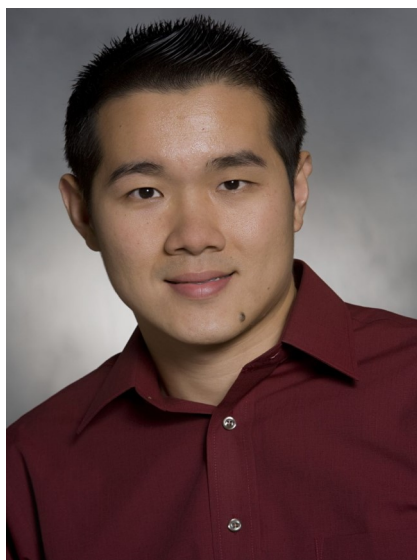


## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Chuen-Fung Wong**

I am pleased to note that, in addition to the three ACMR papers, Chinese music (broadly defined) will be represented in twenty-one presentations (across fourteen panel sessions) at this year's Society for Ethnomusicology conference. The ACMR-sponsored panel, "Processes and effects of canonization in China's folk music traditions" (8B), will be held on October 27, Friday, 4:00–5:30 p.m. in Penrose 2.

In this *Newsletter* we will read reflections from three doctoral students—Wangcaixuan Zhang, Hei Ting Wong, and Ender Terwilliger—on their recent research on popular music in greater China (pp. 7–10). We will also read from Sue Tuohy on a special conference held this past summer at the Inner Mongolia University of the Arts in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia (p. 11). As always, I want to thank editors Yun Emily Wang, Adam Kielman, and Lars Christensen for their time and effort. Special thanks to outgoing editor Adam Kielman for his service over the past few years.

As I write my final message as ACMR President, I want to thank all of you for your trust and patience over the past three years. I feel privileged to have served the ACMR community. I also want to thank my colleagues on the ACMR board for their hard work. I will continue to be a part of ACMR and the broader community of Chinese music research and performance in North America and beyond. Please send me your comments and suggestions. I look forward to seeing you in Denver.

Chuen-Fung Wong  
ACMR President

I write to welcome you to the 2017 annual ACMR meeting, to be held in conjunction with the Society for Ethnomusicology conference in Denver, Colorado. The meeting will take place in Penrose I, Denver Marriot City Center Hotel, on October 26, Thursday, 8:00–10:00 p.m. This year we will return to our time-honored format of research presentations during the first hour. The topics and abstracts of the three papers are included on page 4 of this newsletter. Recipients of the three ACMR prizes will be announced at the business meeting, during which the elections for the next President and Secretary (both serving three-year terms from 2018 to 2020) will also be concluded. We will end with a brief chamber performance by ACMR members Yuxin Mei on the *pipa* and Haiqiong Deng on the *zheng*.

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## People and Places

### Soochow University School of Music Symposium 2 (Suzhou, China): Global Connections in Music and China

The second Soochow University School of Music (SUSM) Symposium took place on October 14, 2:00–5:30 p.m. in the Enling Music Building, Dushu Lake Campus. This year's symposium featured a keynote speech by Ye Guohui, Head of Composition at Shanghai Conservatory. In addition, faculty members and masters students from SUSM presented ongoing research on topics related to music and China that are due to be presented in North America and Europe at international conferences (SEM, AMS, and EUROMAC), as well as in China. Contact **Gavin Lee** (lee\_shin\_kang@hotmail.com) for more information.

### News from University College Cork

University College Cork currently hosts three scholars working on Chinese music—broadly considered. The following news from the last year is submitted on behalf of the group by Colin P. McGuire, PhD, IRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Music.

Professor **Jonathan Stock** published “Sounding the Bromance: The Chopstick Brothers’ ‘Little Apple’ Music Video, Genre, Gender and the Search for Meaning in Chinese Popular Music” (2016) in the *Journal of World Popular Music*. He gave a paper on contemporary musical life among the Bunun of Taiwan at the Yunnan Indigenous Music Conference in September 2017 and will be presenting at the Conference on Huangmeixi Opera in Anqing, Anhui in October 2017. Also, he was a co-awardee in a European Research Council Advanced Grant beginning on October 1 and running for five years. The project is called “Interactive Research on Music as Sound: Transforming Digital Musicology,” and Stock’s role is to work on recorded examples from Chinese and English musical traditions, helping to develop software that accurately analyses and efficiently communicates features of musical sound without the use of notation.

