

Program Notes

Translated by Dr. Doris Chu

From materials provided by Mr. HU Jianbing

1. Walking the Street--String music of the Jiang-nan region (South of the Yang-zi River)

Flute: Chen Tao

Sheng: Hu Jianbing

Pi-pa: Zhou Yi

Yang qin (dulcimer): Wang Lina

Er-hu: Yang Yue

Zhong-hu: Xia Wenjie

Da Yuan: Cai Zhenqi

String of Jiang-nan is one of the eight major categories of music. “*Walk The Street*”

refers to a form of performance in which the musicians roamed the street as they played their music. This suite was also called *Set of four for Walking the Street*. It was so named because they were often used at wedding processions and holiday festivity touring acts. The suite consists of two parts, those of slow beat and fast beat. The slow part is ethereal and exquisite. The fast beat is effervescent and ebullient. And the speed intensifies to bring the joyous mood to a climax.

The composition allows each instrument to display its peculiar sound quality, and each player to show his/her expertise. At the same time, each part compliments the others to bring out a harmonious whole.

2. Bang-zi tune of Henan province

Music by Zhao Guoliang

Ban-hu solo: Xia Wenjie

Accompaniment: small orchestra

This piece was a variation and a developed form of the dramatic singing tune of Henan province. Containing the Upper Five Tune of western Henan with its intoxicating high notes, the music is passionate and boldly unbridled. The slow part is imbued with tender, somber emotion resembles the Lower Five Tune of western Henan. The music has a strong flavor peculiar to that region.

3. Green Waist (lu yao)

Music by Yang Jieming

Pipa solo: Zhou Yi

Green Waist was a major piece of the renowned grand song-and-dance of Tang dynasty. It belonged to the “soft dance” category. Legend had it that during Emperor Dezong of Tang, Yue-yi created a new suite of music for the monarch. It was vaporous and graceful. The Emperor, very pleased, however, thought it was too long. He ordered Yue-yi to perform only the best, selective parts. Thus Lu-yao “Selected Important Parts” was named. In later ages, the term was corrupted because of the homonymic nature of many Chinese characters, thus it became *Green Waist*, or *Six Ones* because they all pronounced **Lu Yao**. Now these pieces are no longer in extant.

At the end of 1982, when Shenxi Song and Dance Company was working on a large scale musical show *Music and Dance in the Style of Tang*, Yang Jieming, basing on the description of Lu Yao in Tang poetry, composed a solo piece for pipa. Entitled *Rewriting of the Airy Tune of Lu Yao* (Green Waist,) the music is flowing and graceful, filled with a flavor of antiquity. In 1983 the Asian Music Symposium rated it very highly. At the 3rd music competition in China it won Second Prize in Chinese instrument category.

4. Li Sao (Poetry of the ancient Kingdom of Chu)

Original music by Chen Kangshi of Late Tang

Variation by Hu Jianbing

Reed pipe solo: Bao Jian

Pipa: Zhou Yi

Yang qin (dulcimer): Wang Lina

The origin music written for gu qin by Chen Kangshi of the Late Tang period was inspired by the long epic poem *Li Sao* by Qu Yuan, a poet and loyal minister of the Kingdom of Chu in the Warring States period. This piece expresses Qu Yuan’s pent up despondency and sorrow after suffering traducement by vicious ministers around the King. It also speaks of his unwavering loyalty to his country and his nostalgia for his homeland.

In accordance with the emotional undulation of the music, alternate emphasis is applied on the respective tunes of shang, yu, gong and jiao to bring out the moods precisely.

5. Lyrical Expression of Qin-chuan Sentiment

Music by Ma Di

Dizi: Chen Tao

Accompaniment: small orchestra

The melody was derived from the musical drama *qin-qiang* and *wan-wan qiang* of Shenxi province. A new technique for the flute called *rou-yin* was introduced to emulate the softening effect of string instrument. Consequently, zest, vigor and fineness of Shensi music are imbued in this piece giving it a rich and simple northwestern Chinese sentiment

6. *Hu Jia Shi Ba Pai* (Eighteen songs of Northern Nomadic reed pipe) An ancient tune

Noted and re-arranged by Hu Jianbing

Xun: Chen Tao

Pipa: Zhou Yi

Da yuan: Cai Zhenqi

The authorship of the original tune is debatable. It has been attributed to Cai Wenji of Later Han (AD194-206.) Another attribution goes to Dong Tinglan (742-763) of Tang dynasty (618-907)

