

AN EXAMINATION OF SELECTED CHINESE ETHNIC CHORAL MUSIC FROM INNER
MONGOLIA, YUNNAN PROVINCE, AND CENTRAL PLAINS AREA

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ABSTRACT

The landscape of choral music in modern China is characterized by a rich and varied repertoire, despite its relatively brief history within the nation. Diverging from the trajectories of traditionally Christian countries, the evolution of Chinese choral music has been shaped by unique historical, social, religious, and folk music traditions. This paper embarks on an examination of selected Chinese ethnic choral music, commencing with an overview of the development path of Chinese choral music in Chapter one. It then delves into an analysis of choral traditions across three distinct ethnic regions in the following three chapters. Each of them is dedicated to a specific ethnic region, namely Inner Mongolia, Yunnan province, and Central Plains area. The analysis starts with introducing the geographical, social, and folk music backgrounds. Subsequent sections explore the characteristic musical elements of each region, offering in-depth examinations of selected representative repertoire. Furthermore, this study aims to provide valuable insights into rehearsal suggestions and performance practices tailored for non-Chinese speaking choral groups.

This disquisition draws upon primary sources, such as unpublished Chinese choral music scores, and a spectrum of secondary sources including scholarly works, dissertations, journal articles, encyclopedic entries, and online resources authored by both Chinese and non-Chinese scholars regarding this research topic.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, and my two dearest younger sisters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF EXAMPLES	x
LIST OF IMAGES	xii
LIST OF APPENDIX TABLES	xiii
1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHORAL MUSIC IN CHINA	1
1.1. Ethnic Multi-part Folk-song Tradition	1
1.2. Professional Composing Period	3
1.2.1. Emerging Period	3
1.2.2. Developing Period	9
1.2.3. Exploring Period	15
1.3. Conclusion	20
2. INNER MONGOLIAN CHORAL MUSIC	21
2.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics	21
2.2. Mu Ge (牧歌, Shepherd's Song)	28
2.2.1. Background of the Composer	28
2.2.2. Composition Background	29
2.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	30
2.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	31
2.2.5. Performance Practice	32
2.3. Naiman Sharag (八骏赞, The Eight Chestnut Horses)	34
2.3.1. Background of the Composer	34

2.3.2. Composition Background	37
2.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	37
2.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	40
2.3.5. Performance Practice	41
2.4. Önchin Botog (孤独的驼羔, The Lonely Baby Camel)	41
2.4.1. Background of Composer	41
2.4.2. Composition Background	41
2.4.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	43
2.4.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	44
3. YUNNAN PROVINCE CHORAL MUSIC	45
3.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics	45
3.2. Tai Yang Chu Lai La (太阳出来啦, The Sun is Out)	49
3.2.1. Background of the Composer	49
3.2.2. Background of the Composition	50
3.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	51
3.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	52
3.2.5. Performance Practice	54
3.3. Shui Mu Ji (水母鸡, Water Hen)	56
3.3.1. Background of the Composer	56
3.3.2. Background of the Composition	57
3.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	57
3.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	58
3.3.5. Performance Practice	64
4. CENTRAL PLAINS AREA HAN ETHNIC CHORAL MUSIC	65
4.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics	65

4.2. Man Jiang Hong (满江红, Full River Red).....	69
4.2.1. Background of the Composer	69
4.2.2. Background of the Composition	70
4.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	70
4.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	70
4.2.5. Performance Practice	72
4.3. Hui Niang Jia (回娘家, Going Back Mother’s Home).....	75
4.3.1. Background of the Composer	75
4.3.2. Background of the Composition	76
4.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques	77
4.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions	77
4.3.5. Performance Practice	78
5. CONCLUSION.....	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	81
APPENDIX A. INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET GUIDES FOR CHINESE PINYIN.....	88
APPENDIX B. MUSIC SCORE FOR “SHEPHERD’S SONG.”	91
APPENDIX C. MUSIC SCORE FOR “FULL RIVER RED.”	99
APPENDIX D. MUSIC SCORE FOR “GOING BACK TO MOTHER’S HOME.”	103