Dr. **Lijuan Qian** is finishing up her Irish Research Council (IRC) Postdoctoral Fellowship, and has been successful in a grant application to the IRC and European Union’s Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie research and innovation programme, known as CAROLINE: Collaborative Research Fellowships for a Responsive and Innovative Europe. Qian’s project is

entitled “Applying Cultural Heritage as a Means of Sustainable Development: Voices of Women Culture Bearers in Yunnan, China.” The fellowship is a three-year, full-time research post, with the first two years working alongside a Yunnan-based NGO, Eco-Women, and the last year back at University College Cork. She also presented on a new format for Chinese TV music talent shows at IASPM 2017 in Germany and gave a paper at BFE 2017 in Sheffield on “contesting” identity among ethnic singer-songwriter contestants of China’s *Sing My Song* TV show. Her article “Female Singer-Songwriters and China’s TV Talent Shows” (2017) was published in *China Policy Institute: Analysis*.

Dr. **Colin McGuire** spent a good part of the first year of his two-year IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship focused on giving six presentations in four countries. All the papers were based on his research into the intersections of percussion music with southern Chinese kung fu and the lion dance, investigating topics like: violent musicking as a heroic display ethos at SEM 2016 in Washington DC, tradition as source and stream at BFE 2017 in Sheffield, embodying Chinese-ness in diaspora at MusCan/CSTM 2017 in Toronto, and legacies of embodied knowledge lineage at ICTM in Limerick. Presentations beyond academic music societies included giving a paper on the rhythm of combat at the Martial Arts Studies 2017 conference in Cardiff and a public engagement talk on music and kung fu for Culture Night 2017 in Dublin. McGuire is currently polishing up the manuscript for a book provisionally titled *Martial Sound: Drumming Resistance in Diasporic Chinese Kung Fu and Lion Dance*.

### Lectures by Sue Tuohy

**Sue Tuohy** (Indiana University) gave a series of lectures in China in summer 2017, including: “Landscape Dramas and Senses of Place in Contemporary China” and “Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, and Folklore Tourism: A View from Qinghai” (Beijing Normal University), “Folklore Studies, Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage Protection, and Senses of Place: A Case Study of Research in Northwest China” (Central Nationalities University, Beijing), “Hua’er Folksong and Cultural Heritage” (Qinghai Normal University, Xining), “Research on Qinghai Hua’er Folk Songs and Culture” (Haidong City, Qinghai), and “Ethnomusicological Theories and Methods: Exploring Music and Identity through a Case Study of Research in Northwest China” (Music School, Inner Mongolia University of the Arts).

## People and Places (cont.)

### Lectures By Bell Yung

**Bell Yung** gave a lecture at the Chinese University of Hong Kong:

- "Metrical Transformation and Tune Metamorphosis in Cantonese Opera -- dedicated to Rulan Chao Pian, pioneer in the study of Chinese traditional opera" (October 12, 2017)

He also gave two lectures at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.:

- "Hong Kong's Folk Music and Local Culture: The Art of a Cantonese Blind Singer" (September 21, 2017)
- "An Audience of One: The Private Music of the Chinese Literati" (September 22, 2017)

He also gave three lectures in Cantonese at the City University of Hong Kong:

- "民間音樂搜集：瞽師杜煥富隆茶樓唱南音" [Collecting People's Music: The Blind Singer Dou Wun Sings Naamyam Songs in a Hong Kong Tea-house] (November 28, 2016)
- "粵劇的藝術價值和唱腔特點" [The Artistic Value of Cantonese Opera: Focusing on Its Vocal Musical Style] (November 29, 2016)
- "以 '廣陵散' 為例試論琴曲演變的 '今'、'古' 相互影響" [Historical Interdependency of Music: the Development of Qin Compositions] (November 30, 2016)

### CFP: CHIME "Chinese Music as Cross-Culture"

The 21st International meeting of CHIME will be held May 9–13, 2018, hosted by the Macau Scientific and Cultural Centre (CCCM) in Lisbon, Portugal, in cooperation with the Ethnomusicology Institute of the New University of Lisbon and the Confucius Institute of the University of Lisbon. The theme of the meeting is Chinese music as cross-culture.

Abstracts of around 300 words are invited for individual posters or for twenty-minute presentations on the conference theme or, for panel sessions of a maximum of 120 minutes, an abstract of around 300 words detailing the focus of the panel as a whole, plus abstracts of 100–200 words for each contribution. (We will allot ample space and time to poster sessions, which will not be held in parallel with lecture sessions or other events.)

