A Golden Mountain Rediscovered: *Sizhu* and the Modern Chinese Orchestra

by

John F. van Deursen

B.Mus., University of British Columbia, 1985 M.Mus., Northwestern University, 1986

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide information to the conductor who intends to program Chinese orchestral music with the Western orchestra. In Chapter One, a background understanding of the unique circumstances that led to the development of the Chinese orchestra is discussed, including an outline of key political, social, and musical events, and an outline of important aesthetic concepts that have made a profound impact on Chinese music. These events have all been discussed independently and some, particularly the political and social upheaval experienced in China from 1911 – 1949, have been written on extensively. Yet no studies have drawn these elements together in particular reference to the founding of the orchestra. In Chapter Two, modal harmony and form in Chinese music is introduced, followed by an analysis of three pieces that demonstrate the development of the Chinese orchestra from its *sizhu* roots into the modern ensemble: *Jinshe Kuangwu*, by Nie Er; *Yangming Chunxiao*, by Tung Yung-Shen; and *Qin Bingmayong*, by Peng Xiuwen. Finally, a conductor's guide to the works is presented, including a detailed study of all three with respect to conducting techniques and pertinent orchestration issues.

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Preface

As a conductor who has lived in Asia for more than 17 years, I always found programming Chinese music for the Western symphony orchestra a challenge. I couldn't find catalogues of music, nor recordings, nor did local musicians quickly suggest suitable material from a wealth of first-hand knowledge; indeed, most could not suggest any suitable works. Questions arose: how should a conductor of a Western symphony orchestra who wishes to program Chinese music go about this task? Can traditional Chinese instruments be paired with the symphony?¹ What technical issues arise in such a case? Where can one learn about this repertoire? After speaking with several prominent orchestral musicians, I began to realize that the reason so many could not easily suggest a wealth of concert music for the symphony orchestra was because the orchestral repertoire exists in either a handful of works written largely during the era of Soviet influence from roughly 1949 to 1960, or in the music of the Chinese orchestra which is not well known by symphony musicians. I became curious: what then was the role of the Chinese orchestra in China's history? What formed the core of its repertoire?

I learned that there were early court orchestras from at least the Zhou dynasty onwards, but this tradition, promoted by the government, faded in and out of favour over the centuries and with no foothold amongst the populace, had largely disappeared by 1911 leaving only traditional music to represent the people. Music and politics are closely entwined in 20th-Century China, so much so that three generations of music instruction has been overturned between 1911 and 1980.² While several Western orchestras existed in the early twentieth century, they were largely the domain of imported foreign teachers and performed largely for the foreign audience. Yet during the 1950s, while China's relationship with Russia was still close, symphonic writing was considered appropriate, especially in the styles of certain composers who were identified with the proletariat, such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Shostakovich, both of whom borrowed from traditional music. Several important pieces were written during this time, but it became clear to me that many of these pieces are so politically infused either through lyrics or title, that it is difficult to program them without dividing an audience or reminding them of a chaotic time in

¹ To simplify matters, the term "orchestra" will represent Chinese ensembles, while the term "symphony" will represent exclusively the Western symphony orchestra.

² See the New Grove's article: "China, II: History and theory 6. Since 1911", paragraphs 2 - 3 which outlines this idea.

Chinese history.³ I then turned to the Chinese orchestra to determine if there was an untapped reservoir of material that could be adapted for the symphony and was again surprised to learn that the Chinese orchestra is a relatively new genre. The equivalent of hundreds of years of repertoire for the symphony from Haydn to Mahler and onwards, does not exist in China for this medium. A traditional music of South China called *sizhu* forms the basis of the orchestral repertoire, but in the transition from an aural tradition for a chamber ensemble, to one performed by a large ensemble with a conductor, many changes occurred.

There is a modern generation of composers, trained in the West, who have gained international prominence in the past 20 years, including Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, Zhou Long and others. These composers are enjoying international careers and their music is currently available on recordings and scores from internationally recognized publishers. Because these works are primarily written for modern Western symphonic and chamber ensembles, this area is beyond the scope of this thesis. I have therefore chosen to focus on a) the historical and social background to the Chinese orchestra, b) the *sizhu* style and four related Chinese traditional instruments, and c) an analysis of three pieces that will demonstrate the type of repertoire that can be drawn upon when considering music for performance.

My sincerest gratitude goes to Jesse Read, Head of the School of Music, for the opportunity to study my D.M.A. at the University of British Columbia and for encouraging me to take my scholarship in the direction of Chinese music; to Jin Zhang, Music Director of the B.C. Chinese Orchestra, without whose help I would never have received the score to the *Qin Bingmayong* in time to complete this thesis; to Mei Han, *zheng* virtuoso, who recommended the fine soloists that performed so wonderfully on my lecture recital, and graciously agreed herself to join the performance; to Professor Martin Berinbaum for his unflagging support; to Dr. Alan Thrasher, who painstakingly helped through many revisions of the text, gave me many excellent sources of information including access to his large personal collection of materials, and gave generously of his time and personal knowledge of Chinese music; and to my loving wife, Viktorie, who helped immensely with proof-reading and research, and put up with months of lonely evenings and weekends as I worked on this document.

³ The "Production Cantata", "The Long March" Symphony, "Yellow River" Piano Concerto, and others.

Dedication

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I dedicate this work to Viktorie, with love.

Chapter One: Historical Context

The twentieth century brought unprecedented challenges to China in the form of foreign military aggression and a powerful Western culture that had grown steadily in strength over the preceding 300 years. Partly as a consequence of the decline of its last empire, China, in a display of self-castigation over the sad state of its once proud and mighty culture, submitted to the musical culture of Western Europe. Then, with the rise to power of the Communists, China absorbed these Western concepts and turned inwards with revolutionary fervour to produce its own answer to what it viewed as the pinnacle of European musical culture, the Romantic-era symphony orchestra, and thus the Chinese orchestra (*minzu yuetuan*)⁵ was born. To Western eyes, the Chinese orchestra appears steeped in a history that goes back for centuries with a performance tradition similarly long. While the music certainly has its roots in ancient times, the reality is that the Chinese orchestra is an ensemble of the twentieth century whose formation came about only after a unique historical period of unprecedented political and social upheaval: the late nineteenth century.

There are three main factors that laid the groundwork for the founding of the first orchestras: first, the mainly negative view of the Confucian influence on music held by scholars by the end of the Qing dynasty; second, the growing isolation of China and the intrusion of the Western powers; and third, the turmoil in Chinese culture during the years of civil conflict leading up to the Communist victory of 1949.

Music and Confucian Thought

The ancient philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) had a pervasive influence on all Chinese social relationships, guiding people through all facets of their lives, including their family, study, work, and play, and asking them to lead a righteous life by cultivating the main Confucian virtues. Fundamental to Confucian philosophy is its guidance of social behaviour and

⁵ Minzu yuetuan 'the people's orchestra.' Three political systems resulted in three different terms for the orchestra and its music. The People's Republic of China uses the above noted term here, while the Nationalists who for many years led the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, refer to the music as guoyue 'national music' and the orchestra as guo yuetuan 'national music orchestra.' In Hong Kong, the title is zhongyue, 'Chinese music' and zhong yuetuan, 'Chinese music orchestra.'

in particular how behaviour relates to the idea of harmony (*xiehe*) – that is, the proper order and balance of things:

The essence of good society was the observance of the proper interpersonal relationships between superiors and subordinates and maintenance of the harmony [in] operation in the universe.

(Yee 1973: 12)

Orderly and proper relationships are the building blocks of society, with the ultimate aim being the proper governance of the people. There was a direct relationship between Confucian tenets and music. As David Liang states:

Confucian doctrines always seem to emphasize the view that the expression of a certain kind of virtuous and reserved (emotionally restrained/restraining) music would bring "harmony" between man and his family, society and the universe.

(Liang 1985: 172)

Thus, if music was composed and performed properly, it could control people's actions, giving rise to a harmonious society.

Rulers saw the value of music not in its artistic merit, but in its ability to promote Confucian values; the main question was not will it give artistic satisfaction, but will it promote moderate behavior and contribute to a smooth functioning of the state.

(Thrasher 1981: 24)

The idea linking music directly to the stability of a society was so strong in the minds of ancient rulers that an entire tome of the Confucian philosophy, as set down by scholars, was devoted to music. The *Yueji* (Book of Music), a tract appearing as a part of the *Liji* (Book of Rites), was written by an early disciple of Confucius and contained detailed ideas on what constituted proper music and how and where it should be applied. Because music was seen as a tool for achieving a harmonious balance in society, both the Zhou and Han dynasties had entire government offices (*yuefu*) devoted to ensuring the correct functioning of governmental music.

Two other central concepts in the Confucian ideology are moderation (*zhongyong*), and respect for continuity, or, in other words, respect for the "ancient and refined" (*guya*). Both of these ideals meant that, with its focus on harmony and stability, innovation and individualism were seen as negative traits. Moderation was valued over creativity, and self-promotion was seen as both disrespectful of the established order and showing a lack of good manners. Creativity requires a certain amount of individualist thought and experimentation, but, in a conformist society steeped in the Confucian ideals, the individual is not encouraged to act

against the prevailing tendencies. As David Liang puts it, Confucianism "acted as a brake on the forward momentum of creative thought" (1985: 348).⁶

My own observations living in Taiwan (1986 – 2003), a bastion of Confucianism during the years of Communist doctrine in China, demonstrate this is still the case today. In daily life, the encouraged behaviour is moderate, temperate, thoughtful, and never directly critical of elders. The brash individualism that is common in young Western youth is rarely seen in Taiwan.⁷ For example, a paradox is created when Taiwan teenagers then learn hip-hop, a popular dance form with origins in the highly individualist paradigm of the American inner city streets, but in large groups organized by the school. The group mentality is reinforced throughout elementary and high school, as classes remain together up to the Western equivalent of Grade 12.⁸

The perception of Confucianism is currently undergoing a re-evaluation by a younger generation of intellectuals. It is well acknowledged that there were times of great flourishing of the arts in China, and in particular, the Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. Any ideology will have positive and negative influences upon a society. A fair analysis would be to say, firstly, that Confucian ideology has had varying interpretations with more and less conservative approaches to the arts, and secondly, that In its more conservative interpretations, it clearly channeled the arts in certain directions. This was highly influenced by those who were literate: the scholar class. I shall now examine this idea by looking at the role of language and aesthetics.

⁶ Take two cities for a comparison: New Orleans in the early twentieth century where the inter-mixing of European and African cultures in the context of America's society that encouraged the interaction, experimentation and selfpromotion of its members, resulted in the creation of jazz, now considered by many as an art music of modern times. Singapore, currently in a bid to develop itself into the "New York of the East," as described by prominent Singaporean musician Jeremy Monteiro, is also a society of many cultures: Chinese, Indian, Malay, European and others. But, as a state strongly influenced in its governance by Confucian ideology, creative work in the arts remains under-developed except in a sanitized, politically correct version that lacks the popular support necessary to create a truly vibrant artistic hub.

⁷ Crime rates among youth in Taiwan are much lower than in the West - an interesting example of the power of the Confucian ideals of harmony and balance.

⁸ Although it is changing now, the high school curriculum has been taught with a focus on memorization rather than analytical thought; everyone should memorize the one correct answer rather than come up with a personal analysis that deviates from that what the teacher has stipulated. Teachers are highly respected and never referred to by name but always by title, a tradition that comes in a direct line from the old society (pre-1911) and the esteem held for the scholar class in China.

Language and Aesthetics. Chinese is perhaps one of the best known of the tonal languages. The *tone* of a word is a sound with a rising-falling pitch and the meaning of the word is directly linked to its tone. Any alterations of tone will transform the meaning of the word. Tonality should not be confused with intonation such as in English language where, for instance, a gradual rising of the pitch toward the end of a statement indicates an interrogative sentence. The tonality of Chinese language and Chinese musical melody are intertwined in a way not found in English. As A. C. Scott relates:

The whole question of musical structure in China was related to the tonal basis of the Chinese language . . . Each word has in its three tones the beginning of melodic movement. Language is therefore much more intimately related to melody in Chinese than in Western music . . . Because the tonal basis of language was so much a part of Chinese music it need not surprise us to know that the highest form of musical expression in ancient China was achieved in poems.

(Scott 1963: 128)

In other words, the fundamental act of speaking Chinese is closely linked to a kind of musical expression. A Chinese composer would then be guided at the most basic level in his construction of melody by this unique relationship between language and music.

I believe this accounts for the linear nature of Chinese music where development takes place not in a series of vertically aligned harmonic structures that drive a melody forward, as one finds in Western music of the Baroque and Classical periods, but in a single melodic line with added embellishment that uses its internal fragments as a building block for later melodies. One way that tension is created, not by an increase in the dissonance of a vertical sonority, but in the fragmentation of melody into shorter and shorter segments until a release occurs with a restatement of an earlier phrase. I elaborate on this idea in a musical context in the discussion of *Dao Baban* in Chapter Two.

As opposed to alphabetical languages such as English, the Chinese writing system is based on the use of thousands of characters, or logograms. Each is a miniature artwork, and those who mastered the written language with brush and ink, in this case members of the scholar-official class, were highly respected by the society at large. Highly dependant on the mastery of thousands of characters, the written language thrived in a stylized prose using "abstruse historical allusions, a multiple system of governing particles, and other complexities of usage" (Scott 1963: 9). Thus it was not only the ability to handle pen and ink that set scholars apart from merchants, peasants, and fishermen, but also their knowledge of poetry, history, philosophy, painting, and their mastery of the art of calligraphy, considered an art form on its own because it combined elements of poetry with painting. Literacy was a form of communication, a key that opened up the door to official posts and wealth, but even more than that, the written language was an art form unto itself. This resulted in the isolation of the scholar class from the common people. With the power of literacy residing a segment of society who were deeply infused with Confucian ideals and had the influence of the court, the scholar class formed a highly influential group on the development of the arts in China. Whereas in Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the courts and churches generally hired composers as craftsmen to provide music for entertainment and service, in China, the scholar class were themselves engaged in creating art. However, they saw music through their own first hand experience of it: through the ritual and entertainment ensembles of the court. Thus there were two reasons why the scholar class saw music as being the lesser of the arts: it was not the domain where they had the greatest freedom to create, as in literature; and it was filtered through their rather sober experiences of the ritual music and the use of music as a tool of government. As Thrasher contends:

Whereas musical expression was more closely associated with Confucian values and ritual from the earliest times, the arts of painting and poetry developed much later, and never became closely connected with ritual or the promotion of Confucian thinking.

(Thrasher 1981: 22)

In other words, scholars had, within the Confucian context, the freedom in both literature and painting that could not be found in music. Within the realm of literature, they could amuse themselves with their highly educated historical allusions and create something sophisticated the art of "brushed words" grew more prominent than the art of "struck sounds."

With the day-to-day power of the government in the hands of an elite educated class steeped in the Confucian morals, what was the effect on the creation of music? Taking the Confucian ideals of balance and order, a good composition had to retain the proper melodic arrangement before rhythm or harmony was considered (Scott 1963: 54-55). Melody took precedence over all else and, based on the rising and falling tone of the spoken word, there were clear indications as to what intervals could follow others, and which ones should be avoided.

While there is no definitive statement in early Confucian texts, both de Woskin and Thrasher agree that the use of the pentatonic scale is closely related to Confucian aesthetics (de Woskin 1983: 202, and Thrasher: personal communication 2007). No doubt there are two factors at play: first, the direct influence of the Confucian ritual music which, by nature of its function, followed strict guidelines of broad rhythms, slow tempo, and simple melody without excessive embellishment; second, the importance of achieving overall harmony (*xiehe*) in society, which, in this case can be seen in the importance given to the alignment of numbers in official policy. In music, the pentatonic scale, based on five notes, aligned well with important Confucian constructs such as the "five directions", the "five virtues", the "five relationships" and others. On the other hand, seven, the number of notes in the major scale for example, was not an auspicious number and so would not have found favour under a Confucian ethic. The Confucian ideals that favoured moderation and respect for the old were impressed deeply in the thinking of the scholar class. This also applied, to a large extent, to the common people for whom the scholar-class was an example to be followed. With such a pervasive mind set and a focus turned elsewhere for the creation of sophisticated artwork, there is ample reason to explain the widespread use of the pentatonic scale and to understand why heterophonic⁹ lines with flowing melodies flourished in China for so many years.

Cultural Turmoil

It is generally known that the arts flourished during three dynastic periods: the Tang, Song, and Ming. The Song encouraged a highly Confucian view of the arts, while the less conservative Tang allowed many influences from India and Central Asia to be absorbed into the culture. The Ming, though prosperous, was marked by protectionist impulses (Liang 1985: 27), an attitude that extended into the last empire, the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), whose outsider Manchu rulers attempted to hold on to power by encouraging the ancient Chinese way of life, including a renewed focus on Confucian thought. However, their attempts to control the masses by creating the impression of self-rule were not always successful:

Although alien rulers, the Qing monarchs tried to perpetuate the Chinese-Confucian official order and classical learning, yet enforced legislation that antagonized the Chinese, such as the wearing of the queue headdress.

(Liang 1985: 27)

The Manchus, wishing to maintain the impression of a nationalist government, fostered a pro-native Chinese outlook, and the result was a dearth of Western influence in the arts despite frequent contacts with Europe. Even more culturally debilitating, the Manchus deliberately rejected earlier Chinese music that was seen as too flamboyant:

⁹ Heterophony is a fundamental element in Chinese music where musicians, simultaneously performing a unison melody, individually add embellishment idiomatic to their own instruments.

There occurred a deliberate discarding of music that was believed to have been from the foreign music that previously flourished in China during the Sui-Tang period . . . The legendary Tang court music was not preserved, nor did any of the great $15^{th} - 19^{th}$ Century European music traditions gain a foothold in China.

(Liang 1985: 133)

By disposing of many rich musical traditions, the Manchus turned their backs on a wealth of historical precedent, including the establishment of orchestras. Beginning as early as the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), orchestral type ensembles did exist, but were used in functional ways, delineated as 'ritual,' ceremonial-entertainment,' or 'processional.' While ritual music was based upon the strict Confucian temple music, processional music was the rough equivalent to modern-day marching bands, and ceremonial-entertainment groups provided for court gatherings. Concert music for public enjoyment did not exist in this early period. By contrast, the court of the early Tang (618 - 907 AD) period boasted the possession of ten orchestras, classed by their influences of mostly India and central Asia, on the government payroll. Still, however, concert music was not the goal, but rather this compendium of foreign culture was kept as a demonstration of the power of the state.

With an emphasis on moderation, and with the glory of the music from earlier dynasties no longer permitted, the cultural environment narrowed. This served to exacerbate the differences between Western and Chinese music and, coupled with the growing military power of the West, the foundations for a cultural disaster were well laid.

The nineteenth century would bring momentous change: the Opium War of 1840-42 marked the beginning of Western invasion and colonialism which shook the foundations of Chinese society by exposing it to the external reality of foreign powers whose technological and industrial might was vastly superior to that of China. The old values that had been relied on for more than two thousand years crumbled in the face of such overwhelming force. Historically, the last years of most dynasties usually brought on disaffection, corruption, and a gradual disintegration of governmental power, and the waning period of the Qing dynasty during the mid 1800's was no different. A growing alienation between the people and the ruling Qing dynasty, viewed as foreign itself, brought about the slow downfall of the last great dynasty in Chinese history.

The year 1911 marked the end of two thousand years of imperial China, replaced by the nascent Republic of China founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The rapid social and political upheavals of previous years had created conflict and instability, and despite the lofty principals of the

Republican movement, unity was elusive with the nation ideologically split and in financial ruins.

Politically, China began to move in two divergent directions. The Nationalists, following Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, looked to the West with its democratic traditions, while the Communists, who would later find their leader in Mao Zedong, began a search for their political direction. The Communist movement did not mature until 1921, and so with the institutional power held mostly by the Nationalists, Western ideas increasingly found their way into China. The external signs that showed the adoption of Western culture are commonly known: the embracing of Western clothes, growing popularity of literature in translation, reform of the education system, and other signs of modernization. These Western ideas were adopted so that the country could "learn the skills of the barbarians in order to control the barbarians."¹⁰

The turn toward Western ideas. According to Han Kuo-Huang, the first avenues for the influx of Western influence on China's music came with the arrival of the Christian church and Western style military institutions. Christian missionaries introduced the first widespread Western musical influence through their hymns. The first Chinese hymnal was published as early as 1818, and between 1838 and 1922 at least thirty-four more were added. Chinese texts were added to Western tunes, such as *Frere Jacques* sung with the text of "Song of the National Revolution" (Wang 2001: 17). By not only spreading Western music, but also influencing public attitudes, Western missionaries added to the overall trend of devaluing Chinese music. Reform of the discredited military resulted in the hiring of German officers who brought along their military traditions in the form of brass bands. The first was founded in 1895 in the city of Tianjin, but the most well known was that led by Hart, Inspector-General of the Maritime Customs Office in Beijing (Han 2001: 230).

