH IN MOSCOW

Twelve years ago, the Moscow Conservatory of Music started a Department of World Music Culture, led by Professor Givani K. Mikhailov. From the very beginning, its courses on foreign music have been widely appreciated by the students. Not only did they study ethnomusicology, but they also seized the opportunity to learn more about foreign cultures in general.

In the past few years, the students of the department have developed a strong interest in the Far East, and a number of them have specialized in Chinese music. As yet, there have been no possibilities for any of them to visit China; there is currently no exchange programme with the People's Republic, and those who study Chinese music have to limit themselves to commercial recordings and written sources, as far as these are available in the Soviet Union.

Helena Vasytchenko (38) is a lecturer of the World Music Department. She published a dissertation in 1982, 'Comparison between Musical Cultures of South-East Asia and the Far East', which focused, in particular, on the music of Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. Later on, she developed an interest in *guqin* music, and published various articles on the *guqin*. At present, she is co-operating in the work on a series of textbooks on ethnomusicology. The second volume of the series will focus on Korea, Japan and China. At the Moscow Conservatory, Ms. Vasytchenko teaches South-East Asian music.

Svetlana Volkova (30) graduated from the department earlier this year. Her thesis is called 'The Reflection of Chinese Musical Mentality in Music Terminology.' Both Ms. Vasytchenko and Ms. Volkova are members of the Sinological Society in Moscow. Sinology in the Soviet Union is particularly strong in the field of (ancient) history. Most of the musicology students who specialize on Chinese music, focus their studies on ancient music or on music theory. Aleksei Skanavi (23) wrote two essays of interest: 'The Evolution of the Temperament Principles in Chinese Music (1988) and 'The Problem of Time in Meditative Music, as Demonstrated from *Guqin* Music' (1990). He is now working on his graduate thesis (about *Yueji*, a chapter from *Liji*, The Book of Rites).

All publications mentioned above are written in Russian. However, their authors are able to speak some English, and would very much like to get in touch with Western scholars. Letters can be directed to the Moscow Conservatory of Music, Moscow, USSR.

'HUANG HE' ENSEMBLE IN PARIS

In Paris, in 1984, the Yellow River Ensemble (Groupe du Fleuve Jaune) was founded, an orchestra of traditional Chinese music. Three years later, it became an official society. It is the only professional Chinese traditional orchestra in France. It has twenty-eight members: fourteen instrumental musicians, four singers, four dancers, two martial arts' specialists, three acrobats and one stage-designer. The group is frequently joined by extra artists, such as Lion Dancers and Peking Opera actors currently resident in Paris. Most of the members of the group come originally from China, where they were soloists, members of Chinese orchestras, or music teachers. Only professional musicians are allowed to become members of the ensemble, and they have guaranteed the exceptionally high level of the orchestra, in spite of the fact that it is recruited entirely from Chinese artists living in France. The Yellow River Ensemble performs regularly at festivals and special occasions. It has made concert tours to Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Tunisia and various other countries. The address of the ensemble is: 21, Rue des Ecoiffes, 75004 Paris, France.

RECTIFICATION

In the article 'Organizations in China & Abroad - A Bird's Eye View' in CHIME No.1 (Spring 1990), it was stated that the Society for Ethnomusicological Research in Hong Kong (SERHK, Xianggang minzu yinyue yanjiuhui) is an offshoot of the Hong Kong Society of Ethnomusicology. This is incorrect. The Society for Ethnomusicological Research in Hong Kong is an independent initiative, taken by four researchers of the Chinese Music Archive of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Its members are scholars or students of ethnomusicology, all of whom have had extensive graduate training in ethnomusicology and historical musicology. Some were educated in America. The SERHK was formed to promote the scholarly study of music and to serve as a nexus linking scholars of Chinese music (both in China and overseas), and the international ethnomusicology community, as represented by organizations such as the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) in the United States, and the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). Although the founders and most of the members specialize in Chinese music, their interest is in the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of music in world cultures, including folk, classical and popular genres of music. The SERHK is co-sponsoring the 1991 meeting of the ICTM in Hong Kong.

BEIJING FOLK SONGS

The editors of the *Beijing Volume of the Anthology of Chinese Folk Songs* had a decisive meeting in

Beijing, from 3 to 6 September, 1989. The collecting work for the Beijing Folk Song Anthology started in May 1979. Ten Chief Editors participate in this work. More than 2,000 folk songs were collected in the ten *qu* (areas) and 8 *xian* (regions) of the Beijing district. 235 songs have now been selected for inclusion in the Beijing Folk Song Anthology. They are divided into seven main categories: *haozi* (work songs), *huahui gequ* (festive songs), *xiaodiao* (little ditties), *shan'ge* (mountain songs), *fengsu gequ* (custom songs), *erge* (children's songs) and *jaomaidiao* (streetcries). The Beijing anthology is expected to be published in the course of 1991.

In the meantime, the editors of the Henan Volume of the Anthology of Chinese Folk Songs have re-examined and accepted 1,015 folk songs to be included in the Henan anthology. According to plan, the manuscript will be sent to the Central Editing office in Beijing by the end of this year for final approval. (WH)

SUCCESSFUL GUQIN MEETING

From 1 to 5 August 1990, the International Exchange Conference on the Art of the *Guqin* was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. It was the biggest meeting on *guqin* music since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. More than a hundred *guqin* players and specialists from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, America, West Germany, Japan and Australia attended the conference. Some 52 papers were presented, dealing with topics like *guqin* music history, theory, aesthetics, composition, performance, the interpretation of scores, the construction of the instrument, etc. There were five large concerts. More than fifty *qin* masters of different schools performed the most representative pieces of their repertory. The Conference was jointly organized by the Chinese Musicians' Association, the Centre for International Cultural Exchange and the Sichuan Branch of the Chinese Musicians' Association. (WH)

NEW DISCOVERIES IN THE FIELD OF JIANGNAN SIZHU

Jiangnan Sizhu 江南絲竹 is instrumental ensemble music performed in teahouses and societies in Shanghai and other cities south of the Yangtze. The genre originated in southern China, and it became popular at the end of the last century. Both amateurs and (semi-)professionals participate in the regular meetings of local sizhu societies. They form ad hoc ensembles and play and improvise together. The most familiar and frequently performed part of the sizhu repertory consists of eight famous pieces. Other sizhu pieces are occasionally performed, or not at all: Sizhu music is primarily an oral tradition, and appreciated especially by people of the older generation; some of the pieces are

hardly played any more, because there are no performers left who have a complete recollection of the music.

Recently, editors of the Jiangsu Antology of Instrumental Folk Music made an interesting discovery. During their search for religious music in the Nanjing area, they stumbled by accident upon nearly a hundred unknown suzhu pieces, some of them only existing as titles, others in the form of written music (in gongchepu notation). The written pieces were the property of a group of instrumental players from the countryside around Nanjing, who met at a regular basis in the city to play sizhu. It turned out that the players had not performed many of the less familiar pieces since 1949. They were able, after some rehearsals, to play 42 of the pieces, which were, subsequently recorded by the editors of the anthology.

In the city of Yanchang, in the Binghai region, the editors collected another 105 titles or notations of sizhu pieces. There are attempts to reconstruct the missing parts of the music and to revive the pieces through performances by the Jiangsu Song and Dance Ensemble.

The primary aim of the editors was to collect religious music. During their recent fieldwork, they collected and recorded three hundred pieces of Nanzong Buddhist music (Nanzong: The Southern Sect, or Bodhidharma School). In Wuxi, ten Taoist pieces were recorded, performed by twelve old Taoist priests.