Throughout the centuries China has maintained extensive cultural relationships with other parts of Asia and other continents. We wish to explore Chinese music from this perspective, across the entire spectrum of musical genres, from ancient court music and other genres from the remote past to present-day Chinese pop, rock, and jazz. But also within China, local, rural and supposedly ethnically or culturally "homegeneic" traditions have often been shaped through contact and exchange between different regional influences. The challenge is to discern how different influences have shaped specific genres, on micro or macro levels. Specific subthemes of the meeting include "musical instruments," "musico-cultural relations between Portugal and wider Asia," and "on-going research on Chinese music."

The Programme Committee for the Lisbon Meeting consists of Enio de Souza (CCCM), Frank Kouwenhoven (CHIME), François Picard (Université Paris-Sorbonne), Helen Rees (UCLA) and Shao Ling (Universidade de Aveiro).

**The deadline for submission of abstracts is November 15, 2017.** Notification of acceptance or rejection will take place by January 31, 2018. All abstracts should be forwarded by email to the Programme Committee of the 20th Chime meeting, c/o Frank Kouwenhoven: [chime@wxs.nl](mailto:chime@wxs.nl). For more on the conference, visit [www.chimemusic.nl](http://www.chimemusic.nl). In the course of November 2017, we expect to announce details about the concerts and cultural activities which we are planning in the framework of this meeting.

## About ACMR

The Association for Chinese Music Research (ACMR) serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information for anyone interested in the scholarly study of Chinese music. Catering mainly though not exclusively to those living in North America, ACMR holds an annual meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology.

ACMR's online discussion group is hosted by the University of Hawai'i. To send messages to the list, please use the address [acmr-l@lists.hawaii.edu](mailto:acmr-l@lists.hawaii.edu). If you have any questions about the list, write to **Ted Kwok** at [tedk@hawaii.edu](mailto:tedk@hawaii.edu).

ACMR Newsletter is published twice a year in spring and fall. We encourage ACMR members to submit the following kinds of materials: notices of recent publications and recently completed dissertations or theses, announcements of and reports on scholarly and performing activities, news of institutions and individuals, as well as views and opinions on any matter relevant to ACMR. Please send all materials and enquiries to [ACMRnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ACMRnewsletter@gmail.com). Back issues are available at <http://acmr.info/>.

## ACMR Meeting Presentations

Denver Marriot City Center Hotel, Penrose I  
October 26, Thursday, 8:00–10:00 p.m.

### **Hakka Children's Songs, Satoyama, and the Redefinition of a Rural Place** Luo Ai Mei, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Children's music is one of the genres in Hakka music in contemporary Taiwanese music that has been constantly producing albums but scarcely discussed in the music scholarship. In 2014, an album of Hakka children's songs emphasizing environmental perception was produced in Meinong under the collaboration of Taiwanese government and a non-governmental organization called the Meinong People's Association. This paper examines the correlation between Hakka children's songs and the Satoyama Initiative, a global ecological vision emerged as an introspection to the changes in lifestyle due to modernization and urbanization, proposed by the UNESCO in 2010 to explore how music making and ecological thinking are mutually shaped as a way to respond to modernization. I will focus on the "Overture" of a Hakka children's song

album entitled *Yelaiyequ Chang Shengqu 3* (2014) produced in Meinong. Within the theoretical framework of acoustemology, my paper interprets how this work evokes an understanding of listening that integrates human action and environmental perception. I propose that a unique human-environment relationship is symbolically expressed in the improvisation of the "Overture," and suggest that how human interacts with nature is not solely determined by proscribed cultural habitus, but also rely on an understanding and positioning of the environment through listening. By showing how natural acoustic features can be responded and interrelated differently by human musical practices, this track therefore embodies the spirit of satoyama with a focus on the idea of harmonious co-inhabitation.

### **A Transnational Anthem: Unisonance and Martial Power in the Most Famous Song of Hong Kong Kung Fu Cinema** Colin McGuire, University College Cork

Wong Fei-hung (1847–1924) is an apotheosized Cantonese martial arts hero from southern China who has become associated with a folk melody called "General's Ode." Since the 1950s, over one hundred Hong Kong movies and television serials forged the link by using that tune as Master Wong's theme. A broader connection between music and martial arts now extends off-screen; this song is often used in kung fu demonstrations. During participant-observation fieldwork in a Chinese-Canadian martial arts club, consultants claimed this piece is a Cantonese national anthem—a hymn for a nation without a sovereign state. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's concept of *unisonance*, I explore how this song acts as a (trans)national anthem for Cantonese people. I argue that repeated co-presentation has generated powerful

intertextuality, thus auralizing the heroic ethos embodied in the physical practice of martial arts. Director Tsui Hark's *Once Upon a Time in China* film series (1990–1997) features the most well-known version of the song, where the addition of lyrics led it to become a karaoke hit. There are now variants of that version set to other lyrics that have been used at Hong Kong's annual vigil for the Tiananmen Square Massacre, as well as during the Umbrella Movement in 2014. The themes associated with Master Wong have a deep resonance in Cantonese culture, especially resistance to domination by other groups. The self-strengthening message of this song fosters a sense of imagined community as a transnational anthem that connects Cantonese people across Greater China and the diaspora.



