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Chinese Music and its Globalized Past and Present

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Music, Globalization, and the Chinese Self¹

Joseph Lam

I. Introduction

*I*n September 2006, I toured China with a group of highly educated and musically sophisticated American businessmen, professionals, and retirees. During the tour, we took a boat ride upstream on the Agricultural Progenitor's Stream (Shennongxi), a tributary of the Yangtze River. There and then, we witnessed boatmen calls and female tour guides singing Chinese ethnic songs and American favorites. Prompted by the tour guides, we also sang, creating American echoes in scenic and tourist China.

Looking back, I find the boat ride a revealing and challenging moment of musical globalization, as it underscores many fundamental questions and contrasting positions.² Are the Chinese songs that we heard authentic?³ Why do Chinese sing American tunes? Do they sing for themselves or for foreign tourists? Do American songs become Chinese when sung by Chinese girls in China? What is global or local, traditional or contemporary, in globalized China or America? What is at stake and how is it negotiated from contrasting positions?⁴

As an attempt to discuss Chinese music as a phenomenon with diverse but not disjunctive elements,⁵ this essay posits the following interpretation. Music constitutes a discourse of Chinese globalization, a dialogue of controlled vocabularies and planned goals between Chinese and non-Chinese participants.⁶ As such, music allows contemporary Chinese to construct and negotiate, among themselves and with the non-Chinese other, their Chinese self—a subjective, reflexive, tran-



Illustration 1. Going Upstream on the Shennongxi.

scendental, and transformative agent of Chinese actions and imaginations that is simultaneously a force and a result of the process.⁷ It is with references to this self that Chinese people claim musics of contrasting and conflicting forms and contents as their own, generating a dynamic music culture that revealingly and simultaneously operates with a multitude of indigenous and adopted musical theories, practices, and repertoires, each of which embodies individualized temporalities, sites, memories, and imaginations.

Contemporary Chinese have an urgent need to construct and negotiate their Chinese self because their recent political and economic successes are transforming their country into a global superpower, a development that demands Chinese to adjust their self-perceptions and projections. To adjust, Chinese perform a self according to not only their strategic imaginations and daily realities but also to historically and culturally rooted ideologies and practices. The remembered past not only guides but also legitimizes the Chinese self in the present. To communicate their Chinese self, contemporary Chinese engage in many local and global negotiations, one of which is music, a medium that, they believe, appeals to people's rational minds and emotional hearts alike.

Contemporary Chinese music practitioners—producers, composers, and performers—create music according to their constructed and negotiated self. In the process, they incorporate all musical elements, native or adopted, that they can access and consider appropriate and effective for their purposes. Responding to the music/self thus created and communicated, Chinese music audiences, who may or may not be ethnically or culturally Chinese, would critique it, confirming, rejecting, or adjusting its meanings. Performances and interpretations of the music/self will continue as long as they remain current and relevant to Chinese realities and imaginations. Sustained performances and discussions of the music/self not only bring substantive financial gain and national/international prestige to the practitioners, but also elevate them as cultural-national leaders who have (or are expected to have) the ability and social duty to promote China and her people. Identifying themselves in the music and musical discourses of the Chinese self, the audiences sustain the music/self and its performances, spreading it to wherever they travel. Should the audience reject or want to nuance the self thus discoursed, they would register their voices by disengaging from the negotiations, withholding their social and financial support, or declaring their views in public as well as private venues. When music participants learn of the audiences' messages, they react, positively or negatively, taking appropriate actions or inactions.

The Chinese music/self thus performed and discoursed is composite and changing, as China is heterogeneous and transformative. China must continuously change to respond to historical and current demands imposed from within and without, and to engage with a myriad of native, foreign, and hybridized thoughts, acts, and objects. To make sense of the rapidly changing Chinese world, and to prevent itself from becoming schizophrenic and inoperative, the Chinese self needs to remain subjectively active and coherent; otherwise it could not guide Chinese actions. Declaring such a self authentic, Chinese conveniently downplay its heterogeneous nature. They highlight, on the one hand, its native elements as being fundamental, salient, and disciplined, and on the other hand, the incorporated foreign and/or hybridized components as something universal, learned, and gained. They claim that the adopted elements have become "sinicized." After being used in China for a substantial length of time, during which they have been adjusted by Chinese needs and aesthetics, the adopted elements transform themselves into something distinctively and intrinsically Chinese. To further consolidate their sinicization claim, Chinese

assert that the Chineseness of their music is defined more by what it signifies and less by how it sounds. If some of its sounds evoke the non-Chinese in one way or another, such references are secondary concerns in their discourses of Chinese music/self.

To illustrate this interpretation of Chinese music as a diverse but not disjunctive phenomenon of globalization and as a dynamic embodiment of the multidimensional and multifaceted Chinese self, this article analyzes nine musical works, each a sample of Chinese music discourse, and each a specific view of the Chinese self. To theoretically and factually contextualize the analyses, the essay begins with an overview of China's globalized present and past, highlighting their interactions. Then the article presents the analyses, demonstrating the ways musical features, performance contexts, and cultural-historical ideologies and practices constitute discourses in which Chinese negotiate their Chinese self with stylized vocabularies for specific agendas and at particular moments and sites.⁸

To facilitate discussion, *Chinese music* is heuristically defined as music that is *essentially* produced for and consumed by Chinese people of the present, expressing and addressing their artistic, ritual, economic, political, social, and individual subjectivities and experiences. Music from China's past does not qualify as Chinese music unless it is produced and consumed in the present. Broad and inclusive, this definition underscores the diversity and complexity of Chinese music, and uses the word "essentially" to explicitly imply that some Chinese music practitioners and audiences may not consider themselves ethnically and/or culturally Chinese. In fact, many American, Japanese, and other nationals play undeniable roles in the production and consumption of Chinese music. *Globalized Chinese music* involves not only indigenous Chinese elements but also those that originated in faraway lands, explicitly or implicitly referencing non-Chinese peoples and cultures, past and present. Production and consumption of globalized Chinese music in the late 20th and early 21st centuries transcend the biographical, geographical, political, social, and cultural boundaries of China and Chinese people. As theoretical categories, Chinese music and globalized Chinese music only differ in one significant way: the former is heard as local and traditional or modernized, while the latter is treated as global, contemporary, and hybridized. The difference between the two becomes ambiguous as soon as one tries to quantitatively and qualitatively access what is Chinese or globalized, and what roles individual musical elements—specific aesthetics, compositional

procedures, timbres, rhythms, and so forth—play in specific musical compositions.

II. China's Globalized Present

It is no secret that Chinese music has been globalizing in Chinese ways. To probe such a complex and dynamic phenomenon, the critical question to ask is not whether the music has been so stylistically transformed by global forces and styles that it no longer qualifies as a distinctive and authentic Chinese expression,⁹ but what and how Chinese and global elements have interacted with one another in the production and consumption of the music, and what meanings the processes have generated. To investigate the globalization of Chinese music as a process of external forces transforming Chinese sonic expressions undermines Chinese agency. Creatively and actively, Chinese produce and consume their musics. They strategically manipulate globalizing forces and resources to serve their musical needs and musically negotiate their self with the other. To foreground Chinese subjectivity and agency, globalized Chinese music needs to be approached as a phenomenon built with diverse Chinese and non-Chinese elements which can hardly be meaningfully split from one another.

Anyone who has stayed in China for extended periods and engaged in substantial ways with her people, sites, sounds, and sights will have experienced the phenomenon and noticed how its diverse elements interact and coordinate in their own ways. To illustrate, a brief description of Chinese cities will suffice. Many cities in China have been globalized. In many ways, they are confusingly similar to London, New York, Paris, Singapore, Tokyo, and other metropolises of the world.¹⁰ In Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, for example, one finds gigantic airports; extensive transportation systems of subways and highways; spacious parks and plazas surrounding governmental office buildings, museums, and other civic institutions that showcase national and local treasures and pride; glassy skyscrapers with logos of international corporations or mammoth TV screens displaying the latest news and advertisements; posh shopping malls selling goods from around the world; and rows of restaurants serving world cuisines. Shuttling among these globalized Chinese locations are people, most of whom physically look Chinese or Asian, wearing business suits, casual jeans, and other globally fashionable costumes; many among these people in transit are talking on cell phones held close to their ears and mouths.



Illustration 2. Tiananmen and Chairman Mao.

If one examines the cities and the people a bit closer, however, one finds, in addition to more evidence of globalization, many local and distinctive signs. Inside Beijing city, for example, one finds the Forbidden City, Chairman Mao's mausoleum, *hutong* (alleys) with old Chinese houses that are now popular tourist sites, and the Panjiayuan Bazaar of Antiques, where native and foreign collectors can purchase all kinds of historical relics, mostly fake, for reasonable sums of money. Just outside Beijing city proper, one finds the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs, and the Chinese Minorities Park. Witnessing such Chinese signs mingled among many that are either Western, non-Chinese, or generic, one sees how the local, the global, the old, the new, the Chinese, and the non-Chinese operatively coexist in China. Thus, one asks how the diverse elements interact to forge globalized and postmodern realities in China. Since Chinese citizens appear to prosper, one has to presume that there is some sort of overarching logic or system in their operations, which bystanders may, nevertheless, find dissonant, if not schizophrenic.¹¹

Indeed, should one search beneath China's globalized and postmodern façade, one finds what coordinates her diverse and disjunctive ele-



Illustration 3. A Multi-Storied Bookstore in Beijing.

ments, generating operative coherence and exercising Chinese agency. Witness the case of Hong Kong, where one finds not only the tallest (85 feet) outdoor bronze Buddha statue in the world, sitting atop a hill that is only miles away from Disneyland, but also rows and rows of skyscrapers all over the city. If the statue is propped by religious and traditional Chinese practices in the former British colony, the skyscrapers, in all kinds of shapes and styles, attest to a multitude of realities and dreams, all of which are intricately linked. For instance, some imposing buildings in Central, one of the top financial districts in the world, architecturally signify forces and memories that dominate the minds and actions of Hong Kong residents. The sharp silhouette of the China Bank, designed by I.M. Pei, cuts like a dagger, symbolizing perhaps the cutting-edge post-modernity of the new socialist-capitalist China, which welcomed Hong Kong back into her political embrace in 1997. China is now a critical force driving the Hong Kong financial engine. The avant-garde HSBC Group building, which stands close by, features a ground floor with no walls and an open space marked by a pair of bronze lions in “Western” poses. The building projects the proud history of the past while exuding present confidence for the future.



Illustration 4. Panjiayuan Antique Bazaar, Beijing.



Illustration 5. An Overview of Hong Kong.



Illustration 6. Bronze Buddha in Lantau Island, Hong Kong.¹²

HSBC Group grew out of the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, a British financial firm that was first launched in colonial Hong Kong in 1865. It then developed in semi-colonial and early 20th-century Shanghai and subsequently matured in the internationalized Hong Kong of the mid- and late 20th century. Currently headquartered

in London, the firm has its financial arms spread all over the world. Many local or expatriate clients doing business with the HSBC Group in Hong Kong own commercial businesses and factories in China that literally stretch along coastal China, from Hong Kong in the south to Shenyang in the north.