MUSIC COURSES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Since last summer, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music offers short courses on Chinese music for (groups of) foreign students, intended for anyone in the age of 16 to 50 with an interest in Chinese music. The duration of the courses is flexible (varying from two weeks to five months) and it is possible to follow several subjects in combination. The maximum programme is twenty hours per week, and the subjects range from musical history to folk song, from music theory to practical lessons (e.g. learning how to play a Chinese instrument). In addition to this, there are optional classes on Chinese culture, painting, calligraphy, *taiji* and Chinese language. An interpreter will translate all the lessons into English, so it is not necessary for the students to be able to speak Chinese. At the end of a course, the students will be offered a ten day trip through part of China.

The Conservatory invites people with some previous experience in the field of music studies in China to act as mediators: they will have to organize a group of at least 15 people to come to Shanghai and attend a course. In exchange, each mediator will be offered free lodging and free admittance to the Conservatory for the duration of the course. If a group has more than 20 people, two mediators can

come free of charge. For the students, the costs for a course are \$20 for registration, \$400 tuition fee for two weeks (three weeks: \$550; four weeks: \$700; five weeks: \$800; six weeks: \$900; seven weeks: \$1,000; eight weeks: \$1,100; and for every following week add \$50 is). Next to this, \$16 per day are charged for lodging. Another \$500 will be necessary to cover travel expenses during the ten-day trip. All fees have to be paid in American dollars. Those who are interested can write to Mrs. Wang Mingying, Foreign Students Office, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, No. 20 Fen Yang Road, Shanghai, People's Republic of China.

MEETINGS

LECTURE SERIES IN HOLLAND

With support from the CHIME Foundation, speakers from Canada, the United States, China and various European countries have been invited to come to Holland in the spring of 1991 to present one or more lectures on their own field of research. The series of lectures is primarily intended as an introductory course to Chinese music for Dutch students of Sinology, Anthropology and Musicology, and will be organized as a joint project of the Universities of Amsterdam (Musicology Department) and Leiden (Sinological Institute and Centre for Non Western Studies). The series is also open to the public. It will take place at Leiden University from February to June 1991. The project is supervised jointly by Drs. Antoinet Schimmelpenninck (CNWS) and Professor Rembrandt Wolpert (Musicology, Amsterdam), who will also participate in it as speakers.

The exact dates of the programme (one lecture per week) will be announced early in January, but the list of speakers and subjects is already known: 1.Drs. A.Schimmelpenninck ('An Introduction to Chinese Music - Major Characteristics'); 2.Prof.Dr. R.Wolpert ('Brief Introduction to Historical Musicology - Tang Dynasty Music & The Tang Music Project'); 3.Prof. Huang Bai, Shanghai Conservatory ('Chinese Folk Song - Regional Styles'); 4.Dr. F.Picard, Sorbonne University, Paris ('Buddhist Music - Buddhist Instruments'); 5.Ms L.v.Heteren, Dutch Theatre Institute, Amsterdam (Chinese Theatre, Part I - Peking Opera); 6.Mr. S.Jones, London ('Instrumental Folk Music - Ceremonial Ensembles in Northern China'); 7.Prof.Dr. K.Schipper, Sorbonne University, Paris ('Quyi (narrative singing), Part I - Nanguan ballads'); 8.Mr. F.Kouwenhoven, Leiden ('Avant Garde Music, Part I - Influences of Traditional Music'); 9.Dr. Leigh Landy, Musicology, Amsterdam ('Avant Garde Music, Part II - The Oriental Concept of Sound'); 10.Ms Dai Xiaolian, Shanghai Conservatory ('Guqin Music, Part I - Performance Schools'); 11.Ms Jo Riley, University of East Anglia ('Chinese Theatre,

Part II - Nuoxi (Exorcism Theatre)'); 12.Prof. A.Thrasher, University of British Columbia, Vancouver ('Silk and Bamboo Music - Comparative Analysis'); 13.Prof. A.Thrasher ('Minority Music - Yi Dance Songs'); 14.Prof. Bell Yung, University of Pittsburgh ('Guqin Music, Part II - Interpreting Scores'); 15.Prof. Bell Yung ('Chinese Theatre, Part III - Cantonese Opera'); 16.Mr. Wang Hong, Nanjing Art Academy ('Quyi, Part II - Quyi Traditions in Northern Jiangsu').

The lectures cover a great many different areas of Chinese musical culture, from ancient times to 20th century music. There is strong emphasis on practical aspects, such as performance contexts, the sound and character of Chinese instruments, style and structure of the music, stage settings of theatre music, ritual and social functions of folk and religious music, etc.

The speakers will illustrate their points with the help of sound-recordings, slides, video-tapes and practical demonstrations. Some Chinese scholars will also act as music performers. A number of lectures may, to some extent, resemble a workshop. Professor Huang Bai will provide a demonstration of vocal styles and singing techniques from different areas in China. She will teach the students some characteristic songs. Dai Xiaolian will discuss some basic playing techniques of the *guqin*, and offer the students an opportunity to try out the instrument. Wang Hong and François Picard will provide similar demonstrations on instruments which are used in *quyi* and Buddhist music respectively. Lorette van Heteren will demonstrate some basic rules for dancing and movement in Peking opera.

The first part of each two hour lecture will serve as a general introduction to a given field or genre, and the second part will deal with a more specific theme (usually a sub-genre, or an analysis of one particular piece of music, or a detailed discussion of performing or social aspects of the music).

The intention of the whole series is to give the students a gradually growing sense of both the broad spectrum of Chinese music and the elements that form a natural link between its many different styles and genres. Such linking elements (which have established the unique place of Chinese music in world musical culture) are, for example, the oriental concepts of sound and time, and the characteristic limitations of thematic material.

In co-operation with the lecturers, an elaborate reader will be compiled, with articles and essays on specific genres of Chinese music which were published over the past few years in (mainly Western) academic journals. The reader will also contain elaborate bibliographies for the various areas of Chinese music which are discussed in the series, in order to help students who would like to further their interests in any specific field or genre. The reader

will include short summaries of the lectures and short curricula vitae of the lecturers. It is due out in December 1990 and will be sent to students who take the course.

For more information, write or phone Drs. A. Schimmelpenninck, Vliet 35, 2311 RD Leiden, Holland, Telephone (071) 133123. (AS)

SEM, 7-10 NOVEMBER, 1990

Oakland, California (USA) will be the site of the joint annual meetings of the American Musicological Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), and the Society for Music Theory, from 7 to 10 November, 1990. Hosts will be the University of California, Berkeley; the University of California, Davis, and Stanford University. A special committee under the chairmanship of Bruno Nettl has been working for several months to stimulate the generation of two to four relevant joint sessions on each day of the meetings. The plenary lecture to the three societies will be delivered by Harold Powers of Princeton University. Major topics of the meetings are Music and Power Relations, Music in Immigrant Communities, Music Industry Appropriation, Feminist Scholarship in Ethnomusicology, Music as Construct of Identity, and Ethnoaesthetics and Music. Papers on various other topics are also included. The American Association for Chinese Music Research (ACMR) will hold its ninth semi-annual meeting in conjunction with the SEM meeting. For further information about the ACMR meeting, contact Professor Bell Yung, Music Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. For further information concerning the SEM meeting, contact Mr Gerard Béhague, Department of Music, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA.