The Nationalists moved their agenda forward primarily through their reform of the school system. Late Qing dynasty leaders had already realized that the only way to compete with the foreign powers was to educate the young. Reform of the education system had already begun as early as 1905 with the abolition of the age-old civil service examination system (Han 2001: 234). A growth in conservatory style teaching made a huge impact by the introduction of the music of Mozart and Beethoven, with lessons on the modern piano, and a growth in

¹⁰ Wei Yuan, in the preface to his treatise: published in *Haiguo Tuzhi*, translated in Han 2001: 229.

conservatory style teaching as the dominant form. Many Western- and Japanese-trained educators disliked Chinese music because they saw it as a part of the trend that blamed everything old for China's weakness against the colonial powers. Responding to the dilemma of the apparent incompatibility of Chinese and Western music, the musical scholar Qing Zhu (1893-1959) declared:

There is only one type of music that can be considered as art, that is Western music... In the opinion of some patriotic citizens, Western music coming to China is a form of "art invasion." If this is true, then let it happen. It is obvious that Chinese music cannot compete with Western music... we have to choose between Chinese and Western music. We cannot have both.

(Qing 1934: 3. Cited in Liu and We: 1994, 6, in Han 2000: 24)

The cultural schism amidst the educated class was quite dramatic, as this quotation shows. Scholars whole-heartedly rejected thousands of years of musical culture and desired to 'upgrade' it by turning to Western music. Educator Zeng Ziming, in his article "On Music Education," published in Japan, described four ways to do this: first, by training native teachers; second, by hiring foreign music teachers; third, by editing music teaching materials; and finally, by manufacturing Western organs and pianos. In Han's interpretation of Zeng's words:

It was necessary to upgrade the society with another kind of music, namely "school music" (which implied refined music). The correct music was Western music, which, according to Zeng, was refined and able to make the society civilized.

(Han 2001: 234)

Thanks to the Manchu rulers who had, under the mandate of a revival of Confucian thought, limited the kind of music that could be performed at the government level, Confucianism was seen as the reason for China's weakness, and Zeng, at least in musical circles, was proposing to replace the refined court music with Western models. Eloquently expressing a perfect example of Confucian ideology towards music, Chao Mei-Pa gave this commentary on the contemporary situation:

The music of a country is not really pure and beautiful, unless the country is flourishing, but its decline is one of the sure signs of approaching decadence. How important then is music?

(Chao 1937: 271)

This aim to 'improve' Chinese music, by wedding Western technique to Chinese instruments, became known as a movement called 'national music' (*guoyue*).^{//}

¹¹ *Guoyue* became associated with the Nationalists, who later lost power to the Communists, and fled to Taiwan where the term is still in use. When the Communists championed a return to traditional and peasant music, they

'National music'. The tide would soon turn away from the West but not before two important concepts were established: the idea of larger scale composition, and the growth of concert music. These developments were particularly significant for this discussion of the Chinese orchestra because the expanding search for concert music meant that instrumental music changed from being primarily an art of the amateur bent on virtuous self-improvement, to one that moved into its own spotlight as a performance art. Composers began to view the genre as a legitimate form through which they could make important contributions to the new culture. The concept of instrumental music as a performance art remained important even through the subsequent cultural upheavals. If Western music was later shunned by the Communists, at least the idea of concert music, albeit with political overtones, remained a vital part of the new musical tradition.

While this cultural storm of controversy and upheaval mostly took place amongst the educated elite, the life of the common people was not always affected. Whereas urban schools underwent transformation brought about by the wave of self-abasement, rural areas continued their musical traditions largely uninterrupted. Amongst the uneducated, a certain amount of Confucian ideals have always filtered down affecting the style of composition and performance to varying degrees in different areas.¹² For example, even though it was not thought of as a Confucian ideal *per se*, practitioners of the *sizhu* style of music found amongst the common people, still aimed to emulate the Confucian trait of moderate behaviour, while exploring virtuous self-improvement. This gave China, in effect, a two-tiered cultural system, one at court and government guided by the educated scholar class and following closely the edicts of the state, the other amongst the common people, where musicians passed on their traditions aurally, were not always able to read music notation, and followed their own creative impulses. The fact that *sizhu* style music continued on its own and away from courtly tenets will have important consequences later, when the composers turn to it as a basis upon which to build the Chinese orchestra.

coined the term *minzu yinyue*, 'people's music' or 'music of the people.' The political connotations of these terms are still relevant today.

¹² An apt comparison is to that of the modern European society of the twentieth century, which, while under much less direct moral direction of the church compared with the Renaissance and other periods, was still clearly very Christian in its overall moral temperament. A man may not have described himself as a religious person and may not have attended church, nevertheless, his actions would still be guided by many of the Christian tenets.

Championing the traditional instruments. The Nationalists dominated the cultural and political discourse from approximately 1911, but in the following decade their sway over China's population waned due to the influence of two major events: first, the May 4th Movement of 1919, when the Western powers ceded areas of China away from Germany and to Japan without any consultation with the Chinese government thus causing large demonstrations; second, the founding of the Communist Party in 1921. Ironically, disaffection with the Nationalists took on the form of a new direction that had the strongest effect yet on the spread of Western music - the New Culture Movement - with the overall goal of forging a new identity in song:

Attracted by the May 4th movement, Chinese musicians studying abroad returned to their motherland one after another and devoted themselves to the establishment of new music.

(Wang 2001: 13)

At the forefront of this reform was Xiao Youmei, a composer trained in Leipzig who had strong ties to the music of China. In 1927, working under the leadership of the influential politician and university director Cai Yuanpei, Xiao founded the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Classes concentrated on Western music theory and the study of the violin and piano as core instruments, but traditional instrument lessons were also offered, although at the beginning the climate of cultural self-deprecation resulted in a lack of attraction to traditional instrumental study:

Interest for these Chinese instruments was rather limited. Most [of the students] preferred the Western-oriented courses.

(Schimmelpenninck 1993: 17)

Nevertheless, Xiao made an important contribution that later led directly to the founding of the Chinese orchestra: his definition of the concept of *guoyue* by focusing on the traditional instruments of the *sizhu* ensemble: the two-stringed fiddle (*erhu*), the plucked lute (*pipa*), the zither (*zheng*), and the bamboo flute (*dizi*). Based on observations made by both Schimmelpenninck and Wang (2001), it is clear that Xiao intended for the younger generation to learn how to compose in the European style and have these new pieces performed on the traditional instruments. Xiao's conceptualization suffered from the same weakness as Zeng's: both ignored the music of the "peasants, beggars, low-ranking actors and Daoist and Buddhist worshippers and priests" (Schimmelpenninck 1993: 63). Their attitude against the common music is echoed in the words of contemporary educator Chen Hong:



Figure 1.1: A Young Musician Performing on the *Erhu* (Source: Chinese 1978)

Our music died a long time ago. The so-called musicians now are lower class amateur bands, prostitutes, the blind, and the homeless. Their music is either extravagant or degenerate. If music represents culture, our nation of li (rite) and *yue* (music) has become bestial. This kind of traditional music should definitely be exterminated.¹³

(Chen 1993: 11. Cited in Liu and Wu 1994: 6, in Han: 2000, 27)

Xiao's heart was in the right place, but his condescending view of traditional music as lowly and unworthy meant placing all his efforts in music that held little attraction for the younger generations.

As the gap between the followers of Dr. Sun's republicanism and Mao's socialism widened and a power shift took place, the Communists

began to dominate the national discourse on China's future and a dramatic reversal occurred. A junior professor and composer on the faculty at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Liu Tianhua, took a broader view than Xiao and voiced the key issues regarding the relationship between Western technique and Chinese music as follows:

To develop Chinese music one can neither superficially imitate the manner of Western music, nor conservatively stand still with the old methods.

(Schimmelpenninck 1993: 17)

Liu took the middle ground and neither completely rejected the common music, nor resisted the influx of Western ideas, but rather aimed to blend West and East and believed that the greatest potential lay in the two stringed fiddle, an instrument ubiquitous in most of the major forms of Chinese music:

It has been seldom discussed as a significant instrument. It is really a misfortune... someone says that the musical pieces played with $huqin^{1/4}$ are mostly vulgar and lascivious and cannot be performed on elegant occasions. This is an opinion of a musical layman. To be sure, the vulgarity of elegance of music is determined by the musician's

¹³ The notions of *li* and *yue* refer specifically to the ancient Confucian views on governing and the role of music. If the music is correct, the people will behave correctly; hence the measure of the modern culture as "bestial."

¹⁴ *Huqin* is the term for all two-stringed bowed instruments, including *erhu*. Both terms were in common usage in the 1930s. See Appendix A.

thought, techniques, and the organization of the composition. Therefore, on any musical instrument, one can express any emotions and how can *huqin* be excluded?

(Liu, as cited in Wang 2001: 29)

Liu composed 10 pieces for *erhu*, of which "Song in Sickness," "Beautiful Night," and "The Birds Singing in Hollow Valley" have become, since their publication in 1928, the most popular pieces for the instrument (Han 1979: 29). Liu also played an important role in continuing the traditional music education in schools:

Under the influence of Liu Tianhua, Chinese instruments *erhu*, *pipa*, *qin* and *zheng* were taught in more and more music institutes. New compositions therefore occurred after the model of his works.

(Wang 2001: 28)

In these compositions, Liu takes Chinese techniques, such as the glissando method from Henan opera, and Western violin techniques such as left hand finger vibrato, spiccato, tremolo, position shifting, and harmonics to enrich the expressive power of the *erhu*.¹⁵ These pieces were meant to be played as written, not with added embellishments from the performer as was done in the past. A careful study was undertaken which was then notated; this is a marked departure from the traditional ways, and when applied to all the traditional instruments, gradually took over as the proper method of instruction. The focused study of a music instrument with the aim of becoming as proficient as possible was yet another marked departure from the Confucian amateur ideal of study for self-knowledge.

The unique circumstances leading to the founding of the Chinese orchestra were now in place. Intellectuals of the early twentieth century looked upon the Confucian mindset at the end of the Qing dynasty as having weakened the creative force of Chinese composers and musicians. Meanwhile, the isolationist tendency of the last dynasties had distanced China from the West, and its musical culture was forced into strict boundaries. The educated class, blaming China's military weakness on the old school thinking, rejected the old traditions and allowed Western ideas and music to flow in. This included the important concepts of music as a concert art, and the acceptance of professional training on a musical instrument. As the Republic lost its grip on

¹⁵ Another example of this idea but in the reverse is the seminal work 'The Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto (*Liang Shanbo he Zhu Yingtai*) by He Zhanhao. In order to successfully reproduce the Chinese element of the *huqin*, He Zhanhao spent time performing Chinese opera (*yueju*) and carefully documented the special techniques needed to produce a particularly Chinese sentiment by imitating the styles of both the master *huqin* player at the opera, and the singers. He then carefully applied these to the Western violin, creating not only a Chinese styled melody, but also embellishments of a distinctive and honest Chinese flavour (Zhou 2001: 114).

power and the Communists took over, changing the attitude of the public towards traditional instruments. With a new direction taken, the groundwork for the Chinese orchestra was now in place. With no equivalent to the European orchestral tradition however, the search for a model that would provide the basis for an orchestra began.



Figure 1.2: A Chinese Orchestra (Source: Chinese 1978)

The Emergence of the Chinese Orchestra

In his famous Yenan speech of 1942, Mao Zedong outlined his views on the role of the traditional arts as the foundation of Chinese culture, stating that artists must be "active in forming intimate contacts with the workers, peasants and soldier [and] study and analyze...all the raw materials of literature and art..." before proceeding to creative work (Mao 1942: 16-17). Mao's use of the arts, including music, to promote the government's message was in fact an

ideology not far from the ancient tenets of Confucianism, with music being used once again as a tool of governance. There was a fundamental difference however; while the Nationalists conceived of their control as from the top down and their music that of the West, the Communists chose to work from the ground up by revering the music of common people. Furthermore, it wasn't simply the traditional nature of the music that appealed to them; they understood the forces that could be harnessed with the emotional power of music, something that had been held back under the conservative Nationalist government:

The emotive nature of music makes it a vital medium for any revolutionary cause, and China's rich background of peasant music provides a ready-made basis for developing an "official proletarian" music...

(Scott 1963: 141)

Music combined with revolutionary fervour made for a potent way to influence the masses.

At the Shanghai Conservatory, a new director, He Luting, was appointed in the 1950s, providing a clear impetus for the development of Chinese instruments. He Luting greatly appreciated European art music, but was also a lover of Chinese folklore and had established a reputation as a composer in support of the revolution. His appointment resulted in a new musical momentum and, as Schimmelpenninck remarks, Chinese traditional music turned quickly into a new focus of interest:

He invited traditional musicians from all over the country to come to the Conservatory and play and teach national instruments. Not only *pipa*, *dizi*, *erhu*, and *zheng*, but also typical folk instruments. ...[and] an official folk music department was set up in 1956.

(Schimmelpenninck 1993: 84)

With the music of the common people now an important new focal point, art forms that held no interest in the eyes of the Nationalists became the center of intense research and study.

By 1958, enrollment in Chinese instrumental studies was so strong that the Conservatory was able to recruit a large ensemble from among its own students, combining some twenty-five instruments that had *never played* in such an ensemble setting before [author's italics] (Schimmelpenninck 1993: 74). Under the unique socio-political environment of the early twentieth century, the Western symphony, seen as one of the greatest expressions of the European music tradition, was combined with Chinese music to bring about the formation of a new kind of ensemble, the Chinese orchestra.



Figure 1.3: A *Sizhu* Ensemble (Source: Liang 1995: 345)

Sizhu as a basis for the orchestras. As discussed earlier, 'silk bamboo' (*sizhu*), is the name given to one style of music performed on the silk stringed *erhu*, *zheng*¹⁶, *pipa*, and *yangqin*, and the bamboo flute *dizi*. Once modern scholars turned their attention away from Western music to embrace these traditional instruments and music of the common folk, they had a wealth of history to draw upon. There is a certain irony in this choice; during a time that rejected the Confucian influences, they chose to form the orchestra from a tradition that, in some regions, maintained much of the Confucian influences of moderation and respect for the ancient.¹⁷ It is difficult to outline clearly the connection between *sizhu*, a genre of the common practice, and the music at court and opera. Han Kuo-Huang states:

Because of its low social status, official documents did not record it; because of its independence from the theatre, the most popular form of entertainment among the people, the literary people did not write about it.

(Han 1979: 10)

¹⁶ The *zheng* is listed here, but it should be noted that it was not generally considered a part of the Jiangnan *sizhu*, but rather came from other *sizhu* ensembles from South and North China.

¹⁷ Alan Thrasher, in recent conversation with *sizhu* musicians of the Chaozhou and Hakka cultures noted that they refer to their kind of *sizhu* music as *ruyue*, "music of the (Confucian) *literati*" (Thrasher 2007: 12).

A substantial part of the *sizhu* repertoire is made up of pieces called 'named tunes' (*qupai*). Many of these trace back to opera and are instrumental pieces known as 'crossing stage music' (*guochang qu*). A second group of instrumental pieces predates opera, but their exact origins are unclear. On the other hand, there is a more direct connection between the instruments of the *sizhu* and the court: the exotic instruments from outside cultures appeared first at court and were passed on during times of interaction between the court and common practice musicians – for example, when an ensemble from a local village was hired to perform for the court.

With antecedents going back thousands of years, *sizhu* became a genre unto its own only in the mid-nineteenth century. Musicians gathered to play for weddings, funerals, and temple fairs but, unlike the professional ritual specialists at court, were not paid for their appearances. Scholars turned their focus to this form of ensemble because with the appearance of the *Jiangnan sizhu* 'silk and bamboo of the south' regional variant, it represented the first musical tradition to contain the instruments common to all types of *sizhu*: *pipa* (plucked lute), *erhu* (twostringed fiddle), *sanxian* (plucked lute), *yangqin* (dulcimer), *di* (transverse flute), *xiao* (endblown flute), and *sheng* (mouth organ).

The Jiangnan *Sizhu* Ensemble represents the lyrical qualities of the region and, at the same time, less specialized instruments compared to other ensembles. This is probably one of the foremost reasons for its being adopted as the model of the modern Chinese orchestra.

(Han 2001: 11)

Apparently, Han did not consider other reasons related to the region for choosing Jiangnan *sizhu*: the Shanghai area was a major financial centre, home of the first important conservatory of music, as well as the home of several prominent scholars who played important roles during this period including He Luting and Xiao Youmei.

Sizhu performers came to develop a substantial body of short works based on a core repertoire of memorized melodies. While playing in an ensemble, each player adds his own form of ornamentation, idiomatic to his particular instrument, thereby creating a complex texture. The melody of a fixed length is repeated, each time with an increase in tempo necessitating a change in the nature of the ornamentation. By the early twentieth century, despite the turn towards Western music, *sizhu* had already enjoyed a growing popularity amongst the populace..

In 1911 a *Jiangnan sizhu* organization began to meet weekly at a Shanghai teahouse. From this time on, *Jiangnan sizhu* organizations began to spring up throughout the city, and by the 1920s a gathering of *sizhu* musicians attracted over two hundred participants. Following Mao Zedong's exhortation in his famous Yenan speech for a renewed focus on folk arts, including traditional music, He Luting suddenly had a clear path open to him: turn to the *sizhu* ensemble and take advantage of the wealth of China's music that had popular support, and wasn't seemingly tainted by the ancient Confucian dogmas.

Early ensembles. The make-up of the Chinese orchestra was based on Jiangnan *sizhu*, but interesting instruments were added, including the large oboe (*suona*), the drums (*dagu*), and the cloud gongs (*yunluo*), which were all taken from the outdoor *guchui*, 'drumming and blowing,' ensembles. In the atmosphere of the championing of traditional music, the traditional instruments came under some scrutiny. The goal was to make them more suitable for ensemble playing and comparable in sound to those of the Western symphony orchestra.

Han Kuo-Huang provides a detailed outline of two periods of the development of the Chinese orchestra (Han 1979: 14 ff.): first, in the 1930s and 40s, a time when the first orchestras were formed; second, during the 1950s and 60s, a time of evolution. I would add to this a period after the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 76) from 1976 to the present, a time of consolidation, when older styles that had been neglected during the Revolution were re-established, and younger composers went abroad and returned with fresh ideas of composition, highly influenced by the modern Western sensibilities.

As I mentioned earlier, the Chinese orchestra showed some key divergence from the original *sizhu* groups: whereas *sizhu* was an oral tradition passed down through generations of masters and ensembles rarely contained more than 10 players, the Chinese orchestra with thirty or more musicians had music stands for the requirement of reading music by sight, sat in a fanshape like in Western orchestras, and called for a conductor with a baton to lead the group.

According to Han Kuo-Huang, the first Chinese orchestra was formed in 1935 at the Central Broadcasting Station (CBS) in Nanjing, the capital of the Nationalist government during the time of open civil war with the Communists. The group did not actually perform on air until during the Sino-Japanese War when the capital was moved away from the front lines to the city of Chongqing. At this time, the orchestra was intended, in part at least, to be used to support the war effort by broadcasting 'national music' (*guoyue*). Although presented in a concert form of live broadcast (a kind of Western influence), the music was still functional in nature; the

government presented the orchestra as an instrument of propaganda, to promote the ideals of the republican movement in the form of music.

Historical sources do not mention the precise size of this group, however, a second ensemble of twenty musicians was formed in 1942, also in Chongqing. Conductor Gao Ziming provides a description of the first concerts of this second group:

In 1942, a new national orchestra consisting of about twenty teachers and students of the Central Broadcasting Station appeared in the temporary capital. In the concert, performers sat facing the audience in two opposing fan-like half circles. A music stand was placed in front of each member (the sight reading practice) ... another person, standing in front of the orchestra, holding a baton in his right hand, conducted lively with his back to the audience. A high music stand with its back against the other stands was placed in front of the conductor, a practice completely different from the old *Sizhu* ensemble.

(Han 1979: 16)

It is pertinent to see how conspicuously the use of music stands and the leadership of a conductor, with his back to the audience, were notable in the mind of a contemporary musician. For thousands of years, and even before the development of *sizhu*, the music of the *literati* was considered an art form designed for self-improvement and to be performed in small groups playing for each other. Now this tradition, as practiced in *sizhu*, was to be altered dramatically by expanding the ensemble almost five-fold or more, employing a conductor, and performing music for wide audience. Such a performance was no longer an intimate experience shared by the musician and his closest friends in the privacy of a garden pavilion or a teahouse, but a large, government sanctioned and public undertaking. From the perspective of the individual artist, this transformation was indeed momentous.