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1. Four Horse-step Rhythm Patterns.	40
3.1. Proportion of Minority Population in Yunnan.	45
4.1. Sentence-to-sentence text, Pinyin, and Translation of Full River Red.	71

LIST OF EXAMPLES

<u>Example</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.1. Li Shu Tong, “Chun You.”	4
1.2. John Pond Ordway, “Dreaming of Home and Mother,” mm.1-12.	5
1.3. Li Shu Tong, “Farewell,” mm. 1-13.	6
1.4. Zhao Yuan Ren, “Hai Yun,” mm. 1-23.	8
1.5. He Lu Ting, “Guerilla Song,” mm. 1-6.	10
1.6. Huang Zi, “Mountain in the Eternal Place,” mm. 1-15.	12
1.7. Wang Zhen Ya, “Three Repetitions of Yang Pass,” mm.1-20.	14
1.8. Cao Guang Ping, “Heaven Lake Namucuo,” mm.1-8.	17
1.9. She Qian, “Baby Moon,” mm.57-62.	18
1.10. She Qian, “Baby Moon,” mm.70-79.	19
2.1. Long-Tune Folk Song Style.	23
2.2. Short-Tune Folk Song Style.	24
2.3. Chaoer dao, “Harmony Sing.”	25
2.4. Khoomei, Haolin Chaoer.	27
2.5. Qu Xixian, “Shepherd’s Song,” mm.16-20.	30
2.6. Qu Xixian, “Shepherd’s Song,” mm.60-66.	31
2.7. Qu Xixian, “Shepherd’s Song,” mm.1-4.	33
2.8. Se Enkhbayar, “The Eight Chestnut Horses,” mm.11-20.	38
2.9. Se Enkhbayar, “The Eight Chestnut Horses,” mm.3-7.	39
3.1. Sang Ye Song, “The Sun is out,” mm.42-45.	51
3.2. Sang Ye Song, “The Sun is out,” mm.24-29.	53
3.3. Sang Ye Song, “The Sun is out,” mm.1-11.	55
3.4. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.1-9.	59

3.5. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.9-19.....	60
3.6. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.44-51.....	61
3.7. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.52-63.....	62
3.8. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.64-71.....	63
4.1. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.1-7.....	73
4.2. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.8-15.....	74
4.3. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.21-24.....	75

LIST OF IMAGES

<u>Image</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1. Geographical location of Inner Mongolia.	22
3.1. Geographical location of Yunnan.	46
3.2. Wood Engraving, Zhuang Song Fair (壮族歌圩).....	48
4.1. Geographical location of Central Plains Area (Henan Province).	66
4.2. Illustrated Edition of the Book of Odes Handwritten by the Qianlong Emperor, Qing Dynasty.	67
4.3. Henan Opera Chen School Performance Talent Training Project Showcase.	68

LIST OF APPENDIX TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
A1. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Single and Compound Vowels.	88
A2. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Nasal Vowels.	89
A3. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Consonants.	90

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHORAL MUSIC IN CHINA

Ancient China left behind a highly abundant cultural legacy, including various genres of arts and music from its thousand-year history. The music has vital historical and research significance due to its unique beauty, diverse styles, and aesthetic values. Many music genres, such as art songs, folk songs, and Chinese operas, flourished and were well-developed in the nourishing soil of ancient China. Different from countries with Christian traditions, choral music was absent in the main stage of ancient Chinese music history. Due to a series of different historical, religious, and societal traditions from the western world, professional choral music composing began in the early 20th century.

1.1. Ethnic Multi-part Folk-song Tradition

According to the famous Chinese ethnomusicologist Fan Zu Yin¹ (樊祖荫, 1940-) in his scholarly study on Chinese ethnic multiple-voice music, choral music was not completely absent from the Chinese people's musical life. The latest research indicates that at least 30 of 56 ethnic groups in China have the tradition of multi-part singing folk songs.