ACMR 9TH SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

The ninth semi-annual meeting of the American Association for Chinese Music Research (ACMR) will be held on 8 November 1990 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Oakland, California, from 8.00 PM to 11.00 PM. The meeting takes place in conjunction with the joint conferences of the American Musicological Society (AMS), the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) and the Society for Music Theory. Programme: John Myers (Simon's Rock of Bard College) - 'Studying Pipa in Beijing, 1990'; Sau-yan Chan (Chinese University of Hong Kong) - 'The Initiation of a Performing Stage: Some Fieldwork Reflections'; Antoinet Schimmelpenninck (Leiden University, The Netherlands): 'Collecting Folksongs in Rural Jiangnan in 1990'; Terry Liu (National Endowments for the Arts - Folk Arts Program) - 'Chinese Music and Scholarly Activity in the USA'; Weihua Zhang (University of California, Berkeley) - 'Chinese Musical Activities in the Bay area' (tentative);

Larry Witzleben (Chinese University of Hong Kong) - 'Instrumental Music in Hong Kong Taoist Rituals'; Siu-wah Yu (Harvard University) - 'How fixed is a 'fixed tune' in Cantonese opera?'. Special guest: Zhang Xinrong (Yunnan Arts Institute): 'Instrumental Music of the Minority Nationalities in Yunnan'.

SCTM, MID-DECEMBER, 1990

The Society of Chinese Traditional Music (*Zhongguo chuantong yinyue xuehui* 中國傳統音樂學會) will hold its sixth annual meeting during the second half of December, 1990, at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Its major topics are: 1) The role and effect Chinese traditional music should have in Chinese music education and how it should be taught; 2) The study of *gongdiao* (scale and mode) in the current practice of Chinese traditional music. For information, write to the Organizing Committee, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 20 Fen yang Road, Shanghai, China.

CHINOPERL, APRIL 11-14, 1991

The tenth semi-annual meeting of CHINOPERL (Conference on Chinese Oral and Performing Literature) will be held in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies in the New Orleans Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana. For information, write to Professor Susan Blader, Dept. of East Asian Languages, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA.

EMAS 3RD ANNUAL MEETING (JUNE 1991)

The third annual meeting of the *Dongfang yinyue xuehui* 東方音樂學會 (Eastern Music Association, Shanghai) will be held from 23 to 26 June 1991 at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The main theme of the conference will be 'Chinese Music and Eastern Culture'. This theme will be discussed from the following angles:

1. Characteristics of Chinese music and of Eastern culture, their contribution to the music and culture of the rest of the world, and future development in this field;
2. The place of Chinese music in Eastern music;
3. Cultural exchange between Chinese and other Eastern music cultures in history; their evolution, mutual influences and assimilation;
4. Research of Eastern traditional music genres.

Participants are requested to send in the title of their paper before 1 December 1990, and a summary (max. 1500 characters) before 28 February 1991. Contact address:

Secretariat of the Eastern Music Association, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 20 Fenyang Road, Post Box 47, 200031 Shanghai, China.

31ST ICTM MEETING, JULY 1991

The 31st World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) will be held from July 3-9, 1991 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Kowloon, Hong Kong. The following themes have been established for the Conference: 1. Current Research in Chinese Music (Special sub-theme: Hong Kong and Macau's Role in the Innovation and Modernization of Chinese Music). 2. Role of the Great Religions in the Musical and Dance Traditions of Asia. 3. European Music in Asia: Reception and Transformation. Papers that do not fall within the above themes will also be considered. Members who wish to read a paper are asked to send in their proposal to Prof. Bell Yung, Music Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA (Tel: (412) 624-448-5911; e-mail: byun@pittvms.bitnet). Proposals should include the title of the paper, an outline of its contents (ca. 150 words), the language in which the paper will be read, and the type(s) of illustrations to be used. It is expected that all papers will present new insights. Proposals whose contents have been previously presented in print or otherwise will be rejected. The Programme Committee reserves the right to accept those proposals which, in their opinion, fit best into the scheme of the conference. Members will be notified as close as possible to January 1, 1991 whether or not their proposals are accepted. Members whose proposals are accepted will be asked to send two copies of an abstract of their paper to the Programme Chair by March 1, 1991. Abstracts should be no more than two typewritten pages including illustrations (music examples, diagrams etc.). It is planned to publish abstracts. In order to assure opportunity for discussion, each presentation will be allowed a maximum of twenty minutes. Students are encouraged to submit their proposals. Please note that only those proposals will be considered whose authors are members of the ICTM in good standing, excepting only participants from China.

The Programme Committee is planning a number of Round-Table sessions within the general themes of the conference. Suggestions should be sent to Prof. Yung at the above address.

Chinese and English are the official languages of the Conference; papers written or delivered in other languages will not be accepted. Contributors of papers written in Chinese are urged to supply summaries in English and vice versa.

Members are invited to present, with short commentary, recordings and films of special interest. Proposals including technical specifications of equipment needed should be sent to Dr. Tsao Pen-yeh, c/o International Conference Consultants Ltd., 57 Wyndham Street, 1/F. Central, Hong Kong (Tel.: (852) 810-4577; Fax: (852) 840-0564. The Conference will include workshops. Members wishing to offer a workshop should send a proposal including space and equipment requirements to Dr. Tsao

Pen-yeh at the above address. Participation in the Conference is open on payment of a registration fee (subject to Board approval): Ordinary Members: US\$70.00, Students: \$40.00, Non-Members: \$100.00.

CHIME, 1ST ANNUAL MEETING (SEPT. 1991)

The first annual meeting of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research (CHIME) will be held in conjunction with the 8th annual meeting of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology, which takes place from 23 to 29 September 1991, in Geneva, Switzerland. There is no special theme, but there will be particular emphasis on practical reports, results of recent fieldwork, illustrated with the help of live recordings. The exact date of the CHIME meeting has not yet been decided upon. Papers of 20 minutes duration are invited. Abstracts of 400-500 words should be sent by 1 March 1991 to CHIME, c/o Frank Kouwenhoven, Post Box 11092, 2301 EB Leiden, The Netherlands. (Telephone 31.71.133123.)

PUBLICATIONS

GUQIN RESEARCH

'Die grosse Solosuite Guanglingsan' is a Manfred Dahmer's dissertation study in German about one of the best known pieces of the the guqin (Chinese zither) repertory. It was published in 1988 and can still be ordered from the publisher, Lang-Verlag, Frankfurt (ISBN 3-8204-1091-0). The same author has also written a general, popular book in German about the guqin, which is still available, too: 'Qin - Die klassische chinesische Griffbrettzither', published by Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1985, in the series 'Insel-Bücherei' (no.1024).

Dr. Dahmer is a sinologist who studied in Frankfurt and wrote an M.A. thesis about song forms in the Shijing, the famous classic of ancient Chinese poetry. From 1978 to 1980 he studied Chinese music in Beijing, notably pipa and guqin. Before his studies in sinology he was a student at the Frankfurter Hochschule für Musik, where he learned to play the guitar and recorder and graduated with a music teacher's degree. At present he is active both as a music teacher and as a journalist, making programmes for the Hessische Rundfunk. He has also been a music critic for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung since 1980, and has written extensively about Chinese, Indian, Korean and Turkish music.