After the Communist victory of 1949, the CBS moved to Taiwan and became the Broadcasting Corporation of China. In Taiwan, the republican movement continued, and the orchestra became an icon of the conservative ideals of the government as even under the republican adoption of Western influences, the basic Confucian undercurrent of society did not change.¹⁸

Technical issues. During the second phase of development spanning the period of the 1950s and 60s, the size of the orchestras expanded. This is no doubt in part due to the close relationship between Communist China and the Soviet Union at the time. Young composers and

¹⁸ See my personal observations in the section Music and Confucian Thought.

conductors were encouraged to travel to Moscow for their studies, exposing themselves first hand to the large Western style orchestra and the works of composers such as Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Shostakovich, Bartok and other "politically correct" composers.¹⁹ Partly because of the need to stimulate the masses, and partly because Communist Russia was the chosen partner, particularly the orchestrations of Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Shostakovich appealed to the Communists during this time. The exciting, brash, full sounds of these composers is clearly heard in the early pieces composed for Western symphony orchestra in China, such as the *Long March Symphony* and the *Yellow River Cantata* (later changed into a piano concerto). As Yang Ziming contends: "Glorious life needs equally grandiose performing styles to match" (Han 1979: 17). Under such ostentatious influences, and with the symphony of Western instruments showing the way, the Chinese orchestra was under pressure to expand dramatically by the need to support the ideology of the state.

In his account of the development of the early orchestras, Gao Ziming refers to some of the key developments, particularly the taking of the Western orchestra of the late Romantic Period as a model:

In organizing an orchestra, we use the yuehu or nanhu I as the first violins of the Western orchestra, nanhu II as the second violins, zhonghu as the violas, dahu as the cellos, dihu as the contrabasses, yangqin as the piano, twelve-hole xindi as the flute, xiao as the clarinet, bangdi as the piccolo, bili as the oboe, large guan as the trombone, suona as the trumpet, muqin as the xylophone, dagu as the timpani, xiaogu as the snare drum, diaopo as the cymbals, and pengling as the triangle.

(Gao Ziming. Cited in Han 1979: 17)

Gao further mentions that for particularly large ensembles, cellos and double basses were added, even trombones and bassoons. Clearly, under such circumstances, the traditional instruments in their contemporary state were quite unsuitable for such large groups in the areas of sound quality, volume, and tuning. He Luting was one of those who studied the possibilities of technical 'improvements' such as equal-tempered tuning and enlarged resonance chambers to enhance loudness. Quality of the low sounds was an issue with the early, enlarged versions of

¹⁹ The Communists continually re-evaluated the 'political correctness' of composers. This was a subjective process and the results varied over time. As the Cultural Revolution approached, the interpretation of communist doctrine generally narrowed and therefore more and more composers were deemed incorrect. For example, Bartok was initially included because of his study and use of folk music, but was later rejected.

the *erhu*, therefore Western instruments were often used in these orchestra sections, a practice that can still be seen today.²⁰

In 1953, the Central Broadcasting Station in Beijing formed a new orchestra. Experimentation continued, searching for a new instrument that could provide the fundamental bass tones for the orchestra. The largest issue was finding an instrument that could preserve the traditional timbres of the *sizhu* yet provide the solid low pitches needed to ground the orchestra. The answer was found in the *gehu* and *dihu* (see Appendix A), the equivalent of the cello and double bass.

Fret board instruments including *pipa*, and *ruan*, required alteration to match the demands of equal temperament. This was necessary in order to perform music based on the major-minor tonality system. These tuning issues were dramatic because they challenged at the most fundamental level a musician's learning as passed down over the previous thousands of years. In common practice technique, modal pentatonic music depended on notes that were not in accordance to the equal temperament. Using a Western major scale as a basis for comparison, the note based on the sub-dominant degree of the major scale lay sharp in modal pitch, approximately halfway between the sub-dominant and the pitch a semi-tone above, while the leading tone in the major scale lay flat in pitch, between it and the flatted-seventh (see also Figure 2.1). This traditional tuning also meant that the instruments could not play in all key signatures, but only in the ones that lie in direct relation to the open strings of the instrument.

Finally, the ranges of the traditional instruments needed to be enlarged significantly in order to produce the wide spectrum needed for the new concert music. This entailed, in some cases, adding higher pitched strings and placing frets on higher and higher positions.

Conferences with newly developed instruments took place in Beijing and Shanghai throughout the 1950s. Here are the key results of these sessions as recorded by Han Kuo-Huang:

1. Enlargement of the erhu into the *zhonghu* (alto), *dahu* (tenor) and *dihu* (bass); and invention of the *gehu*, a 4-stringed cello-like fiddle with a finger board, tuned and played like a cello and using a cello bow.

2. Enlargement of the *ruan* plucked lute into *zhongruan* (alto), *daruan* (tenor), and *diruan* (bass).

²⁰ As late as 1989, I observed members of the National Concert Hall Chinese Orchestra performing with cellos and double basses.

3. Changing the frets of all the lute-type instruments to accommodate chromatic and tempered arrangements.

4. The use of wood instead of bamboo for some flutes, with adjustable joints for tuning. Also, a complete set of 12 flutes one in each pitch of the chromatic scale.

5. Creation of a quick-tuning system for the *yangqin* (dulcimer).

6. Invention of the *paigu*, a tuned sets of drums like timpani.

(Han 1979: 18-19)

These early orchestras existed due to the unique socio-political circumstances found in China in the early twentieth century. The national spirit of China was calling for unity and a strong and modern country. In order to satisfy these goals, modern scholars turned to the traditions that most represented the country as a whole, the *sizhu* of the Jiangnan region, and began to develop the Chinese orchestra in order to represent both tradition and modernity at the same time. To the Western point of view, these orchestras appear to have descended through a long tradition that is older than the Western symphony. Rather, it is the opposite - the Chinese orchestra is a uniquely twentieth-century institution. As a hybrid form of both Chinese and Western culture, its success as a cultural institution has been uneven, but the establishment of many ensembles amongst the Chinese diaspora has shown that it does have a meaningful existence in many circles.

Since 1976, China has once again gradually opened up to the West, and the international success of composers such as Zhou Long, Tan Dun and others signifies that one generation has been able to set new directions in place for the future ones to follow. It is only speculation to talk about the future, and China's long history documents many engagements with, and withdrawals from the international stage. However, the situation today demonstrates a China that is embracing modern life to a degree unseen in the past, as well as a desire to take its place amongst the world's super-powers. Music plays a role in the politics of any country, and, as I have discussed, this is particularly true in the case of China. The art form of music may require a much longer time span than the current generation in order to work its way free from the cultural paradigm of serving the government, but it is most likely that the Chinese orchestra will play an important role in this process.

Chapter Two: Three Representative Works

In this chapter, I will analyze three compositions that demonstrate the development of the Chinese orchestra from its *sizhu* roots to the modern ensemble: *Jinshe Kuangwu*, by Nie Er; Yangming *Chunxiao*, by Tung Yung-Shen; and *Qin Bingmayong*, by Peng Xiuwen

Before I begin an analysis, a brief explanation of modes, affect, and form in Chinese music will be very helpful.

Modes, Affect and Form

Modes. Traditional Chinese composers created melodies with pentatonic construction and used added or altered notes to extend the choice of pitches beyond the basic pentatonic scale. Under the Confucian aesthetic, the pentatonic scale was favoured both for the harmonious sound of whole steps and minor thirds, and because the ancient theorists theorized several ways that it reinforced cultural values. The *wusheng* ('five sounds') modal system was believed to have parallels with important social constructs such as the 'five relationships', 'five virtues,' 'five directions' and others. The numerological values associated with these concepts were important where music was concerned because the overall concept was to define a harmonious (as in *xiehe*) relationship between all the different elements. For example, the number five (the number of pitches in the pentatonic scale) which related to the constructs mentioned above was more auspicious than seven (the diatonic scale) or twelve (the chromatic scale)²¹; the interval of the fifth was more harmonious than the fourth, and so forth. The number five placed higher in the hierarchy of relationships, and this gave a convincing argument in favour of the prominence of the pentatonic scale.

The commonly known pentatonic scale is constructed of five notes (Figure 2.1 example a) called *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu*.

²¹ The number twelve was also auspicious and therefore an important relationship to the chromatic scale was also laid out. In ancient China, the chromatic scale was not a scale from which to create melody, but rather a series of steps used to calibrate the beginning frequency of each modal centre.

a) the pentatonic scale:













Figure 2.1: Basic Modes of the Wusheng System with Bianyin

Five basic modal forms are shown in Figure 2.1 b) through f). Pitches written in halfnote durations indicate the important notes upon which phrases would normally end. Borrowing terminology from early Western church modes, the note at the end of a composition may be called the 'finalis.' Quarter-note durations indicate the often-used pitches in each mode. The stemless notes in brackets are the substitute notes (*bianyin*), which are not technically part of the scale, but may be used to add colour and variety. For example, a melody based on the *gong* mode would be constructed using mostly the five notes of the basic pentatonic scale, 'c', 'd', 'e', 'g' and 'a' with most phrases ending on 'c' or 'g'. For variety, the pitch 'f' or 'b' might be substituted in certain passages. The finalis could be either 'c' or 'g', depending on the overall sound colour the composer desired. Each mode has a unique overall mood and composers exploited these qualities. This is comparable to the common associations of the Western major tonality with cheerful qualities, and minor with gloomy ones.

Affect and Form. I have discussed in Chapter One both the Confucian influence on the arts in general as well as the key aesthetics of music. I will now describe how these ideals are related specifically to form in music.

To the scholar class, music was filtered through a Confucian sensibility and seen as a lesser art form than literature and painting, and because of this aesthetic, form in music often followed the principles set first by poetry. As Wang Cizhao outlines:

Chinese music was led, from early on by the aesthetic concept, [along] the course of constantly attempting to synthesize music and literature.... Even today, vocal music still occupies an absolutely major portion in [the] musical life of the Chinese people. In comparison, Chinese instrumental music was not developed rapidly, nor did it become a completely independent genre. Most of the instrumental music pieces were actually derived from vocal prototypes, and many of them contain vocal elements.

(Wang 2002: 28)

To begin with, titles of many compositions are highly programmatic, describing natural scenes or dramatic historical events. Following the classifications given by Han Kuo-Huang (1978: 25), most compositions fall under the category of 'Psychological' program music: rather than outline a specific series of events as in a programmatic work such as *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz, Chinese titles are meant to establish the various symbolic ideals to be communicated, for instance virtue, righteousness, or honesty. Such symbolism is unique to Chinese music, and intended to "suggest the virtuous [and other ideals] in the music by invoking a desired image in

the mind of the audience" (Wang 2002: 29). Thrasher refers to this literary aesthetic in the *sizhu* music when noting:

Of special importance to *sizhu* aesthetics is the association made by musicians between music and cultural imagery. To be meaningful, music must be based on (or at least named after) old legends, natural phenomena, emotive states, or qualities of mythic animals.

(Thrasher 2002: 240)

The *qin* repertoire exemplifies these concepts. The *qin* has been the quintessential instrument for the *literati* in their quest for self-cultivation. It is a quiet instrument not generally designed for public performance even in chamber music, but is well suited to the quiet contemplation and self-instruction of the amateur who wishes to experience inner reflection. *Meihua Sannong* (Plum Blossom, Three Variations) invites the player/listener to reflect upon the comparison of an intellectual with the virtue and purity of the plum blossom, which comes to bloom against the ice and snow of early spring. *Xiaoxiang Shuiyun* (Water and Clouds in Xiao Xiang), rather than a depiction of the government was unpopular and unstable. Criticism of the government with the aim of restoring a healthy leadership was dangerous, and admiration for beautiful landscape represented a safe way to express one's love for the country (Wang 2002: 32).

Han presents two other classifications of program music: 'Descriptive,' in which the music follows the story line suggested by the title, and 'Imitative,' in which instruments emulate the sounds of nature. These three styles account for the vast majority of traditional Chinese music, demonstrating the importance given to literary images in the titles. A composition should be 'explained' to the audience, and the best way of communicating this was through a description given in the title. In other words, instrumental music needed to be filtered through words.

Programmatic titles place a picture in the mind of the listener, or in some cases, a story that represents important ideals. This had an important impact on the value of formal organization: structure is less important than content since the desired association is already established by the title. According to Wang, form in music was neglected because 'content' (*neirong*) took precedence as composers adhered to the Confucian ideal of expressing virtue.

In Chinese thought, musical development is the changing of musical material determined by the progression in literary plot or the sentiment expressed therein. Multi-sectional form is typical in Chinese instrumental music; but the sectional relationship between the sections is relatively loose. In general, it has no fixed structural pattern.

In extended structures, recapitulation is not generally a part of the process, and sections flow freely from one to another. In the analyses to follow, it will be shown that, in the longer works especially, the different sections are presented as a series of melodies, each with its own character and matching orchestration, following one after the other: $A - A^{\dagger} - B - C - D$, as in *Qin Bingmayong*, for example.

No discussion of form in Chinese music would be complete without touching on the use of variation, which takes on a much different and more important role than might be found in Western composition. Western listeners are no doubt familiar with the idea of 'theme and variations,' but Chinese performers use variation in a different way.

When composers turned their minds to creating a new body of art music for the Chinese orchestra in the middle of the twentieth century, they chose one type as a foundation, music of the *sizhu* tradition. In *sizhu*, passed on as an aural tradition and still performed today, musicians play for each other in small groups of four to eight. The interaction between the musicians is a most important element of *sizhu*: simultaneously, and in response to what the others are playing, each instrumentalist adds his own variation to the memorized melody (*qupai*), thus creating a complex heterophonic texture, unlike anything existing in Western music.

The name given to this kind of variation is *bianzou*. Alan Thrasher gives an excellent description of the different techniques that may be drawn upon by each instrumentalist (Thrasher 2002: 233 ff.), but I shall touch briefly on three that are particularly pertinent to the discussion in this document: 1) modal variation (*diaoxing bianzou*) as demonstrated in *Dao Baban* and *Jinshe Kuangwu*), when original melody notes are substituted by 'borrowed' notes throughout the piece; 2) beat variation (*banshi bianzou*) as demonstrated in *Xunfeng Qu* (Figure 3.1). The tempo of the original *qupai* melody is played in either a very slow tempo (as in the case of *Xunfeng Qu*) requiring the addition of notes between the original ones; a moderate tempo almost like the original; or a fast tempo requiring a shortened, or paraphrased version of the *qupai*; and 3) embellishment, the personal additions, idiomatic to their respective instruments, of each musician in performance.²²

⁽Wang 2002: 30)

²² Other variation techniques as outlined by Alan Thrasher are: 1) Substitution. Phrases from other *qupai* are used instead of the original material. This is a type of 'quotation' and usually led by one member of the group; 2) Suite form (*taoqu*). This is a combination of several or all of these methods to create an extended performance. In

Finally in this discussion of form, I turn to the creation of individual phrases and their building blocks. In Chinese traditional music, phrase structures can be very irregular. The basic unit is called beat (*ban*), and beats are combined into short rhythmical patterns, which are in turn, added together to create a phrase.²³ In the pieces to be analyzed, for example, various phrases are constructed from a mixture of small patterns such as 3+2+3, and 3+3+4 beats (see the first five measures in both staves of Figure 2.3). The antecedent – consequent structure common to Western art music is not often observed. Alan Thrasher comments that this mixture of beats in traditional music is partly a result of the lack of a social dance tradition in Chinese society, which would have required music to have an even number of beats (Thrasher 2007). I believe there is considerable merit to this argument, but I would also add two other influences: first, with the knowledge of the enormous influence that literature played on music, the unevenness of meter in poetry must have played a role; second, the Daoist ideal of following the manner that is natural (*ziran*), is one of the fundamental concepts in the *literati* approach to self-realization, and called for music to flow in a way that came naturally.²⁴

I turn now to the music. I have chosen three works to analyze, each demonstrating a different element of the above stylistic factors. Each piece falls within a different category of Chinese orchestral music as outlined by Han Kuo-Huang (1979: 20): 1) Unison (*qizou*), based on the repertoire of *sizhu*, represented in this document by *Jinshe Kuangwu*; 2) Solo-Ensemble (*duzou*), newly written pieces that incorporate many aspects of the *sizhu* genre and feature a solo instrument standing out against the larger ensemble, represented by *Yangming Chunxiao*; and 3) Ensemble (*hezou*), newly written pieces using modal harmony and highlighting the orchestra, represented by *Qin Bingmayong*.

bianzou ti, repetition with different tempos results in an extended form of A1 (very slow) + A2 (moderate) + A3 (fast). A cyclic form is called *xunhuan ti*, and in it a *qupai* theme is alternated with one or more other melodies. This is similar to the Western Rondo form. In the chain form *lianzhui ti*, several different *qupai* melodies appear in a chain and are then grouped from slow to fast in an enlarged *banshi bianzou*. Master instrumentalists will combine all these elements to create a complex and sophisticated performance (2002: 233 ff.)

²³ This is a modern use of the word *ban*, which originally denoted 'phrase'.

²⁴ Often incorrectly seen as a competitive philosophy to Confucianism, Daoism actually played a complementary role. While Confucian thought mainly addressed morality, self-cultivation, and the relationship of man in society, Daoism addressed man's relationship with nature and creativity (de Woskin 2002: 97). Music was discussed as a way of communicating with nature, and this was epitomized by the studies of the *literati*, artistically inclined and educated individuals who enriched their lives through the study of calligraphy, painting, and music. 'Narrow-minded' specialization leading to a professional level was not the aim, but rather the enlightenment of the self and broadening of knowledge.
Jinshe Kuangwu (Crazy Dance of the Golden Snake)

A complete biographical sketch of composer Nie Er is difficult to find in scholarly sources. I have taken the following information from A.C. Scott, but also from a website devoted to Nie Er's hometown of Wuxi, in Jiangsu province (Scott 1963; China Yuxi 2007). It is tragic that Nie Er (1912 – 1935) died at the young age of 23 in a swimming accident. Nevertheless, his contribution to the music of China is important, not the least of which is his contribution of the national anthem to the People's Republic. Nie was born in Kunming and showed musical aptitude at a young age, learning to play the traditional instruments of flute, *erhu, sanxian,* and *yueqin* while in primary school, and later becoming the conductor of the Children's Orchestra. In 1927, while still a student in high school, Nie formed the "Nine-Nine Music Academy" and learned to play the violin and piano.

In 1931, he joined the Mingyue Musical Drama Society as a violinist, but was forced to leave the Society as a result of his criticism of the group's president in a published article entitled *A Short Treatise on Chinese Song and Dance*. In 1932 he joined the Lianhua Film Studio in Shanghai and became a member of the musical group Friends of the Soviet Union Society. He also organized the Chinese Contemporary Music Research Group, which participated in the Leftist Dramatist's Union. In 1933, Nie became a member of the Communist Party.

In 1934, Nie joined the Baidai Record Company as manager of the musical section, and founded the Baidai National Orchestra in the same year. This was his most prolific time, composing a total of 37 pieces all within the next two years. Often working together with lyricist Tian Han, many of these compositions lent direct support to the ideals of the Communists, with lyrics and titles reflecting the life and struggles of the working class. Some examples are: "Progress Song," "Dock Worker's Song," "Village Girl of the Steppes," and others. Included in this material is an opera, "Storm on the Yangtze" and the instrumental pieces "Spring on Green Lake" and *Jinshe Kuangwu*, "Crazy Dance of the Golden Snake". In 1935, Nie composed "March of the Volunteers," which became the national anthem of the People's Republic.

Analysis. I have discussed at length the *sizhu* tradition. *Jinshe Kuangwu* is a prime example of the early repertoire for Chinese orchestra and demonstrates an interesting relationship with the *sizhu* traditions. It is an indirect descendant of the *qupai* '*Lao Liuban*' (Old Six Beat), one of the classic, memorized pieces of the *sizhu* repertoire, but there is a third layer of imitation

involved through the piece *Dao Baban*. The line that runs from *Lao Liuban*, through *Dao Baban*, and comes to rest in *Jinshe Kuangwu*, demonstrates clearly the influences of the Daoist and Confucian aesthetic as passed on in *sizhu* through the generations.

Figure 2.2 shows the memorized tune (*qupai*), *Lao Liuban*. In the *sizhu* tradition, it is to be played by five to eight musicians as a melody to which variations are added. It is often the case with such melodies that they have been handed down over the centuries from a time when the composer, in the spirit of the Daoist and Confucian philosophies, was composing for self-improvement rather than personal recognition, and did not acknowledge his role as composer of the original melody.²⁵ Thus the composer and date of *Lao Liuban* are unknown, although it was probably performed as early as the Ming dynasty.²⁶



Figure 2.2: Lao Liuban

There are three phrases of 8 measures each, marked A, B, and C, and a fourth phrase of 6 measures, marked D. Middle points of the phrases occur at regular moments and are marked by HC, (Half Cadence), and FC (Full Cadence), which marks the 'finalis' in the modal system.²⁷ In

²⁵ Other reasons may also account for this: occasionally through history, it was considered dangerous to create a piece of art that might have been be considered 'better' than the Emperor's own masterpieces.

²⁶ Thrasher in personal conversation (Thrasher 2007).