## ACMR Meeting Presentations (cont.)

### Music of Reminiscence (*huaigu yinyue*): A Pragmatic Approach to Performing and Hearing Music from the Song Dynasty

Joseph Lam, University of Michigan

Many notated scores, visual illustrations, literary descriptions, and other material evidence of Song Dynasty music and music culture have been preserved, evoking musical sounds heard and seen centuries ago. By positivistic criteria, the evoked sounds cannot be heard: unless transmitted through detailed notation and/or learned from teachers, musical works vanish with the passing of time and as soon as their performance end. By traditional Chinese music aesthetics, however, musical works can exist beyond their original performance as long as their salient features and meanings are notationally or verbally preserved, and are judiciously recalled by informed musicians and in appropriate contexts. Chinese music works exist flexibly and contextually, a fact that the Chinese practice of *dapu* (beating scores into tunes) readily demonstrate. In theoretical and practical terms, the Chinese approach does not recall music of the past exactly as what it was created and heard by

the original composers and audiences; the approach only generates contemporary versions/echoes/reminiscences of what the music was, through which performers and audiences in the present musically connect themselves with past musicians, expressing feelings and meanings that transcend temporal and acoustic boundaries. With reference to current theories of cultural pragmatics, musical ontology, and historically informed performance of music compositions, the Chinese approach can be theorized into a practice of music of reminiscence (*huaigu yinyue*). When activated, the practice would pragmatically break the silence of Song Dynasty music imposed by positivist values, and musically transforms preserved and intelligible music evidences into a performable and audible legacy, one that contemporary Chinese can use to express their musical-historical memories and imaginations.

## New CD Release

*Mingzhu za jin—Xianggang wenhua guibao xilie zhi qi* 名著雜錦—香港文化瑰寶系列之七 [Excerpts from *Literary Masterpieces: Hong Kong's Cultural Treasure 7*]. 2016. Hong Kong: Bailey Record Company. 2 compact discs.

This is a two-compact disc set published by the Chinese Music Archive, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Bailey Record Company, Hong Kong. Bell Yung originated the concept, did the fieldwork recording, produced the disc and co-edited the CD booklet.

This 2-CD set continues the series of publications of historical recordings made in 1975 at the Fu Loong Teahouse in Hong Kong, where the blind master Dou Wun (1910–1979) performed for almost four months entertaining customers with his Cantonese folk narrative songs in the style called *naamyam* (Southern Sounds). The four songs in this set are stories from China's celebrated literary masterpieces, All Men are Brothers, The Dream of the Red Chamber, The Story of the Jade Pin, and Love Reincarnate. Not only do the CDs preserve Dou Wun's artistry, but they also faithfully reproduce the ambience of the old-fashioned teahouse, with dim sum selections being called out by servers, teahouse customers chatting, the traffic noise from Queen's Road West outside, and—most interestingly—the singing of pet birds brought to the teahouse in elaborate little cages hung on the windows.



## Recent Publications

- Gibbs, Levi S. 2017. "Culture Paves the Way, Economics Comes to Sing the Opera: Chinese Folk Duets and Global Joint Ventures." *Asian Ethnology* 76 (1): 43–63.
- Gong, Hong-yu 宫宏宇. 2017. *Haishang Yueshi—Shanghai Kaibuhou Xiyang Yueren, Yueshi Kao 1843–1910 海上乐事—上海开埠后西洋乐人、乐事考, 1843–1910 [Music-Making in Semi-colonial Shanghai, 1843–1910]*. Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press.
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- Yung, Bell 榮鴻曾. 2017. "Recording Reviews of Liang Mingyue, *The Flowing Waters: Guqin Music of Liang Mingyue*; Sou Si-tai, *Chine: 'Le pêcheur et le bûcheron': Le qin, cithare des lettrés* (China: 'The Fisherman and the Woodcutter': The Qin, Zither of the Literati)." *Ethnomusicology* 61 (2): 379–388.
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## Reflections: Popular Music Methodologies

The editors of ACMR Newsletter approached several scholars working on dissertations on topics related to popular music in greater China to write short reflection pieces on the methodological approaches that they have developed in order to study their topics. We asked: How do you as a scholar approach your topic? How do you

conceive of the category “popular music”? How does your approach intersect with methodologies used by scholars focusing on popular music in other regions and/or other disciplines? Does the music you work with, or the area work in, push you toward any innovative methodologies or research approaches?