According to literary evidence, the songs depict the vicissitudes of Cai Wenji's life. The story was recounted in "A Biography of Dong Si's wife" in *Hou Han Shu* (*A History of Latter Han Dynasty* compiled by Fan Ye) and "A Biographical Sketch of Cai Yan" in the same book. The story reads "Cai Yan's by-name was Wenji, a daughter of Cai Yong. She was a learned and articulate individual with particular talent in music. At age six, she heard her father playing music at night. A string broke. She was able to determine which string had broken. She was married to Wei Zhongdao of He-dong. Later, being widowed and without a child, she went back to live with her parents. During the turbulent time at the end of Han dynasty she was abducted by northern barbarian and brought to Southern Xiongnu.(a Turkish tribe) whose King made her his Queen. She spent twelve years in that barbaric land, loved by the King and had two children with him. Prime Minister of Han, Chao Cao, and Cai Yong were close friends. Chao Cao feeling sorry for Cai Yong having no children, sent envoy with gold and jade to redeem Wenji. Leaving her two children in that foreign barbaric land Wenji returned home. She was then married again to Dong Si of Chen Liu. Steeped in sorrow and regrets about the violent unrest that separated her from her families she composed two poems. One poem reads 'At the end of the Han dynasty, the Emperor lost his power, minister Dong Cho wreaked havoc to the land....' In another chapter the original passage reads

Reed pipes playing and horses neighing,
A solitude wild goose crying

....

Guo Mo-ruo, through his exegetical work, believed that not only the poem was written by Cai Wen-ji herself, but the music of *Hu Jia Shi Ba Pai* was also composed by her.

7. *The Sky*

Music by Hu Jianbing

Sheng solo: Hu jianbing

When placing yourself in the expansive grassland and gazing at the deep blue sky, you will feel that time has frozen, your breathing will stop. Human existence and nature have arrived at perfect harmony. You will move with the

wind, drift with the cloud, sing at will, relax as you wish. This piece is played extemporaneously.

8. *The Sun Shines on Tashikuergan*

Variation by Chen Gang,
Er-hu solo: Yang Yue
Sheng: Hu Jianbing
Pipa: Zhou Yi
Yang Qin (dulcimer): Wang Lina
Bass: Cai Chenqi
Hand drum: April Centrone

Based on “Beautiful Tashiguergan” written by (original name of composer 吐尔逊卡的尔 and Liu Furong’s flute solo piece, Chen Gang wrote this solo piece for violin. It was completed in 1976. He used some musical elements of 塔吉克族 Tajike tribe of Xingjiang, and some performing techniques from Chinese folk music. The augmented second note, the decorative chromatic and the imitation of the four-note cord pizzicato of Dombra, coupled with unrestrained and emotion charged cadenza give this piece its unique style.

9. *Zhoujintang, A classic of Zhihua Temple of Beijing* (see detailed notes next page)

10. *Flower and Youth* Folk song of Gansu province

Arranged by Hu Jianbing
Flute: Chen Tao
Sheng: Hu Jiangbing
Pipa: Zhou Yi
Yang qin (Dulcimer): Wang Lina
Ban hu: Xia Wenjie
Er hu: Yang Yue, Wang Li
Da Yuan: Cai Zhenqi
Hand drum: April Centrone
Lin drum: Bao Jian

Lyric of the song

*Coming is the spring
Flowers are blooming
Young maiden saunters in the green, oh young lad
Young lad, Young lad ambles by.
Spring flowers bloom, sending fragrance to a thousand miles.
Young maiden’s heart ripples, oh young lad
Young lad, young lad, a long wisp of love rives not*

*Spring flowers bloom, sending fragrance to a thousand miles
Young maiden's heart ripples, young brother
Young Brother, young brother, a wisp of love rives not
Young Brother, young brother, a wisp of love rives not*

This arrangement affords ample possibilities for the performers to exhibit their respective talent. There are large segments reserved for improvisations. The slow-beat part in particular is entirely improvised.

(Translation by Dr. Doris Chu)

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北京智化寺古音乐 **Beijing Zhi-Hua Temple**

(Translated by Dr. Doris Chu based on materials provided by Mr. HU Jianbing)

Zhi-hua Temple, situated at the southeastern corner of the ancient city of Beijing, was built in the 11th year of Emperor Ying-zong of Ming Dynasty (AD 1226.) It was a family temple of a shrewd, power playing eunuch, Wang Zheng. Because of his blatant power and position in the palace, his temple was staffed with artistic monks of sophisticated musical cultivation. Their music troupes in the Temple were rigorously regimented. Their performances were primarily for Buddhist routines and rituals.

Zhi-hua Temple is now not only famous in Beijing for its architecture and collection of Buddhists sutras, but the old musical scores, instrument, especially its "capital music" are also valuable documents to the music circle. The old music preserved by this Temple carries a significant meaning to the research of Buddhist music, ethnic music and musical history of China.