²⁷ I use the word "cadence" not in the Western harmonic sense, but to indicate a resting point in the linear flow of the music.

this example, shown in 'c' pentatonic, there is a final of g, and midpoint of d.²⁸ Compare this to the key signature of 'c' major in Western music where the 'finalis' would almost always be 'c.' In the modal system it is possible to use either 'c' or 'g' as the finalis, giving two different choices to the composer for each mode. These middle and end points are reinforced rhythmically: note the repetition of rhythmic patterns, as outlined by the brackets marked i, ii, iii, and iv. There is a precise rhythmical relationship, with i, ii, iii, forming a pattern RP (Rhythmic Phrase) of 3+2+3 beats, and another (not marked) of 4+4 beats. The phrases A, B, and C are all eight beats in length, while the rhythmic fragments within them are uneven. As the origins of the composition are unknown, it is impossible to speculate on its original orchestration. It is known that early repertoire was performed in unison, and no harmony or counterpoint would be added above or below. Even in its later version, orchestrated as an ensemble piece, vertical harmony was not added, rather, elaborate layers of ornamentation would give the piece a rich texture. I shall explore this idea further with a look at the fully orchestrated version of *Jinshe Kuangwu* (Figure 2.8A and B).

Next, I introduce a newer piece from the *sizhu* repertoire of the early nineteenth century²⁹ called *Dao Baban*, 'Reverse Eight Beat' with the subtitle *Wu Gongban*, 'No 'e' Version.' ³⁰ It is based on *Lao Liuban* and I have placed the two pieces on one staff for comparison.

It is remarkable how much similarity there is, but there are also some interesting differences. First, note how even though at first glance the phrases A in both pieces do not correspond, there is a very interesting relationship between the two (Figure 2.4): fragments taken from measures 21 - 26 of *Lao Liuban* are used in the first 4 measures of *Dao Baban*.

²⁸ All examples in this section have been transposed to the key of c for ease of comparison. To avoid confusion, all key signatures and pitch names will use lower case letters, while phrases shall use upper case letters. Lower case does not denote minor key.

²⁹ The date of this piece was estimated by Alan Thrasher in private communication (Thrasher 2007).

³⁰ This is not an exact translation. For simplification, 'gong' is translated into the key of 'c' and equals the pitch 'e' in Western staff notation. The Chinese had at least five notation systems in use during different eras, one of which was the 'gongche' system and from whence this word orginates. Similar to the solfege system, where the words doh, re, mi, fa, soh, la, ti were used to represent the main notes of the scale, 'gongche' notation used characters to represent the pitches of the scale. The 'gong' used here is a homonym of the one refering to doh in the Wusheng system (Figure 2.1). These two terms should not be confused with each other.















Figure 2.3: Dao Baban and Lao Liuban



Figure 2.4: Sources for Phrase A in Dao Baban

The title *Dao Baban* 'Reverse Eight Beat' is no doubt a word play based on two interrelated ideas: first, the opening measures of this piece are taken from the last phrase of the older *Lao Liuban*; second, within this five measure phrase, the composer began not with fragment B as in the original *Lao Liuban*, but fragment A. While the phrases marked B and C are almost identical note for note, one pitch is consistently different: the 'e' in *Lao Liuban* has been changed for an 'f' in *Dao Baban*, and this explains the subtitle of the piece, "No 'e' Version." This type of alteration in *Dao Baban* is shown in Figure 2.5 and represents what a traditionally trained player might choose to introduce to his performance of a piece, bringing variety and his own interpretation into the presentation.



Figure 2.5: The Wugongban Mode in Dao Baban

The half-note pitches are the important notes upon which phrases normally end, while the quarter-note pitches may be freely used within the phrases. Figure 2.5 matches *Dao Baban* and is therefore in 'c' mode with a finalis on 'g'. When this scale is compared to its corresponding one, e) in Figure 2.1, there are two important differences: first the *bianyin* of 'b' has been removed because it never appears in *Dao Baban*; second, the brackets and arrow indicate that the expected scale note 'e' has been replaced by 'f' – this scale has now become 'no 'e'' or

'wugong'. Despite the programmatic nature of many titles, they were, as in this case, often very practical.

If this change took place in a live performance, it would be an example of modal variation (*diaoxing bianzou*) and this is quite likely how the *Dao Baban* came to exist. The composer was most likely an instrumentalist with his own idiosyncratic way of performing *Lao Liuban*, by changing all the 'e' pitches for 'f', and repeating the phrases in a new way. This became known as *Dao Baban*, which was then passed on through the generations as a new piece.

When comparing the two pieces (Figure 2.3), note the addition of two new measures (mm. 9, 10), and the repetition of phrases B and C at the end of D (mm. 47 ff.), thus making *Dao Baban* a longer composition. The internal rhythm of the various phrases is not always the same. While *Lao Liuban* is consistent, with phrases of 8 beats and the one final phrase which lasts for 12 (it can also be interpreted as 6+4), *Dao Baban* has a variety of phrase lengths: 10 (3+3+4) and 10 (6+4) beats in section A, 8 (4+4) and 8 (3+2+3) beats in section B, 7 (3+4) and 9 (5+4) beats in section C. Section D shows a very interesting use of short phrases that gradually diminish in length: 4+4 and 4+4, 3+3 and 3+3, 2+2 and 2+2, 1+1. This diminution is an example of a certain development technique, where tension is increased by the progressive reduction of the number of beats, and each fragment is a variation on some previous melody (Figure 2.6). Alan Thrasher traces the basis for this motivic diminution to the *chuida* music, a ceremonial music performed by winds and drums. It is interesting to see this technique used as a section in a larger work, providing both contrast and a way to expand the form of the original *qupai*.



Figure 2.6: Fragmentation in Dao Baban

Using the knowledge of variation in modal practice explained above (Figure 2.6), section D can now be seen as a development of earlier material where all of the statements and responses (S.1, S.2, R.1, R.2, etc.) are derived from material in either section A, B, or C, but with altered notes. Notice also that the cadences in section D no longer occur on 'd' and 'g', but 'c' and 'g.' This is another kind of variation that introduces variety and further delineates section D as different from the others. The tension that has been built throughout section D is relieved with a certain recapitulation that occurs in measure 47 with the return of section B. 'Recapitulation' in the Western sense means a return to the main theme(s) of the opening of the piece, after a developmental section in which a transformation of the material has taken place. Harmonic motion leading towards a cadence is just as important as melodic/motivic development. In *Dao Baban*, a comparable process can be traced, albeit in a smaller form, where in section D, the fragmentation of earlier material plus an increase in tension (i.e. development), has led to a restatement of earlier material at section B (m 47). An implied harmonic structure is shown by the indications of the Half Cadences and Full Cadences, but, in contrast to Western music, triadic harmony is not used.

This concept of development is much more linear in fashion than its Western counterpart, and I believe this is a further example of the literary nature of Chinese music. By using a technique that occurs through melody and rhythm in a horizontal direction, rather than through a harmonic way in a vertical one, Chinese music is in its conception similar to language. Humans are not able to understand three or four layers of words when spoken simultaneously, yet in music, we are able to conceive of melody and harmony in several vertical layers as being a whole. Chinese music is composed with a similar linear flow such as that found in language, does not depend on vertical relationships but horizontal ones with few or no layers.

I will now go one step further in the discussion of *sizhu* as the basis for the early Chinese works, and make a comparison of *Jinshe Kuangwu* and *Dao Baban*.

There is a striking similarity in the overall pitch content and phrase structure between the two pieces, shown in Figure 2.7A and B.









Figure 2.7A: Jinshe Kuangwu and Dao Baban











Figure 2.7B: Jinshe Kuangwu and Dao Baban

Jinshe Kuangwu continues to use the "No 'e' Version," the motivic diminution (mm. 27 – 51), and the repetition of B and C (mm. 52 ff.) – all elements from *Dao Baban*. On the other hand, phrase lengths are uneven now and shorter: in phrase A, *Jinshe Kuangwu* is shortened by one measure and one beat (m. 10), and the internal rhythmic structure is altered with a beat structure of 3+3+11 (it could also be interpreted as 3+3+9+2); phrase C is also shortened by one measure through the use of the 16^{th} notes (m. 24) that effectively halves its related two measures in *Dao Baban* (mm. 25-26). Notice also the effective elimination of the Half Cadences in measures 5 and 22 by adding the sixteenth notes that move the melody quickly away from the cadential note 'd'. Phrase D is two measures longer in total, but the internal structure is altered by first cutting S.4 and R.5, then adding an expansion section (mm. 45-51), thus taking the listener back to the repetition of B – C.

This diminution and expansion is an example of an important idea in Chinese music, often heard in the form of crescendo – diminuendo, or, most idiomatically, accelerando – ritardando. This idea can be applied across a whole section performed by the entire group as in the variation techniques of *sizhu*, or in a cadenza performed by one. In my opinion, this is an example of the Daoist influence in Chinese music where diminution/expansion, when performed correctly, represents 'natural' (*ziran*) organic growth: taking accelerando/ritardando as an example, each incremental increase in speed must occur evenly over the course of the accelerando and the same in the ritardando.

Referring again to Figure 2.7 A and B, note the use of sixteenth notes: even though phrases A and B are shorter, they still contain the repetition of the cadential measure (compare mm. 7-9 in *Jinshe Kuangwu* to mm. 7-10 in *Dao Baban*), but the use of sixteenth notes pushes the rhythm along faster (mm. 7-8 and elsewhere) and considerably livens up the atmosphere.

In the modern age, such a comprehensive use of the original material (a copy itself) would be considered a serious case of copyright infringement. I am not stating the case for a legal challenge, but rather pointing out the difference in concept; copying the work of a master showed respect to the past traditions. While on the one hand the past is respected through the copying of the overall pitch content and phrasing, on the other hand, the programmatic nature of titles, shifts in modal harmony, and use of sixteenth notes all indicate a move in the direction towards concert music and the need to satisfy, at least to some extent, audience expectations: no longer are the composers thinking only of self-entertainment and improvement but rather considering whether the performance will please an audience.

Now it is time to turn to a section of a recent version of *Jinshe Kuangwu*, orchestrated for Chinese ensemble (Figure 2.8A and B). Because composer Nie Er wrote most of his works for solo *erhu* and died at a young age, it can only be speculated as to how he might have orchestrated the piece. As with the earlier pieces, the creative work, in this case the orchestration, is not acknowledged. There are some additions to the form, and the use of percussion as a section of the orchestra set apart from the rest of the group shows a development of orchestration technique.



Figure 2.8A: Jinshe Kuangwu Beginning, fully orchestrated



Figure 2.8B: Jinshe Kuangwu Beginning, fully orchestrated

The phrasing is the same as in Figure 2.7A and B, but the percussion solos have been added at the beginning (mm. 1 - 8), one measure before B (mm. 17 - 18), and before the repetition of B and C phrases (not shown, please refer to Appendix C). Note the cross rhythms notated with different time signatures in the percussion solos (mm. 1 - 8) and the 1^{st} ending (not shown), a twentieth century notational technique. The *sizhu* influence is still very direct, evidenced by the overall unison writing, and, of course, the chosen instruments of *di, erhu, sheng,* and *yangqin,* to which the *ruan,* modernized *diruan,* and percussion were added. The preponderance of unison writing implied that the musicians would have been much fuller than what is pictured here. A wood block, also important in the *sizhu* tradition, is used to accompany the *tutti* sections, with a larger percussion group added at special places, and especially at the diminution - expansion section D (m. 36 ff., not shown). Finally, the length of the piece as a whole has been at least doubled, not only with the addition of the percussion interludes, but also a repeat back to measure nine through the use of 1^{st} and 2^{nd} endings. Here

again is the influence of the growing importance of concert music: for an attentive audience, longer pieces of 4 - 5 minutes were more satisfying than the 1 -2 minute solo works.

Showing reverence and respect to the old by using the *qupai* as the basis for a new piece is a longstanding tradition in Chinese music. The examples from Figure 2.2 through 2.8B demonstrate this concept at two stages of the evolution of the music: first from *Lao Liuban* to *Dao Baban*, probably sometime in the late nineteenth century, and again from *Dao Baban* to *Jinshe Kuangwu* in 1934 – 35. The third stage, occurring most likely between 1935 and 1950, involved the anonymous orchestration of *Jinshe Kuangwu*. Each of these stages demonstrates the links to both the Western influences of the early twentieth century and the Confucian past.

In addition, most traditional music was not composed with harmony, and it was understood by the composer and the performers that the combination of different instruments adding their own variations would create a sophisticated texture of heterophony. In the 1920s and 30s, during the time of the strongest Western influence, the addition of harmony to the sizhu style pieces became important when they were used as a source to satisfy the new demand for orchestra works. This was considered acceptable because of the long-standing traditions of performers adding their own variations to pieces as they played them, and the tradition of 'new' versions of pieces based on such variations. But grafting Western style harmony onto modal pieces can be problematic because the modal system does not always follow Western harmonic patterns. Often, the results are bass lines and triadic harmony that, to Western ears, do not match well to the melody. To make matters worse, the role of orchestrating, which included the addition of harmony, often fell to the orchestrator rather than the composer. On the one hand, reorchestration work can be considered a valid interpretive addition that maintains the traditions of the earliest performances of Chinese music, but the quality of work done by the orchestrator can be an issue. Therefore, conductors accessing this early repertoire must be aware of the role of orchestrators in this regard, and either choose carefully the edition they wish to orchestrate for Western symphony orchestra, or be prepared to alter themselves the given bass lines and harmony.

Yangming Chunxiao (Early Spring on Mount Yangming)

Tung Yung-Shen (1932 -) is a gifted composer and conductor who has dedicated his life to traditional Chinese music.³¹ Born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, China, Tung studied the Chinese violin as a child. During the civil war period, Tung enlisted in the navy, and left China for Taiwan in 1948 at the age of 16. As a soldier, Tung wished to pursue his studies in music but was limited due to his career in the military to attending the Fuxing Military Academy where he finished his college degree in Theory and Composition. Upon graduation, he took up the position of Professor of Music at the National Taiwan Academy of the Arts, and convinced the Dean of the Arts to form an entire department. As Head of the Chinese Music department, Tung taught and composed over 100 works for traditional instruments, including operas. Tung joined the Chinese orchestra belonging to the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC) based in Taipei as *erhu* performer and later became its conductor. During the orchestra's first international tour in 1968 to the World Cultural Exhibition in Mexico, Tung took part in many performances, and the group later toured South America, the U. S., Canada, and Asia. Upon retiring, Tung moved to Burnaby, Canada, and taught *erhu* and Chinese music performance at the University of British Columbia.

Tung has been the recipient of several prestigious awards, including the *Zhongshan Wenyi*, the *Zhizuo Jiang* of the Department of Education (Taiwan), the Arts Prize given by the Arts Association of China, the National Arts Prize of Taiwan, and was given the honour of being chosen as one of 100 Outstanding Artists of the twentieth century in China. His composition *Yangming Chunxiao* was the winner of the Taiwan Medal of 1977, and is widely recognized as an important part of the modern repertoire for the Chinese orchestra.

Compared to the pieces discussed above, *Yangming Chunxiao* composed in 1966, has a more recent history. It falls under the category of Solo-Ensemble (*duzou*) and features the short flute (*bangdi*) as the solo instrument. The title follows a literary aesthetic, but the piece is more strongly influenced by Western concert music. First, the solo part is highly virtuosic, combining many technical passages including short cadenzas, making the piece similar to a single-movement concerto in its overall presentation. Second, while still primarily modal in its harmonic approach, an independent bass line and countermelody in the strings are both parts of the composition and were written by the composer. A development of form is signified by a

³¹ Biography material on Tung Yung-Shen was provided by the composer in personal communication, February 7, 2007, as well as his textbook on the Chinese violin (*nanhu*) (Tung 2000: iii).

clear structure. At eleven minutes in length, this is a longer piece than the other works, and a clearer overall plan is advantageous for the listener who can more easily comprehend the work. This use of a larger scale plan, and solo-versus-tutti element of the piece, are both direct consequences of the Western influence of music as concert hall medium.

Analysis. A development of form is demonstrated in the earlier examples, from the A-B-C-D structure of Lao Liuban, to a basic ABA form with Jinshe Kuangwu, with the idea of a repeat of earlier material (A-BC-D-BC). William Caplin describes ternary as a form in which the first part is a relatively stable unit that achieves closure, the second is contrasting in nature, and the third essentially restates the first (1998: 211). Whether intended by the composer or not, Yangming Chunxiao matches this definition accurately and thereby demonstrates a further development of the use of this form compared to the earlier works. The Allegro (kuaiban) (A) is a spirited, bouncing melody, Moderato (zhongban) (B) a contrasting lyrical passage, followed by a return to the Allegro (kuaiban) (A¹) with some minor changes. All three sections are selfcontained units with complete closure at the end, matching Caplin's description. Upon questioning with regard to this element, Tung explained that Western ternary form was not specifically intended, and that his intention was to provide variety and a clear form for the listener to grasp.³² This demonstrates how, in the concept of at least one composer, the role of the listener had become a key element to consider when composing. Tung often uses triadic harmony, and each of the three main sections is based around tonal centres that are familiar to Western ears: the Allegro is in *la*-pentatonic, finalis on 'b' giving the impression of the Western equivalent of b minor, while the Moderato is *do*-pentatonic with the finalis on 'd' giving the impression of 'd' major, followed by a return to *la*-pentatonic ('b' minor) for the final Allegro section. Figure 2.9A and B show only the solo flute (*Bangdi*), dulcimer (*Yangqin*), and bass (Daruan) parts of the Allegro A section (for the complete score, see Appendix D).

³² Tung Yung-Shen, in personal communication Tung 2007.



Figure 2.9A: Yangming Chunxiao A Section



Figure 2.9B: Yangming Chunxiao A Section

At first glance, the Allegro seems to resemble the style of *Lao Liuban* and *Dao Baban*, with short rhythmical fragments combining to make larger phrases, and unison writing predominant. However, a closer look reveals a different use of rhythm. I have marked these short patterns in Figure 2.9A and B with brackets underneath the Solo *Bangdi* staff. In the earlier works, the rhythms were composed of primarily eighth- and quarter- notes, with the latter usually signifying the end of short pattern or phrase. In *Yangming Chunxiao*, the first five measures in the solo part features the use of quarter-, dotted quarter-, eighth-, dotted eighth- and sixteenth

notes. This is a wider range of rhythm and calls for sudden and subtle changes from both the orchestral players and soloist. The existence of a bass line written by the composer is important, because it shows a fundamental shift in harmonic thinking from the older generation. An important addition is the use of dynamic marks in the score (m. 11, 13, 40 and elsewhere).

The Moderato B section is very different from traditional forms, with its long phrases of four measures in 4/4 time signature (16 beats in the traditional system), and with highly emotive even passionate, expression required (Figure 2.10A and B).



Figure 2.10A: Yangming Chunxiao, B Section



Figure 2.10B: Yangming Chunxiao, B Section

The regular phrase lengths can be clearly divided into an antecedent – consequent relationship and the use of a basic harmony is evident. The *Yangqin* part is written simply, but would surely be embellished by the player in performance. While the melody in the A and A^{\dagger} sections of Yangming are still consistently modally pentatonic modal, this middle section shows how the use of altered notes can result in sonorities very close to diatonicism. Beginning at measure 53, the melody starts in modal fashion (do pentatonic, d finalis), then contains the first use of altered notes occurring on the 3rd beat of measure 55 where the *bian* tone (see also: Figure 2.1) 'c'-sharp takes the place of what would probably be 'd' if keeping to the mode. In measure 59, the same substitution occurs, this time as an eighth-note. In measure 63, the 'g' on the third beat is a substitution for either 'a' or 'f'-sharp. There are more examples of altered notes throughout the B section, not listed here. These alterations, occurring roughly once every two measures, at first fit neatly into the modal system. However the modal system is stretched almost to the breaking point in measure 73 - 76 (and repeated in mm. 97-100) where a more consistent use of notes from outside of the mode results in the pitches that complete the octave of the diatonic scale (Figure 2.11). With the support of full harmony, the sonority moves away from modal pentatonic and much closer to the major/minor system.



Figure 2.11: Diatonicism in Yangming Chunxiao

The piece concludes with a return to the Allegro (Figure 2.12). A neat two-measure transition (mm. 101-102) moves the group quickly from *do* pentatonic (finalis on 'd') to *la* pentatonic (finalis on 'a'). To Western ears, and because of the near-diatonic nature of the B section, it sounds as though the piece is moving from D major to B minor. A return to the style of the opening takes place, but the first ten measures introduce new material (mm. 103 - 112). A recapitulation of sorts is brought on seamlessly (m. 113) by a return to the opening phrase. Measures 2 - 31 are repeated here with only a slight variation that occurs in mm. 118-119.

The orchestration changes from measure 113 onwards compared to the A section, as Tung uses the whole orchestra here (see Appendix D). By contrast, this section at the opening of the piece is written for the plucked strings only as an accompaniment. In A^1 the bowed strings perform a simple contrasting melody of half- and quarter-notes, while the plucked strings play a rhythmic figure. In the opening, the orchestration is unison, aside from the bass line.