As revealed by Hong Kong, globalized China is driven by a good number of Chinese and non-Chinese forces, which include individual and collective subjectivities, national and international politics and economies, historical and cultural memories, current and rapidly changing realities, and creative and strategic solutions. How the forces interact and what results they generate cannot be simplistically generalized, but the dynamic operations and negotiations that frame the musical discourses of the Chinese self can be glimpsed through Chinese tourism. Inside contemporary Chinese cities are many hotels built to accommodate national and international travelers. In these homes-away-from-home that offer all kinds of global and branded luxuries and desires, Chinese and non-Chinese travelers alike conduct their out-of-town business or enjoy their personal encounters with exotic or familiar China. As much as the hotels reveal foreign investments, technologies, and other global dreams that contemporary China has imported, hotels do not by themselves suppress or invalidate what is Chinese and local. In fact, hotels provide many launching pads for tourists to journey into Chinese hearts and minds.

It is from hotels that most tourists board tour buses or limousines to visit natural and historical vistas that monumentalize China. Traveling along congested roads, the tourists sit in their comfortable vehicles, breathe cleansed air, and listen to the guide's introduction to the sites. Sometimes they get mini-lectures on Chinese culture and history. Some tour guides, one should note, are highly educated specialists who have joined the tourism industry for financial survival. Between the guide's talks, the tourists rest, with Chinese music suavely packaged to soothe their bodies and souls. In addition to sightseeing and exploring activities, tourists attend cultural performances. Highlights in their Chinese sojourn, these performances range from Chinese folk music and dance shows to acrobatic stunts accompanied by popular and Westernized music. In short, if Chinese tourism essentializes Chinese people and culture, it also exposes the actual and working China.

For this reason, one cannot categorically dismiss tourist and popular images and messages about China as globalized, Westernized, inauthentic, and devoid of Chinese meanings. This is particularly true if one



Illustration 7. Entrance Sign, Songcheng, Hangzhou.

notes that many tourist sites in China, especially those built as theme parks or entertainment centers, are manufactured to satisfy native dreams and needs. Songcheng (Song City) in Hangzhou, for example, provides a fascinating case, demonstrating how the global and the local have joined forces to stimulate memories about a particular historical time and place in China, namely, Lin'an, the capital of Southern Song China (1127–1279), at a critical stage in Chinese history.¹³ Hangzhou is where Lin'an once stood. Built as a miniature of the historical city, complete with streets, temples, shops, restaurants, and homes, the theme park sells historical imaginations and entertainment with a catchy slogan: "*Geiwo yitian, huan ni qiannian.*" Literally, it says, "Give me one day, and I will return to you a thousand years"—the promise of reaping huge profits with a minuscule investment underscores current Chinese dreams of getting rich effortlessly and overnight. In less emotive language, what the slogan claims is: "If you come to visit this theme park for one day, you will leave with memories about the Southern Song dynasty of a thousand years ago."

Contemporary Chinese fondly remember and imagine thirteenth-century Lin'an as a culturally creative and socially dynamic metropolis



Illustration 8. A Drum and Ribbon Dance, Songcheng.

of more than a million people. It was where romantic scholar-officials and beautiful courtesans frolicked around the scenic West Lake—a history and a lifestyle that Chinese operas continuously glamorize and many Chinese individuals crave.¹⁴ To help Chinese people get in touch with such a remembered and romanticized past, to promote tourism in Hangzhou,¹⁵ and to make money for the investors, Songcheng was launched in 1995. It attracts visitors by offering a rich program of daily activities and musical shows, such as processions of dignitaries escorted with loud drum and wind music, and energetic performances of instrumental music and dances at the city gate by handsome young men and beautiful girls. Featuring catchy melodies and bouncing rhythms, the performances are created to entertain visitors and stimulate their imaginations about the cherished past of Southern Song China. Jaded world travelers and music audiences will probably find nothing artistic or significant in these anachronistic sights and sounds. Some would not hesitate to criticize them as bastardized sounds of global tourism. The reality is that Southern Song music as it was actually heard in the thirteenth century has vanished. Unless Chinese music practitioners mix fact with fiction, they cannot musically communicate

what they have learned or imagined about Southern Song China, a historical time and site that occupies such a special place in Chinese understandings of who they were and still are.

Chinese merging of realities and dreams through music is not limited to Songcheng. Throughout globalized China, such musical discourses are regularly launched and disseminated by Chinese media. Like their Western counterparts, Chinese TV, radio, and music corporations track consumer needs, design fashions for them to follow, and manufacture and sell products that they want. In other words, the music products thus marketed significantly overlap with what Chinese consumers experience in tourist venues, theme parks, and entertainment centers. Listening to the commercially packaged music, consumers can relive the pleasures they have experienced in tourist or entertainment sites or through movies and TV shows. As Chinese consumers purchase their desired music more and more, they generate a rapidly expanding music market. Telling signs of this development are multi-storied shops that sell all kinds of music products, which include all varieties of recorded music (CDs, CVDs, and DVDs), Chinese and Western musical instruments, manuals on composition and performance on all types of Chinese and Western musics, books on music histories and biographies, and so forth. The variety of choices attests to the Chinese consumer's agency in shaping Chinese music culture: most would only purchase musics that they enjoy and use to confirm who they are or want to become.

What makes Chinese media a critical channel of musical discourse is the fact that it provides the only public, officially sanctioned, and financially affordable stage for most Chinese to musically and actively express their self. China has relatively few public music performance venues, and most live performances involve large-scale cultural programs and festivals that the government and semi-official institutions control. China has no significant philanthropic or civic foundations that regularly sponsor affordable and educational concerts for the general public. Few Chinese universities have music departments or established concert programs to musically educate their students. Large-scale and commercial concerts of popular music have recently become common in China; such commercial and occasional events, however, reach mostly affluent audiences and fans. Many genres of popular and vernacular music, especially those that involve politically and socially bold performers, can only be heard in private homes or small cafés or bars.

Government and corporate control of Chinese music production, nevertheless, does not stop practitioners and audiences from finding ways to effectively negotiate their Chinese self with music. In fact, for the first time in their music history, Chinese people can freely and strategically engage with the music they desire, producing and consuming a large variety of recorded works, Chinese or non-Chinese, historical or contemporary, elite or popular.¹⁶ Visiting Chinese music stores or commercial websites, consumers can purchase all kinds of Chinese music products. These include, for example, “ancient” music played on replicas of the Marquis Yi bell-chimes of 2,500 years ago; *pipa* (four-stringed lute) renditions of Tang dynasty (618–907) tunes notated and preserved in thousand-years-old manuscripts once archived in the Dunhuang caves and now held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; lyrical *ci* songs written by Jiang Kui (1155–1221), a thirteenth-century Chinese musical and poetic genius; virtuosic *qin* music that Zhu Quan (1378–1448), a Ming prince, collected and published in his *Anthology of Mystical and Precious Qin Music* (*Shenqi mipu*) of 1425; flowing melodies of *Kun* arias (*Kunqu*) that late Ming (1550–1644) and early Qing (1644–1730) elites sang with their fellow connoisseurs and courtesans/household entertainers; festive ensemble music of gongs, drums, shawms, and flutes that first flourished in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jiangnan; masterpieces of Peking operas that Mei Lanfang (1894–1961) created in the early decades of the 20th century; “timeless” ethnic musics heard in Chinese cities and contemporary Xinjiang, Yunnan, and other ethnic enclaves or autonomous regions; Chinese vernacular songs (*tongsu gequ*) and Chinese rock-n-roll (*yaogun yinyue*); and avant-garde concert music created by composers trained in the U.S. and Europe. The list can go on and on.

This diversity is meaningful because the distinctive genres embody particularized Chinese temporalities, sites, biographies, aesthetics, practices, and styles. As such, the genres provide Chinese practitioners and audiences with a wealth of materials and platforms to individually, collectively, selectively, sequentially, and/or simultaneously negotiate their desired Chinese self. Chinese people are neither immune to nor unaware of national and global forces that limit their musical discourses. Nevertheless, they know how to work within or push the limits, making their voices and concerns known. Chinese minority peoples’ recent use of popular styles to air their ethnic and social concerns within and without their homes is, for example, only one among a number of notable examples of such grassroots resistance.¹⁷

Individually or collectively, musicians and audiences can, however, neither totally eschew the Chinese self that the government and international corporations promote, nor completely reject standardized practices and homogenized sounds. One among many of such national and top-down homogeneities, the merits of which are controversial, is a sonic texture that can be found in many genres of Chinese musics. It features soprano melodies played by fiddles (*huqin*), flutes (*dizi*), or other Chinese string or wind instruments; accompaniments or contrapuntal and rhythmic inner voices played by *pipa*, dulcimer (*yangyin*), and zither (*zheng*); and propelling harmonic bass lines played by the enlarged moon-guitar (*ruan*), cello or other bass instruments. As a distinctively Chinese sonic texture, it is on the one hand unmistakably reminiscent of traditional practices and, on the other hand, explicitly evocative of the Western concert music of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe.

As commonplace as it now is, this distinctive sonority is a globalized and hybridized Chinese expression. Forcefully introduced and promoted by music officials in socialist China, it has gained universal acceptance only since the 1980s, when a global and media-driven market of Chinese music performances and recordings rapidly emerged. Regardless of how critics may discuss the sonority as Chinese, Westernized, hybridized, local, global, and artistically empowering or suffocating, it is a musical sound that embodies interactions between China and the West since at least the late 1950s.¹⁸

It vividly tells how Chinese used music to negotiate their realities and identities, a history that needs to be briefly reviewed here. Soon after China became a people's republic in 1949, her socialist government launched a series of extensive and drastic music reforms, nation-building projects that responded to domestic and international forces. One of the most striking and influential results was the emergence of a new tradition of Chinese instrumental music, hereafter termed *contemporary Chinese instrumental music*. As discussed in Chinese literature, it can be flexibly and ambiguously labeled as Chinese commoners' music (*minyue*), Chinese instrumental music (*zhongguo qiyue*), or Chinese traditional or ethnic music (*minzu yinyue*). Played with mostly Chinese musical instruments, but featuring not only traditional melodies and rhythms but also newly developed Chinese and 20th-century harmonies and counterpoints, the tradition/genre is a hybridized and localized result of musical globalization.

The genre developed in a specific historical and musical context of Chinese and Western interactions. In 1911, Imperial China collapsed, after being invaded by Western military power and scientific might since the 1830s.¹⁹ Thus humiliated and downgraded into a backward and semi-colonial nation-state, China had to modernize to survive. As a result, early 20th-century China embraced all kinds of Western ideologies and practices, including those of music. In fact, many leading Chinese intellectuals and officials of the time, such as Xiao Youmei (1884–1940), openly argued that traditional Chinese music was backward, and that musical China could only be saved by adopting Western music.²⁰ Implementing their musical vision, pro-West music intellectuals and officials embraced the Western musical language of tonal harmonies and orchestral textures, and had it formally taught in the newly established schools and conservatories. Realizing the potential of musical China as a source of exotic sounds and a market for selling Western music products, American and European music institutions promptly sent their musicians, products and technologies, and in no time established a hegemonic presence.

Before musical China became totally Westernized, or colonialized, however, political China became a socialist nation-state, and chose to assert her political and cultural independence. Marching with proletarian banners, socialist China thus started to promote commoners' music at the expense of Chinese court music, *qin* music, and other elite and/or Westernized genres. This is to say that since 1949, all genres of traditional Chinese music produced and consumed by Chinese commoners, ranging from folksongs to narrative singing to operas, were nominally "liberated" and adjusted as authentic musical expressions of the new China.