Due to the oral tradition of the folk songs, these multi-part folk songs can only spread inside a small group. Moreover, they were discovered in the middle of the last century when Chinese musicologists went to different areas of the countryside for field research. The multi-part folk songs were finally discovered and recorded, and a concentrated research and protection system was formed. According to Fan Zu Yin, folk songs with two or more melodic lines simultaneously or one melody line performed by multiple voice parts in various ways, such as antiphonal singing, can all be considered in the multi-part folk song category.²

¹ Fan Zu Yin, Chinese ethnomusicologist, composer, and music educator.

² Fan Zu Yin, *A Study of Multi-part Folk Songs* (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2014), 8.

Each folk-song type from a different ethnic group displays unique meanings and musical characteristics based on different living environments, labor styles, cultural customs, and historical backgrounds. For instance, the contents of Mongolian folk songs are related frequently to their living environments, such as topics relating to horses, rivers, and grasslands. Similarly, the minority ethnic groups from the Southwest area have various types of mountain songs because the Southwest of China is primarily hilly and mountainous. In contrast, the folk songs from the central plain area are often related to agricultural activities, such as peasant songs, work songs, and fisherman songs.

The contents of Chinese ethnic multi-part folk songs can also represent daily life activities, such as love stories, weddings, funerals, ethnic festivals, games, dance, raillery events, and children's social life. Ritual ceremonies and folk legends are sources of the multi-part folk-song simultaneously. Because of the unique political environment in China, texts of traditional folk songs that reflect the ethnic conflicts, social class contradictions, and various kinds of political life emerged in the 1950s.

Respected Chinese ethnomusicologist Du Ya Xiong (杜亚雄 1945-) summarized the musical contents of all kinds of folk songs into three categories: music that reflects the relationship between people and nature; music that reflects the relationship between people and other people; and music that reflects the relationship between people and gods.³ Among them, the folk songs that reflect the relationship between people and gods, such as ritual ceremony songs, originated from the earlier human society when human beings had limited cognition and productive forces. This kind of music became the way to communicate and show devotion to the gods for ancient Chinese people, and it is less prevalent at present. The remaining two categories

³ They refer to the gods from Chinese mythology, Buddhism, and Taoism.

are still playing essential roles in ethnic folk songs. This music, regarding text, melodic language, rhythmic structure, harmonic technique, and performance practice, significantly influenced modern Chinese choral music composition.

1.2. Professional Composing Period

1.2.1. Emerging Period

The time from the late 1800s to the 1920s is the emerging period of modern Chinese choral music. In the late 1800s, Western missionaries brought the Bible and choral music to this mysterious eastern kingdom. Numerous christian churches and religious schools were built soon after, and choral music was introduced to the Chinese people for the first time. This type of church choral music retained the original tunes and translated the original text into Chinese. It had the same function as Western liturgical choral music. Although it cannot be considered the first Chinese choral music, church music with adapted Chinese texts introduced a new and unique musical genre to Chinese people and professional musicians for the first time.

Another choral music type emerged in the early 1900s and is considered the first indigenous Chinese choral music genre. This genre of choral music that was specifically composed for students, collectively known as Xue Tang Yue Ge (学堂乐歌), which means School Songs. Among them, a three-part choral piece *Chun You* (春游, Spring Tour) composed by Li Shu Tong (李叔同 1880-1942)⁴ in 1913, was well-accepted as the first Chinese choral work.

⁴ Li Shu Tong, a Chinese Musical and Art Educator.

春 游

(混声三声部无伴奏合唱)

李叔同词曲

Moderato

mf

女高
女低

男声

春 风 吹 面 薄 于 纱, 春 人 妆 束 淡 于 画。

5

游 春 人 在 画 中 行, 万 花 飞 舞 春 人 下。

9

p *mp*

梨 花 淡 白 菜 花 黄, 柳 花 委 地 芥 花 香。

13

mf *rit.*

莺 蹄 陌 上 人 归 去, 花 外 疏 钟 送 夕 阳。

Example 1.1. Li Shu Tong, “Chun You.”⁵

⁵ Online Free Resource, <https://www.gangqinpu.com/chtml/1016482.htm>.