These changes point to a wholly new way of thinking when compared to the earlier works: first, the composer is acknowledged, second, the piece divides up neatly into a larger formal arrangement that the listener can easily perceive, and third, the orchestration at the end is sophisticated. It points to the development of the use of the different instruments as a sound palette which can be further delineated with dynamics, rather than simply a collection of different sounds to be called upon all at once, or not at all. The piece comes to a close with a beautiful flourish of the *bangdi*.



Figure 2.12: Yangming Chunxiao, A1 Section

This piece has quickly become a concert favorite and a staple of the *bangdi* repertoire. To ask a *bangdi* player if he knows *Yangming Chunxiao* is like asking a violinist if he can play *Czardas*. Overall, this piece is a striking example of a wonderful balance between East and West. It is melodically faithful to its pentatonic past, but taking just the right amount of Western harmony without burdening the basic pentatonic structure, and using ternary form to bring about the right mix of contrasting material. It provides a formal structure that allows the listener to quickly grasp what he is hearing.

Qin Bingmayong (The Terra Cotta Warriors)

Chinese conductor and composer, Peng Xiuwen (1931-1996) was born in Wuhan, Hubei province.³³ As founding conductor and composer of the first National Symphony Orchestra at the Central Broadcasting Corporation, Peng had considerable influence on the establishment, development, and musical accomplishment of the Chinese orchestra.

From childhood, Peng was self-taught on the traditional instruments *erhu* (two-stringed fiddle) and *pipa* (lute). In 1949, he graduated from Business Special Training School, and in 1950, began work for Chongqing National Radio, Sichuan province. In 1952 he was transferred to the Central Broadcasting Corporation in Beijing where he began his pioneering work developing the orchestra.

Peng made great contributions to Chinese music. In all, he arranged over 400 pieces for orchestra, including folksongs, arias from Peking opera, pieces for traditional instruments, and re-orchestrations of Western orchestral literature. Many of his compositions have become the foundation of the Chinese orchestral literature and include classics such as *The Moonlight Over the Spring River, Reflection of the Moon On the Water, Dance of the Yao Tribe, Full Moon and Blossoming Flowers*, and the larger works such as *Symphony No. 1: Nanjing*, and the *erhu* concerto, *Crane in the Clouds (Yunzhong He)*. His project of orchestrating Western classical pieces for Chinese orchestra was important as an experiment, although not widely accepted. Peng Xiuwen died in Beijing on December 18th, 1996.

³³ The background on Peng Xiuwen was taken from Du 2005: 609 and CRI Online 2007.



Figure 2.13: The Terra Cotta Warriors (Source: Friendly Planet Travel: 2007)

A brief outline of background information for *Qin Bingmayong*, and a clear programmatic description through each of its sections, is provided in the program of the recording by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra: 2001, 13). The excavation of the tomb of the First Emperor of Qin and the terra cotta warriors found within attracted world attention. In the span of ten years, from 221 and 206 BC, the First Emperor conquered the six dukedoms of Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan and Qi to form a unified China. This unified dynasty lasted for only 15 years however, due to the tyrannical nature of the First Emperor's reign. The subject of the piece is the Qin soldiers, who were on active combat assignments for year after year, suffering greatly, missing their families who longed for their return. This is a powerful image, one that has inspired many artistic works, one of the earliest and best-known being the poem of Tang dynasty poet LiPo (699-762) entitled *Guanshan Yue*.

Trained in traditional music, it is no surprise then to find that Peng's compositional style is strongly modal pentatonic in its melodic language. Peng's compositional techniques developed over the course of his life as he continually absorbed new concepts and matured as a composer. By 1984, the year that *Qin Bingmayong* was composed, his vast experience as an orchestrator of many works by Western composers had clearly given him new compositional techniques that pointed the way forward for the younger generation. In my view, Peng is a pivotal composer for the Chinese orchestra because his roots lie in the *sizhu* traditions, but his willingness to absorb the international music to which he was drawn no matter the current political climate, gave him the inspiration to experiment in a tradition that did not openly encourage it. Peng's work lies on a line between the *sizhu* generation and the younger generation of composers coming after the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 76) who could, if they desired, once again seek their training in the West.

Qin Bingmayong belongs to the Descriptive category of programmatic music. Narrative descriptions match moments in the score quite literally, and Peng's ability to set the atmosphere of the various different sections is remarkable and in contrast to the works discussed so far.

The form of this work is in three movements, lasting 23 minutes in total, an important departure from the relatively short, single-movement works of *sizhu*. The three movements are arranged in a fast-slow-fast sequence but multi-sectional within.

Referring now to the second and third movements only and before undertaking an analysis of the individual movements, I should like to make some overall comments.³⁴ While Peng's melodic language remains essentially modal pentatonic, his use of harmony is sophisticated, with examples of both modal and major/minor harmony. His orchestration is very Western influenced, with featured instruments as soloists and instrumental combinations of a varied nature, set over mood-setting accompaniments. Compare this to *Yangming Chunxiao*, written with the solo flute as an external instrument to the orchestra, and *Jinshe Kuangwu*, which features only large sections of the orchestra set against each other (percussion versus everything else, for example), but no solo writing. Peng's virtuosic style represents a major departure from the *sizhu* traditions where ensemble interaction spurs spontaneous variation.

³⁴ The Peng family kindly permitted access to the second and third movements of the score.

Peng is a master of orchestration, taking advantage of a wide palette of sound colour (for all examples in this section, refer to Appendix E). For example the opening measures contrast the sparse, marcato, treble sounds of the wood block against the low, sustained *gehu* (low fiddle) and *dihu* (bass fiddle) (mm. 205 - 224); the following *xun* (globular flute) solo is set against the sparse pizzicato of the *ruan* and shimmering figures of the *huqin* (mm. 225ff); the intimate *zheng* (zither) solo of the second movement is accompanied by wood block alone (mm. 257 - 264); later in the work (mm. 330 ff.), the *suona*, a double-reed instrument with the equivalent register and dynamic of the trumpet, brings on a sudden, brash colour in contrast to the entire second movement; the bass drum and percussion and full orchestra are used for the first time only in the return of a theme from the first movement (mm. 344 ff.). Dynamic contrast is wide, from the soft opening of the sustained bass figure, to the loud entry of the *suona*, which Peng withholds until close to the end of the piece (m. 351ff.).

Harmonically, Peng also takes a sophisticated approach with much more triadic writing in his accompaniments than has been seen in the earlier pieces, but this is not always indicative of major-minor tonality. Mostly, his harmony matches the modal writing of the melodies. Even in a work such as *Yangming Chunxiao* written as late as 1966, triadic harmony was still rarely explicit, and at other times only implied. In this work, there is such consistent use of triadic harmony that the Western listener may begin to perceive diatonicism, only to subsequently realize that it is not really so after all. For example, the first A theme in movement II (mm. 225-236) is constructed with a melody that is highly modal pentatonic, but accompanied by triadic harmony with clearly outlined root movement of I with an added 6th (mm. 225-227), to V⁷ (m. 228), then back to I (m. 229) in the first 6 measures. A closer study reveals that it is problematic to complete the following measures along the same lines (mm. 230 – 236), and the melody comes to an end on 'c,' (m. 236) reinforcing its modal nature. Conceiving of the melody in 'f' pentatonic, 'c' finalis facilitates accounting for both the melody and harmony, with 'b'-flat and 'e'-flat as altered notes.

The most tonal setting of any pentatonic melody in the two movements is found in the repeat of the melody in C Section of movement II (Figure 2.14 is a reduction).

53



Figure 2.14: Qin Bingmayong, Western Harmony

This example is a fascinating look at Peng's combination of pentatonic melody and Western harmony. Out of nine measures, only two beats are awkward to account for under Western harmony: the first two beats of measure 282. The outer lines present logical voiceleading: 'g' falling to 'f', then to 'e' in the treble, 'c'-sharp rising to 'd', then to 'e' in the bass, but the dissonance of the 'g' chord on the downbeat against the 'c'-sharp of the bass seems suddenly out of character with the rest of the passage. If we use the modal pentatonic system, however, these two beats can be accounted for precisely. Figure 2.15 shows a scale in the 'g' mode (*do* pentatonic). This scale is derived from b) in Figure 2.1, then transposed to the mode of 'g'. Both the flatted seventh ('f'-natural) and the raised fourth ('c'-sharp) make complete sense as *bianyin*. Using accidentals is an accommodation to Western tempered tuning and accounts for the 'f'-natural and 'c'-sharp. When played by a musician trained in the traditional styles these notes, to a Western trained ear, will sound out of tune, with the 'c' raised and lying between 'c' and 'c'-sharp, and the 'f' lowered, lying midway between 'f' and 'f'-sharp.³⁵

³⁵ A careful study of the recording taken from the live performance of my lecture recital shows exactly this result. The solo bamboo flute sounds, to Western ears, low in pitch on the upper 'b'-flat in measure 287.



Figure 2:15: Qin Bingmayong, Bianyin and Traditional Intonation

Analysis. Movement I. Discipline is Strict in the Army. When Will the Emperor Get Tired of Traveling and Offering Sacrifices on Various Sacred Mountains?³⁶ (score not shown)

The music begins quietly to describe the army in progress at dawn. Military horns are vaguely heard. The sound is heard from afar but is getting nearer and nearer, bringing out the theme of an ancient army advancing. The second theme is an expression of the soldiers' distress. A fanfare on both the wind instruments and the drums signifies the appearance of the Emperor and his entourage, then the gongs and cymbals are sounded to stop the advance and to indicate that tents are to be pitched.

(Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra 2004: 13)³⁷

Movement II. Spring Dreams: Soldiers Missing Their Wives

Form: Introduction $-A - A^{\dagger} - B - C - D - Transition - (III. Movement)$

Programmatic Description:	Analytical Comment:
	Introduction (Figure 2.16)
"The music begins with a	Low sustained octaves in double basses and cellos.
depiction of the quiet of the	Mm. 211-217 Basses pizzicato modal melody in 'a'-
night and the sound of wood	flat pentatonic, with one measure of modal shift (m.
blocks, which represents guards	217). Sparse wood block and cymbals contrast against
doing their rounds	the low sustained basses.

³⁶ All movement titles and matching programmatic descriptions are taken from the liner notes of the CD (Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra 2004).

³⁷ It is my assumption that due to the highly specific nature of the storyline and how it matches specifically to places in the score that these notes are Peng's own ideas.

Qin Bingmayong: II. Soldiers Missing Their Wives



Figure 2.16: Qin Bingmayong, Introduction

A Section (Figure 2.17)

weeping songs of soldiers are heard.... It is the sound of men missing their homeland...

... In this quiet the Globular flute (Xun) solo, accompanied by light strings (huqin). 'F' modal/pentatonic melody, finalis on sol, scored with "arrhythmic" feel of 5/4, changing to 4/4 in the fifth measure. Altered notes are used in measure 232 with the use of the lowered 7th, 'e'-flat. After the first statement of the theme, a 4-measure interlude brings us the first use of chromaticism in the lute (*pipa*) (m. 236, Figure 2.27) combined with a reiteration of the opening bass figure under a continuation of the tremolo fiddle (erhu) motive.



Figure 2.17: *Qin Bingmayong* A Section, Xun Solo

... and very soon other soldiers are affected and induced to sing. This brings up a chorus, which gradually leads the men to a dream... A repeat of the A melody with increased orchestration. This time, the melody is heard in the plucked-lute (*ruan*), (representing the men singing en masse) and accompanied by chromaticism in the upper strings. The low sustained 'c' pitches in the bass continue providing an ominous undercurrent in this statement of the A theme.



Figure 2.18: Qin Bingmayong, Movement II, A¹ Section

B Section (Figure 2.19)

... The wood blocks are also meant to represent wives pounding garments when they are doing the laundry for their husbands. Here a haunting melody is heard on the *guzheng* [zither]. Changing to 'd' pentatonic, finalis on 'd', the zither (*zheng*) performs against the wood block. Asymmetrical phrase structure shows the influence of traditional styles. Notice the 'pushed' notes in

measure 257 (marked as grace notes), and marked with an arrow in measure 263, a technique going back to the ancient times.



Figure 2.19: Qin Bingmayong, Movement II, B Section

C Section (Figure 2.20)

...but, as the soldiers dream about being together with their families... The lute (*pipa*), and end-blown flute (*xiao*) begin a new melody in 'g' pentatonic, finalis on 'd', accompanied by high strings, tremolo, in thirds. After four measures, the melody is completed by the winds. This 8-measure phrase is repeated with all strings in octaves, accompanied this time by the dulcimer (*yangqin*) and plucked lutes (*ruan*) with triadic harmony (m. 276 ff.). A response to the 8-measure melody comes with a new 8-measure statement by the end-blown flute (*xiao*) (m. 285 ff.), accompanied by the mouth organ (*sheng*) with triadic harmony and rhythmic figures in the strings. The harmony is interesting here: a mode change to 'c', finalis on 'g', without marking a key change as Peng has done consistently earlier in the work. Notice the use of 'b'flat, an altered note, (m. 287) and its accompanying harmony. Finally the reed-pipe (*diguan*) (m.290) with a return to the 'g' pentatonic, this time based on *la*, giving the tonal centre similar to the Western minor key. A 2-measure answer (not shown) is played by first the lutes, followed by the dulcimer, which prepares the listener for the next passage.



Figure 2.20: Qin Bingmayong, Movement II, C Section

D Section (Figure 2.21)

The narrative of the liner notes describes D section as a continuation of C. Musically however, the orchestration changes to a duet texture, and the presentation of a new melody results in a new section. In this dreamlike passage, set in 'g' pentatonic, finalis on 'd', the fiddle (*erhu*) and lute (*pipa*) play an intimate duet. This section concludes dramatically with the gong strike in measure 305.

...the sound of a gong rudely breaks their dreams...."



Figure 2.21: Qin Bingmayong, Movement II, D Section

Transition (Figure 2.22)

An abrupt change of tempo marks the beginning of the transition to the third movement. Melodic fragments are played in an ever-increasing build-up of volume and orchestration, starting with the bowed strings (m. 306), adding the dulcimer (m. 310), and finally the high winds (m. 315), which make their first entry as a section since the opening of the movement. Aside from A¹, which presents a broad orchestration of the A theme, most of the second movement is intimate in nature, with solo instruments set against sparse backing. This transition marks the first use of the full orchestra since the first movement. Alternating rhythmic figures of one- and two-measure length keep the forward momentum until the beginning of the third movement in measure 328, which arrives with no break.



Figure 2.22: Qin Bingmayong, Movement II, Transition

Movement III. A Ten Thousand Mile March Across Snowy Mountains

Form: A (mvt. 1 theme) – B (mvt. 1 theme) – C – Coda: $A^{\dagger} + D^{\dagger}$

A Section (Figure 2.23)

"The reappearance of a theme from the first movement. The mood and the configuration of instruments, however, are all changed.... In its original form in movement I, the tempo of this theme represents the ancient army on the move. Correspondingly it is slower and methodical, the mood strong, unrelenting. In movement III, the mood is altered by the change to a faster tempo and with only one simple statement lasting a total of 14 measures (mm. 330-343). A short statement serves to remind the listener of the proud and regal nature of this theme as heard in the first movement, but at the same time leaves an unsettled feeling, due to its brevity and faster tempo.











Figure 2.23: Qin Bingmayong, Movement III, A Section

B Section (Figure 2.24)

... The army is still in progress and the Emperor's procession is as before...

In this section, a second melody from the first movement is reprised. Representing the Emperor's procession, the use of drums refers to the guchui tradition of court music and is particularly dramatic. Set in 'd' pentatonic, notice the use of the altered note 'c'-natural, the lowered 7th, in measures 351 and 355. Particularly prominent in this section is the extended use of parallel 4ths and 5ths, an idiomatic use of harmony distinctive to Chinese music. This technique descends directly from the important and very early traditional instrument of the mouth organ (*sheng*), which is constructed so that parallel 5ths sound automatically when playing parts that are written as unison lines. The overall sound of this melody is particularly striking because of its unexpected movement to the 'b'-natural in measure 345 (and elsewhere). The passage is reminiscent of an important composition Dong Fang Hong, "The East is Red", composed for Western orchestra during the time just after the Communist victory of 1949. It is only speculative to suggest that Peng was making such a politically charged parody, but the similarity and timing (*Oin Bingmayong* was composed after the official end of the Cultural Revolution) is striking. After all, Shostakovich was also known to blatantly parody the Stalin regime through his use of musical quotations, and the Soviet influence on China is well documented.

B Section:









Figure 2.24: Qin Bingmayong, Movement III, B Section
(B Section, cont'd) m. 366

...But a cold wind has risen and the sky becomes dark and cloudy... Peng brings back the chromatic figure again (see Figure 2.27), set this time with canonic entries. First the high string (*huqin I*) doubled by dulcimer (*yangqin*), then *huqin II* with lute (*pipa*), followed by plucked strings (*sanxian* and *jung ruan*), with bowed strings (*gehu* and *daruan*) and finally the low bowed strings (*gehu* and *dihu*). A descending chromatic line in the basses, reminiscent of Mahler, lasting for four measures (m. 377ff.) brings the listener to the next section.

C Section (Figure 2.25)

...Snow begins to fall... The music becomes somber... Slow sextuplets (not shown) in the upper strings wind their way upwards over a sustained bass note. The key has changed to 'f' pentatonic, *la* mode, giving us the sound, in Western terms, of 'd' minor. A slow somber melody of broad rhythm is first played in the basses, doubled by low reed-pipe (*gehu* and *diguan*) (m. 385), accompanied by an ostinato in the timpani and chromatic lines in the plucked strings (*ruan*). This is the first use of the timpani in ostinato, driving home the somber nature of this broad melody. This melody is then repeated in full orchestration, at full force, (m. 392ff.) with an added fanfare figure in the winds (m. 293 and 395).



Figure 2.25: Qin Bingmayong, Movement III, C Section

Coda A^1 (Figure 2.26)

...and the military theme now appears in the tragically heroic horns... ...The whole work ends [with] heightened emotions.

With all strings tremolo, the reed-pipe *(guan)* performs a last presentation of the A theme in a modified form. Here, the first four measures of the melody have been truncated to three, and a new segment of four bars (mm. 405-408) added using the densest harmony in the whole work yet: 'b' diminished (m. 406) and 'b'-flat diminished (m. 407). Finally, a return of the fateful chromatic figure (m. 409). This time, Peng changes the rhythm, using 16th notes to move it faster, and adds repetition for further emphasis. It is also harmonized as never before in the work, with the harmonic movement of 'e' half-diminished7 to 'd' minor. A reduction of this harmony is given in Figure 2.27.









Figure 2.26: Qin Bingmayong, Movement III, Coda

Over the span of the two movements, Peng carefully builds a chromatic figure (Figure 2.27, m. 236).³⁸



Figure 2.27: Qin Bingmayong, Movement III, Chromaticism and Reduction

³⁸ It is likely there is some use of this figure beginning in Movement I, however it was not possible to investigate this idea.

Its first appearance in measure 236 takes the form of a solo line with no harmony, played by the lute (*pipa*), and he uses here it to provide a short break before a repeat of the A Section melody. In its second usage, just after Section A¹, (m. 251) he adds the harmony performed by the mouth organ (*sheng*), and repeats the figure twice. The next occurrence takes place in movement III, measure 366, where Peng expands the figure with canonic entries at the 5th and 6th below, extending its range downward a combined total of two octaves and a third. The combination of the melodies in counterpoint creates a sophisticated harmonic texture. Finally, in the Coda, he sets it in its most emphatic form (m. 409), this time in a condensed version with 16th notes and with the densest harmony of the entire piece (see reduction, Figure 2.27): 'c' minor triad with an augmented 5th plus the major 7th, all resolving to 'd' minor. Overall, Peng's use of chromaticism, similar to Debussy, is to provide colour rather than harmonic motion.

Peng's writing demonstrates clearly the traditional influences of modal melodic writing and multi-sectional form, but also interesting international influences in his use of chromaticism and key signatures, and the development of basic ideas through extension, increased use of harmony, or rhythmic alteration. His orchestration is also Western in its concept and reflects a sophisticated approach. Certainly, the years of Soviet influence on Communist China, plus his own efforts at orchestrating works for Chinese orchestra, must have given him a strong insight into this technique. In my opinion, the international influences can be clearly heard in Peng's orchestration technique. The style of Tchaikovsky comes to mind first: the A^{\dagger} theme of movement II (See Appendix E) where Peng scores all the bowed strings in octaves is much like the main theme in the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto; his use of the chromatic figure as a kind of fateful device that returns ever more strongly until the strong emotions of the ending in 'd' minor is reminiscent of the famous fate motif of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Two moments bring to mind the orchestral works of Mahler: measures 377 - 380 where the celli and basses perform the low descending line, and the horn solo above the full orchestral tremolo in measure 399, are both reminiscent of the Second Symphony. The transition to the last movement (mm. 305 ff) shows a Russian influence: eighths against triplets (Tchaikovsky) in measures 306-312, eighths with two sixteenths (Shostakovich) in measures 319-320 and 326 - 327, the repeated chords near the end in measures 413

and 414 (Tchaikovsky or Shostakovich), and finally, the grand Tchaikovsky-like unison and full-force ending at the last measure. Despite all the Russian-ness however, Peng's traditional roots still come through, with the open-fifth sonority of the penultimate measure, 415, a distinctive gesture in Chinese music whose roots lie in the ancient traditional instrument of the mouth organ (*sheng*).