It was a musical liberation because it aspired to remove all social and cultural stigma associated with Chinese commoner musicians and their music, generating new musical values and realities. In imperial China, one should remember, commoner musicians enjoyed little social prestige; they mostly operated as musical entertainers and servants, and their musical expressions were designated as vernacular (if not vulgar and undesirable) games and hobbies. Throughout the centuries, Chinese played a lot of musical instruments in ritual, processional, dramatic, and leisure contexts, but they rarely performed concerts of instrumental music with featured soloists and without singing of lyrics. Even when the traditional elite played *qin* or *pipa* solos in their private studios for friends and connoisseurs, they did not perform as

hired hands, and they often sang with instrumental playing. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that even if contemporary Chinese instrumental music sounds exactly like commoners' instrumental music did before 1949, many of its performance and listening practices and concepts of musical compositions have been transformed by socialist China's rejection of undesirable practices of the past, and by its embrace of musical technologies from the West.

It is clear that contemporary Chinese instrumental music does not sound exactly like its predecessors of 1940 or earlier decades because traditional Chinese instrumental music did not feature inner and contrapuntal voices, modal harmonies, and walking basses, which are, however, common features of Western art music since the 1600s. It is also clear that contemporary Chinese instrumental music does not sound exactly like Western art music, even though the newly developed counterpoints and harmonies clearly reveal their Western origin. To become a proud, modern, and nationalistic expression of the new China, contemporary Chinese instrumental music has to sound distinctive. It cannot sound like traditional Chinese music; if it did, it would only remind its audiences of "feudalistic" and "backward" times and practices. At the same time, contemporary Chinese instrumental music cannot sound exactly like Western music either. Sounds that slavishly emulate Western models privilege the West as the teacher/colonizer and negate Chinese agency and independence. Striking an effective balance, contemporary Chinese instrumental music forged a new sound and became the preferred music discourse of new China by default. In addition to tapping into the aura of instrumental music in the West, the genre skirts the issues of Chinese language and dialects. Mandarin, the official language of China, is not the mother tongue of many Chinese citizens who speak many dialects. Chinese songs sung in Mandarin or dialects may appeal only to those who understand the national language or regional dialects. Without the burden of language/dialect, contemporary Chinese instrumental music attempts to appeal to all Chinese.

Given the national urgency to develop contemporary Chinese instrumental music as a distinctively Chinese and modernized expression, it is no accident that Chinese theorists and musicians soon developed the new sonority being discussed here. It is a sonic texture that would, on the one hand, favorably compare with Western art music or the international standard, and on the other hand, effectively project

China's new status and independence, while connecting it to historical and cultural roots.

The rise of contemporary Chinese instrumental music and its distinctive sonority, however, involves more than musical and political decisions. Its success has also significantly benefited from the Westernizing and globalizing forces of music education in mid- and late 20th-century China. If the newly established conservatories and music academies of socialist China hired many prominent commoner music masters as professors to teach traditional Chinese music, the institutions also employed many faculty and administrators who grew up in republican China, learning and admiring Western instrumental and concert music as a universal model. In other words, the conservatories provided a fertile ground for Western/Westernized music agents to exercise their pro-West theories and practices. The impact they have had on contemporary Chinese instrumental music is unmistakable. Since the mid-1970s, most major Chinese cities have their own orchestras playing Chinese melodies with modal harmonies, counterpoints, and other hybridized features.²¹ As musical and civic enterprises, the orchestras rival philharmonic powerhouses in Berlin, London, New York, and Paris.

As demand for contemporary Chinese instrumental music increases, and as its marketability has become clear since the late 1980s, new forms of teaching, learning, and marketing have emerged. This development has rendered the distinctive sonority of the genre more widespread and homogenizing. It can now, for example, be found in some performances of *Kunqu*, the historical and classical form of Chinese operas. Responding to new demands, many individual master instrumentalists have set up commercial studios to teach private students. Some even compile and produce electronic tutors in the form of CDs and DVDs for students to learn at home and on their own, transmitting contemporary Chinese instrumental compositions, performance techniques, and theories wide and far.²² "Distance learning" of Chinese music through TV programs or the Internet is no longer a dream but a reality.

These electronic outreach programs not only affirm forces of the Chinese media and other national and international institutions, but also reveal the cultural, social, and individual links in globalized Chinese music. In fact, contemporary Chinese instrumental music would not have become so prevalent if it was not supported by all kinds of Chinese music practitioners and audiences. Recognizing the charm

of music, its cultural and social meanings, educational functions, and potential for enhancing one's social standing, many Chinese parents have their children take music lessons. The instruments they choose for their offsprings to learn, however, gravitate toward the piano,²³ violin, *guzheng*, *erhu*, and *pipa*, the most popular musical instruments in China. The piano and violin figure prominently in this cultural and social discourse because they underscore the hegemonic position of Western/Westernized music in China. Growing up with years of music lessons, many Chinese subsequently become dedicated audiences, if not skilled musicians. Some even go on to conservatories to try their luck at becoming professionals. Most give up their dreams before long, and move on to learn new and more practical trades.

If such trades or the necessity of finding a new means of livelihood prompt some Chinese people to emigrate from China, they bring their globalized and hybridized contemporary Chinese instrumental music to their new homes in Australia, Europe, North America and beyond. As a result, throughout the globalized world, wherever there are Chinese people, there is Chinese music, which often means contemporary Chinese instrumental music, whether it is played on the piano, the *guzheng*, or with some kind of mixed ensembles. Many overseas Chinese communities have their own professional or semi-professional orchestras, perpetuating and spreading their Chinese music/self to the host communities.²⁴ Often immigrant Chinese musicians collaborate with local and non-Chinese artists, creating music that fuses diverse genres and styles, ranging from blues to zydeco. As these hybridized Chinese genres become popularized through performances, movies, and other contemporary venues, they prompt their audiences to sonically confront the Chinese self projected.²⁵

The ways native and overseas Chinese directly and indirectly shape contemporary Chinese instrumental music constitute a unique but not isolated discourse of the Chinese self. Similar interactions between Chinese/local and non-Chinese/global elements manifest themselves in the genres of Chinese concert music, vernacular songs, and minority music (*xiaosu minzu yinyue*). Chinese concert music, namely, music that Chinese composers create with the language of Western or international concert music, holds a highly valorized niche in musical imaginations of the Chinese self and its interactions with the Western other. Many contemporary Chinese elite, especially those who have studied in the West, esteem the genre because they believe it is a contemporary and serious expression, one that is intrinsically meritorious and one

that appeals to both Chinese and non-Chinese alike. Implementing this belief, Chinese conservatories devote a lot of human and material resources to train Chinese pianists, violinists, singers, conductors, and composers so that they can favorably compete with their Western counterparts.

In return, whenever these musicians achieve international success, they certify China's musical and contemporary prowess. Thus, when Chinese citizens win international music competitions, they make national history and become national heroes. Witness the social prestige and popularity of Li Yundi and Lang Lang: the former won the grand prize at the International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition (2000) and the latter has become an international sensation. Chinese admiration of musical and national heroes extends to those who no longer live in China or are legally no longer Chinese citizens. To cite but a few, these overseas Chinese or naturalized foreign nationals include composers like Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, Chen Yi, and Zhou Long, who received their first professional musical training in China, emigrated, and subsequently earned international fame in the West.²⁶ As Chinese heroes, they personify Chinese dreams, and their individualized, Westernized, and hybridized musical styles and practices become models for aspiring musicians in China, artists who are struggling to break out of their Chinese confines.

Another revealing musical discourse of Chinese desires, realities, and forces involves Chinese vernacular songs,²⁷ a particular type of nationalistic and popular music that the government and government-controlled media have engineered and promoted. What triggered the development were, however, global forces that reached Mainland China via different parts of East Asia. When China opened her doors in the early 1980s, Hong Kong and Taiwanese popular music promptly flooded the new market. With new sounds and styles, which had significantly emulated Western and Japanese popular music, popular songs from peripheral China captivated Mainland Chinese audiences by satisfying their craving for creative and innovative tunes. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Chinese musical audiences could only listen to revolutionary songs and operas, genres that the government rigidly controlled. Socialist China of the late 1970s and early 1980s had no popular music in the Western and current sense of the term.

To counteract the invasion of global/Asian musical imports, Mainland China promptly manufactured a new and controlled version of

popular music. Subsequently known as vernacular songs, they feature sounds more stylistically varied and innovative than the Mainland Chinese audience used to hear. To fight for audiences, it has even incorporated some musical elements directly from the West, Central Asia, or other exotic lands of the world. Constrained by political and social agendas, vernacular songs are stylistically compromised. As a result, while some vernacular songs have successfully attracted a large number of Mainland Chinese music consumers, the genre as a whole neither satisfies the musical needs of the young and adventurous, nor appeals to those who have studied in the West and returned with personal memories of Western popular music performed *in situ*. Many of these audiences choose to engage with authentic Western imports or hybridized genres, such as Chinese rock-n-roll, that mixes American music practices with Chinese aesthetics and stylistic adjustments.²⁸

As the hybridized and innovative genres have become more widely known and desirable, they have critically impacted musical China. In particular, they have encouraged Chinese minority musicians to sing their own tunes, demonstrating that globalization has reached all corners of the Chinese world. Until recent years, when Chinese minority music was produced and consumed outside its own homeland, it was often adjusted and packaged with Han aesthetics and performance practices. With China being globalized and her exotic and ethnic regions becoming trendy playgrounds for international tourists, Han adjustments become less desirable, and are even camouflaged or circumvented. Grasping such opportunities to exercise their own agency, Chinese ethnic minorities have begun to sing more creatively and openly, mixing the global and the local in their own non-Han ways, and negotiating the Chinese self that they have rejected or given themselves.

III. China's Globalized Past

Collectively, instrumental music, concert music, vernacular songs, minority music, and other traditional as well as new genres of Chinese music constitute a very complex and diverse phenomenon. The force that gives it operational coherence and overarching meanings is the Chinese self, a subjective agent behind and a tangible result of Chinese discourses about who they are and what they desire. As such, the Chinese self is being constantly constructed or reconstructed to cope with changing demands. Whenever Chinese feel their Chinese self is

being threatened, they promptly and vigorously strive to maintain and/or adjust that core of their existence. In the 1950s and '60s, the Chinese self operated according to socialist/nationalist agendas. In the first decade of the 21st century, the Chinese self faces critical competition in a globalized world. As successful and confident as they are today, Chinese know that they cannot be complacent and must prepare for the future. Burdened by many painful and shameful memories from the recent and semi-colonial past, they acutely feel that others are watching threateningly.²⁹ To fortify their own being so that they can effectively and favorably compete with the other in the present and in the future, Chinese actively construct and communicate their Chinese self among themselves and to the other.

Seeking guidance and authentication for their constructive, communicative, and proactive efforts, Chinese search everywhere for models and lessons. Oftentimes they look back to China's past for insights. They know that, in broad terms, their ancestors acutely experienced and successfully addressed what they are facing today. Historical China regularly and actively engaged with peoples and cultures stretched across the Eurasian continent and along sea routes linking China and the Muslim and Christian worlds.³⁰ In the process, a multitude of peoples, ideas, practices, and objects moved across diverse temporalities, great distances, contrasting cultures, and competing communities, generating conflicts and negotiations, producing localized needs and results, and satisfying or crushing particularized desires and dreams. Viewed today, the mass migration of peoples in historic China and their numerous exchanges are not unlike those of the current globalization phenomenon. The only marked difference between the two is that in the past, negotiations and transformations occurred at a much slower speed and within more confined sites.