YI DANCE SONGS

This summer, Danbury, World Music Press, published a study by Alan R. Thrasher (University of British Columbia, Vancouver) on minority music

from South China. It is called 'La-li-luo Dance songs of the Chuxiong Yi, Yunnan Province, China' and is based on recent fieldwork. The book focuses on the traditional dance music of the Yi minority, both in urban and rural areas. Attention is paid to the cultural background and performance context of the music, the musical instruments used in performance, the formation, steps and patterns of the dance, the melodic structure of the music, and the vocables and texts of the songs. The author concludes his work with an assessment of the status of preservation of the Yi dance songs, in the context of a rapidly changing society. The book is completed with music transcriptions, photographs, notations from Chinese sources, a glossary of Chinese characters and a bibliography. It is accompanied by a tape with field recordings. 141 pages, ISBN 0-937203-18-1 (paperback) or ISBN 0-937203-23-8 (pb./audio tape set). World Music Press, P.O. Box 2565 Danbury CT 06813, Phone (203) 748-1131.

HANDBOOK OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The Grove/Norton Press is currently preparing a comprehensive handbook of ethnomusicology, surveying all aspects of the field. Publication of the handbook was originally scheduled for 1988, but was severely delayed. Now the book is due out in 1991.

It is divided into broad sections on history, theory and method, and a series of area studies, dealing with Europe, Africa, various parts of Asia, the Pacific, North America, the Caribbean and Central & South America respectively. Renowned researchers from various parts of the world contribute to it, with papers either on theory or on historical developments in the world areas they are most familiar with. General editor is Helen Myers.

The chapter on Central Asia and the Caucasus contains contributions by Marc Slobin (Western part) and Mireille Helffer (Eastern part, including Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, Tibet, Mongolia and adjacent areas). The chapter on East Asia is coordinated by Robert Provine, and contains contributions by Alan Thrasher (China), David Hughes (Japan) and Robert Provine (Korea).

The section on China is divided into four parts, dealing with (1) pre-imperial and imperial periods to the early twentieth century, (2) post-World War II developments, (3) post-World War II materials, and (4) future perspectives. It includes a 450-item bibliography of both Chinese and Western language sources.

STUDIES OF TAOIST RITUALS

'Studies of Taoist Rituals and Music of Today', edited by Pen-Yeh Tsao and Daniel P.L. Law (1989, published by the Society for Ethnomusicological Research in Hong Kong) contains a selection of

papers delivered at an international symposium held on the campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in December 1985. From the original twenty-five papers read during the symposium, seventeen were included in the book. As Michael Saso puts it, in his introduction: 'For the reader unfamiliar with the rivulets and streams that flow into the greater river of Taoist studies, the accomplishments of the scholars of the People's Republic are brought together, for the first time, in print. The French school and its followers, the Japanese scholars with a penchant for detailed fieldwork, and other Chinese, American and European activities of Taoist scholarly endeavour become three movements in a well-wrought literary sonata performed for the conference.'

The Chinese and Japanese contributions in the book are written in Chinese, and include papers by Tong Kin-woon, Chen Dacan and Issei Tanaka. Western contributions come from, amongst others, John Blacking, Julian F. Pas, John Lagerwey, Kenneth Dean, Judith Magee Boltz, Kristoffer M. Schipper and Alan L. Kagan. The book has 232 pages in typescript and can be ordered from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Music Department, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong. The price is US \$ 25. The proceedings of the latest conference on Buddhist and Taoist music held in Hong Kong (December 1989) will be published soon.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY GHOST

'Taoist Ritual Music of the Yu-Lan Pen-Hui 盂蘭盆會 (Feeding The Hungry Ghost Festival) in a Hong Kong Taoist Temple' is a study by Prof. Pen-Yeh Tsao, published in 1989 by the Hai Feng Publishing Co. in Hong Kong. It focuses on the music performed during the seven-day festival mentioned in the title, and is based on fieldwork carried out in 1987. The book was first written as a doctoral dissertation (at the University of Pittsburgh) and then edited and prepared for publication. Pen-Yeh Tsao studied the music in its ritual context and intends to show how it bridges the separation between the realms of interior prayer and exterior performance. The book consists of two parts, the first dealing with historical backgrounds, the development of Taoism in Hong Kong, the special position of the Yuen Yuen institute 圓玄學院, the training of ritual specialists, a general description of the 1987 Yulan festival, and information on the concepts of gods, ghosts and ancestors in this festival. The second part deals with music and text, including analysis of chant tunes, instrumental repertoire and a chapter on the affinity between Taoist ritual music and secular folk music. The book is completed with music transcriptions, a glossary of Chinese terms, a bibliography and many illustrations (21 photographs in colour). It has 235 pages and can be ordered free from the Chinese Univer-

sity of Hong Kong, Music Department, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong.

THE MULIEN OPERAS

'Ritual Opera, Operatic Ritual - 'Mulien Rescues His Mother' In Chinese Popular Culture' is the title of an anthology of papers read at the international workshop on the Mulien operas, held in Berkeley (United States) in August 1987. The book was edited by David Johnson, and published in 1989 by the University of California, as part of the Chinese Popular Culture Project. Apart from six papers from the workshop (by David Johnson, Kenneth Dean, Ch'iu Kun-liang, Kristofer Schipper, Gary Seaman and Stephen F. Teiser) it has an additional contribution by Beata Grant, and a selective bibliography on the Mulien Operas by Dajuin Yao.

The workshop was originally designed as a forum for discussing and analysing what might be called Mulien opera proper: the great multi-day ritual operas in which the monk Mulien's descent into hell and rescue there of his sinful mother were re-enacted before the community. In the end, most of the papers focused on skits or playlets about Mulien presented during funeral rites. Partly, this was a natural consequence of the fact that the study of Chinese local religion is much better developed than research on local opera and other popular performing arts. But it also happened because Chinese ritual and drama are so closely allied that it is quite natural to move from one realm to the other. The student of Chinese ritual is confronted with drama at every turn, and operas are frequently presented in an atmosphere saturated with religion and ritual.

The book, 325 pages with index and glossary, can be ordered from the University of California, 2223 Fulton Street, Sixth Floor, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA. (ISBN 0-9624327-0-9).

KOREAN MUSIC

Keith Pratt's 'Korean Music, Its History and Performance' was published by Faber Music Ltd. in London in 1987 (in association with the Jung Eum Sa Publishing Company, Seoul, Republic of Korea): a handsomely produced book with accompanying cassette. After a brief description of Korea and its history, there is a survey of Korean music over the last thousand years or so, with the reader referred at relevant points to the musical examples on the cassette. Topics of interest such as notation are also covered. A catalogue of Korean instruments is illustrated by black and white photographs and line drawings. The last part of the book consists of 142 colour plates illustrating music in contemporary performance, instruments, ceremonial and official music, religious music and entertainment music, all supplied with copious notes. Further useful features

include bibliographies, English-Korean glossaries and an index. An excellent introduction, of great interest to Chinese music specialists. (HR)

INTERCULTURAL MUSIC STUDIES

Florian Noetzel Edition (Wilhelmshaven, Germany) has started a new ethnomusicological book series entitled, 'Intercultural Music Studies'. The series is edited by Max Peter Bauman and published under the auspices of the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation Berlin. One volume is already available. It is called, 'Music, Gender and Culture' and contains fifteen chapters on gender aspects of music and musical performance in countries as different as Sweden, Finland, Poland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Algeria, Liberia, Thailand, China and the United States. The contribution on China comes from Nora Yeh: 'Wisdom of Ignorance - Women Performers in the Classical Chinese Music Traditions'. The second volume of the series, now in press, will deal with 'Music in the Dialogue of Cultures: Traditional Music and Cultural Policy'. Among its projected thirty-three chapters, there is one by Chou Wen-chung on 'US-China Arts Exchange: A Practice in Search of a Philosophy'. Both volumes can be ordered from Florian Noetzel Verlag, P.O.Box 580, D-2940 Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

VIDEO ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD MUSIC

The Japanese company JVC has published 'The JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance', a series of 30 videocassettes with materials from over a hundred different countries. The entire collection was first edited in a Japanese version, in close co-operation with the National Museum of Ethnology in Japan. Recently, an English version has been prepared by an editorial board appointed by Smithsonian/Folkway Records, and including prominent ethnomusicologists and anthropologists in the United States.

