

**2007 Meeting of the
Association for Chinese Music Research**

Abstracts of Presentations

Beth Szczpanski, *Ohio State University*

Title: Politics and Identity in Wutai Shan's *Fang yankou*

Describing a Chinese Buddhist funerary ritual for feeding hungry ghosts, cultural cadre Han Jun writes, "Although *fang yankou* has a strong religious and superstitious tinge, the literature and music used in the ritual nonetheless have aesthetic value" (Han 2004). In the state-sponsored *Collected Editions of China's Folk Music*, Ren Deze rhapsodizes that *fang yankou's* music transports listeners to a "fairly land" (Ren 2000). Official emphasis on the musical aesthetic value of monastic instrumental music used in ritual affects how that music is conceived of and performed at some monasteries in Wutai Shan. Interest among government officials in preserving and promulgating more musically colorful variants of the ritual encourages some monasteries to make greater use of ritual music as a proselytizing, fund-raising, and publicity tool. The monks from Su Xiang Si, a monastery that uses a *shengguan* ensemble in performance of a regional style of *fang yankou* receive no such attention. In my fieldwork at Shu Xiang Si, I have found that this national exposure has led to a greater emphasis on music within the monastery than before; from 2005 to 2007, the monastery has increased the use of wind instruments in rituals, and in 2006, the monastery began presenting concerts of *fang yankou* music in its own Buddhist Music Hall to gain additional exposure and income. This paper will demonstrate that the official identification of *fang yankou's* instrumental music provides Shu Xiang Si not only with government tolerance, but enthusiastic government support for its performance of traditional funerary ritual, and how that government support has caused the monastery to identify itself as a more musical entity than before.

Yawen Ludden, *University of Kentucky*

Title: Yu Huiyong and Beijing Opera Reform During the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976

This study examines Yu Huiyong, Chinese minister of culture (1975-1976) and his contributions to the reform of Beijing opera, which was a remarkable hybrid of the Western classical music and Chinese culture. It focuses on music innovation and especially how Western music technique became a major tool to shape the model opera, and in turn, how the impact of Beijing opera influenced the development of Western music in China and affected the course of musical activities during the Cultural Revolution. Due to the Chinese government's restriction on research regarding the Cultural Revolution and the general view of Yu as a politician by Chinese and Westerners, very little is generally known about Yu's role in Beijing opera reform. In contrast, this study breaks away from earlier stereotypes in order to examine him as a musician. As a chief composer, designer, organizer and theorist behind most of the revolutionary model Beijing operas, Yu's contribution to Chinese music society and Beijing opera was profound. The artistic achievements in the areas such as music and language developed during the Cultural Revolution were remarkable and have paved the way for musical developments in Chinese music composition since then.

Alan Kagan, *University of Minnesota*

Title: "Scattering Lotus Blossoms," A Beggar's Ballad Adopted for K'un-ch'u"

In the course of examining the 16th- century *k'un-ch'u* opera *Hsiu Ju Chi* (Tale of the Embroidered Jacket), I encountered a song in which a scholar-turned beggar sings a ballad titled "*Lien Hua Lao*" (Scattering Lotus Blossoms). Commenting on the despair of his life, he describes a funeral procession and its musical instrumentation, mimicking their sounds. The song is clearly distinguished from *k'un-ch'u* arias in its structure, literary content, and musical style. I will explain the context of this song in the story, its literary and melodic structure and content, providing a transcription.

Bell Yung, *University of Pittsburgh*

Title: "Confucian Ideology and Political Intrigue: the Cantonese Opera, 'The Flower Princess'"

"The Flower Princess" (*Di Nü Hua*), possibly the greatest Cantonese opera of the last fifty years, is first and foremost a serious political drama played out between the Han and Non-Han at the end of the Ming dynasty. The story pits romantic love against the lofty Confucian ideals of social hierarchy and moral rectitude, represented by the principles of *zhong* (faithfulness to one's superior, in particular one's emperor) and *xiao* (filial piety). The opera does not end with a routine "happy-ever-after" wedding scene, but with a double suicide. Comparing the story with operas by Puccini, Verdi, and Wagner, where love and death all play central roles, the paper examines a fundamental difference between "The Flower Princess" and the Western counterparts in their political and moral messages.