Examining their global past, Chinese found revealing lessons on how to construct a well-defined, tenacious and powerful Chinese self, and how to justify changes whenever needed.³¹ Indeed, a wealth of historical and official documents has eloquently registered China as a distinctive and continuous civilization and people. It is also an understanding that is richly complemented and elaborated by numerous unofficial but cherished oral histories and personal memories, all of which are anchored by historical sites and monuments, such as battlefields, religious shrines, and beautiful landscapes that Chinese poets described and where heroes and beauties cavorted. Living among these sites and monuments, upon which numerous expressions of the

Chinese self have been inscribed, contemporary Chinese constantly see reifications of their self, edifices that anyone can observe by visiting the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Confucian Temple in Qufu, or the Bund in Shanghai.

In addition to material and contextual signs, Chinese see and define themselves through their families and other cultural and social institutions. As they respectfully worship their dead ancestors, filially serve superiors, harmoniously work with their equals, and tenderly nourish their children, they socially define their self. This does not, however, mean that Chinese see themselves solely through biological genes and genealogies. Individually and collectively, Chinese see their self through many prisms and reflections. For instance, they always find a geographical and/or intellectual home called China, where they subscribe to Confucianism, Daoism, or other Chinese ideologies and practices, and where they plant individualized roots to mark specific sites, times, peoples, memories, and imaginations.

By constructing and seeing their self clearly, Chinese actively control their own lives. Yet their agency and control processes involve much more than self-determination; the Chinese self is also very much a response to the other. If China proper is geographically marked by the natural boundaries of the Gobi Desert in the north, the China Sea in the east, the Pacific Ocean in the south, and the Himalayan mountains in the southwest, and if Chinese people are narrowly understood as Han Chinese, then China is enclosed by a diversity of non-Han peoples living in lands along three sides of the Chinese borders. Throughout their history, Han Chinese have been threatened by and interacted with these non-Han peoples. In fact, it is because of such interactions that Han Chinese have imprinted on their souls evaluative and fundamental paradigms for accessing “Chineseness” and constructing the Chinese self. These paradigms include, for example, the Chinese (*hua*) versus the non-Chinese (*yi*),³² the inner (*zhong*) versus the outer (*wai*), and the civilized (*ya*) versus the vulgar (*su*), all of which are dichotomies that can be flexibly defined and strategically implemented. Between the polarities, meanings of which subtly change over time, there are substantive and fluid grey areas. Through their constant interactions, including cross-ethnic and cross-cultural marriages, Han and non-Han peoples have generated numerous ambiguities and contradictions linking Han and non-Han China. A Chinese citizen can, for example, be racially a non-Han but culturally a Han.

To control the ambiguities and contradictions so that they do not undermine the perceived Chinese self and the Chineseness it projects, and to justify needed changes, Chinese have developed many win-win solutions. One solution that has been continuously adopted is the belief that Chinese people and their culture are so strong that they can absorb and sinicize anything that comes from outside: whatever enters China will eventually become Chinese and the Chinese self becomes enriched and not diluted.

Such rhetoric works for Chinese people because their temporalities can flexibly expand or shrink, and their historical past can be selectively remembered and strategically interpreted. When documenting the past as events that happened, Chinese meticulously trace their beginnings to primordial times. Marking the long processes in detail, they generate a continuous series of dynasties, individual reigns, and chronological years when influential individuals perform significant acts or express seminal ideas that change the Chinese world. When Chinese engage with the past in terms of what it means to them personally or in a specific context, however, the chronological distance and historical differences between them and their ancestors make hardly any barrier. The personalized past becomes singularly connected to what is close at hand.

Being informed and pragmatic, Chinese know that they cannot literally or comprehensively reconstruct or relive the past. Thus, they strategically focus on reconstructing its essence or spirit, an ideological practice that is philosophically and empirically grounded. The Chinese world manifests itself as a myriad of peoples, institutions, and animated and unanimated objects. These are constantly changing, but they do not foment chaos all the time. Beneath the changes are steadfast principles, namely, the Dao or the Way, which explains everything and every change. *Yijing*, or *The Classics of Change*, eloquently demonstrates such changes and their underlying principles with its constantly mutating trigrams and hexagrams.

An artistic demonstration of such Chinese engagement with the past and the emphasis on its essence is their operas, which often tell historical stories with anachronistic aesthetics, costumes, practices, and other fictive details. Despite the incongruities in their performances, successful operas can effectively transport Chinese audiences to their desired times and places where they can directly engage with respected ancestors or admired heroes, and where they see who they are or should become. Another testimonial is Chinese use of antiques, which they

collect and display for themselves and for the other. By manipulating archaeological finds, large and small, Chinese strive to reconstruct the lost past, no matter how chronologically remote it is and how little its material being has been preserved—a process that is unintelligible and unsustainable unless one prioritizes perceived essence over verifiable details. Throughout history, Chinese have often returned to the glorious past, reconstructing in the present the ancestors' sacrosanct institutions and expressions. The “return to the past” (*fugu*) literary movement of Han Yu (768–824) and other Tang and Song masters is one such example, and it is not an isolated phenomenon. It is only a literary counterpart of many elite efforts to emulate/reconstruct the perfect music of ancient sage-kings. One particularly grand example of such efforts is the Music of Great Brilliance (*Dashengyue*) of Huizong (reigned 1101–1125) of the Northern Song.³³

Listening to their ancestors, Chinese music practitioners find many reasons to implement music ideologies and practices that they have internalized. They understand that music helps distinguish their self from the other: different sounds embody different peoples and cultures from lands close by or faraway. It is an understanding that sagaciously guides Chinese to classify their music according to the charted lands and peoples who live there. The *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*), for example, classifies its collected folksongs according to the fifteen nations in which they originated. Chinese music history labels many music genres with references to specific lands and ethnic groups. These include, for example, songs from the Wu area (*wuge*), tunes from the western land (*xiqu*), Cantonese music (Guangdong *yinyue*), and the Xu clan's school of *qin* music in the Zhejiang area (*Xumen zhecao*).

Disciplining music so that it can better serve their needs, Chinese chronicle its origins and developments, classify its repertoires, record musical personalities and their biographies, and date and preserve music documents. Thus, Chinese historicize the *Shao* and *Wu* of the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1066 BCE–771 BCE), the Chamber Music (*Fang-zhongyue*) of the Han (206 BCE–220 CE), and the rise and decline of *Kunqu* in late Ming and early Qing China, among others. To positively or negatively evaluate music, Chinese critically ask whether the historical or contemporary genres being discussed are *ya* (civilized and civilizing) or not.³⁴ All genres that cultivate people's virtues and promote social harmony are civilized music, a more or less monopoly of elite Chinese. Hardly any music of Han or non-Han commoners has been accepted as civilized. Commoners' music genres only become civilized

when they have been refined, (i.e., disciplined) by the elite. Lamenting the corrupted and confused state of music in their own time and place, Chinese elites often call for a return to ancient music by emulating perfect compositions of the sages and their harmonious societies, and by using authentic musical instruments of the past. That the music thus produced includes hybridized or anachronistic elements raises few reservations. What renders the music authentic and meaningful is its expression of the idealized past, which legitimizes the Chinese self being negotiated. This is why Zhang Zai (1020–1077) of Northern Song China perspicaciously urged people not to search for and reconstruct ancient music with only technical and verifiable details, such as measurements of pitch standards and tunings; people should understand why and how ancient masters made music to serve their personal and social needs.³⁵

When combined with the sinicization argument, the focus on *essence* allows Chinese to claim as their own all kinds of musics, including those that had foreign origins or were inspired by external forces. Chinese know that over time musical differences can become blurred, and musical associations of people and cultures can shift. Supporting this view are many well-documented and well-known cases of Chinese music genres and their histories. These include, for example, Zhang Qian's (195 BCE–114 BCE) introduction of drum and wind music from central Asia into China, a tradition that subsequently took root and blossomed among Chinese commoners, and is now often promoted as Chinese folk instrumental music par excellence; Cao Zhi's (192–232) creation of Chinese chanting for Indian sutras—since then Buddhist sounds have permeated cultural and religious China; central Asian musicians' importation of the *quxiang pipa* (*pipa* with bent neck) into Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) China, a historical process that transformed Chinese theories and practices of musical modes; the localization and sinicization of ten kinds of ethnic entertainment musics (*Shibuji*) in the Tang court; the rise of stylistically robust northern arias in Yuan China (1271–1368), tunes that embody musical influences from Mongolians and other ethnic groups in northern China; the performances of non-Han ethnic musics in the early sixteenth-century Ming court; and the European music that Emperor Kangxi (reigned 1661–1722) had performed inside his Westernized palace. The list can go on and on, registering how the Chinese have embraced and appropriated musics with foreign origins, all of which have subsequently become Chinese with the passage of time.

The critical thread in the Chinese embrace of diverse musics as their own is the ability to selectively and imaginatively remember—as well as forget—complex musical exchanges in the past, so that they can meaningfully and strategically construct a desirable Chinese self in the present. Realizing the dynamics of change and stasis as well as the permanent truth of the *Dao*, Chinese have adopted a music aesthetics that handsomely serves their subjectivities and realities. Thus, they approach music more as expressions with specific meanings and less as rigidly structured sonic objects. Music, Confucians argue, is a genuine expression of, and communication between, human hearts and minds; as such, music makes a most effective discourse, a function that Confucius underscores when he asks, “Oh music, music, does it mean only the striking of drums and gongs?”

In other words, Confucians claim that what renders music significant is its revelation of human hearts and minds, and music coming from one’s inner self can only be genuine. This is to say that Chinese embrace any music as theirs when it expresses their hearts and minds, and when it serves their agendas. Given such aesthetics, musics and musical elements with foreign origins cease being non-Chinese once they have been embraced and sinicized. Wishful thinking or not, this strategy serves Chinese realities well. Chinese are in continual contact with musics of the other, elements of which keep seeping into and then stay in China. Chinese cannot and would not take out all foreign “impurities” in their music because such a purge would only suffocate their musical creativity and expressions.

Throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, Mei Lanfang (1894–1961), the legendary Peking opera performer and cultural ambassador, actively transformed the genre by adjusting his performances for himself and for his Chinese and non-Chinese audiences.³⁶ To construct his contemporary Chinese self and to communicate it to his foreign audiences, Mei boldly but judiciously learned from the West, a development that transformed his art. Mei’s introduction of the *erhu* fiddle into the Peking opera orchestra, for example, is inseparable from the rich and blended sound that he experienced as Western art music. To ask what is Chinese and what is Western, or what is authentic versus inauthentic in his modernized and globalized Peking opera, trivializes his artistic efforts and negates his creative and personal agency. One should ask what he negotiated and how he constructed and communicated the Chinese self of his time through his innovative operas. As one answers, one cannot afford to forget Mei’s aesthetics

and subjectivity: he declared that he had merely moved the “footwork of Peking Opera, but not its overall pose” (*yibu bu huanxing*). Indeed, while he updated the genre with new elements from within and without China, he had not changed the image of Peking opera as a national theatre.³⁷

IV. Musical Discourses of the Chinese Self

Following Mei Langfan, many Chinese music practitioners, especially those in socialist China, have boldly and creatively transformed Chinese music as a discourse of the Chinese self that they are constructing and negotiating. Remembering selected versions of the Chinese past, implementing native ideologies and practices, and sinicizing foreign and global elements, they have created numerous musical works to represent different facets of the Chinese self, an alloy of diverse elements. Nine examples of such musical works and nine facets of the Chinese self will be discussed here. For the convenience of discussion, each musical work will be discussed along with one facet of the Chinese self; in reality, any Chinese musical work can simultaneously project one or more facets.