The collection is accompanied by written materials (nine books in all, some thousand pages) which describe each performance in great detail and include historical, cultural and ethnomusicological background essays on the music, dance, musical instruments, costumes, religious rituals etc. There is no narration, and the subtitles have been reduced to a minimum.

Approximately one half of the footage focuses on Asia. Material about the Soviet Union (all fifteen Soviet Republics are covered) was provided courtesy of the Soviet television and government. Much of the collection was gathered independently by teams organized for the project, and sent to the different areas including China (Yunnan province), Vietnam, Pakistan and Bolivia.

The collection is divided into nine sections: East

Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, the Soviet Union, the Americas and Oceania. Noticeably, there is no coverage of Japan in the anthology, because JVC is in the process of producing a separate video anthology of Japanese music, which will be released in the future.

The current anthology has a very broad contents, from folk songs and minstrelsy to religious services, from drama and puppetry to tribal ceremonies, etc. The editorial supervisor of the English version of the series is Anthony Seeger, assisted by an editorial board consisting of Mantle Hood, Kwabena Nketia, Hiromi Lorraine Sakata and Barbara Smith. The anthology is distributed in the United States and Canada by Rounder Records, 61 Prospect Street, Dept. SEM, Montpelier, VT 05602, USA. A sample videocassette is available for review by authorized educational institution buyers. The series is only available in the VHS/NTSC format.

NEW MUSIC IN THE ORIENT

'New Music in the Orient', Harrison C. Ryker (Ed.), has just been published by Uitgeverij Frits Knuf, P.O. Box 720, 4116 ZJ Buren, Holland. It is a collection of essays in English about new developments in art music (avant-garde) in various Asian and Oriental countries. All contributions are written by native scholars, and the collection is edited by Harrison Ryker, a researcher of the Music Department of The Hong Kong Chinese University. The book has approximately 220 pages, and contains a separate chapter on Chinese music, written by Li Huanzhi (Composition Department of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing). The book can be ordered from the publisher.

CHINESE PUBLICATIONS

YUNNAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Zhang Xinrong's 張興榮 'Cream of Yunnan National Instrumental Music' 雲南民族器樂薈萃 has been published this year by the Yunnan People's Publishing House in Kunming. The text is in Chinese, with some English. The bulk of this book consists of transcriptions into staff notation of various instrumental pieces of the national minorities of Yunnan. Instrument, tuning, performer and place are given for each item. The transcriptions are preceded by 31 pages of colour photographs of the instruments and performers, and piece titles and photo captions are given in both Chinese and English. Other useful features include an introduction to the instrumental music of each minority, a detailed map of the distribution of the minorities in Yunnan, a bibliography and tables of important festivals of the minorities, population statistics and language families. This very useful major work (534 pages) was

preceded in 1986 by a smaller-scale (65-page) anthology of instrumental music from Western Yunnan, with the same chief compiler and publisher, called 'Selected National and Folk Instrumental Music from Western Yunnan' 滇西民族民間器樂曲選. (HF)

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NANYIN MUSIC

The Fujian People's Publishing House recently issued a book on Nanyin music from Fujian. It is called *Fujian nanyin chutan* 福建南音初探 ('Elementary Introduction to Fujian Nanyin'). The authors are Wang Yaohua 王耀華 and Liu Chunshu 劉春曙. The book includes chapters on musicology, stories from opera literature, the relation between Nanyin and folk customs and religion. The chapter on musicology deals with the development of melody, the *gong* scale, the scores, musical instruments, aesthetic views on the music, the structure of the music, etc. (WH)

SERIES ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Zhongguo minzu yinyue daxi 中國民族音樂大系 'The Chinese Traditional Music Series' is a publishing project of the Eastern Music Association 東方音樂學會, Shanghai. The intention is to bring out eight separate volumes introducing different genres of traditional Chinese music.

The following categories will be covered: religious music, dance music, folk songs, minority music, quyi music, instrumental folk music, opera music, and ancient music. Each book will contain some 300 pages, giving a general outline of the genre, illustrated amply with music examples.

Up till now, three volumes have been published: *Minzu qiyue juan* 民族器樂卷 (instrumental folk music), *Xiqu yinyue juan* 戲曲音樂卷 (opera music), and *quyi yinyue juan* 曲藝音樂卷 (quyi music). All three were published in 1989 by the Shanghai yinyue chubanshe. Prof. Xia ye 夏野 and Chen Xueya 陳學姪 act as Editors-in-chief for the series.

According to Prof. Jiang Mingdun, one of the co-editors, a set of tapes with sound examples will accompany the book series, but so far, no recordings have been published. (AS)

JOURNALS

MUSICOLOGY IN CHINA

In 1989, the Music Research Institute in Beijing published an English edition of its journal, 'Musicology in China' (*Zhongguo yinyuexue*), edited by Guo Nai-an and a board of scholars from both China and the United States. It was intended as the first of a series, but, unfortunately, financial difficulties and

problems with distribution prevented the publication of any subsequent issues. The first and only issue that did materialize contains English translations from contributions to *Zhongguo yinyuexue* in the period 1986-88, and can still be ordered from Ms. Li Cui 李翠, Editorial office of *Musicology in China*, the Research Institute of Music, Chinese Academy of Arts, West Building no.1, xinyuanli, zuojiazhuang, Dongzhimenwai, 100027 Beijing. Price: \$ 6 plus postage. The following articles are included: 1. 'On the Preservation and Development of Traditional Chinese Music' (Huang Xiangpeng), 2. 'The Restoration and Extension of the Tradition of Temperament Study in China' (Zhao Songguang), 3. 'The Musico-aesthetical Implication of Dayin xisheng - A Comparative Study of the Confucian and Taoist Schools' (Ye Chuanhan), 4. 'The Idea of Zhuangzi's Music of Heaven' (Wu Yuqing), 5. 'On the Dating of the Book Lülü Jingyi' (Li Chunyi), 6. 'On the Vertical Konghou' (Yuan Quanyou), 7. 'The Regional Division of Chinese Folk Songs by Their Local Colour' (Miao Jing), 8. 'A Review of the New Tide in China's Musical Compositions' (Wang An'guo), 9. 'New Tide and Old Roots - Special Speech at the First Modern Chinese Composers' Music Festival in Hong Kong' (Wang Lisan), 10. 'Development in China's Piano Compositions' (Wei Tingge). The journal has 162 pages.

ACTA MUSICOLOGICA

Volume 3 (1989) of the journal *Acta Musicologica*, published in German by Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, contains a report of 62 pages by the Chinese scholar Jin Jingyan (Beijing) on music research in China over the past four decades. 'Musikforschung in der Volksrepublik China (1949-1988)' is a detailed survey of research methods, areas of research, historical and practical sources, fieldwork, institutes and organizations, and publications in the field of musicology, as they can be found in China at present, or which played a role in the recent past. The author mentions the most important achievements and publications in any field of musicology, from history and aesthetics to sociology and foreign music. Titles are given in German translation, and occasionally in *pinyin* (a phonetic transcription system of Chinese). A selected (two-page) glossary of Chinese musical terms is included. The author, Jin Jingyan, is a researcher of the Music Research Institute in Beijing.