### Learning to Become a Buddhist: Performative Ethnography<sup>1</sup> in Religious Music Research

Wangcaixuan Zhang, University of Pittsburgh

Breaking through the established duality of the secular and sacred, a renaissance in Taiwanese Buddhism has been reshaping the meanings of Buddhist laity and Buddhist identities in twenty-first century Taiwan. At the center of this quiet yet powerful movement is a noteworthy emphasis on musical practices. Tzu Chi 慈濟,<sup>2</sup> a new-age transnational Buddhist organization, has grown into one of the largest Buddhist relief organizations in the Chinese-speaking world. Along with its efforts to demonstrate acts of generosity and compassion in and beyond Taiwan, Tzu Chi’s musical activities, though rarely mentioned or studied, are also developing at an astounding pace. Beginning as musical compositions for specific Tzu Chi institutions such as the Tzu Chi Hospital and Tzu Chi Nursing School, Tzu Chi’s music, namely Tzu Chi’s Buddhist songs—seamlessly fusing with popular music and its sign language performance<sup>3</sup>—have been widely used in secular contexts during the last two decades. One of the musical ritual performances, the *Water Repentance Sutra* 慈悲三昧水懺 in 2011, attracted more than 200,000 people, including Tzu Chi and non-Tzu Chi volunteers as well as Buddhists and non-Buddhists. They participated in weekly rehearsals, and committed to a vegetarian diet for nearly one year prior to their final performance in the Taipei Arena.

How do such secular musical practices inspire participation and guide participants to further engage in religious practices in both secular and sacred contexts? In order to answer this question, I began my fieldwork<sup>4</sup> as an ethnographer in 2015 by interviewing the composers and producers of the musical ritual performance. However, instead of crediting the compositional process and one’s own artistic expression, the

composers Kuo Meng Yong 郭孟雍 and Lee Shou Chuen 李壽全 insisted that the success of the organization and the high participation of those musical events were not due to their musical achievements at all. Kuo instead suggested that I should visit Master Cheng Yen, the founder of the group, to find the secret of Tzu Chi music. As a young scholar and a devoted volunteer of the group, I was lucky to be introduced to Master Cheng Yen, and she blessed my project with her wisdom as she said to me with her soft and gentle tone, “To help record the history, you have to put your effort in knowing Tzu Chi.” How would I follow her suggestion? How would I as a scholar and ethnographer put my effort into “knowing Tzu Chi”?

Besides interviewing key individuals, I started to actively participate in music-making in the context of Tzu Chi activities, which allowed me to combine perspectives of an



**Make a Pilgrimage to Jing Si Abode Ritual 朝山 in April 2016 during the 50th Anniversary of Tzu Chi Foundation in front of the Jing Si Abode in Hualien. Photo taken by the author.**



## Performative Ethnography in Religious Music Research (cont.)

ethnographer, an ethnomusicologist, a performer, and a Buddhist practitioner. Being a performer in sign language performances, participating in the Buddha Day Ceremony and performing sign language songs with other Tzu Chi volunteers, my experience not only helped me to understand how the music is supposed to be sung and performed in different contexts, but, more importantly, how a performer feels during the performance and what those Buddhist songs might mean to him or her. Because of my participation, I have built close relationships with my Tzu Chi mentors, who are not only my teachers in sign language and the aesthetics of Tzu Chi's musical performance, but also my guides in interpreting and internalizing Buddhist teachings in those Buddhist songs, which Guo has indicated are the essence of the Buddhist songs. In addition, they became colleagues who accompanied me on the path of learning how to become a Buddhist as well as a qualified Tzu Chi volunteer. Those understandings of being a Buddhist in a modern society aided me tremendously in interpreting interviews as both an ethnographer, a Buddhist, and a member of the group. My active involvement also helped me to raise my status within the group. I was invited to participate in different training programs and eventually became a commissioner, which opened the possibility of getting more first-hand information about various musical events of the group.

The dynamic nature of performative ethnography also made me aware of how my own position limited the research. In Tzu Chi, males and females often have distinctive roles in social and musical events. Due to the gendered division of Buddhist practice, I was only given access to information available to female participants. Performing ethnomusicology, in this context, has challenged me to conduct more interviews with male participants in my fieldwork.