Prominently featured in many Chinese musical and non-musical discourses, the facets are: (1) the historical and spectacular, (2) the civilized and expressive, (3) the religious and social, (4) the popular and regional, (5) the united and orderly, (6) the contemporary and globalized, (7) the gendered and sensuous, (8) the exotic and ethnic, and (9) the young and lovable.³⁸

In October 2005, I attended a concert at the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam, one event in a month-long celebration of Chinese culture in Holland. The star of the concert was a replica of the ancient, gigantic, and world-renowned Marquis Yi bell-chimes,³⁹ which was specifically transported to Holland for the occasion. During the performance, the piece that drew my attention was the “Plum Blossom, Three Variations” (*Meihua sannong*), a favorite composition for the Chinese seven-string zither (*qin*). As performed in the Dutch museum, the piece reflected a globalized and somewhat schizophrenic mix of musical elements, temporalities, sites, aesthetics, and identities. The exquisite and complex *qin* solo was rearranged and performed as a short and melodious tune played on a modern Chinese zither (*guzheng*), accompanied by the bell-chimes and other Chinese musical instruments. The zitherist wore a costume that evoked images of princes or noblemen on



Illustration 9. A Performance of Bell-Chime Music at the Tropical Museum, Amsterdam.

Chinese operatic stages. The deep sounds of the big bells echoed in the large and domed hall, generating sonic confrontations between ancient and modern Chinese pitches, and between Chinese musical instruments and European edifice.

Some cultural critics would chastise the performance as a sin of musical globalization, one that is for tourists, inauthentic, and fractured. Against such an understanding, one can, however, hear the performance as a discourse of the historical and spectacular Chinese self. Given global interest in the bell-chimes as an ancient and grand musical instrument, an icon of Chinese history, and given contemporary Chinese musicians' efforts to incorporate its distinctive sounds into their compositions and performances, the use of the bell-chimes and their distinctive timbre constitutes a deliberate discourse. The physical being of the sixty-four bells and the technologies that minted them in ancient times and replicated them in the present make a statement about Chinese historicity and technology, one that few can refute. Similarly, one can hardly miss the fact that the anachronistic use of ancient musical instruments to play young tunes and globalized sounds is rooted in Chinese practices of manipulating the past for the present.

The sharp contrast between the old and the new, the Chinese and the non-Chinese, is what renders the bells and their distinctive timbre an unmistakable statement of the historical and spectacular Chinese self. The bell-chimes make a grand cultural legacy and it is what pumps up Chinese confidence about themselves and what the non-Chinese other admires.

As I reflected on how the “Plum Blossom, Three Variations” played with bell-chimes differed from traditional solo renditions, I remembered various performances, recordings, and discussions of the *qin* masterpiece, all of which evoke the civilized and expressive Chinese self.⁴⁰ As documented in traditional China and discussed by international scholars and connoisseurs, *qin* music is the music par excellence of the traditional Chinese elite—imperial clansmen, erudite scholar-officials, wealthy landowners, individualistic artists, and others who have bequeathed to the world numerous books, paintings, calligraphies, operas, and other material evidence of Chinese civilization and expressivity.⁴¹ Thus, when performed and heard with references to Chinese history and culture, *qin* music always generates a discourse about the civilized and expressive Chinese self, a process one can promptly launch by listening to any traditional performance of the “Plum Blossom, Three Variations” and by reviewing its history. Allegedly, the piece was first composed as flute music by Huan Yi, a scholar-official who lived in the late fourth century. Then it was rearranged for the *qin*. By 1425, Zhu Quan declared the composition a classic from thirteenth-century China, and had its music notated and explained.⁴² Since then, the piece appears in many *qin* handbooks, registering its popularity among both performers and audiences, and attesting to the Chinese civility and expressivity that its nuanced pitches, subtle rhythms, elaborate melodies, and complex structures have embodied.

The “Plum Blossom, Three Variations” is still a favorite. As it is performed and heard nowadays, the piece projects the civilized and expressive Chinese self of contemporary China. Elitists like their forerunners, many contemporary *qin* connoisseurs and amateur players are highly educated, socially privileged, and internationally connected. Witness the international respect and admiration for Madame Tsar The-yun/Cai Deyun (1905–2007), the pre-eminent *qin* master and teacher from Hong Kong. *Qin* music is now regularly performed in concert halls, with metal-strings wrapped in silk—traditional silk strings, which easily go out of tune, cannot produce sounds that can reach the back of large auditoriums. Many *qin* compositions have been shortened in their cur-



Illustration 10. An Elite *Qin* Party in Ming China; An Excerpt from Du Jin's (active ca. 1465–1509) "Eighteen Scholars."

rent performance or recordings, so that they can better appeal to the globalized audiences who listen to recorded *qin* music in the comfort of their homes while seeking temporary relief from their fast and mundane lives by engaging with an idealized and artistic past. Most *qin* performance have been sanitized. Historical modes, tonal dissonances, and "white noise" produced by the performers' fingernails scraping silk strings, for example, have all become undesirable sounds and have been promptly erased. The civilized and expressive Chinese self of the present is obviously not a mechanical copy of earlier editions. Even if contemporary Chinese elite share much with their ancestors, they are civilized and expressive in their own current and globalized ways.

In April and May of 2007, I visited Singapore to learn about globalized Chinese music in that former British colony, which is now not only a center of global finance and cutting-edge technology but also a multi-ethnic city-nation-state of 4.5 million citizens, 77% of whom have Chinese ancestry. The hybrid and avant-garde sonorities that I experienced there were impressive, but none overwhelmed me as much as the traditional Chinese chanting in Thian Hock Keng (Temple of Heavenly Bliss). It made a statement about the religious and social Chinese self, one that operates beyond national and political boundaries. The date



Illustration 11. Buddhist Chanting at Thian Hock Keng, Singapore.

May 9, 2007 celebrated the birthday of Mazu, the Chinese Goddess of the Sea, worshipped by numerous Chinese, especially those who live along coastal China and those who have emigrated to Southeast Asia and North America. The Buddhist and Daoist chanting performed in the temple during the four-day celebration (May 6–9, 2007) sharply contrasted with the contemporary and globalized sounds I heard elsewhere in Singapore. For example, one round of Buddhist chanting by a group of five monks and a small congregation was accompanied by only the tinkling of a bell and the striking of a wooden fish (*muyu*); the rhythmic and monotonous song of repentance had no easily identifiable traces of globalization or hybridity.⁴³

Nevertheless, a brief conversation with temple officials promptly confirmed that a contemporary, global, and highly intricate network operated behind the timeless Chinese chant. As I learned, the 2007 celebrations at the Thian Hock Keng represented a renewed practice of hiring local Buddhist and Daoist monks to perform the required rituals and chants. For the last decade, clergymen from Mainland China were hired. This information prompts one to ask if and why the religious music performed there has been (or has not been) localized in one

way or another. Because the music sounds as traditionally Chinese as can be—i.e., one cannot identify any sound that evokes contemporary China or multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Singapore—one has to ask why the local Singaporean monks sing Chinese. An obvious answer is that they subscribe to the religious and social Chinese self.

In fact, they constantly communicate with their colleagues on Meizhou Island in Fujian Province, China, the hometown of the goddess, who once lived there as a woman named Lin Mo. Many Chinese Singaporeans shuttle between China and Singapore for business and/or pleasure, demonstrating the ways Chinese and overseas Chinese negotiate their Chinese self with the rest of the world, evidencing how they can faithfully preserve and project their Chineseness outside China.⁴⁴ For example, the administration of the Thian Hock Keng represents a local institution that deftly negotiates Chinese and Singaporean identities. Advancing its ethnic, financial, political, and social agendas, it works closely with the Singaporean government while paying minute attention to the needs of its Chinese-Singaporean constituency.⁴⁵

Heard in the religious site of the Thian Hock Keng and in the dynamic contexts of Singaporean and Chinese interactions, the Buddhist and Daoist chants sung during the Mazu rituals generated not only a religious soundscape but a globalized discourse of the Chinese religious and social self. It is clear that the monks, the patrons, and their audiences want to and can afford to sing as Chinese as they can imagine there and then, a desire and reality that many writings on Chinese religion, overseas Chinese, Chinese politics, and identities describe.⁴⁶ When they sing in that way, they not only transport themselves to a religious and social China that they have visited or imagined, but also connect themselves to all Mazu worshippers living inside and outside of China. They chant to authenticate and announce their religious and social Chineseness to all who are listening.

This discourse of Chinese Singaporean Mazu worshippers is closely related to but also revealingly contrasts with Chinese negotiation of their popular and regional self. A musical sample of this discourse, which I found in Singapore, is a Taiwanese performance and recording of "Praise to Mazu" (Mazu song). Featuring a Chinese female vocalist singing a religious text in the Taiwanese/Hokkien/Fujian dialect to the accompaniment of Chinese woodblock, gong, synthesizers and other globalized musical instruments, the music cannot be sonically and stylistically more different from the traditional chants performed in the Thian Hock Keng. The music store where I purchased the CD is, how-



Illustration 12. Cai Qiufeng Prays to Mazu.

ever, only a couple of blocks away. As recorded, the music is popular, hybridized, and globalized in terms of musical styles and instrumental timbres, but it is regional in its melody and sung lyrics—the melody closely matches the linguistic tones of the words in the lyrics sung in the Taiwanese/Hokkien/Fujian dialect.

Who would perform and listen to such a localized and globalized song in Taiwan or Singapore? Apparently, they are Chinese or Taiwanese/Singaporean with Hokkienese/Fujian heritage who can understand the sung dialect. Worshipping Mazu in private and non-ritual settings, they engage with the goddess via religious songs sung in secular and fashionable styles. Historically speaking, the division between religious and secular Chinese music has never been rigid. Chinese, and in particular Chinese commoners, never hesitate to use the popular music of their times to communicate with their gods. Their use of the latest popular musical sounds not only reveals their contemporary hearts and minds but also generates the artistic interest and financial gain that they need to survive; Chinese religious music pleases not only gods but also people.⁴⁷ And it is never produced and consumed in a social vacuum, a point that the Taiwanese “Praise to Mazu” attests. Tai-

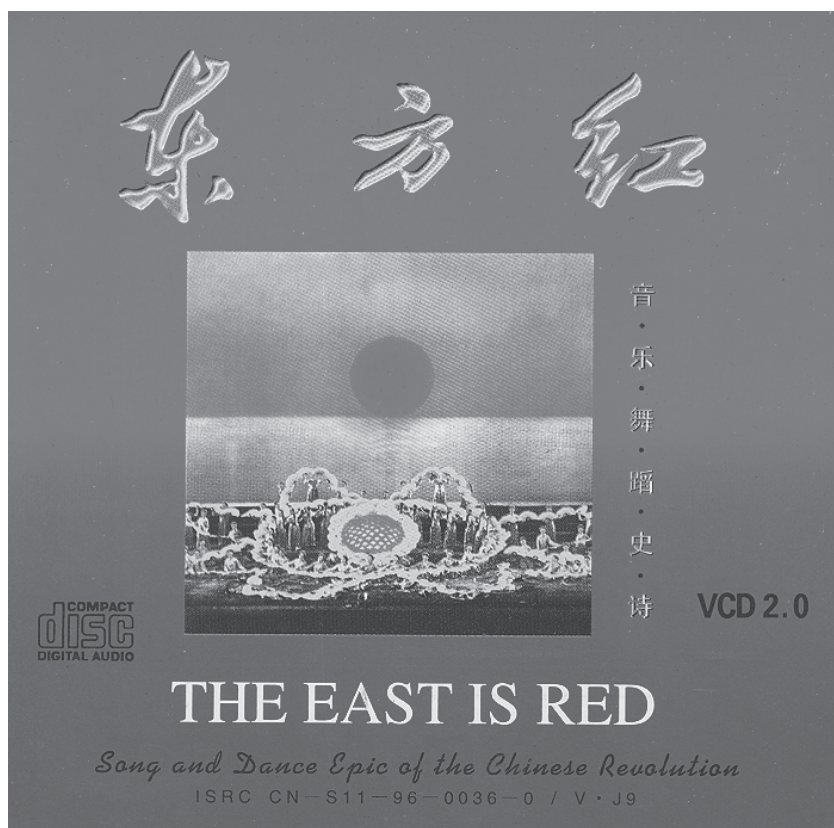


Illustration 13. Jacket Cover for *The East is Red*.

wan is a center of Mazu worship. Many Taiwanese take their popular and regional products and practices of Mazu worship to Chinese communities in Mainland China, Southeast Asia, and beyond.⁴⁸ As they worship Mazu with recorded songs in globalized styles, they display and negotiate their popular and regional self with the world.