ASIAN MUSIC

Volume XXI, no.2 of *Asian Music* contains, amongst others, a subject index for vols I-XXI of this journal, various book reviews, articles on Indian and Turkmen music, and also a contribution by Hai-Hsing Yao on 'The Relationship Between Percussive Music And The Movement Of Actors In Peking Opera'. The

forthcoming issues of the journal (Volume XXII nos 1 and 2) are due out in late 1990 and mid-1991. One issue is multi-regional while the other focuses on popular music in China today. *Asian Music* can be ordered from The Society for Asian Music, Department of Asian Studies, 388 Rockefeller Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853 USA.

NEWSLETTER ACMR

Volume 3 no. 2 of the *Newsletter of the Association for Chinese Music Research* (ACMR) contains short contributions by Rulan Chao Pian ('Some random thoughts on the question of singing styles in present day China') and Han Kuo-huang ('The current status of Chinese minority music research'), various announcements and book notes, and a six-page bibliography of writings on Chinese music since 1985, compiled by Su Zheng. A list of addresses of some hundred ACMR members is included. The *Newsletter* can be ordered from Professor Bell Yung, Music Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. Annual membership of the ACMR is US \$ 5 for individuals and US \$ 10 for institutions. (Overseas subscriptions add \$ 5 for mailing). The ACMR Newsletter is published twice a year.

CHINOPERL PAPERS

Chinoperl Papers #15 (1987-89) includes contributions by Samuel H. Cheung ('Structural Cyclicity in *Shuibu Zhuan*: From Self to Sworn Brotherhood'), Wilt Idema ('Zhu Youdun's Plays as a Guide to Fifteenth Century Performance Practice'), Mark Bender ('Felling the Ancient Sweetgum: Antiphonal Epics of the Miao of Southeast Guizhou'), David Moser ('Reflexivity in the Humor of *Xiangsheng*'), Kate Stevens ('The Slopes of *Changban*. A Beijing Drumsong in the *Liu* Style - with translation'), and Bronislaw Kordas ('Poetic Function and the Oral Transmission of Proverbs'). The journal can be ordered from Karen Smith, East Asia Program, Cornell University, 140 Uris Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-7601, USA.

CHINESE JOURNALS

MUSICOLOGY IN CHINA

Recently, vols. 1 and 2, 1990, of *Zhongguo Yinyuexue* 中國音樂學 (Musicology in China), the Journal of the Research Institute of Music, have been published. No. 1, 1990 contains, amongst others, the following feature articles: 'A Preliminary Research into the Term, *Pai* in Tang Dynasty Dance Scores', by Xi Zhenguan; 'A Comparative Analysis of the *Yangge* Dance Music of Four Different Regions', by Xue Yibing; 'A Study of Xun Xu's Pipe Tuning Theory' by Wang Zichu, and a fieldwork

report on drum music in Panjin, Liaoning Province, by Li Runzhong (illustrated with photos of the instruments, maps of the area and examples of the music). No. 2, 1990 contains (a.o.) a lengthy article (51 pages) on the use of Chinese scales in modern composition, called, 'The Extension of National Scales in the Musical Creation Today', by Wang Zhenya, and an overview of different opinions on ancient scores found in Dunhuang: 'The Argument about the Scores from Dunhuang, and the Study of early Musical Notation, and My own Opinions' by Jin Jianmin.

For those who wish to catch up with previous issues: *Zhongguo Yinyuexue* 1989, No. 4, gives a full survey of all articles which appeared in this journal in 1989, arranged according to subject matter. Musicology in China can be ordered directly from the Editorial Office: No. 1 West Building, Dongzhimenwai Xinyuanli, 100027 Beijing, or through the China International Book Trading Co-operation.

NEWSLETTER MUSIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE, BEIJING

The Music Research Institute in Beijing issues a bimonthly Newsletter, called *Yinyue xueshu xinxi* 音樂學術信息 (Academic Messages on Music). It has 24 pages and is produced by the information department of the institute, which monitors new developments in academic music research and translates foreign music publications into Chinese. The Newsletter offers practical information, such as reports on conferences, new publications, ongoing research, etc. Much attention is paid to international developments in music research. Publication of the Newsletter in its present form started in 1986. The Newsletter can be ordered from the Editorial board of *Yinyue Xueshu Xinxi*, Research Institute of Music of the Academy of Arts, No. 1 West Building, Dongzhimenwai Xinyuanli, 100027 Beijing.

MUSIC RESEARCH

Yinyue Yanjiu 音樂研究 (Music Research) 1990, No. 1 contains an introductory article on the Hubei Volume of the Anthology of Chinese Folk Songs: 'An Important Measure to protect the Heritage of Traditional Chinese Music', by Feng Guangyu and Wang Minji. Two further articles of interest are: 'On the Mountain Songs in Northwest China - the National Nature of *hua'er* Tunes', by Wu Peng, and 'The Metrical Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Music - On the Numerical Metre System', by Peng Shiduan.

In *Yinyue Yanjiu* No. 2, Xie Xiaoping reports on a unique *guqin* score which was discovered in the Van Gulik collection kept at the library of the Sinological Institute, Leiden, Holland. The article is called 'The Discovery of the "Longyin guan Qin Score"

abroad - In Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Mei'an Qin Society'. The same issue has, amongst others, an article on 'The Evolution and Progress of the Music of Chinese Local Operas', by Xia Ye, and an elaborate report on pitch in Chaozhou music by Chen Wei and Zheng Shimin: 'The Temperament of Chaozhou Music is Not Seven-tone Equal Temperament'.

No. 3 starts off with a series of essays titled 'Improve Thought, Promote the Creation of Music', by Zhao Feng, Lü Ji, Qu Wei, Du Mingxin, Shi Fu, Li Zhangmin, Feng Guangyu, and Dai Yuwu. These essays reflect various views presented at a meeting on contemporary and pop music, held by the Chinese Musicians' Association in Beijing in June 1990. The journal also contains a number of articles on music education in China, and on the work of the early 20th century Chinese composers Ma Sicong, Jiang Wenye and Tan Xiaolin. Some other topics are: 'Two Remarks on "scores" of Nanyin music', by Zhou Chang, and 'The Traditional Genre and Classification Analysis of the Music of the She Minority', by Ding Xianzhi. *Yinyue Yanjiu* is a publication of the Editorial Board of 'Music Research'. It is published by the People's Music Publishing House, No. 2 Cuiweilu, 100036 Beijing. It can be ordered through the China International Book Trading Cooperation (International Order No.: Q 267).

CONCERTS & FESTIVALS

SIX CHINESE CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

The New Ensemble, a Dutch orchestra specialized in contemporary music, will perform works of six mainland Chinese composers on 2 April 1991 in Paradiso in Amsterdam. The six composers are He Xuntian, Tan Dun, Mo Wuping, Qu Xiaosong, Xu Shuya and Guo Wenjing. All the pieces have been written especially for this concert. The concert will be repeated in Utrecht (Muziekcentrum Vredenburg) on 3 April. In Holland, there are plans for a Festival of New Chinese Music in the Spring of 1992, to be organized as a joint-venture of the Rotterdam Art Foundation, the Dutch Broadcasting Cooperation and the CHIME Foundation.