As my experiences suggest, active participation in musical events still remains one of the most important approaches in the study of popular music in greater China, when participation not only shows one's effort to get to know the music, but also to show respect to the community. More essentially, it pushes the ethnographer to consolidate the critical positions of ethnomusicologists and performers, enabling the scholar to draw on various perspectives and



**The Overture to *The Sutra about the Deep Kindness of Parents and the Difficulty of Repaying It* 父母恩重難報經. Performed by Tzu Chi Foundation Hong Kong Branch on April 2, 2016. Photo taken by the author.**

evaluate them with more consciousness regarding the shadow side of the fieldwork, such as the gender issues that I have alluded above. By applying performative ethnography, we may achieve more productive fieldwork experiences, as well as more dynamic interpretations of those experiences and the subjects we write about.

1. I borrow this term from Deborah Wong (2008). "Performative ethnography" encouraged me as a researcher to reflect on and write about my different roles including volunteer, performer, Buddhist practitioner, as well as my relationship to interlocutors. "Moving" between these different roles makes us more aware of the politics of fieldwork and power relationships, and results in more critical reflections on the multiplicity of perspectives.
2. Tzu Chi Foundation or Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation is a Buddhist non-profit organization that was founded in Hualien in eastern Taiwan in 1966 by Master Cheng Yen. It is reasonably estimated now to have ten million members and branches in ninety-eight countries. This group is well-known for its social engagement, such as its involvement with medical care, environmental protections, educational programs, and disaster relief. It also launched its own television station in 2005.
3. Developed from sign language, sign language performance is a performance style that is designed by Tzu Chi volunteers to use modified sign language to interpret the lyrics of a Buddhist song. It is similar to Gospel Mime in the U.S. (Maggio 2017).
4. This paper is a reflection on my fieldwork for a recently submitted master's thesis *Buddha's Songs: Musical Practices in Taiwanese Buddhist Renaissance*, for which I have conducted fieldwork in Taiwan during the winter of 2015 and the summer of 2016.

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## Bridging the Pre-1997 and the Post-1997: Cantopop Research and Hong Kong Politics

Hei Ting Wong, University of Pittsburgh

Cantonese popular music (Cantopop) is a relatively young research area, as the music did not receive attention in academia until the mid-1990s. The research tradition for the study of Cantopop is grounded in lyrical studies and has grown towards the study of the performers. Beyond the music itself, researchers review the relationship between the music and Hong Kongese identity construction. Because Cantonese music was popularized by the free-to-air television industry, researchers have long recognized that television programs and the affiliated Cantopop songs are a meaningful source for understanding Hong Kongese culture. Building on the legacy of the pioneering researchers of Cantopop, my research aims to analyze how contemporary political changes have been influencing the production, implication, and perception of Cantopop. In addition to the television-focused entertainment-oriented scholastic approach, my research explores the development of Cantopop in continuous changing political situations in Hong Kong and China, especially after the handover of sovereignty to China from Great Britain in 1997. In my on-going project, I study how Cantopop songs found in a format similar to music videos can be used to narrate socio-political messages, even when the songs do not have an explicit political theme.

Cantopop, from its start, has been entertainment-oriented, if not totally profit-oriented. There are Cantopop songs produced before 1997 that carry political messages, such as those sung by Lo Ta-yu (Luo Dayou) and Tat Ming Pairs. These songs were usually packaged in other themes like love songs, and scholars agree that Cantopop audiences did not tend to interpret the music politically. However, after 1997, more industry members began to use the music as a means to explicitly voice their political ideas for the public. Under the increasing political tension between pro-liberal Hong Kongese and the Chinese government, political elements were more explicitly found in Cantopop songs in response to how China began to seize more control of Hong Kong's interests. Despite losing their commercial interests in the market of mainland China, some Cantopop performers, including Denise Ho Wan Sze, Anthony Wong Yiu Ming, and producer Chow Pok Yin, not only revealed their political stances but participated in social movements, such as the anti-patriotic education protest in 2012 and the Umbrella Movement in 2014. The changing nature of

the music redirects my research to emphasize politics.

Instead of studying political Cantopop songs and the related industry members, I try to bridge the implication of Cantopop in politics from pre-1997 to post-1997. In my on-going research project, I study the television program *Headliner* produced by the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). I argue that Cantopop songs without political content have been able to carry political messages and the audiences are able to interpret them. In each episode, *Headliner* has about four current music videos (hereafter "MV"), which is a format the program has utilized since 1990. Each MV is about 2 minutes and 30 seconds long, combines images and clips from social issues (like news programming in the US), and is accompanied by a sound track—but does not have a clear narrative. The MV almost always features a Cantopop song.