Around the Dao-kuang and Xian-feng era (1821-1861) of the Qing dynasty, Zhi-hua Temple allowed its music to be taught to over ten other temples. Consequently Zhi-hua Temple became the center for teaching Buddhist music in Beijing. It has been 26 generations of masters teaching the music to the disciples at Zhi-hua Temple. After more than 560 years, the original style of performing their music remains intact.

The music that the 26th generation of Zhi-hua Temple's musician perform springs essentially from the "Scores of the Tune of the Music". These scores were hand copied by the 15th generation Zhi-hua Temple musician during the Kang-xi era of the Qing dynasty. The method of notations in these scores was different from what was used among other musicians of the time. It was, however, in accordance with those used during the Song times. Some were the same as those used in the Tang dynasty. As such, these scores, though copied by Qing dynasty monks, have kept traces of Tang and Song music notation characters. The origins of the titles of the music are richly varied. Such titles as "Wang-Jiang-nan," "Qian Qiu Sui," were derived from the Tang repertoire; whereas "Shan Jing Si," "Dian jiang" and so forth were similar to songs in Yuan drama. The most of the titles are for religious services, such as "San Bao Zan." "Jing Zi Jing" "Wu Shen Fu" and others.

The music titles of Chi-hua Temple are categorized into "Zhi-Qu" and "Tao-Qu." Zhi Qu are those single composition to be played by itself. Tao Qu are those having several pieces combined together. Those Tao-Qu used during day time services are called "Zhong-Tang Qu"; those used in the evening are called "Liao-Qiao Qu." The structure of Tao-Qu consists of an overture, a body and an ending. For example, in a Liao-Qiao Qu the overture is "Hao Shi Jin", the body comprised Qian Qiu Sui, Zuei Tai Ping, Gun Xiu Qiu, the ending is "Si Ji." This shows that Tao-Qu is a combination of several pieces rigidly regulated.

During a religious ceremony or similar event at Zhi-hua Temple, nine monks would chant sutras and tapping on ritual vessels, and play various instrument. These instruments included 2 reed pipes, 2 strings of sheng, 2 flutes, 2 racks of yun-luo, 1 large drum, one Rao and Ba, one dang-zi and one Nian-Zi. In pipe music, the pipe has nine holes (seven in the front and two in the back.) Sheng has 17 metallic tongues. According to "Book of Music" by Chen Chang of Northern Song dynasty, nine-hole-pipe and 17-tongue Sheng were the old Tang models. Pipes were the lead instrument in the performance, adhering to the original score in it's rhythm and spirit. Sheng must imbue the music with a wealth of rhythm. The flute must be lively, vivacious, freely weaving in the melody. The performers of these instruments must each display his/her expertise, to avoid the possible monotony of a chorus on the one hand and not to be showy on the other. This is the unique tradition of Zhi-hua Temple music.

Zhi-hua Temple music has 4 types of tunes (*diao*). The musician-monks call them "Cheng, Bei, Jie, Yue." ("正、背、皆、月") According to study, *Jie Diao* or *Jie-zhi Diao* ("皆止调") was the same as Xie-Zhi Diao "歇指调" (a corrupted name of He-shi Diao"褐石调") of Tang period. Yue Diao (月调) was a miss-write of "越调" of Tang times. Bei Diao "背调" was most probably the "Bei Si Diao" "背四调" of Tang period. As such, it is clear to us that three of the four types of tunes of Zhi-hua Temple music have close affinity with Sui and Tang period music.

From the above we are certain that in matters of musical scores, instrument, tunes, and titles, as well as performing styles and techniques, Zhi-hua Temple's music has preserved the music of Tang and Song periods. In some cases it even traces to more ancient times. It is because Zhi-hua Temple's insistence on the preservation of the original qualities of their music through meticulous, direct transmission of those qualities from teacher to student, disallowing the slightest aberrance or modification, so that their music still maintains (retains) the specific flavor of remoteness, emptiness, blandness, and serenity of Buddhist music.

The most valuable features of Zhi-hua Temple's Jing music (京音乐) is it's preservation of the ancient music of Song dynasty or even earlier eras of Sui and Tang dynasties. It is a corpus of rarely seen, complete, accurate and truly valuable materials for research within China and internationally on ancient Chinese music. The music of Zhi-hua Temple along with that of Da Xiang-guo Temple of Kaifeng, Qing-huang Temple of Wu-tai shan, and nan-yin 南音 (music of the south) of Fu-jian province, as well as the drum music 鼓乐 of Cheng-huang Temple of Xian are the oldest music extant in China.

(Translated by Dr. Doris Chu based on materials provided by Mr. HU Jianbing. 4-2010)