SOUND RECORDINGS

GUQIN MUSIC BY LI XIANGTING

'Chine: l'Art du qin', a CD album of Chinese zither music played by Li Xiangting 李祥庭, was published by the label Ocora (Radio France), last summer. The number of the disc is C 560001, HM 83. Li Xiangting is a professor of *guqin* music at the Central Conservatory of Music in Peking, currently living in London. The Ocora recording captures the sound-world of the instrument well, with just the

right amount of audible finger movements, part of the qin aesthetic. Li Xiangting belongs to the middle generation of qin players in China. He is the musical heir of the great masters Zha Fuxi and Wu Jinglue, and also a distinguished painter, in the true tradition of the litterateur. Most pieces on the disc are classics in the guqin repertory, such as Meihua san nong, Youlan, Liushui, Yi Guren, Xiao xiang shui yun, and Guanglingsan. (SJ)

UYGUR MUSIC

Recently, two CD records of Uygur music from Xinjiang were issued on the French label Ocora. Xinjiang is China's biggest province, in the far west of the country, with a population of little under 14 million people. The Uygur, with 6 million people, constitute the majority of Xinjiang, but the province is also the permanent home of many other Turco-Mongol peoples, such as Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Uzbeks, Mongols, Taghurs and Tartars. The vast area shares borders with Mongolia, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and its musical cultural traditions are clearly different from those of the Han Chinese. In 1988 and 1989, Sabine Trebinjac and Jean During visited Xinjiang to record Muqam music of the Uygurs: suites of songs to instrumental accompaniment, both to classical and popular texts. The recordings are of excellent quality, and provide a varied picture of, in particular, the purely traditional or 'folk' type of Muqam music (with a soloist or a small group of performers). The CDs are well documented, in a booklet with photographs, texts, notes on the individual performances and ample background information on the geography, general history and music history of the area. *Turkestan chinois/Xinjiang - Musiques Ouigoures* is a highly recommendable 2-CD album for those who wish to acquaint themselves with the autonomous music traditions of China's far West. It has a generous total recording time of 144 minutes. Disc no.1 contains examples of the classical muqam repertoire; disc no.2 focuses on the popular repertoire of the Dolan. [Ocora, Radio France, Order no. C 559092-93 (Paris, 1990)]. (FK)

CHINESE PIANO MUSIC

The German label Wergo offers a collection of new piano music from China, played by Chong Liao, on a CD produced and issued in 1988. 'New' here refers to the 20th century repertoire, not to contemporary music, although the album contains a few modern pieces. Some of the classics of the Chinese piano repertoire are included, such as He Luding's 'Herdsboy's Flute' (the piece that won the first prize in the Tcherépine competition for pianoworks in Chinese style, 1934), Sang Tong's Mongolian Folk Songs, and Wang Lisan's Sonatina. Some pieces by Wang Jianzhong and Li Yinghai reflect

the more formal and academic period of China's art music, and Luo Zhongrong's Three Piano Pieces demonstrate the new freedom which composers in China enjoy: the latter piece sways between Bartók, Prokofiev and Debussy, is written in twelve-tone technique, and would have been unthinkable in China only a decade ago. Surprisingly, it was written by a composer of the older generation. The Wergo label specializes on recordings of contemporary music. A little bit of research might have led to a more representative collection of Chinese avant-garde piano music, including the works of composers like Tan Dun, Guo Wenjing and various others. The present collection (under the title 'The Dream of Heaven') provides a reliable picture of the romantic mainstream of Chinese piano music: pentatonic tunes, Chinese folk rhythms, a preference for *salon* pieces with fancy titles, and chords borrowed from (at best) Bartók and Debussy, but more often borrowed from the 19th century Western romantic repertoire. Harmless music in a flawless performance. The total playing time is 65 minutes. [Wergo, order no. WER 60138-50]. (FK)

'CHINE' - A POTPOURRI

The musicologist Tran Quan Hai made the selection of pieces of Chinese music for the CD 'Chine', produced in France by Playasound. Tran is actually a specialist in the field of Vietnamese music, but he is interested in Chinese music as well, and apparently fascinated by many different musical sounds which originate from the People's Republic. 'Chine' contains various *sizhu* pieces (instrumental tea-house music), but also southern minority instrumental pieces and songs, as well as excerpts from Peking Opera and *Suzhou Tanci*, narrative singing from the Suzhou region. These genres present totally different worlds, and the idea behind the selection is unclear; there is no good reason for combining *sizhu* with minority dances, or Peking Opera with *tanci*, certainly not if the wrong impression is created that these genres are a representable cross-section of Chinese musical culture. The broad, historical introduction to Chinese music, which is included in the accompanying booklet, hardly bears any relation to the pieces performed on the disc. Moreover, one wonders whether a *tanci* performance with a communist propaganda text, sung partly in Suzhounese, partly in Japanese and in broken English, offers a suitable introduction to that genre. One also wonders why, out of three *Jiangnan sizhu* pieces, only in one case a title is mentioned - especially since that title is wrong. And why does Tran present the *sizhu* pieces as 'classical music'? Classical is a term more appropriate for Chinese court music and the *guqin* repertory than for a popular tradition established at the end of the last century. Furthermore, the booklet provides no information whatsoever about who the performers

are, where and when the music was recorded, by whom, etc. This disc, once more, testifies of the embarrassing lack of properly documented sound recordings of Chinese music in the West.

This is not to say that the music excerpts presented are not worth listening to. On the contrary. The excerpts of Yao minority dances are the first ever produced on a record or compact disc in the West, and belong to the very few sound recordings of southern minority music available in Europe. The examples of *lusheng* ensemble music and of minority percussion music are splendid. Anyone fond of potpourris may very well be pleased with 'Chine', but separate and properly documented recordings of the various genres would have been preferable. The total playing time is 65 minutes. *Chine - musique classique; musique des minorités ethniques du sud; conte régional; opera de Pékin*; Playasound PS 65048, produced in 1990 by Sunset-France, 66, Rue de l'Est, 92100 Boulogne, France, distributed by Audivis, 34, Avenue Paul Vaillant-Couturier, 94250 Gentilly, France. (FK)

THE GUO BROS. VERSUS THE CHIEFTAINS

Guo Yue and Guo Yi are two Chinese musicians who came to England a few years ago to further their musical studies. They were asked by David Byrne to contribute to the soundtrack of Bertolucci's film 'The Last Emperor'. In 1989, they were joined by Shung tian, an ensemble of five musicians recruited from the Peking film orchestra, who went on tour to England and was surprised by the Tiananmen events. Shung tian decided to stay on in Britain for a while, and, in co-ordination with the Guo brothers, the ensemble played 'traditional' music - actually a mixture of Chinese tunes and Western-influenced 'light' music. When Pól Brennan, Irish musician and songwriter, and former member of the folk group Clannad, first heard a tape of the Guo brothers, he immediately got interested and decided to collaborate with the Chinese group. This led to a widely publicized CD: The Guo Brothers & Shung Tian, issued by Real World Records, a label of Virgin Records. With the help of advanced studio equipment, the Chinese bamboo flutes, harp dulcimer and other instruments acquire a new sound, full of echoes and special effects, which are reminiscent of New Age music and the experiments of Clannad itself in this field. There is no objection to mixing Chinese and Irish music, nor to adding synthesizers to Chinese instruments, but 'The Guo brothers' are an acquired taste. The electronic gadgets and the co-operation with Pól Brennan do not prevent 'Dancing and singing in the village' (actually an arrangement of a well-known Yao minority tune) from sounding dull, nor 'Step by step' from sounding stiff and uninspired. Compare the latter with the arrangement of the same tune by the Chieftains, on their record 'The Chieftains in China'. There it is