While it may be argued how much international influence there is in Peng's compositional style, there is no doubt that his music also retains its essential Chinese character. This is because of three main qualities: first, the overall modal nature of his melodic writing; second, the expressive ornamentation in each of the instrumental solos, taken from the idiomatic variation of the traditional instruments in the *sizhu* style; and finally, the programmatic narrative, with its resulting free-flowing multi-sectional form. In these ways, Peng remained true to his inner language even while he absorbed as much as possible from foreign influences, and in doing so, showed the way forward for younger generations; he successfully incorporated the world into his work, but remained Chinese at the core.

Summary. These three works show a remarkable consistency in development between 1935 and 1984. The style begins with a short, unison piece, *Jinshe Kuangwu*, continues with the exploration of large scale form and the addition of basic harmony and counter lines in *Yangming Chunxiao*, and comes to a further expansion of form with clearly delineated movments and an amalgamation of all the harmonic and melodic elements, plus a highly developed sense of orchestration in *Qin Bingmayong*. Yet through all this development there is a basic common thread: the modal pentatonic scale forms the basis for melody in all three compositions. In *Jinshe Kuangwu* the melodies are built out of fragments into larger phrases of eight to ten beats. The interest lies in the subtle inter-relationships between the fragments while at the same time the melodic contour remains true to Confucian ideals through its pentatonicism. In *Yangming Chunxiao* the melodies of the A Section maintain many of these same qualities, but in contrast, the romantic nature of the B Section melodies shows a Western influence on pentatonicism. Finally, in *Qin Bingmayong*, Peng moves away from the fragmented melodies and presents both romantic and heroic themes while underscoring these with

very Western style harmony. There is an interesting paradox: on the one hand, the creativity of these composers has fostered many innovations in form, harmony, and orchestration, moving away from the conservative Confucian elements; yet, at the same time, continual use of the pentatonic melodies is a thin thread that ties all of these back to their Confucian roots.

He Zhanhao, composer of the seminal work, the "Butterfly Lovers" Violin Concerto said:

Our ancestors made such beautiful music for us! However, people may not study it well. They are living with a golden mountain,³⁹ but they may not have seen it and they may still be wondering, while looking for something else.

(Zhou 2001: 117)

Fortunately, Peng Xiuwen, Tung Yung-Sheng and Nie Er did not suffer from this shortcoming, and their creative work will live on as a testament to their own fidelity to the 'golden mountain.'

³⁹ "Golden mountain" refers to the wealth of untapped traditional compositions and musical practices. "Old Golden Mountain" is the Chinese name for the city of San Francisco. In the interview it is not clear whether or not He Zhanhao wished to suggest an indirect reference to the dream of prosperity to be found in North America and represented by the title given to San Francisco.

Chapter Three: Conductor's Guide

While music has been performed for thousands of years, conducting, as a role separate from that of the leader - performer, has only been clearly defined in Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century. Carse notes that the first mention of the conductor as separate from the musicians in the orchestra occurs in 1732 in Germany, and further that one of the earliest musicians to be widely known as conductor was Ludwig Spohr, who made a career in Germany and appeared with the Philharmonic of London in England in the year 1820 (Carse 1964: 341). Through the nineteenth century, the importance of conducting as a new model grew, in large part, due to the expanding forces required to perform the new symphonic and operatic works. The ever increasing numbers of forces required by the late Romantic era composers meant that the conductor became indispensable to the proper performance of their works, if only to serve the fundamental requirement of keeping such large groups together from beginning to the end of a performance. As conductors gained prominence they naturally became more than mere ensemble keepers, and their role as important musical leaders in the community gave them the power to become proponents in the introduction and interpretation of works new and old to the public.

Revision and Re-orchestration in Western Music

In modern times, revision and re-orchestration have become important processes for the conductor when preparing music for performance.⁴¹ Before conductors existed, orchestration was an important technique reserved for composers, and especially when instrumental music became a genre unto its own. "Apt for singers or viols," a description found on the cover of one of the earliest scores printed for public use, demonstrates the relationship between voice and instruments up to the middle of the seventeenth century: instruments accompanied voices, and they both performed the same music (Howard-Jones 1935: 2). Little more than one hundred years later, when the Baroque period reached its pinnacle, instrumental music as an important and separate genre is evident in the varied works of Handel and Bach, among others.

⁴¹ In this document, to revise or edit is the act of making minor adjustments to existing music without altering its pitch content or instrumentation; to orchestrate is to apply a composer's pitch content to a set of instruments; to re-orchestrate is to take the composer's pitch content and apply it to a different set of instruments than originally stipulated; to transcribe is to notate that which is not in notated form – to copy music from a recording, for example.

Bach was a prodigious transcriber and re-orchestrator: harpsichord concertos he arranged from violin concerto; overtures and choruses from cantatas; choruses and sinfonias from movements of the Brandenburg concertos; the triple concerto for flute, violin, and harpsichord from a prelude and fugue for harpsichord solo (Aldrich 1949: 1). By taking works already composed and re-orchestrating them for different instruments, Bach was able to satisfy the heavy demands for new music at the weekly church services as well as the constantly changing needs of the ensembles. Transcribing the works of other composers offered Bach the opportunity to study their compositional style. Through this method, Bach absorbed the styles of the Italian composers Vivaldi and Telemann, which showed later in the string writing of the Brandenburg Concertos (Grout 1980: 426).

In his last position in Leipzig, Bach was an employee of the town council, hired to produce music for the services at three churches in the city. As the position of conductor did not exist, Bach led his ensembles from the keyboard. In the nineteenth century, a new type of relationship developed, outlined by Tovey in his discussion of the modern conductor (Tovey 2003: 207). Mendelssohn became one of the first to sign a contract as a conductor, marking an important change from the days of Bach and Handel, and giving him unprecedented power to influence the musical life of the region. As an employee of the town council of Leipzig from 1835 - 43, he was responsible for the production of music at the Gewandhaus, and introduced many new works by Schumann, Berlioz, and other composers to the wider public.⁴² Similar relationships soon followed: Gustav Mahler at the Vienna Opera (1898-1908), Edward Elgar at the London Symphony (1911-12), and Franz Liszt at Weimar (1848-61).

Score editing has always been an important part of the conductor's preparation for rehearsal and performance, but before the position of conductor became independent from that of leader - performer, the task of editing musical scores fell to the composer. Clearly, a composer's first duty after the creative work is completed, is to provide a notated version of his work to the ensemble performing it. No matter how clear the composer's notated intention, practical issues that influence the final product can arise, such as technical limitations or improvements of instruments since the work was composed, and acoustical properties of the hall in which the piece is performed. This is particularly true for modern conductors when preparing music

⁴² Mendelssohn was also largely responsible for initiating a revival of Bach's music, triggered in part by his performance of the *St. Mathews Passion* in 1829, the first performance of the work since at least Bach's death in 1750.

written before the twentieth century. All conductors struggle with the issue of whether or not to make alterations in the notated score. In the case of Beethoven's symphonies for example, much debate has taken place over how much editing is warranted.⁴³

Beethoven is widely celebrated as a master composer, but the orchestra for which he conceived his works is vastly different from the modern one. Technical limitations set clear limits on his orchestrations. For example, trumpets and horns did not have valves and could not play all notes of the chromatic scale; orchestras of the day used only two timpani, placing a limit on the range that could be used; nineteenth century wind instruments were not capable of the higher volumes and flexibility of the modern ones; tone colour of most instruments has changed dramatically.

The question of editing has always been a contentious issue. On the one side of the argument stand the proponents of Berlioz, who disagree with almost any changes made to the printed score as notated by the composer. On the other side, following the leadership of Mahler, who composed and conducted at a time when many instruments had been modernized, are those who feel wholly justified in adding notes that Beethoven 'would have written himself' had it been technically possible.⁴⁴ Berlioz acknowledged the problem with these guidelines: modifications to the score may only take place to fulfill two objectives: 1) achievement of musical and historical authenticity; and 2) reflection of the style and personality of the composer (Leinsdorf 1981: 187). But it is a fine line that delineates the two poles. Eric Leinsdorf outlines a clearer approach:

The dividing line between improving a composition, to the advantage of the composer, and distorting it is both elastic and very thin. It is not a boundary that can be surveyed as if one were dealing in real estate. Flexibility, good taste, and above all reverence for a master are of the essence. The admonition "play what's printed" will never suffice. Even without the emendations of conductors, there are considerable differences between scores. No firm rules can be laid down. Perhaps the most useful advice would be an example: every sensible conductor will add the low D-sharp to the double basses in the opening phrases of the Brahms Second Symphony; none will replace the flutes with oboes in the second movement of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. Between these extremes lies a vast field of exercise of thoughtful consideration.

(Leinsdorf 1981: 190 – 91)

⁴³ Galkin discusses these issues in A History of Orchestral Conducting (1988: 83 – 85).

⁴⁴ Berlioz was clearly familiar with the issue of instruments undergoing improvements. When technical advances resulted in the invention of the cornet with valves, its flexibility and beautiful tone caused him to write a new solo passage for the instrument in the waltz movement of his *Symphonie Fantastique*, long after the work had been completed and published.

Toscanini, conductor of the New York Symphony (1928 - 36) and NBC Symphony (1937 - 54) was a strong proponent for the strict interpretation of the composer's notation, and exerted a strong influence upon a generation of American conductors to exemplify this attitude (Galkin 1988: 659 - 665). Despite this wide reputation, even Toscanini was well aware of the need to make revisions and often did so, some drastic.⁴⁵ This demonstrates the nature of the problem: technical issues or inconsistencies in the composers work may mean that revisions are necessary even for the conductor who stands firmly on the side of caution.

An even larger issue, not discussed widely in research materials, is that of reorchestration. Where this issue is concerned, no conductor is more controversial than Leopold Stokowski, conductor of the Philadephia Orchestra in the 1930's. According to Galkin, Stokowski was responsible for one hundred and forty re-orchestrations of works by forty-six composers ranging from Frescobaldi and J.S. Bach, to Johann Strauss, Shostakovich, Debussy and Stravinsky. Most criticism was leveled at his thirty-six arrangements of the music by Bach with their "uniquely luxurious scoring practices and his improvisatory phrasing" (Galkin 1988: 717). His version of the *Prelude and Fugue in D minor* is perhaps the most well known of these orchestrations. It was recorded for the Walt Disney animated movie *Fantasia* and has brought the music of Bach to millions of listeners since its release in 1940 and reissue in 1990. Criticism centered on the question whether these new orchestrations truly represented the music of Bach. Speculation has never ceased as to how Bach's orchestration would have changed had he been able to access the large and technically competent contemporary orchestras. One thing is certain: as proved by his own work, Bach certainly would have experimented with the instruments available today.

It is clear then, that the aesthetic question of whether or not a re-orchestration is an authentic representation of a composer's work can never be answered unequivocally yes or no. Many composers altered their own works as time progressed and they saw important changes in the technical aspects of instruments or their own tastes changed. Bach, Schubert, Berlioz, Liszt, Debussy, Bruckner, Mahler, and many other prominent composers revised their works. The conductor, as I have outlined above, plays an important role in the modern century in the re-

⁴⁵ Eric Leinsdorf was Toscanini's assistant, and relates that Toscanini invented a new modulation for a performance of Fidelio by Beethoven in order to accommodate a transposition of one aria for the soprano. Controversial alterations in other works include changing the first note of the presto section of Leonore Overture No. 3, and revisions to Debussy's scoring of La Mer (Galkin 1988: 661).

orchestration of compositions, but, he must keep the words of Berlioz and Leinsdorf in mind at all times: good taste, respect and reverence for the master are the only sure guidelines.

Re-orchestration in Chinese music

The discussion above centres on the issue of whether or not changing the composer's original intentions by either revising or re-orchestrating their original work maintains any kind of authenticity. Chinese orchestral music based on the sizhu tradition operates under a much different paradigm than that of European art music. The *sizhu* traditions of *qupai* tunes and their variation have been explained at length, but a further demonstration can be given by studying an example of the standard notation used to perform these works, shown in Figure 3.1. This composition, entitled Xunfeng Qu, is taken from a textbook that teaches how to play the erhu by Tung Yung-Shen, and is an example of *sizhu* in cipher notation (2000: 86)⁴⁶. Notice that specific instrumentation is not supplied, nor is ornamentation written in.⁴⁷ Any number of players could perform this work and in the traditional sizhu style, between four to ten musicians would all read from this notation.⁴⁸ It demonstrates that: 1) re-orchestration is not an issue, as the original notation makes no clear stipulation as to which instruments should be used; 2) a 'personal edition' of this piece, consisting of a memorized (or notated) version of a particular performer's rendition, is considered an acceptable form of performance; 3) new pieces based on these personal editions are also acceptable, as shown by the development of Lao Liuban into Dao Baban, and finally to Jinshe Kuangwu.

⁴⁶ Xunfeng Qu, like Jinshe Kuangwu, and Dao Baban, is based on Lao Liuban. A careful analysis of Xunfeng Qu shows that the first beat of each measure (beginning from measure two) will outline very closely the melody of Lao Liuban. This is an example of banshi bianzo.

⁴⁷ This can be compared to the European instrumental music of the early and middle Baroque era, from approximately 1600 to 1716. The latter date is the year of Couperin's published article "The Art of Playing the Clavecin" in which he outlined carefully keyboard ornamentation that was normally added by the performer (Grout 1980: 381). In the Classical era this changed and composers were expected to notate all of their ornamentation, although cadenzas were still left up to the performer until as late as Piano Concerto No. 5 by Beethoven, where the first indication by a composer to play specifically what was notated occurs (Schuller 1997: 342).

⁴⁸ The numbers indicate the pitch to be played. In the key of 'c', the number '1' means the pitch 'c' and so on. Rhythms are indicated by the horizontal lines underneath the notes. One line represents an eighth-note, two represents a sixteenth-note, and no line represents a quarter-note. This piece was taken from *Nanhu Jyauben* a textbook on how to play the fiddle (*nanhu*) by Tung Jung-Shen.

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Figure 3.1: *Xunfeng Qu* in Cipher Notation (Source: Tung 2000: 86)

Personal editions, as I have shown in the early part of this Chapter with analyses of *Lao Liuban*, *Dao Baban* and *Jinshe Kuangwu*, can involve both a substantial verbatim use of, and reworking of the original material. Even with a more recent work such as *Yangming Chunxiao* the composer has agreed that re-orchestrations are acceptable as long as the "flute solo remains

untouched."⁴⁹ This is supported, to some degree, by the composer's own adaptation for *bangdi* and piano, which shows substantial alterations to the original accompaniment (Tung 1980: solo *Bangdi* and piano). In the case of *Qin Bingmayong* there is a much stronger case to be made in favour of making little or no changes, based on the detailed and specific intentions of the composer that is presented in his score.⁵⁰

As shown by the score of *Xunfeng Qu*, early twentieth century works for the Chinese orchestra based on the *sizhu* repertoire demand more in-depth work as an orchestrator than do later pieces, due to the unison nature of their composition with its unwritten but implied heterophony. In order for these works to be transferred successfully to the Western symphony orchestra, much needs to be added by the conductor who must take the place of the Chinese instrumentalists who know their own idiom well. First, embellishment that is normally done by the musicians themselves will need to be written into each part. Initially, this will entail the study of each of the main *sizhu* instruments and the transcription of some early recordings in order to understand the right approach for each instrument. Next is the question of whether or not to add a bass line. This can be done without resorting to a re-harmonization of the piece by choosing bass notes that outline the melody. This is the technique used in *Yangming Chunxiao* (see Figure 2.9 A and B). When *sizhu* was performed with instrumentation that included the mouth organ (*sheng*), some harmony was added to the inner parts. This instrument is normally played in open fifths, therefore, the addition of these notes can also be considered.

Later compositions written directly for the Chinese orchestra are easier to re-orchestrate for the symphony. Perhaps the most difficult challenge is simply *finding* the right piece to consider for adaptation. Many early pieces are unpublished and can only be located within the personal collection of someone connected to the local Chinese orchestra. If the local university library does not have a collection of Chinese music, then the next step is to locate a sympathetic member of such an orchestra. Finally, one must decide whether or not any Chinese instruments will be added to the symphony.

Chinese percussion instruments are the easiest to work with, will add a very idiomatic sound, and can be played by most Western-trained percussionists. The Western woodblock, tam-tam, bass drum and timpani may all be used directly in place of the Chinese *muyu*, *luo*, *dagu*

⁴⁹ This is my translation of the composer's words, from personal communication, 2007.

⁵⁰ Permission was granted by the composer's family to make a re-orchestration of the work for the occasion of the performance with chamber orchestra, related to the presentation of this thesis.

and *paigu*, but the sounds of the cymbals (*bo*), cloud gong (*yunluo*) and the single-headed drum (*bangu*) from opera are not heard in Western percussion.

The plucked lute and strings (*pipa, ruan, sanxian*) are the next consideration. The strumming technique is the hardest to replicate and fast tremolo in the Western strings will only approximate this sound. The plucked notes, on the other hand, may be adequately performed by the use of pizzicato. In *Qin Bingmayong* movement II, A¹, (compare the two scores in Appendix E) for example, I have chosen to solve this problem by doubling the strings, tremolo, with the lute (*pipa*) and zither (*zheng*) in order to provide both the necessary volume through the upper strings and correct sonority of the lute and zither.

Music for the bowed strings is, to some extent, the easiest to adapt to the Western ensemble, but stylistic nuance will require some careful attention by the conductor. Many of these are clearly outlined in the Performance Notes of the orchestral score to the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto (*Liangshanbo He Zhuyingtai*) (He 1996: 3-6): glissando, three different types of portamento, are taken from traditional *erhu* performance techniques, while bowing that imitates flourishes of the zither (*zheng*), and syncopated triple-stops are used to imitate lute (*pipa*) strokes, and the trembling bow of the *erhu* are all demonstrated.

Winds can very nearly be directly written from the Chinese instruments except for solo passages (see Appendix A, Table A1.3), which must be considered carefully. In *Qin Bingmayong* the globular flute solo (mm. 225-236) may be played on clarinet or alto flute, but with its lowest note a 'b'-flat below the staff, the symphonic flute will only be able to play this note by bending from the pitch above. The solo written for zither (*zheng*) (mm. 257-264) can possibly be done on harp, but much of the special techniques such as pushing notes will be lost. It is difficult to catch completely the essential sound of the original instrument with Western equivalents, and so a judgment must be made to determine how much of the sound of the original instrument is central to the sentiment of the music.

In the adaptation of these pieces, I have chosen to keep several of the key Chinese instruments and have them perform as solo instruments. In *Jinshe Kuangwu* I believe that the best effect can be achieved by having the Chinese instruments play in unison with the Western ones, lending their characteristic nuances to the larger group. In *Yangming Chunxiao*, the solo bamboo flute is absolutely central to the composition and therefore it must remain and this is in line with the direct wishes of the composer (Tung 2007). Otherwise, the piece can be adapted very successfully with the Western orchestra as a backdrop for the solo instrument. In *Qin*

Bingmayong, the solo sections are important to the overall character of the piece and so I have kept the Chinese instruments as soloists. Peng's orchestration technique is very Western in its orientation, and therefore the rest of the piece can be very directly adapted for Western orchestra.

The instruments I have used in the orchestration for the performance related to this thesis, are, for practical reasons, those of a small Western chamber orchestra, with the Chinese instruments performing as a quasi concerto grosso group within the larger Western instrumentation. In this way, much of the original character of all three works can be maintained, either by the sounds of the Chinese instruments alone, or by their sounds combined with the Western ones. For example, solo passages will be played by the appropriate solo instruments, but tutti passages will have the Chinese instruments doubling with the Western ones in order to have both the required volume plus the Chinese inflections. In this way, the tutti sections of *Yangming Chunxiao* will combine the sounds of the *erhu* and violin, with the *erhu* providing the Chinese element, and the violins giving the full sound needed.

Preparing and Conducting The Three Works

Jinshe Kuangwu: Preparation. As an example of a unison type piece, the first preparatory work to be undertaken is to determine the version to be performed. I listened to three performances of the piece, and noticed that while the notes are very similar, the rhythms were not, greatly affecting the effect of the different versions. In the version I have used, the eighthnotes are performed evenly with no alterations from the notation. In other versions, I have observed the eighths changed to dotted-eighth plus sixteenth notes for example, and this would be an acceptable form of embellishment. The use of percussion varied, with one version using much less, and with different rhythms completely in the percussion solo sections. This is most likely due to the aural tradition and the flexibility of approach that is taken to the traditional repertoire, and derives from the personal embellishment that is an integral part of these types of compositions. The variation found in traditional performance techniques gives the orchestrator some degree of latitude when working with the early orchestra works. It is legitimate to choose a version for transcription based on the conductor's tastes or technical requirements as to length or orchestration, rather than strictly following the notation, which is normally only a guide for which heterophony is added by the musicians.