Through conducting interviews with the production team members and observing the production process of an MV, from lyrics and clips selection to filming and editing, I realized each MV is a collective work even though a director oversees its creation. By only sitting in the open office, I got to know that only serious socio-political issues, such as policy reform and bird flu, would be selected for *Headliner*, while other public and current affairs programs of RTHK may choose some issues which were comparatively light-hearted. Through listening to the conversations between the director and cameraman or film editor, I learned that they tried to understand each other's view on the issue and express their ideas by creating a suitable atmosphere in the MV. Though the selection of melody and lyrics seems to be the most crucial process, the coordination of other personnel cannot be neglected. Moreover, consistency found among the MVs shows the understanding between directors of the production team. I believe the collective derivative creation process, similar to having discussions among people of different background, helps the Cantopop songs in-use to break away from their original meanings, narrate the issues with their melody, rhythm, and lyrics, and match relevant images and clips, which make the MVs successfully distribute the messages.

I believe there is still a lot about Cantopop that deserves further study, and am looking forward to learning from other colleagues' works.

## Crossing Over the Sound Bite Barrier

Ender Terwilliger, Wesleyan University

I spent the last two years in Taipei, Taiwan studying the *kuajie* or crossover music scene. While in Taipei, I attended concerts in the crossover scene featuring pipa, erhu, dizi, etc. being performed in popular music genres as varied as rock, rap, punk, and jazz. A major research interest of mine was understanding the major motivation for “crossing over.” All of the musicians I interviewed originally studied a traditional instrument in either private lessons or a Chinese orchestra setting, but at some point branched out to join the crossover scene. My impression from previous trips to Taiwan was that they grew dissatisfied or stifled by the lack of creativity and freedom of expression they saw in the traditional music scene, but I eventually discovered that for many there was more to this scene.

On stage and in program notes, there was a strong tendency to romanticize the arts. While political messages are frequent in the crossover scene (almost always supporting Taiwan independence), there was rarely criticism of Chinese culture or the Chinese orchestra tradition that the musicians had left behind. The worst criticism I heard was, “I got bored doing that traditional stuff.” When I had formal interviews with musicians, I generally received the same vague response that this crossover stuff was more interesting, usually combined with an anecdote about wanting to collaborate with a friend who played a Western instrument. While I do not want to dismiss these motivations, I found that after longer talks, and especially casual ones that involved either an excess of caffeine or alcohol, that I often heard an addendum to the first story.



**A fusion band rehearses for a jazz festival. Instruments from left to right: guitar, dizi, suona, saxophone.** (Photo by author)

As a foreigner, casual chatting often brought up the question of how I translated certain terms into English. Literally, *guoyue* translates as the national music, but *guoyuetuan* is more often translated as Chinese orchestra. And for my research topic of performers of *guoyueqi*, I use the English term Chinese instruments. This topic of translation brought up a political motivation for joining the *kuajie* scene. Many musicians I spoke to objected to the national music being a Chinese import, and compared it to the national opera being Peking opera rather than the local Taiwanese opera. For the generation of musicians that I worked with (roughly late 20s to late 30s) their personal politics were incompatible with the pan-Chinese identity of the Chinese orchestra. They saw Taiwanese identity in terms of localization and fusion with the West. After discussing the formation of the Chinese orchestra and the changes to the instruments that took place in the last century, the musicians frequently relaxed and allow me to cross over the sound bite rhetoric of their program notes into a more nuanced stance that involved a complicated cognitive dissonance between personal and state politics.

Often, I see being a foreigner as being a negative in fieldwork, but another barrier, language, has opened up conversations, and asking how musicians would translate terms that they take for granted in Mandarin allows us both, the musician and the researcher, to glean a more precise understanding of how and why this crossover music scene is constructed.



**Photo taken after a salon performance. Instruments from left to right: mandocello, dizi, pipa. The sculpture was made during the pipa player's solo.** (Photo credit: Jan Lin)