called 'Full of joy' - probably more Irish and more 'folky', but also far more lively and more inspired. Those with an interest in 'folk' may very well prefer the older record by the Chieftains, which has now been re-issued on CD. The group made a tour to China in 1984 and, playing together for the first time with Chinese musicians in a rehearsal room in Peking, the Irish and Chinese musicians discovered an almost uncanny appreciation of each other's music. Paddy Moloney, leader of the Chieftains, believes that Irish music has a much more intimate relationship with Indian music rather than Western folk forms. He believes that somewhere along the lines, what has become identifiable as Chinese traditional music crossed with the early foundation of Irish music, as one moved east, the other moved west. A theory yet to be substantiated, but at least the record which the Chieftains made together with musicians in China offers a far more convincing synthesis of Chinese and Irish elements than the one by the Guo brothers. It is also more enjoyable. *The Guo Brothers & Shung Tian - 'Yuan'*; Real World CD 260.680, 1990, Virgin Records LTD, also available as cassette and gramophone record. *The Chieftains in China*, CC42CS, Claddagh Records LTD, Dame House, Dame Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. (FK)

UNIQUE MUSIC OF GREAT ANTIQUITY

Only a year ago, the Chinese Record Corporation started producing CD's, and one of its first products is a very memorable one: 'Unique Music of Great Antiquity' features a number of arrangements of Chinese folk tunes and Tang Dynasty classical tunes for instrumental ensemble with bronze chime bells and chime stones. The title of the CD is the only bombastic aspect of the record, because the music itself is very delicate, and there is no attempt to present the various pieces as 'scientific reconstructions' of ancient scores, which they are not. This has happened, unfortunately, with previous records which featured the Chime bells unearthed in 1978 from Marquis Yi's tomb in Suizhou in Hubei Province. The CD contains an exquisite rendering of the classical guqin piece *Youlan* by Li Xiangting, in an arrangement with bronze chime bells. The deep sound of the bells is a pleasure to listen to, also in the other pieces. The nature of the music is calm and solemn, but never dull or uninspired. It has not been spoiled by adding a large orchestra or Westernizing the music. The record is accompanied by a booklet with a brief, down-to-earth account of how the chime bells of Marquis Yi's tomb were discovered, and some excellent photographs.

An absolute must for lovers of Chinese music. *Unique Music of Great Antiquity*, recorded by the Hubei Provincial Museum and the China Record Corporation, CCD-89/28; produced 1989; also available on cassette. (FK)

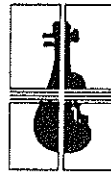
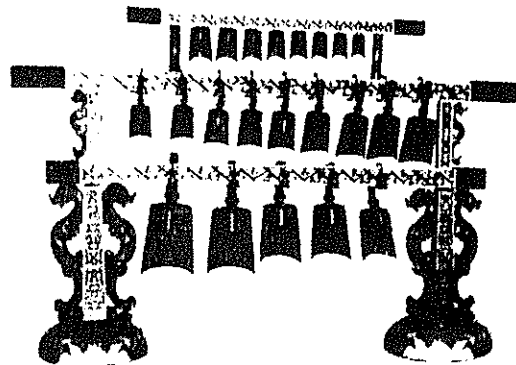
**CHIME, 1ST ANNUAL MEETING (SEPTEMBER 1991, GENEVA)
- CALL FOR PAPERS -**

The first annual meeting of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research (CHIME) will be held in conjunction with the 8th annual meeting of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology, which takes place from 23 to 29 September 1991, in Geneva, Switzerland. There is no special theme, but there will be particular emphasis on practical reports, results of recent fieldwork, illustrated with live recordings, films, video, or live performances. All papers are expected to present new insights. The exact date of the (one-day) CHIME meeting has not yet been decided upon. All contributions will be in English. Papers of 15-20 minutes duration are invited. Abstracts of 400-500 words should be sent to CHIME, c/o Frank Kouwenhoven, Post Box 11092, 2301 EB Leiden, The Netherlands.

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The International Council for Traditional Music has pleasure in announcing that its Thirty First World Conference will be held from 3 to 9 July, 1991, at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Themes of the Conference: 1. Current Research in Chinese Music; 2. Role of the Great Religions in the Musical and Dance Traditions of Asia; 3. European Music in Asia: Reception and Transformation. Papers that do not fall within the above themes will also be considered. ICTM members who wish to read a paper are asked to send their proposal as soon as possible to Prof. Bell Yung, Music Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA 15260, USA. Tel. (412) 624-4061; Fax: (412) 648-5911. e-mail: byun@pittvms.bitnet. Proposals should include the title of the paper, an outline of its contents (ca. 150 words), the language in which the paper will be read, and the type(s) of illustrations to be used. Proposals whose contents have been previously presented in print or otherwise, will be rejected. Members will be notified as close as possible to 1 January, 1991, whether or not their proposals are accepted.

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目錄

編者按 - 重要的是去那兒.....	3
施聶姐 (Antoinet Schimmelpenninck) - 一百年的中國民歌研究.....	4
韓國 黃 (Han Kuo-Huang) - 少數民族音樂研究近期的發展情況.....	24
饒羅斌 (Robin Ruizendaal) - 福建省鐵枝傀儡戲的重新發現.....	28
汪洪 (Wang Hong) - 中國民族音樂集成, 江蘇曲藝卷的編輯工作.....	43
榮鴻曾 (Bell Yung) - 中國音樂雜誌.....	52
高文厚 (Frank Kouwenhoven) - 中國大陸的現代音樂(上): 走出荒漠.....	58
展艾倫 (Alan R. Thrasher) - 泰國北方的中國少數民族音樂.....	94
信息, 報告.....	96
中國音樂學術研究動向.....	96
報告, 新聞.....	99
會議.....	102
新書 (外文).....	104
新書 (中文).....	107
刊物 (外文).....	107
刊物 (中文).....	108
音樂會.....	109
新出的音響材料.....	109

FOR OUR CHINESE READERS

中国音乐研究欧洲基金会 "CHIME" ("磬")

主要目的和范围:

CHIME 是一个促进,发展欧洲研究中国音乐的基金会.她的主要作用是在欧洲建立一个联络网,以便在欧洲从事研究中国音乐的专家,学者能定期地探讨他们的工作.基金会的研究范围包括在中国境内所有的汉族以及其他民族的音乐,而且还包括接近中国音乐的邻国地区的音乐文化,以便比较及研究.

和"ESEM"联合召开的会议

CHIME将密切地与欧洲民间音乐学会(ESEM)合作,每年在ESEM召开会议期间,本会将同时召集欧洲以及世界各地的中国音乐专家.

信息通讯

CHIME将每年两次发行信息通讯.(如需要将增刊).内容包括有关在中国实地研究的报告和关于图书,音响,科学杂志,音乐会,集会,正在进行中的研究工作,大学课程以及奖学金提供的消息.这份信息通讯是提供交流意见和消息的场所,而不刊登长篇科学文章.欢迎读者投稿.

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CHIME在荷兰莱顿的办工处建立了中国音乐资料中心.它既收藏图书,又收集和存放有关中国音乐的报告,文章,论文.CHIME将有选择地提供发表机会:所有未出版的有关中国音乐的文章都将受到欢迎.资料中心也收集音响,录象资料.

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