A globalized commodity, recorded music has become a significant component of musical discourses of the Chinese self. Shopping for music in China and North America in the last decade, I have found quite a number of reissues of *The East is Red*, a music and dance extravaganza of the early 1960s. Its theme song, which bears the same title, has become a de facto sonic symbol of Chairman Mao. When performed and heard nowadays, however, the song prompts discourses of the united and orderly Chinese self.

Featuring a folksy melody and a Chinese lyric, and often performed with vocal solos and/or choruses with orchestral accompaniment of Chinese and Western musical instruments, the song is pregnant with political meanings. Originally composed in 1943 by a farmer in Yan'an, the birthplace of Maoist China, the song was regularly performed all over China during the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁹ A musical icon of Maoist China, it was also broadcasted to the world by the first Chinese satellite, when it orbited around the earth (April 24 to May 14, 1970). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the song has acquired new meanings. Contemporary Chinese, who are more concerned about making money than political ideologies, engage with the song as a reminder of a recent and socialist past when they survived great tragedies and misfortunes, but when China appeared to be united and orderly. Idealizing Maoist China before the Cultural Revolution, many choose to remember its glories through its music and dance spectacles, and make "The East is Red" a musical expression of their desires for a united and orderly China. Through the music, they hear and negotiate a powerful Chinese empire and a self that can confidently address difficulties. This discourse is historically rooted. In imperial China, founders of new dynasties always had grand spectacles of ritual, music, and dance created to celebrate imperial unification and the new order. Years later, songs of such celebrations often become musical reminders of Chinese desire for a united and orderly nation-state where they can prosper.

Chinese often assert a united and orderly self when they face difficult times.⁵⁰ At those junctures, they would evoke historical and cultural experiences to imagine that a new and great leader would come, bring order to their present world, and shepherd them to the promised future. Living in a contemporary China that has made great economic progress but is, nevertheless, plagued with social, environmental, and political problems, many Chinese listen to "The East is Red" as a musical reminder that a united and orderly China will return. Then they will become prosperous and live comfortably again.

This is why as Chinese indulge themselves with visions of socialist prosperity, they also actively sing out the contemporary and globalized Chinese self. It is the agent that can actively create the promised China of the future. A musical work that manifests this proactive agency and imagination is Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997*.⁵¹ A contemporary and unconventional work commissioned by the Chinese government to celebrate Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, the symphony features a variety of sounds to reference diverse groups of Chinese peoples and

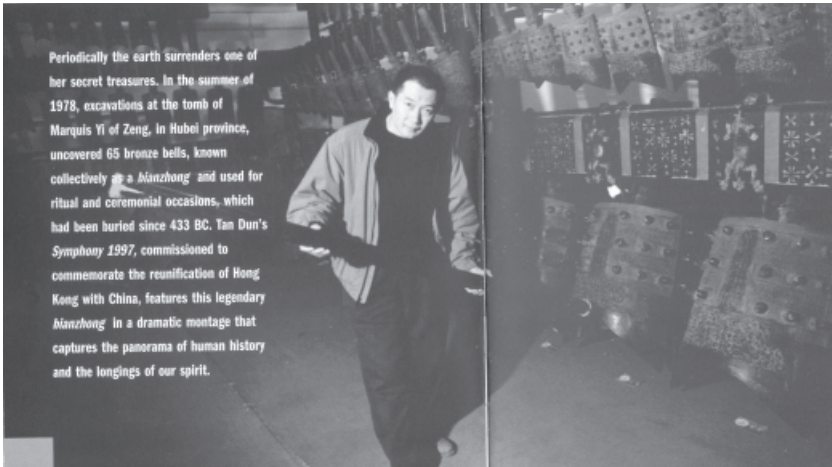


Illustration 14. Tan Dun, Bell-Chimes, and a Statement.⁵²

their cultures, sites, and temporalities. The symphony includes, for example, ancient sounds played on the original set of the Marquis Yi bell-chimes, echoes of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, sampled sounds from a field recording of a street performance of a classical Cantonese opera in Hong Kong, innocent voices of Hong Kong children's choir, and mesmerizing cello solos performed by Yo-Yo Ma. Mixing the contrasting sounds into a globalized product, the symphony projects Chinese and universal dreams about heaven, earth, and mankind, underscoring the human spirit. Like the multi-media spectacle of *The East is Red*, Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997* is a political statement and imagination that the Chinese government penned with the hand of an Oscar Award winning Chinese composer. To represent and communicate the contemporary and globalized Chinese self to international audiences, especially the Western elite, what could be more appropriate than a globalized and postmodern symphony? It is a discourse that unfolded as planned: the symphony generated more excitement in the West than in China.⁵³

How Tan's *Symphony 1997* appeals to the average Chinese audience is obviously not a primary concern for either the Chinese government or the contemporary Chinese elite who patronize Western art music in globalized China. And most Chinese commoners care little about such symphonies or other highbrow music discourses. To musically express themselves, they prefer more pleasurable sounds, music that reveals and satisfies their gendered and sensuous Chinese self. A case



Illustration 15. The Twelve Girls Band.

in point is the international success of the Twelve Girls Band. Featuring a bevy of young and beautiful Chinese women musicians playing a mixed repertoire of Chinese and Western tunes with traditional Chinese musical instruments, the band's music and performances can only be described as Chinese, globalized, and popularized. Launched in Beijing in 2001 and marketed worldwide with Japanese help, the band has attracted many audiences inside and outside China.⁵⁴ It has also provoked a lot of criticism among Chinese audiences and critics, just as gendered and sensuous Chinese music did in imperial and Confucian China. Many Chinese critics find the girls' blend of Chinese, Western, and world musics—as demonstrated by the performance of the tune "*Liu Sanjie*" (Sister Three of the Liu Family)—superficial and dubious. Many have objected to the sexist marketing of their music and performance. The moral underpinning of the discourse is a Confucian ideology and practice: music should be used to cultivate virtues, not corrupt people's aspirations (especially men's); sexy women performing vulgar

sounds are dangerous, as they have, official Chinese history notes, toppled empires in historical China.

To refute such criticisms, supporters of the band argue that Chinese people have a long tradition of men hiring women to please their male eyes and ears. That the Twelve Girls Band continues such an entertainment tradition and satisfies men in not only China but all over the world is precisely why they are successful. In short, the band's music and performances prompt competing agents to discourse the engendered and sensuous Chinese self that they have constructed for themselves. One can hardly deny that the Twelve Girls Band phenomenon puts forward explicit messages about sexuality and profit-making practices inside and outside globalized China. One cannot, however, deny that the phenomenon also underscores female agency and gender tensions in contemporary China. Professionally trained and amazingly virtuosic, members of the Twelve Girls Band have vigorously competed for opportunities to play in the band, which brings them fame and riches. In socialist and contemporary China where men and women are nominally equal, men, and especially older men, have managed to dominate society and control most of the available riches. To advance their own interests, young, talented, and career-minded women have little choice but to act "womanly" and globally.⁵⁵ By showing their abilities to charm even non-Chinese men, they promptly acquire the ticket to demand more respect and a bigger paycheck at home. The gendered and sensuous Chinese self inscribed on their female bodies and sonically projected by their music is indeed their capital and commodity; it is as profitable as it is controversial.

In 1960, when Wang Huiran (b. 1936) composed "Yi People's Dance Music" (*Yizu wuqu*), a classical composition of contemporary Chinese *pipa* music, he probably did not anticipate anything controversial. He just used the *pipa* to musically project the exotic and ethnic Chinese self as he knew it then. Featuring melodic motives evocative of Yi people's folk songs, traditional *pipa* performance techniques, and a European ABA structure, the *pipa* masterpiece now elicits contrasting responses from contemporary and globalized audiences.⁵⁶ When Han Chinese listen to the piece among themselves, it confirms a cultural and historical image that they have internalized, namely, non-Han minorities are as different as they are skilled in their singing and dancing (*nengge shanwu*). The piece also confirms that Han Chinese have perfected the *pipa* and its music by blending the imported *quxiang pipa* with a native Chinese plucked instrument and producing a distinctively Chi-

nese expression. When “Yi People’s Dance Music” is played among non-Han audiences or those sensitive to ethnic conflicts, however, it provokes political and emotional discourses of ethnic representation, ownership, and authenticity. As underscored by global discussions about Tibet and human rights issues in China, Han China’s treatment of non-Han minorities is now an international concern.

When Wang composed his *pipa* piece, he lived in a China that hardly discussed ethnic unease inside her borders. Like his contemporaries, Wang probably only wanted to musically project the young and lovable Chinese self. Who among Chinese wants to see himself or herself as old and undesirable? The projection and negotiation of this specific facet of the Chinese self, I would argue, is a driving force behind the current and international revival of *Kunqu* or *Kun* operas. In particular, it underscores the success of Kenneth Pai’s production of the *Peony Pavilion*, *The Young Lovers’ Edition*, an ongoing discourse of the young and lovable Chinese self that Chinese and non-Chinese media extensively report.⁵⁷ In recent years, classic *Kunqu* and the *Peony Pavilion*, a masterpiece of Chinese literature and drama that Tang Xianzu (1550–1616) authored in 1598, have generated a series of international debates about Chinese culture and politics. In 2001, UNESCO proclaimed *Kunqu* as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.⁵⁸ Between 1998 and 2004, Peter Sellers, Chen Shizheng, and Kenneth Pai produced three large-scale and international productions of the romantic story, drawing global attention.