As the percussion forms a soli section in this piece, the instruments should be, if at all possible, Chinese ones. In particular, the Chinese hand-held cymbals, small drum, large drum,

should be obtained for use. The gong can be played on a tam-tam, and wood block may be used instead of *ban*. Next, a bass line should be added that outlines the melody. A good example of this technique can be observed by studying the bass part of *Yangming Chunxiao*, A Section (Figure 2.8 A and B). As a composition from the *sizhu* repertoire, *Jinshe Kuangwu* adding harmony should not be considered because it will fundamentally alter the original nature of the piece.

Conducting *Jinshe Kuangwu.* Conducting this work requires a clear marcato beat pattern with attention paid to the cross rhythms (for the complete score, refer to Appendix C). The exciting and rhythmical nature of the piece should be brought out with energy. The percussion may use dynamics in the build-up to the repeat and should perform at a strong dynamic level in its soli sections. However, a careful balance must be struck so that the sudden entrances of the full section (m. 17, 36, 40, and elsewhere) do not seem out of place in contrast to the orchestra. In this respect, the orchestra must, to some extent, play up in dynamic level to the volume of the percussion.

Yangming Chunxiao: **Preparation**. This composition works very well with the Chinese flute performing as solo instrument accompanied by Western instruments. It makes an excellent addition to the symphonic repertoire, but some preparation is required before it can be performed successfully with Western instruments.

I have chosen to perform a version of *Yangming Chunxiao* transcribed from a recording (performed by an unacknowledged ensemble), but which has subtlely changed the bass part from the original as published by the Republic of China Publishing House (1970)⁵¹. My experience with *Jingshe Kuangwu* showed that a printed score in China may or may not be faithful to the original version as prepared by the composer. Therefore, in conversation with the composer, I learned that the bass part as written in the published score is his, leaving a further decision as to leave the altered bass part in place. Further discussion with Tung revealed that he would be satisfied with my orchestration as long as his one express wish was followed: that the solo flute part remain untouched. I therefore decided to keep the bass part taken from the transcription. Figure 3.2 shows a comparison of the first page of these two versions.

⁵¹ Tung: *PGMCD-9064*



Yangming Chunxiao

Figure 3.2: Yangming Chunxiao, Published Score and Transcription,

A Section

Figure 3.2 is a comparison of the first five measures of the published score, labeled "Score," to a transcription of a recording, labeled "Transcription." For clarity I have placed the solo flute at the top, as it is identical in both versions. First of all, in the Score, Tung chooses only the plucked strings to accompany the bamboo flute at the opening and only brings the full orchestra sound into play in measure twenty-nine and forwards (not shown). In the Transcription, the full ensemble plays, including winds (in this case only mouth organ), plucked strings and bowed strings, from the first measure. Notice how in Score there are three different lines of music: 1) the solo flute doubled by three of the plucked strings, 2) the zither (*guzheng*) and 3) the bass line played by the *ruan* and *daruan*. However, more careful examination will reveal that the zither part is an octave doubling of the bass line, and that the bass line is not a separate line giving harmonic structure, but rather an outline of the melody. The A section of *Yangming Chunxiao* is not *sizhu*, but the style of writing is very similar. The use of unison means that the instrumentalists are expected to provide their own idiomatic embellishments.

Now, compare the Transcription. Measures two and three have been re-written to match the continuous eighth-note line in the *gehu*. This line brings an element of intermediate closure to the end of measure three, by outlining the solo part and again at the end of measure eight. This neatly outlines the structure within measures two to eight as that of 2 + 3 measures. *Erhu* 1 and 2 play a counter-melody of half-notes with rhythmic figures at the end of measures three and six that coincide with the phrasing just mentioned. The plucked-strings *ruan*, and *pipa* both play triadic, strummed chords in the first measure and, even though they are playing only two notes thereafter, the combined result of their pitches plus the bass line often results in triadic harmony. The *yanggin* outlines these harmonies with arpeggios.

Figure 3.3 is a comparison of five measures containing the end of the Allegro (A Section) and the opening measures of the Moderato (B section).



Figure 3.3: *Yangming Chunxiao*, Published Score and Transcription, B Section

The differences in orchestration are fewer here. The same instruments play in both versions, however, in the Score the bowed strings are only given whole notes, while in the Transcription they play arpeggiated eighth-notes with tremolo added. There are differences in

the bass notes starting from measure fifty-two where in the Score it is notated with the basses more active (first and fourth beat), and the Transcription less (first beat only). Finally, notice the difference in the *yangqin* (dulcimer) parts. While the triplet figure in the Score does not give complete triadic harmony, the Transcription contains notes added to the arpeggios, giving full harmony. It is quite likely that this was the player's own interpretation of the triplet figure and illustrates the amount of flexibility given to the musicians.

How should these harmonic additions be viewed? Is this recorded version of *Yangming Chunxiao* to be considered simply a re-orchestration, or an arrangement? On the one hand, embellishments added to early works falls within the accepted performance practice as handed-down in the *sizhu* tradition. This is the process that took place between *Lao Liuban*, *Dao Baban* and *Jinshe Kuangwu*. Tung's opinion is that re-orchestrations are legitimate, as long as the solo flute remains untouched, but the Transcription goes beyond that with harmony added. Tung's writing style throughout the piece, while still modal, has strong diatonic implications. Viewed in this light, the harmonic additions in the Transcription make sense. In my opinion they do not alter the original intent of the music, but give it a richer framework without moving beyond the context of the music as originally conceived.

Under the paradigm of Chinese music in the tradition of *sizhu*, the freedom of performance practice means choosing the repertoire will require some manner of re-orchestration and revising. What I have shown here provides a clear insight into such issues faced by the conductor when programming this work for Western orchestra.

Conducting *Yangming Chunxiao*: Allegro (*A*) (see Appendix D). To begin, a preparatory motion in conjunction with a breath from the soloist will start the piece. A common interpretation is to play the first measure as a crescendo, then drop the accompaniment to mezzo-piano in dynamic from measure 2 onwards. Keep careful track of the phrasing as it is built on uneven measures, unlike much Western music: (beginning from measure 2) 2 measures + 3 measures + 3 measures etc. Make special effort to bring the ensemble down in measure 11 – this is the first dynamic marked by the composer and should be carefully observed.

In measure 14, the orchestra has a tendency to cover the bamboo flute, partly due to the simpler nature of the rhythm, plus the crescendo in measure 13, which can often come up too much. A gesture to the zither in measure 13 is very effective to bring out the upwards glissando. Measures 18 - 19 may be performed with a crescendo, remembering to bring the orchestra back

down again at the downbeat of measure 20. Hold the tempo steady in measures 24 - 25, paying close attention to the bamboo flute. At measure 26, the simplified rhythm and rising pitches can easily lead to a crescendo over 2 measures, but the balance with the bamboo flute must be kept in mind at all times. At measure 28, the bamboo flautist will often add notes to the flourish. Cease beating at the rebound of the third beat of measure 27, and wait for the soloist to motion onwards at measure 29. Take note that the fermata will not be a long one and be ready to move onwards, at once encouraging the orchestra to come up to full strength, as indicated by the orchestration. It is wise to ask the musicians to mark this passage the dynamic of forte during rehearsals, bringing them back to mezzo forte in measure 35.

From measure 29 onwards, take the phrasing from the beginning of the piece - one measure introduction, then 2 + 3 measures - then prepare again for the entrance of the bamboo flute. In measure 40, make sure to indicate staccato in the gesture with a rebound-stop technique, keeping the gestures small to indicate piano dynamic. In measure 45 take care to mark the decrescendo. Notice that the figure in measure 46 - 49 is one measure longer than previously. It is traditional to make a luftpause between measure 48 and 49; it is worthwhile to rehearse with the soloist before meeting the ensemble in order to properly prepare this kind of detail. Beginning from measure 51, clearly mark the first beat, then allow the zither to take the ensemble into the next measure. Gesture to the strings in measure 52, so they may safely come out of their sustained notes.

Conducting *Yangming Chunxiao*: Moderato (B). A legato beat that contains a slight pulse will be required for the first measure, at least until the ensemble has settled. In any case, follow the soloist, although the traditional style will not require much rubato expressive playing and therefore the conductor can expect the tempo to be fairly steady. Notice that the bottom notes of the *yangqin* (dulcimer) should occur on the downbeat and not before, except in measure 53, where they come before the beat.

The phrase lengths are very regular in the B section, with neat 4-measure segments. Make sure to bring in the winds in measure 63, as the players have been tacit for some time and enter in the middle of the phrase. In measure 68, bring out the strings after the third beat, but make sure that they do not cover the soloist from the downbeat onwards.

In measure 76, a choice needs to be made to either carry the whole-note through to the next measure as though a crescendo was indicated, or to end the phrase on the 4th beat. Bring in

the winds at the downbeat of measure 77, as they have not been playing for some time, but the phrasing belongs to the strings. Encourage them to sing through the beautiful melodic lines, and pay attention to the second line in the cellos and basses. The soloist returns in measure 93, but because he enters at the top of the phrase and in the high register, balance should not such an issue here.

Conducting *Yangming Chunxiao:* Allegro (A¹). Measure 101 brings a return to the A¹ Section with some changes: note that the introductory measure has now been expanded into 2 in order to allow the shift from 'd' tonality to 'b' mode (*la*-pentatonic). Measures 103 - 112 present new material closely linked to the previous A section. Measures 103 - 104 require strong pulses in order to co-ordinate properly the syncopation. Beat through the next two measures with a smooth beat to indicate the pulsing-but-legato writing, which is a marked departure from the previous A section. Notice however, the staccato articulations on the third beat of measure 106. Give strong indications for the first and third beat of measure 107 to indicate the tutti notes occurring on beats two and four. In measure 107, care should be taken to not infer a crescendo while the soloist is performing his legato sixteenth-notes. In any case, the crescendo occurs in the next measure as indicated in the original version, two measures in length this time. For the next two measures (mm. 111 - 112), conduct the basses in order to allow the after-beat notes to be properly placed.

Measure 113 onwards is a repeat of the A section, but skips several measures (mm. 3-6 of the piece). In measure 133, stop beating after the count of one with a slight rebound to indicate the length of the quarter-note, give a preparatory beat on four, stop again on one (m. 134), another preparatory on three. Beginning in measure 136, beat through the two measures, stopping on the rebound of beat three of measure 137. Make sure that the ensemble is very precise with this cut-off so that nothing hangs over to cover the bamboo flute. The cadenza here may also have some added notes to it, however, keeping to the style of traditional music, it will also not be an extended cadenza. Be prepared to bring the ensemble back in, guided by the breath of the bamboo flautist. Watch the soloist in order to bring the piece to a brilliant ending, using a cut-off, perhaps in an upward direction, that co-insides neatly with the soloist, and also indicates the wonderful flourish of the last trill with added crescendo.

Qin Bingmayong: Preparation. Because of Peng's mastery of orchestration techniques, much less work was required when adapting this work for Western orchestra. The wind and string parts were transcribed almost exactly, as were the percussion parts. In important decision was made to keep the solo instruments, which I believe were crucial to maintaining the original nature of this work. This was done by creating a concerto-grosso group of zither, lute, bamboo flute, and fiddle. This was especially important for the following sections (see Appendix E: *Qin Bingmayong Re-Orchestrated*):

- P. 181, rehearsal mark 'B': the zither plays a low strummed melody. This was originally scored for multiple strummed instruments. It would not sound authentic played with cellos using tremolo alone. Here I have doubled the zither with the cellos in order to have the zither provide the correct timbre, while the cellos provide the necessary volume. The lute joins in measure 244.
- P. 182, seven measures after rehearsal mark 'C', zither solo
- 185, rehearsal mark 'F', bamboo flute solo
- p. 186, rehearsal mark 'G,' duet

Other comments:

- piano was used to re-enforce the overall sound of the relatively small chamber orchestra.

- one measure before rehearsal mark 'E', the piano substituted for the dulcimer.

Conducting *Qing Bingmayong*: **Movement II, Introduction.** The opening section of the second movement begins with a sustained passage with little forward motion and therefore the conductor must take care to convey, by subtle motion and demeanor, the somber atmosphere of the first measures. A smooth preparatory gesture in the dynamic of mezzo-piano to the violas, cellos and basses begins the piece. Give clear beats through the half note in measure one in order to establish the tempo. Keep the motion quite legato but be sure to obtain some articulation from the low strings. Exactly how much is a matter of personal interpretation, but will also be influenced by the acoustical resonance in the hall: a large echo will require more articulation, a dull, dry unresonant hall will require less. In measure 206 (movement II begins at measure 205) give a small but rhythmical gesture on beat two to prepare the wood block. Each tap of the wood block will require a precise and rhythmic preparatory motion, and, if directed to

the back of the ensemble - the normal position for the instrument - this should not interrupt the sustained sounds in the low strings. Notice the change in dynamic level to piano, in the 4th measure. Next, conduct the pizzicato of the cello and basses. The conductor should understand that sparse pizzicato with no accompaniment of any kind presents a considerable challenge to a string section, and care must be taken by the conductor to prepare each entrance. Imagining a subdivision of triplets will help to subtlely give the correct amount of rhythmical pulse to the beat while, at the same time, beating slowly and within the piano dynamic. Using this technique, the basses will perform more accurately.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong:* **II**, **A Section.** Measure 225. The first four measures are notated in 5/4 time signature giving an "arrhythmic" quality to the melody. Taking this aesthetic into consideration, some flexibility can be given to the solo in the alto flute. It is suggested to divide the measure 3+2. Begin with a gentle preparatory motion on beat four to prepare the entrance of the solo flute and establish the mood and pulse, but immediately address the celli and basses pizzicato with a rhythmical gesture on beat 1, followed by a quasi-legato with pulse on beat 2, addressing the upper strings. Give the soloist time at the end of each of the first 2 measures to take a breath. As the flute is performing a solo, the player is most likely going to be quite prepared to enter, but this is the first entrance of the upper strings so care must be taken in order to ensure that they are ready to enter, and in the correct place. Once all are in, continue with attention focused on the solo, while conducting the accompaniment. Bring out the celli pizzicato figures slightly in measure 228 and 232, noting the 'e'-flat in the latter, which is not an error.

Measure 236 brings the first statement of the 'fate' figure – the rising fifth and chromatic descending line, this time in the lute (*pipa*), strummed. This is the first entrance of the lute, and the figure is important: a glance at the player in measure 235, followed by a preparatory motion on beat 4, piano dynamic, should be given. Continue to monitor the Violin II figure to ensure that the rhythm remains correct. On beat 4, prepare the cellos and basses entrance of the next measure. Note also that the decrescendo in the lute occurs on beat 4 and onwards. This may not show properly in the part.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: II, A¹ Section. This is a repeat of A with a fuller orchestration. In the 5/4 time (240 ff.) conduct in a similar fashion as before, paying more

attention though to the last beat of each measure: the Violin II must be given enough time to complete their eighth-note figures without having to rush. Playing the first two measures (240-241) with a slight lift at the end of each will achieve a good result with this detail. Notice the entrance of the Violin I in measure 242. Upon reaching the 4/4 time signature, (m. 244) notice a slight increase in dynamic and the addition of the crescendo - diminuendo in the upper strings. Pay careful attention to dynamics here, bringing out the crescendo and diminuendo. If necessary, request the players to write a specific dynamic in their parts to indicate that the crescendo is more than a gentle swell. Taking the crescendo up to what dynamic is up to the conductor's interpretation. Care must be taken to keep the tempo slow in this section, and, as is always the case with slower tempos where the nature of the melody does not necessarily call for subdivision, the proper tempo must be internalized otherwise the tendency will be to go faster. It is often helpful to think in eighth-notes while beating in quarter-notes. This is one of the more difficult techniques to master for a conductor.

Measure 248 contains a small crescendo – diminuendo. This is a change from the first A, and should be emphasized. As in the previous A, the last measure of the melody (m. 251) coincides with the beginning of the chromatic "fate" figure. This time there are additions to the orchestration, with the upper strings and horns providing harmony underneath, and it is played this time by the piccolo and clarinet. Measure 252 reiterates the low sustained somber figure plus cymbals from the opening of the work. These two measures (251-252) should be thought of as three different things: the end of the melody (m. 251), the chromatic figure (m.251), and the opening figure (m. 252). At the end of measure 254, the winds will require a cut-off that coincides with the cymbal. The conductor must decide whether the cymbal should be allowed to ring after the winds cease, or be silenced together with the winds. A short fermata on the bar line is notated here.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: **II**, **B Section.** If one player plays the wood block, now with two simultaneous pitches, the coordination will be much easier than with two. The zither solo beginning in measure 257 does not need to be conducted, but the beats should be marked for the wood block player, who will need preparatory gestures on beat 2 of each measure starting from 258. It may be necessary to explain to the percussionist that you will not beat measure 257, and only give him/her the preparatory motion for the 3rd beat. This is especially true if the soloist performs with much rubato, as can be expected.

A glance at the low strings in measure 264 will alert them to their approaching entrance. They should be ready to play, but with the rubato nature of the zither solo, they may have trouble counting the first 10 measures of B Section correctly. As the woodblock makes a decrescendo into measure 267, prepare the upper strings by looking at them to see if they are ready to enter, then give a preparatory motion to the solo flute and/or lute.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: **II**, **C Section.** A slightly brisker tempo can be taken here, changing to approximately quarter-note equals 60 beats per minute. Ensuring that the strings do not make an unintended crescendo with the left hand, bring out the flute and lute with the right hand through beats 3 and 4. Beat through the 4th beat of measure 268 to ensure there is no diminuendo on the half-note. Allow the solo instruments to continue through measure 269, while gesturing a gentle crescendo - diminuendo in the upper strings. At the first beat of measure 270, make sure that the solo instruments observe the sixteenth-note rest. The eight-note on the first beat of the bar may be played slightly shorter than notated in order to emphasize this. At measure 271, bring in the zither and *erhu* then gently gesture to, or glance at, the piano for beat 2, as this is its first entry in the second movement. The rest in measure 274 must be carefully observed, just as the one in measure 270, this time on beat 3. Prepare the piano on beat two of measure 275, and encourage a slight forward motion through the thirty-second notes, although without rushing.

Measure 276 brings a repeat of the C melody, this time in the upper strings, tutti. This is the largest use of resources yet in the movement and also the loudest dynamic, with the crescendo in measure 276 that moves the orchestra beyond mezzo-forte. With generous and sustained gestures, show the singing quality of this melodic passage; encourage the upper strings to play out strongly with a warm and resonant sound. It is time to allow the movement to move away from the intimate nature it has maintained up until now. Observe the rest in measure 279. In measure 280, the main melody continues in the Violin II, flute and clarinet. Be careful that the Violin I does not overshadow this. Two, 4-measure melodic gestures begin at measure 284⁵², followed by a two-measure transitional passage in the piano and lute, that brings the music back to the intimate setting, similar to other sections in the movement. This time, a duet between

⁵² Measure 289 is not performed on the Hong Kong recording (Hong Kong 2002). This omission makes sense from a musical standpoint, but without interviewing the conductor it is difficult to determine whether or not it was done at the request of the composer.

zither and *erhu* is prepared by the descending eighth-notes in measure 295. A slight ritardando in the last two beats of this measure will prepare the duet well.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: **II**, **D** Section. Conduct this section (m. 296 ff.) only if necessary. Preferably, the conductor has worked with the soloists ahead of time and they will know each other's music. In this case, beating will not be necessary until measure 304, and here only enough to prepare the gong entrance. Allow the gong to dissipate somewhat before beginning the transition.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong:* **II, Transition**. After a lengthy section at slower tempos, this sudden move to a quick and lively pulse will take time in rehearsal to achieve. It is a challenge to get the orchestra moving immediately, especially with the added difficulty of coordination with triplets in the piano part versus eighth-notes in the viola: these are the only instruments that will set the tempo and they have opposing rhythms. The solution is to make sure that the basses and cellos re-articulate the 'd' at beat 1 of measure 305. They may even need to put a small rest between the two whole notes of measures 304 - 305. Keep track of all entrances in this section, as the sudden change to the faster tempo requires alertness from all the players. At measure 315, cue the high winds, then give a strong gesture to the strings on the downbeat of the next measure to ensure that they begin their descending eighth-note figure exactly together. Back to the high winds for the downbeat of 317, strings again at measure 318. No diminuendo is marked in measure 320, however, the overall effect is likely to be just this, with a reduction in the instrumentation taking place and the range dropping lower and lower. You may ask for the strings to compensate for this slightly by playing strongly in measure 320 as they make their descending figure.

In measure 321 and forwards, make sure the 1st and 3rd beats of each bar are precisely together in the low strings as this prepares everything else in the measure. All strings should be instructed to release the quarter-note earlier than notated in order to make sure that the first of the sixteenth-notes begin together. The conductor's beating must be vigorously marcato through this section (mm. 321 - 327). Make sure that there is no diminuendo until the downbeat of measure 327.