## A Brief Report on an Interdisciplinary Conference on “Music and Identity” Held in Inner Mongolia in July 2017

Sue Tuohy, Indiana University

This summer an exciting conference, exploring interdisciplinary perspectives and new research on the relations between music and identity, was held at the Inner Mongolia University of the Arts (内蒙古艺术学院) in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. The conference was organized by ethnomusicologists Dr. Wei Linlin 魏林林 (Inner Mongolian Arts Academy) and Dr. Yang Xifan 杨曦帆 (Nanjing Arts Academy), and was sponsored by the Education and Research Institute and the Music School of the Inner Mongolia University of the Arts and co-sponsored by organizations ranging from the *Journal of Ethnic Arts* (民族艺术杂志) to the Research Society for the Study of the Musical Culture of the Northern Grasslands of Inner Mongolia (内蒙古北方草原音乐文化研究会). Among the goals of “Music and Identity: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue between Ethnomusicology and Anthropology” was to stimulate productive interactions among scholars working on common issues across academic boundaries. The conference brought together forty anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, including prominent senior scholars and bright younger scholars, from universities and institutes across China for a stimulating program that included keynote addresses, formal paper sessions, outstanding musical performances, and many opportunities for informal conversations over the course of the four-day conference.

Among the key themes addressed in the rich pallet of presentations by scholars in this conference were: the relations between grand theory and micro-case studies, the importance of ethnographic research, theories of social construction, musical forms as cultural symbols and as historical and ethnographic records, the agents of musical practice (people), and interdisciplinary perspectives. These themes were at the heart of keynote addresses given by noted scholars Naribilige 纳日碧力戈 (Naran Bilik, Fudan University), Yang Minkang 样民

康 (Chinese Central Academy of Music), Pan Jiao 潘蛟 (Central Nationalities University), Liu Hong 刘红 (Shanghai Academy of Music), Guan Kai 关凯 (Central Nationalities University), Yang Hong 杨红 (Chinese Music Academy), Zhou Xianbao 周显宝 (Xiamen University), Wang Jianmin 王建民 (Central Nationalities University), Li Song 李松 (Center for the Development of Ethnic Folk Arts, Ministry of Culture), Song Jin 宋瑾 (Central Nationalities University), and Wu Da 巫达 (Central Nationalities University).

Presentations in panel sessions also addressed similar themes, both in theoretical papers on the contexts and constructions of individual and group identities and through case studies of diverse musical forms, groups, and processes. Through the excellent papers and discussions, participants brought into dialogue philosophies and methodologies not only from anthropology and ethnomusicology but also from historical studies, sound studies, physics, and performance studies. The conference provided models for collaborative interdisciplinary work that will stimulate further research on the ways that identities are performed, that boundaries between groups are both drawn and bridged musically, and that music is used to evoke sense of place. These ideas also were made manifest in performances of Mongolian music by students, faculty members, and master artists resident at the Inner Mongolia University of the Arts.

Synopses of the keynote presentations already have been published in Chinese in the *Journal of Ethnic Arts*. And we can look forward to additional publications by conference participants in the near and more distant future. The conference was successful in achieving its goals of providing a forum for lively and productive exchange as well as of providing new directions for individual and collaborative research for decades to come.

### Membership Reminder

We encourage your new membership and renewal for the 2017–18 period. Current membership dues are \$15 for those in professional positions and independent scholars, and \$10 for students. Please define your status when paying. Please notify us of address and email changes. Payment can now be made through the ACMR PayPal account. If you wish to pay through this method send Alan Kagan a request for a PayPal invoice

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## Upcoming Conferences

**Society for Ethnomusicology 2017 Annual Meeting**

October 26–29, 2017

Denver, Colorado

<http://www.indiana.edu/~semhome/2017/>

**116th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting**

November 29–December 3, 2017

Washington, D.C.

<http://www.americananthro.org/AttendEvents/>

**Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference**

March 22–25, 2018

Washington, D.C.

[www.asian-studies.org/Conferences/AAS-Annual-Conference/](http://www.asian-studies.org/Conferences/AAS-Annual-Conference/)

**21st CHIME (European Foundation for Chinese Music Research) Meeting**

May 9–13, 2018

Macau Scientific & Cultural Centre & University of Lisbon

Lisbon, Portugal

<http://www.chimemusic.nl/>

CFP deadline: November 15, 2017

**Asia Intermedialities: New Objects, Themes, and Methods at the Convergence of East and Southeast Asian Cultural and Media Studies**

May 25–26, 2018

Chinese University of Hong Kong

<https://www.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/ccs/main/2017/08/>

CFP deadline: December 11, 2017

**The 6th Inter-Asia Popular Music Studies Conference 2018**

June 9–10, 2018

Communication University of China

Beijing, China

<https://interasiapop.org/category/call-for-papers/>

CFP deadline: December 15, 2017

**ICTM Study Group on Musics of East Asia 6th Biennial Symposium**

August 21–23, 2018

Seoul, Korea

<http://ictmusic.org/group/musics-east-asia>

CFP deadline: January 20, 2018