Sellers’ production is a unique mix of traditional Chinese and avant-garde Western aesthetics, musical styles, and theatrical practices. In addition to traditional *Kunqu* music and acting, the production features Tan Dun’s multicultural and fusion arias.⁵⁹ Chen’s production for the Lincoln Center was billed as a critical effort to present the drama as it was originally experienced in late sixteenth-century China. It caused a minor international crisis. Attacking the production as a serious misrepresentation of Chinese culture and people, the Chinese government torpedoed its New York performance by impounding its stage set and costumes as its Shanghai performers prepared to leave for their American show. When it was finally performed at the Lincoln Center in 1999 by a different cast, its production could no longer be innocently viewed as a Chinese-American artist’s effort to return to the theatrical past of late Ming China. It has become an international skirmish over Chinese culture and its representation. The Chinese government and many Chinese and non-Chinese audiences definitely did not like the “vulgar



Illustration 16. A Publicity Photo of the *Peony Pavilion*, *The Young Lovers' Edition*.⁶⁰

and bawdy” Chinese self reflected in Chen’s theatrical presentation. To counter Chen’s offense, the Chinese government had the Shanghai Kunqu Company launch a new production, one that presented a more “authentic” image of the Chinese self. Artistic as it is, the Shanghai production has not attracted international attention; it was performed only inside China and in Hong Kong.

Kenneth Pai’s version debuted in 2004 in Taiwan.⁶¹ Exercising his artistic sensitivity and literary skill as an internationally known author, and relying upon his experiences teaching Chinese language and culture to college students in America and Taiwan, Pai and his team of librettists condensed the long story of fifty-five scenes into a dramatic story of twenty-seven scenes. Identifying talented performers to play the male and female protagonists, and having them rigorously trained by the best *Kunqu* teachers available, Pai has the *Peony Pavilion* performed by a cast who are as young and lovable (*qingchun*) as the characters they portray on stage. Having raised a great amount of public and private money, Pai hired internationally renowned costume-makers, stage designers and technicians to produce an opera that is as artistically sophisticated and technologically advanced as any theatrical production in the First World. The result is a national and international hit: wherever and whenever Pai’s *Peony Pavilion* is performed, it

creates positive feelings about *Kunqu*, and Chinese people and culture. In order to revive Chinese interest in the genre as an expression of the young and lovable Chinese self, a discourse that will shape the future of the genre and generate new directions in the preservation and development of traditional Chinese expressive culture in general, Pai has deliberately and perspicaciously brought his *Peony Pavilion* to Chinese universities where young Chinese intellectuals can directly experience his art and become a new generation of *Kunqu* aficionados. To establish global acceptance of the genre and the Chinese self being explored, Pai also brought performances to California (Irvine, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara, in 2006), acquiring an American stamp of approval that Chinese officials, artists, and audiences can hardly ignore. In June 2008, he took his show to London and Athens.

How long the positive feelings and artistic impact of Pai's *Peony Pavilion* will last is for the future to tell. For the time being, Pai's successful discourse echoes numerous achievements that many young and lovable Chinese/Chinese-American celebrities have demanded on the global stage. To cite but a few, one can mention the names of David Ho, a pioneer of AIDS research; Ang Lee, a movie director; Yao Ming, an NBA player; I.M. Pei, an architect, Wei Wei, a popular singer; and Ziyi Zhang, a movie star. Pai's success has already inspired many Chinese artists, and his discourse strategy will be remembered and emulated for many years to come. Singularly and collectively, these artists and their creative works will discourse a Chinese self that is multi-faceted and fluid. It is what Chinese subjectively and actively want for themselves; it is also a response to the globalized world in which Chinese now live, a time and place where peoples, cultures, and commodities rapidly crisscross diverse sites and temporalities, blurring boundaries and identities, and generating tense competition and productive collaboration.

V. Conclusion

To navigate their lives in such a globalized and confusing world, Chinese subjectively and actively construct and negotiate their Chinese self with all kinds of discourses. A particularly effective one among these discourses is music. Being temporal and malleable, music can be creatively and effectively adapted to whatever facet of the Chinese self is being constructed and negotiated at localized or globalized sites. Grasping such a nature of music, and learning from their ances-

tors, Chinese people employ historically and culturally rooted ideologies and practices to guide their musical discourse. Chinese music, they believe, can sonically express their Chinese self, even if the sounds include elements that have come from outside China and reference the non-Chinese. Through music, they can effectively negotiate among themselves and with the non-Chinese other their subjective and authentic self. Only when Chinese know who they are and who they will become can they effectively coordinate their present realities and prepare for their unknown future inside and outside of China. ●

Notes

1. This essay is developed for the Macalester International Roundtable of 2007 at Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Thanks to Professor Ahmed Samatar's invitation, I found a practical need to organize my thoughts on Chinese music, Chinese music history, and globalization. I am particularly interested in the interactions among Chinese music history, sinology, ethnomusicology, Western music history, and world history. The result is a rather large project, which I summarize here. To focus on discussing the broad issues of globalized Chinese music and the Chinese self in this summary, I must gloss over many historical and cultural details. I will address them more fully in a monograph in progress, which is tentatively entitled, *Chinese Music and its Global Discourses*. I will also keep footnote entries short and to a minimum here.

2. My understanding of musical globalization is shaped by many works that I have studied, and discussions with friends and colleagues. The following works have, however, provided a theoretical anchor for this discussion: Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, ed., *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imagery* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996); Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds., *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998); and Arjun Appadurai, ed., *Globalization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001).

3. Many ethnomusicologists have asked similar and related questions about world music, music identities, and styles in their writings. These include, for example, Peter Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Jocelyne Guilbault, "Interpreting World Music: A Challenge in Theory and Practice," *Popular Music* 16, no. 1 (1997): 31–44; Martin Stokes, "Voices and Places: History, Repetition and the Musical Imagination," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3, no. 4 (1997): 673–91; Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Veit Erlmann, "How Beautiful is Small: Music, Globalization and the Aesthetics of the Local," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 30 (1998): 12–21; Derek B. Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (1998): 309–35; Ingrid Monson, "Riffs, Repetitions, and Theories of Globalization," *Ethnomusicology* 43, no. 1 (1999): 31–65; Patria Roman-Velazquez, "The Embodiment of Salsa: Musicians, Instruments, and the Performance of a Latin Style and Identity," *Popular Music* 18, no. 1 (1999): 115–31; Helmi Javiluoma, "From Manchuria to the Traditional Village: On the Construction of Place via Pelimanni Music," *Popular Music* 19, no. 1 (2000): 101–24; Tony Michell,

ed., *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001); and Jonathan H. Shannon, "Sultans of Spin: Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage," *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 2 (2003): 266–77.

4. Professor Bell Yung has reminded me of the contrasting positions in an international debate about Chinese music, which is particularly relevant to the discussion here. See Fang Kun et al., "A Discussion on Chinese National Musical Traditions," *Asian Music* 12, no. 2 (1981): 1–16.

5. There is a wealth of literature on Chinese popular culture and globalization. Works that have stimulated my thoughts include the following: Xudong Zhang, "On Some Motifs in the Chinese 'Cultural Fever' of the Late 1980s: Social Change, Ideology, and Theory," *Social Text* 39 (1994): 129–56; Jianying Zha, *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Tabloids, and Bestsellers are Transforming China* (New York: The New Press, 1995); Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1996); Liu Kang, "Popular Culture and the Culture of the Masses in Contemporary China," *Boundary* 24, no. 3 (1997): 99–122; John V. Langdale, "East Asian Broadcasting Industries: Global, Regional, and National Perspectives," *Economic Geography* 73, no. 3 (1997): 305–21; Joseph B. Tamney and Linda Hsueh-Ling Chiang, *Modernization, Globalization and Confucianism in Chinese Societies* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002); Sean Metzger, "Ice Queens, Rice Queens, and Intercultural Investments in Zhang Yimou's *Turandot*," *Asian Theatre Journal* 20, no. 2 (2003): 209–17; Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *China's Brave New World—and Other Tales for Global Times* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007).

6. In addition to classical works on the topic, such as M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 259–422, my arguments on music as a discourse are inspired by Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1998). I have, however, combined my take on Small's theories with my understanding of Chinese music history and its ideologies and practices, and developed a theory of "musiking" that I use as a framework for analyzing Chinese music and culture. I will comprehensively describe this theoretical framework in the book version of this discussion. For a brief statement, see Joseph Lam, "Music and Male Bonding in Ming China," *Nannü* 9 (2007): 70–110, particularly pp. 79–83.

7. My understanding of the self as both a guiding force and a revealing result of Chinese construction and negotiation of their being is derived from my reading of anthropological and sinological studies. The former group of studies include, for example, Laura R. Graham, "Dialogic Dreams: Creative Selves Coming into Life in the Flow of Time," *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 4 (1994): 723–745; B. Farnell, "Moving Bodies, Acting Selves," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1999): 341–373; Martin Sökefeld, "Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 40, no. 4 (1999): 417–447; Laura M. Ahearn, "Language and Agency," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 109–137; and Jeannette Marie Mageo, *Theorizing Self in Samoa: Emotions, Genders, and Sexualities* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001). I am particularly inspired by Sökefeld's contrasting of the concepts of the self and identity; the self is subjective and active, while identity is much more passive and is oftentimes an objectified version superimposed by the other. Within sinological studies, the following two groups of articles have critically shaped my view: Tu Wei Ming et al., "Person in Chinese Theory

and Practice," in *Self As Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, edited by Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 171–270; and John Hay et al., "Self as Image in Chinese Theory and Practice," in *Self as Image in Asian Theory and Practice*, edited by Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 29–218.

8. Because of limited space, this essay will discuss the discourses from Chinese perspectives. How Americans or other non-Chinese nationals respond to such discourses will be addressed in the book version of this discussion.

9. To doubt whether globalized Chinese music is authentic or not is to presume that Chinese music can only be authentic in specific and essentialized ways, and to view the global and the Chinese as mutually exclusive categories.

10. This description of Chinese cities and tourism is based on my travels to China in the last five years. A wealth of information about the historical and cultural vistas described here can be accessed by "Googling" the place names and Chinese tourism.

11. For Chinese, the need to discuss Chinese music as a coherent phenomenon is personal, ideological, political, and social in nature. For scholars who have no personal attachments to China or Chinese people and culture, the need can simply be intellectual and historiographical. All needs are significant in one way or another. Unless Chinese music is considered a coherent phenomenon, one with some kind of operative logic and consistency, there is no need or context to interconnect the diverse music that Chinese claim as expressions of their hearts and minds. Unless interconnections are made, music scholars can neither identify fundamental patterns of music developments in China, nor construct broad interpretations about them. Isolated studies of individual genres or compositions are limited in many ways. For example, if one approaches Chinese orchestral compositions by Tan Dun and other contemporary Chinese composers as autonomous and abstract works of sounds, one cannot probe their intentional and unintentional references to Chinese aesthetics, history, identities, and interactions with the West.

12. The photograph is taken from the website <http://www.celestial-china.com/blog/2006/12/25/hong-kong-lantau-island-po-lin-monastery>. It was accessed on 14 August 2007.

13. For an insightful discussion of South Song history and culture, see James T.C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988).

14. See Sun Yue, *Hangzhou di mingren* (Celebrities of Historical Hangzhou) (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanse, 2003).

15. For a brief survey on Hangzhou tourism, see the website <http://www.asia-planet.net/china/hangzhou.htm>. For a video-clip on the music activities in Songcheng, see the website <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvAGk-TXKYQ>. These were accessed on 23 April 2007.