Conducting Qin Bingmayong: III, A Section. The opening of the third movement

comes attaca and with no alteration in the flow of the rhythm. The tempo here is quicker than in the first movement (not shown), and should maintain a pressing-ahead quality about it. Emphasize the accent on the third beat in measure 329. Cue the entrance of the bassoon in measure 329, making sure that the strings and piano have all come down far enough in dynamic that the bassoon and horns can come to the fore. The bassoon melody should be played in a martial style with little sentimentality. The trumpet entrance on the third beat of measure 332 is very important. Make sure that the orchestra does not begin its decrescendo before the downbeat of measure 336. The fourth beat in this measure needs extra care in order to stimulate the sixteenth-note pick-up to the next. Two things can be done to ensure that this entrance is precise: first, make the diminuendo in measure 336 quite large; second, keep the accompanying instruments in measure 336 down in volume so that the Violin II, piano and lute do not need to strain in order to get their line across. Do not push the tempo here and beat with a very steady pulse.

In measure 339, give a clear pulse on the fourth beat for the Violin I. Cue the timpani in measure 342 as he has not played for a considerable length of time, and this entrance is very important.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: III, B Section. A slight ritardando is called for, beginning from three beats before measure 344, but move ahead the tempo to approximately quarter-note equals 132 once the downbeat of measure 344 has arrived.

Give a very strong cue at the entrance of the bass drum and cymbals, as this is one of the most dramatic moments of the two movements. It is the first use of these instruments in these two movements. The trumpet entrance in measure 351 is also very important. Use a gesture of syncopation to keep the trumpet exactly in tempo.

After the almost wild sounds of the preceding 14 measures, the diminuendo at measure 357 provides a refuge. The winds take over the main melody, with the cellos providing a counter melody. Make sure that the Violin I plays down their dynamic, and it may be necessary to ask them to mark the score mezzo-piano in order to achieve a better balance. Measure 366 brings us a third statement of the chromatic 'fate' figure, this time with canonic entries. The most important entry will be the basses (m. 371), as they come one measure later than the one-measure pattern set by the other strings. Immediately bring in the clarinet in measure 372. Notice also, the changes in dynamics in the lower strings: mezzo-piano (m. 371), then piano (m.

373), then pianissimo (m. 375). At measure 377 a new phrase begins and this four-measure grouping brings us to the gong/tam-tam strike at measure 380. Each note must be very clearly accented in this passage.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: **III, C Section.** Even though the dynamic is marked piano, the sextuplet figures will require a clear pulse in order to be precisely together. It may be necessary to beat with an eighth-note subdivision until the players are established in their tempos. Notice the subito mezzo-forte dynamic at measure 384. At measure 385, cue the entrance of the timpani, then move to the celli, who have the melodic line. This melody must be very sustained in order to be effective, yet, at the same time, the conductor must keep track of the sextuplets: this is a challenge. At measure 392, the focus shifts to the upper strings, with exactly the same rhythmical challenge just mentioned: the conductor must indicate sustained melody, but the pulse must not be neglected or the sextuplets in the upper winds will not be able to maintain the correct placement. Bring out the brass fanfare in measure 393 by giving a strong emphasis on the downbeat. Once the brasses are established in their soli, prepare the tam-tam, which enters on the third beat. This pattern is the same for the next two measures.

At measure 396, address the upper strings and give a clear marcato beat with good pulse to move the eighth-notes in good rhythm.

Conducting *Qin Bingmayong*: **III, Coda.** Even though the tremolo is marked mezzoforte at measure 399, it must have a consistent, full, and balanced sound. It may be necessary to mark this dynamic up to forte in order to achieve the desired effect, but this depends on the power of the horns, which must be heard clearly above all else. This should not be an easy task for them, or, in other words, they should have to play loud enough to project a forceful sound, majestic, but with a tinge of desperation. Notice that the horn fanfare is based on the earlier A theme, but shortened to 3 measures, and that there is a percussion 'response' (m. 401) to the first two bars of this abbreviated A melody. Another 3-measure phrase comes next (mm. 402-404) which is also an abbreviated version of the next phrase of the A theme.

Measure 405 is a most dramatic moment and the three eighth-notes at the end of the measure must be performed emphatically – accent marks could easily be added. The harmonic change to the diminished chord in measure 406 is also significant: the use of modal harmony means an absence of root-movement driven rhythm as found in the major-minor system. This

diminished chord takes on added importance because it is not being used harmonically, but rather as a strong colour, and is the most intense discord in the whole work, leading to the resolution of this built-up tension at measure 408. The descending line of 'b' in measure 406, to 'b'-flat then 'a' in measure 407, ending on 'd' in measure 408 becomes a most important element in driving the piece to its powerful conclusion, and should be clearly audible.

Each beat in measure 408 does not need to be conducted, but a crescendo should definitely be indicated. The upper winds and strings will, however, require a preparatory beat to be given on the 4th beat in order for them to place their eighth-note anacrusis into the final presentation of the 'fate' figure (m. 409 and again at m. 411) properly. The drama of the percussion entry in measures 410 and 412 requires that the conductor address them with a large cue at this moment. The final four measures should be conducted with all the power that can be mustered. In measure 413 and 414, make sure that the winds, brass and strings are addressed on beat 1, and percussion on beat 2. The last two measures can be taken slightly out of tempo, with two large grandiose gestures for the open-fifth half-notes in the penultimate measure, as well as the last downbeat of measure 416, which should be held as long as possible, bringing the piece to a dramatic, emotional ending.

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Appendix A: The Sizhu Instruments

The five most commonly found instruments of the *sizhu* genre are: *erhu*, *pipa*, *yangqin*, *zheng*, and *dizi*.

Erhu

In general, all bowed strings fall under the term *huqin*, which translates directly as 'barbarian fiddle.'¹ Amongst these, *erhu*, 'two stringed barbarian fiddle' is the now the most



Figure A.I: Erhu

commonly found type in China today, although many variants can be found in different areas and within different ethnic groups. Up to the early Tang dynasty period, one of the key lead instruments at court had been the *pipa*, but this began to change and by beginning of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty (1279-1368 AD), the *erhu* was introduced from Mongolia and it gradually superceded the lute (*pipa*).

In general, the characteristics that make the Chinese fiddle distinct from the Western violin are: two, rather than four, strings; it is played upright, with the resonator, made of snake skin, sitting on the left thigh; the bow, made of horsehair, runs between the two strings and is thus inseparable from the instrument during the course of normal performance. The player's right hand moves the bow across the strings and with inward or outward pressure the upper or lower string vibrates. The two strings are not normally sounded together. The resonator, smaller than the Western counterpart, creates a clear singing tone with a slight nasal sound, more strident in higher pitched versions, such as the *gaohu*. It is a very expressive instrument.

In the early part of the Twentieth Century the *erhu* underwent considerable modernizations to increase its range and volume. Largely

due to the influence of Liu Tianhua (1895 – 1932), who wrote studies and solo pieces combining Western violin technique and pioneered much of its technical improvements, the *erhu* has now

¹ Background information on the *erhu* is taken from Thrasher and Stock 2006.

moved into the category of art instrument from that of one largely only played by street musicians and small informal village ensembles.

The origin of bowed strings is not clear. Earliest records show that a two stringed instrument called *xiqin*, after the northern Xi people with whom it was associated, existed in the mid-eighth century. It was not played with a bow, but by scraping with a bamboo strip. Sometime in the late eleventh century, horsehair bows were introduced and gradually became the norm across China.

During the 1930's, a period of experimentation occurred especially in relation to the 'national music' movement, and larger and lower-pitched fiddles that could create alto, tenor and bass versions of the *erhu* have been developed for the orchestras. In the 1950s, instruments such as the *gehu* (direct translation: 'reformed fiddle') attempted to solve the weakness of tone of the tenor and bass forms of *erhu*. This four-stringed instrument, tuned similarly to a cello, grafts a cello fingerboard onto a large tubular resonator. Unlike the *erhu*, the bow hair is not fed between the strings. The success of the *gehu*, as well as its related lower pitched *dihu*, is relative, and many orchestras continue to use cellos and double basses due to their higher sound quality. Putting it another way, the *gehu* rather *too closely* resembles the cello, but with inferior sound quality.²

² Jan Haliska, Principal Cellist of the Janacek Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, remarked that upon seeing the *gehu* at a performance of one of the touring groups from China, his Czech cello section was highly curious; when discovering that it was actually the same as the cello in the manner of playing (as opposed to all the members of the *huqin* family), but was inferior in sound while being a modern invention rather than a traditional instrument, curiosity quickly waned. I believe this reflects the general indifference to these instruments, even from the Chinese musicians themselves. The higher pitched instruments related to the *erhu* are successful and play their unique roles in the aural spectrum as well as hold a certain cachet as Asian instruments. However, the fundamental sound of all bass instruments cannot be altered drastically without weakening its sound quality and therefore reducing its value. As a modern instrument, the *gehu* does not overcome weaknesses in sound and therefore the instrument is not popular.



Figure A.2: Pipa

Pipa was the generic name for various types of plucked lutes from roughly the second century BCE to the ninth century CE and this included the long or short neck, and the round or pear-shaped body³. The modern *pipa* is generally of the pear-shaped kind and was introduced into China from India in 346-53 CD, but it originated in ancient Persia. This early type was a four stringed instrument with four frets and was held transversely while being plucked with a plectrum. Cave drawings at Dunhuang depict musical performances in the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534). Gradual changes occurred during the millennium after the Tang dynasty (618-907): the playing changed from horizontal to vertical; fingernails, whether real or false, replaced the plectrum; the number of frets increased from 4 to 14 or 16. In the twentieth century this increased to as many as 30 as Western harmony was introduced, necessitating the need to perform with chromatic harmony.

Traditional music was written using a notation called *gongche*, an early form that uses Chinese characters to represent the notes of the scale with other

marks showing beats. From the 1920's, however, cipher notation has been widely adopted and most 'national music' is written in either this or, for even later works, with Western style staff

notation.

The range of the *pipa* is about three octaves, normally from A to f" or a". Traditional players use the 14 or 16 fret *pipa* with unusual tuning that includes a combination of semi-tones, whole-tones and ³/₄ tones. The modern *pipa*, with 24 or 30 frets was developed between the

³ Background information on the *pipa* is taken from Lui and Wu 2006.

1930's and 50's, and is based on the 12-tone equal tempered chromatic scale. The range is normally from A do d'" or e".

Yangqin

The *yangqin* (literal translation: "foreign, stringed-instrument") is the hammered dulcimer, trapezoidal in shape with rounded ends⁴. Strings, suspended over a resonating chamber by two rows of bridges, are struck with two slender bamboo beaters. Older instruments use copper strings while modern ones use steel. Strings are organized in two groups, left and right, with precise tuning on the left at the 5th on either side of the bridge, but movable tuning on the right. The instrument was introduced from Persia to south China late in the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), making it a 'late-comer' amongst the instruments of the orchestra. It was accepted quickly into the local Cantonese ensembles where it is sill an important instrument. In the twentieth century it was also accepted into some of the *sizhu* ensembles.

In the 1930's, the traditional *yangqin* was enlarged to increase the volume, and extra bridges were added to increase the range. Sliders and rollers were also added to facilitate fine tuning and half-step pitch changes. The modern instruments have ranges of between three and four octaves.

Zheng

The zheng is a plucked zither with a long and important history in China⁵. During the imperial period, the *zheng* was used as both a solo and ensemble instrument. Its early music was often associated with themes of romance, the beauty of nature, or women or sentimental feelings of love and sad memories, and it was played by mostly the *literati*, as a source of self-cultivation, or as an entertainment by female members of the imperial family, courtesans and professional musicians serving at court. Since the nineteenth century, solo playing has tended to gain a higher profile, and the twentieth century has fostered greater technical complexity. Since the 1950s many new pieces have been composed and new techniques developed, especially requiring harmony and counterpoint to be plucked with both hands, not only the right, as traditionally played. To accommodate these requirements, the instrument has been modified since the 1970s, with harp-like pedal mechanism to enable the changing of string tuning, and

⁴ Background information on the *yangqin* is taken from Thrasher 2006.

⁵ Background information on the *zheng* is taken from Han 2006.

chromatic tuning. The 21-string zheng is most commonly used in modern times, although the more traditional 16-stringed zheng is still played by some musicians.



Figure A.3: Zheng

The *zheng* has a wooden sound box of long rectangular shape, and is placed on a table or stand in front of the player. Over the sound box are strung a series of 16 or, in the modernized version, 21 strings. The strings are fastened at one end, then pulled over the length of the sound box, suspended in the middle on a raised bridge, and attached to a revolving peg at the other end. The strings are struck with the fingers and nails. Pushing and pulling the strings with one hand while striking with the other 'bends' the pitch enabling many different and subtle musical gestures to be sounded.

Dizi

Figure A.4: *Di* and *Bangdi*

The *dizi*, often simply called *di*, is also known by many other names (*hengchui*, *hengdi* etc) in historical accounts⁶. Constructed of bamboo, the tube is closed at the blowing end with a cork, but open at the bottom. Along the upper portion are the blow-hole, a second hole covered with a thin bamboo membrane giving the *di* is distinctive buzzing sound, and six finger-holes. On traditional flutes, the finger holes are equi-distant, giving a temperament of mixed whole-tone and $\frac{3}{4}$ tone intervals. The flute is held either to the right or left in performance.

It is believed that the *di* came to China from Central Asia in the early Han dynasty (206 bce-220cd). Used in the Tang (618-907) court ensembles, this early flute had six finger holes but no membrane. The membrane is first mentioned in the early twelfth century treatise *Yueshu*. During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) the *qudi* ('song flute') of central-eastern China and the *bangdi* of northern China, became leading instruments in *kunqu* operas and instrumental ensembles. During the mid-twentieth century, the demand for equal temperament

brought on the modern design of the *xindi* (literally: 'new flute') with 11 finger holes and the capability of playing the complete chromatic scale, but it is rarely used. The most important instrument in the modern day is the *bangdi* with its bright tone and virtuosic techniques.

The *qudi* is pitched in A, with a range of two octaves and a tone, covering a' to b'', and is used primarily in *sizhu* and *kunqu* opera. The *bangdi* is featured in a large solo repertoire composed in the twentieth century, is pitched in D, E, or C, depending on the composition.

⁶ Background information on the *di* is taken from Thrasher 2006.

Appendix B: Instruments and Seating of the Modern Chinese Orchestra

The *sizhu* instruments above form not only the foundation of the early Chinese orchestras but were also taken as the models from which the higher- and lower- pitched versions could then be developed. This was a requirement of the larger orchestras and the modern repertoire with its wider range.

The following figures show the various instruments used in the Chinese orchestra and their rough Western equivalent. The *sizhu* instruments are marked "*".

There are four categories:

Category

Western equivalent

- 1) bowed string instruments
- 2) plucked string instruments
- 3) wind instruments
- 4) percussion

strings (when played *arco*) strings (when played *pizzicato*) wind and brass percussion

Gaohu	violin I
Erhu*	violin II
Zhonghu	viola
Gehu	cello
Bass Gehu	double bass

Figure B.1: Bowed-string Instruments



Figure B.2: Erhu*, Gaohu, and Gehu

Notes: The *gaohu* ('high barbarian' – soprano fiddle) was developed by the Cantonese in the 1920's for solo playing but is well suited for the high range in the orchestral repertoire. The *zhonghu* ('middle barbarian' – alto fiddle) was developed in the 1950's to widen the range of the *erhu* for orchestral usage. Both the *gehu* and bass *dihu* were developed in the 1950's to provide the low foundation for the orchestra. As opposed to the higher *huqin*, which has no fingerboard, both the *gehu* and bass *dihu* use the fingerboard similar to the cello and double bass.

Liuqin	guitar or pizzicato violins
Pipa*	guitar or pizzicato violas
Yangqin*	piano
Zheng*	piano
Ruan	pizzicato cellos
Sanxian	pizzicato cellos or violas

Figure B.3: Plucked-string Instruments



Figure B.4: Liuqin, Pipa, * Ruan, and Sanxian



Figure B.5: Zheng*

Notes: The *liuqin*, originally used to accompany southern Chinese opera, was adapted in the 1950's as a soprano voice to match the *pipa*, a lower pitched instrument. The *Ruan* dates back to ancient times and was traditionally used for playing court and dance music. The *Sanxian* dates back to the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), and was often used to accompany narrative singing, opera singing and operatic music.

Dizi*	flute
Bangdi*	piccolo
Sheng	(harmonica)
Suona	trumpet
Guan (bili)	oboe





Figure B.7: Di* and Bangdi, * Sheng, Suona, Guan (2 shown)

Notes: The *sheng* is an ancient Chinese instrument with single reeds that vibrate in two directions, allowing it to produce sound on both inhaling and exhaling. Oracle bone inscriptions show the *sheng* extant as early as the Yin dynasty (fifteenth century B.C.). The *suona* has its predecessor as the shawm of Persia, and was introduced into China during the Jin and Yuan periods. The *guan* was brought to China from Xinjiang province around the Sui dynasty. It can be found all over China and is mainly used in folk music and Buddhist and Taoist music.

Ено	gong / tam tam
Во	cymbals
Миуи	woodblock
Yunluo (cloud gongs)	glockenspiel
Dagu	snare drum (no snares)
Jiangzhou Dagu	bass drum
Paigu	timpani
Xylophone	xylophone
Figure B.8: Percussion	



Figure B.9: Luo, Bo, Muyu, Paiban and Yunlo

Seating

The layout of the Chinese orchestra takes its form from the traditional fan-shape of the Western orchestra, but the different instrumental make-up affects the seating arrangement. As noted earlier, China's history included many dynasties that openly accepted foreign instruments into the culture, but instruments of the brass family were not included. On the other hand, the prominent role played by the plucked strings in China's early history means that the *pipa* and *zheng* occupy prominent positions.

Early ensembles of the Han dynasty and later featured the *pipa* as the lead melodic instrument with a clapper (*pai ban*) as the rhythmic device to hold the ensemble together. With the introduction of the bowed instruments of the *huqin* family, the *erhu* eventually came to take on the lead melodic position in the Chinese orchestra. All of these points are reflected in the seating map, below, taken from *The 25th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra* (Cheng 2002, 187).



Figure B.10: Seating Plan of the Modern Chinese Orchestra

Appendix C: Jinshe Kuangwu **Original Cipher Notation and Staff Transcription** G 调 ² 蛇、狂 民間古曲· 辨耳編曲 中國音乐研究会配器 金 舞 輕快·活發·熱烈 $\frac{3}{4}$ 24 m f mf 稍快 D DO D D OD D D DO D D D 鼓 D DDD 0 鑼 0 0 0 0 K K K K 0 ККК tx 0 K 0 仗 0, 0 0 0 C C C O 6 6 C C] 0 0 CO 8 C C 0000 Ó 犹做[0 0 0 0 tu utu tutu t t tt t tttt t ŧ 0 6156 2552432124461 56432 2 4 2161 5 66 木魚 8 8 8 8 8 6 8 6 8 8 8 8 8 6 8 6 BbBb 8 8 8 8 8 6 8 6 8 6 8 6 → 5544 5 000 2544612 552 0 合 4224 5 56 0 <u>B b B b</u> <u>B b B b</u> B b B b B b B b 木魚 B 0 0 <u>B b B b</u> 8 b 8 b 菣 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 備 KK 0 K K 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 \ 鏉 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 +. 1161 165 <u>56542225524321244</u> **∩** 6124 2161 5 木魚 B b B b 8 6 8 6 8 b bBb 8 6 8 6 8 6 8 6

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金蛇狂舞 这是一支有名的江南絲竹乐曲,原名"倒八板",又名"無工板", 或称"陽八曲"。据說是描寫端午節賽龍舟时,許多彩色繽紛的龍舟在水上急 駛飛舞的悄景;曲調活覆緊凑,常在民間的一些喜麼節日里演奏,用來配合 零众載歌載舞的热烈場面。該曲經人民音乐家聶耳同志重新处理,改称 "金 蛇狂舞"。我們可以从曲子中体会出聶耳同志是以金蛇——火焰——來作为新 生活的象征的,为新中國到划了一幅光明燦爛的远景;曲調健康、活潑,節 奏鮮明、有力,表現出作者堅強的信念和革命的乐观主义精神。

全曲演奏时,情緒要饱潇而热烈,收尾一段的反复要奏出全曲的高潮。 其中強弱部分——特別是打击乐的強弱,一定要按照曲譜上的記載,鮮明地 奏出來。打击乐不可呆板,要緊密地和旋律結合,以增強热烈的气氛。



* These phrase markings are my addition to assist in comparing the different scores.








































































Yangming Chunxiao

Re-orchestrated

Composed by Tung Yung-Shen Re-orchestration by John van Deursen











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Appendix E: Qin Bingmayong



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Qin Bingmayong



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