16. I will supply a discography of the music referenced in the book version of this discussion. Basic information on the genres is available in standard works on Chinese music and music history, such as Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, eds., *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Macmillan, 2003); Robert C. Provine, Yoshihiko Tokumaru, and J. Lawrence Witzleben, eds., *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea (New York and London: Routledge, 2002). See also, Frederick Lau, *Music in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

17. See Nimrod Baranovitch, *China's New Voices: Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2003).
18. For a brief summary of 20th-century Chinese music history, see Jiang Jing, Guan Jianhua, and Qian Rong, eds., "Jinxiandai yinyue" (Modern and Contemporary Music in China), in *Zhongguo yinyinyue wenhua daguan* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2001), pp. 317–76.
19. The first Opium War (1839–1842), which led to the Treaty of Nanking and China's cession of Hong Kong to Britain, is often considered the formal beginning of the Western invasion of China.
20. For a comprehensive study of the interactions between musical China and the West in early 20th-century Shanghai, see Joys Cheung, "Translated Musical Modernity in Semi-Colonial Shanghai," University of Michigan dissertation, 2008. See also, Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Andrew Jones, *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001).
21. See Han Kuohuang, "The Modern Chinese Orchestra," *Asian Music* 11, no. 1 (1979): 1–43; and Tsui Ying-fai, "Ensembles: The Modern Chinese Orchestra," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 7, pp. 227–232.
22. Two examples of such tutors are Li Xiangtiang, *Guqin jiaoxue* (A Guqin Tutor) (Beijing: Beijing huanqiu yinxiang chubanshe), VCD, ISRC CN-A54-00-301-00V.G4; and Miao Ruxin, *Jiao ni tan pipa/Follow me pipa, Baiken quanshu*, VCD, ISRC CN-A71-00-0007-1. The Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, for example, offers an extensive program of distance learning. CCTV offers a number of programs on music performances.
23. For an insightful discussion of the piano and piano culture in contemporary China, see Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
24. Professor Carleton Macy of Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, conducts the Minnesota Chinese Music Ensemble, which performs and records traditional and new compositions by Chinese and non-Chinese composers. Listen to their CD, *Auspicious Clouds*, Minnesota Chinese Music Ensemble, 2002.
25. A recording of such hybridized music is *Ume: Improvisations for Zheng and Piano*, by Mei Han and Paul Plimley, ZA Discs N 14.
26. Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997).
27. Zeng Suijin, "Gangtai liuxing gequ chongjihou de huigu" (Reflections after the Influx of Popular Songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan), *Zhongguo yinyuexue* (Musicology in China) 2 (1988): 44–51.
28. Claire Huot, "Rock Music from Mao to Nirvana: The West is the Best," in *China's New Cultural Scene: A Handbook of Changes* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 154–181.
29. "China bashing" occurs for a variety of reasons. A recent (summer 2007) and revealing example is American criticism and reporting about problematic Chinese products, ranging from defective automobile tires, to poisonous toothpaste and seafood, to harmful toys with lead paint. There is no denying that Chinese manufacturers have made seri-

ous mistakes and they should be held responsible. To put all the blame on the Chinese, however, begs the question of what role the American corporations (such as Mattel, which imports the Chinese toys) play. Unless American corporations play no role in the design and manufacturing of the products, they cannot be totally innocent. The mistrust between China and America is mutual.

30. For an English survey of the historical interactions, see John King Faribank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, Enlarged Edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

31. See Tu Wei-ming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1994).

32. On the politics of the term *yi* (barbarian), see Lydia Liu, "Figuring Sovereignty," in *The Clashes of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 70–107.

33. See Joseph S.C. Lam, "Huizong's *Dashengyue*, a Musical Performance of Emperorhip and Officialdom," in *Huizong and the Culture of Northern Song China*, edited by Patricia Ebrey and Maggie Brickford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 395–452. Chinese do not have a monopoly on the imaginative use of music from/about the past. A telling development is the beginning of Western operas in 16th-century Italy.

34. See Joseph S.C. Lam, "Kunqu: The Civilized/Civilizing (*ya*) Music from Late Ming and Early Qing China," paper presented at the Symposium: The Peony Pavilion in Context: Kun Opera and Cultural Performance from Ming to Modern Times, University of California, Berkeley, September 15–17, 2006.

35. Zhang Zai, "Zhang Zai lunyue" (Zhang Zai discusses music), in Yinyue yinjiusuo ed., *Zhongguo gudai yuelun xuanji* (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1983), pp. 188–90.

36. See Catherine Yeh, "From Male 'Flower' to National Star: Choreographing Mei Lanfang's Rise to Stardom," in *Performativität und Ereignis*, edited by Erika Fischer-Lichte, Christian Horn, Sandra Umathum, and Matthias Warstat (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke Publishers), pp. 259–76. See also, Qi Rushan, *Mei Lanfang youmei ji* (A Report of Mei Lanfang's Tour in the U.S.) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005).

37. Huang Xiangpeng, "Lun Zhongguo gudai yinyue di chuanzheng guanxi" (A discussion of music transmission processes in historical China), in *Chuantong shi yitiaoheliu* (Tradition Flows like a River) (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1990), pp. 105–143; see, in particular, pp. 132–135.

38. The facets reflect my understanding of current debates about Chinese people and culture, which project a variety of distinct images, ranging from autocratic emperors and Confucian scholar-officials to computer wizards and successful entrepreneurs. The Chinese self is by no means limited to these nine, albeit fundamental, facets. In Chinese numerology, nine is the maximum number, and it is used here to symbolize the multiplicity of the facets.

39. For English descriptions of the set of sixty-four bell-chimes, see Jenny F. So, ed., *Music in the Age of Confucius* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2000); and Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). A representative recording of bell-chime music is *Bianzhong yuewu/To the Chime of Bells*, CD, China Record Company CCD-8703. A representative video recording is *Bianzhong: Unique Music of*

Great Antiquity, VCD, Zhongguo Changpian Shenzhen gongsi CSLD-96/162. A public video-clip of a music performance featuring the bell-chimes is available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycGm8f4GpYY>; accessed 3 December 2007. A public video-clip of a performance featuring a Chinese zither and a set of generic Chinese bell chimes is available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thXgjlbgJY&feature=related>; accessed on 3 December 2007.

40. Staff notation of the piece is available in *Guqin quji* (Anthology of *qin* compositions) (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1982), pp. 51–70. Representative recordings of the piece include “Meihua sannong” by Pu Xuezhai, in *Zhongguo yinyue daquan: guqin quan*, vol. 5, CD, China Record Company CCD-346; “Three Variants of Plum Blossom” by Zhang Ziqian, CD, in *Guangling qin yun* (*Guangling Qin Music Series*), Hugo HRP718-2; and “Meihua sannong” by Li Xiangting in *China: L’art du qin*, CD, Ocora C 560001. Many websites have information and sound files on this piece.

41. Two seminal discussions of *qin* music in English are Robert van Gulik, *The Lore of the Lute* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1969); and James Watt, “The Qin and the Chinese Literati,” *Orientalism* 12 (1981): 38–49.

42. Xu Jian, *Qinshi chubian* (A draft history of *qin* music) (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1982), pp. 89–90, and 134–135.

43. Representative recordings of traditional Buddhist and Daoist chanting are *Chinese Buddhist Music*, CD, Lyricord Lyrce-7222; and *Puxuyun*, CD, Feicaiba chenghuang miao, 2003. Other genres of traditional Chinese music, such as *nanyin*, a theatrical genre affiliated with Fujian people and culture, are also performed at the Thian Hock Keng.

44. A case in point is a minor confrontation that occurred in the spring of 2007. Malaysian-Chinese in Sabah fought with the local authorities over the size of a Mazu statue that they wanted to build near a Muslim neighborhood. See Lim Kit-Siang’s reports in blog site <http://blog.limkitsiang.com/?p=189>; accessed on 15 August 2007.

45. See Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, *Guardian of the South Seas: Thian Hock Keng and Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan* (Singapore: Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, 2006).

46. See Wang Gengwu, *Yimin ji xingqi de zhongguo* (Essays on Migrants and China’s Rise) (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2005).

47. See Li Wei, “The Duality of the Sacred and the Secular in Chinese Buddhist Music: An Introduction,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 24 (1992): 81–90.

48. *Tianshang shengmu Mazu song*, Taipei Yourong wenhua shiye, CD, EVC-0302. See Mayfair Yang, “Goddess across the Taiwan Strait: Matrifocal Ritual Space, Nation-State and Satellite Television Footprints,” *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 209–238.

49. The copy I consulted is *The East is Red*, VCD, Guangxi jinhai yinxian shiye lianhe gongsi ISRC CN-S11-96-0036-00/V.J9 GXJD-951. For a discussion of the tune and popular Chinese culture, see Gregory Lee, “‘The East Is Red’ Goes Pop: Commodification, Hybridity and Nationalism in Chinese Popular Song and its Televisual Performance,” *Popular Music* 14, no. 1 (1995): 95–110. A website with a mp3 file of the song is <http://www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/China/CRSongs/eastisread.html>; accessed on 4 December 2007.

50. For an insightful analysis of Chinese political psychology, see Lucian Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, New Sub edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

51. Tan Dun, *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Mankind*, CD; Sony SK63368.

52. From the pamphlet to Tan Dun, *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Mankind*, CD; Sony SK63368.
53. Google "Tan Dun" for website reports and comments on the symphony. For a scholarly review that registers Hong Kong feelings, see Yu Siu Wah, "Two Practices Confused in One Composition: Tan Dun's Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, and Man," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 57–71. See also, J. Lawrence Witzleben, "Music in the Hong Kong Handover Ceremonies: A Community Re-Imagines Itself," *Ethnomusicology* 45, no. 1 (2002): 12–33.
54. See their website, <http://www.12girls.org/english/index.asp>. Since 2003, Beijing Shi Ji Xing Die Cultural Communication Limited Company has collaborated with the Japanese Platia Company to take the band to audiences in Japan and North America. For a video clip, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mR_Sxf17W0; accessed on 2 May 2007.
55. See Zhang Zhen, "Mediating Time: The 'Rice Bowl of Youth' in Fin de Siecle Urban China," in *Globlization*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, pp. 131–64.
56. See Yuan Jingfang, *Minzu qiyue* (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1987), pp. 212–16. There are many commercial recordings and website sound files of the piece. A representative recording is "Dance of the Yi People," performed by Wu Man, in *Wu Man and Friends*, Traditional Crossroads CD 4329. Free download of the piece is available at <http://www.emusic.com/album/Tang-Liangxing-High-Mountain-Flowing-Water-Traditional-Chinese-MP3-Download/10586750.html>; accessed on 3 December 2007.
57. See, for example, the analysis posted on <http://culture.people.com.cn/GB/70806/70982/5730417.html>; accessed on 3 November 2007.
58. See Susan Pertel Jain, Judith Zeitlin, David Rolston, and Catherine Swateck, "Contemplating Peonies: A Symposium on Three Productions of Tang Xianzu's Peony Pavilion," *Asian Theatre Journal* 19, no. 1 (2002): 121–58. For a study of the different productions, see Catherine Sawteck, *Peony Pavilion Onstage: Four Centuries in the Career of a Chinese Drama* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002). For a collection of Chinese reviews on Kenneth Pai's production, see Pai Xianrong, *Mudan huanhun* (Shanghai: Wenhui chubanshe, 2004).
59. "Bitter Love," from *Peony Pavilion*, CD, Sony SK61658.
60. Photograph by Xu Beihong, from Bai Xianyong, *Shuo Kunqu* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004), p. 188.
61. There are now two commercially available DVD recordings of the production: *Mudanting*, DVD, Zhejiang yinxiang chubanshe ISRC CN-E13-04-0391-0/V.J8; and *Mudanting*, DVD, Guilin Beibeite dianzi yinxiang chubanshe, ISRC CN-S17-07-0040-0/V-Z. Currently, there is a production boom of books, pictorials, DVDs, and other products on *Kunqu* and its many practitioners.