Music educator Shen Xin Gong (沈心工 1870-1947), along with Li composed multiple choral works for primary and secondary schools. The text was usually related to children’s daily and school life, the texture was often homophonic or simple counterpoint, and the pieces were in three parts frequently. Meanwhile, foreign tunes borrowing can also be found in works of Xue Tang Yue Ge. The following piece is an example of a foreign tune borrowing. The melody is adapted from the American song *Dreaming of Home and Mother*, composed by John Pond Ordway. Li Shu Tong used the melody and write for new lyrics into a choral composition titled *Farewell* in 1915.

PIANO.

1. Dreaming of home,
2. Sleep, balmy sleep,
3. Childhood has come,

dear old home! Home of my child_hood and Mother;
close mine eyes, Keep me still think_ing of Mother,
come a - - gain, Sleep_ing I see my dear Mother,

Example 1.2. John Pond Ordway, “Dreaming of Home and Mother,” mm.1-12.⁶

⁶ John Pond Ordway, *Dreaming of Home and Mother. Poetry and Music by John P. Ordway* (G.D. Russell & Company, 1868), available at: <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/100/068>.

送别

制谱: qwer8211233

作曲: John Pond Ordway

作词: 李叔同

♩ = 66

1女高

2男中

3旋律

4男低

唔

长亭外

6

1女高

2男中

3旋律

4男低

古道边 芳草碧连天 晚风拂柳

10

1女高

2男中

3旋律

4男低

笛声残 夕阳山外山 天之涯

嘞 唔

Example 1.3. Li Shu Tong, "Farewell," mm. 1-13.⁷

⁷ Online Free Resource, <https://www.gangqinpu.com/chtml/990059.htm>.

In the 1920s, three representative composers Huang Zi (黄自 1904-1938), Xiao You Mei (萧友梅 1884-1940), and Zhao Yuan Ren (赵元任 1892-1982) composed more complex and sophisticated choral music with original tunes and text. This choral music targets professional college students with sufficient musical literacy and singing abilities. Xiao composed the first large-force women's choral work *Bie Xiao Ci* (别校辞, Farewell for School), in 1924.⁸ Zhao's *Hai Yun* (海韵, Sea Rhythm, text by Hsu Chih-mo) signaled the beginning of professional choral composing in 1927. This work written for a soprano solo and mixed choir, combined western compositional techniques and traditional Chinese music features in an organic way, and it represents the highest artistic standards of Chinese choral music at that time.

⁸ *Bie Xiao Ci* was commissioned by the music department of Beijing Normal University for their first graduation concert in 1924.

海韵

(混声四部合唱)

徐志摩 词

赵元任 曲

Allegro ♩ = 116

Piano

7

8^{va}

rit.

13

mp

S.
A.

mp “女郎, 单身的女郎, 你为什么留

a tempo

T.
B.

(8).....

a tempo

mp

18

S.
A.

恋这黄昏的海边? 女郎, 回家吧, 女郎!”

T.
B.

Example 1.4. Zhao Yuan Ren, “Hai Yun,” mm. 1-23.⁹

⁹ Online Free Resource, <http://m.niupiano.com/music/675.html>.

The first choral cycle *Chun Jiang Hua Yue Ye* (春江花月夜, Moonlight River in Spring) by Xiao in 1929 showcased a unique style of large-scale Chinese choral music. This Chinese choral cycle differed from the familiar idea of the western choral cycle. Regarding the form, it assimilated the traditional Chinese musical form *Da Qu* (大曲, Big Piece).¹⁰ The text is from a singular Chinese poem, so all ten sections are performed continuously without breaks between. However, each section has its independent musical idea and key. In terms of harmonic language, it applied the western major-minor functional system and the modulation and tonality layout.

1.2.2. Developing Period

Between the 1930s and 1970s, modern Chinese choral music developed rapidly. The new choral genres that emerged during this period can be summarized into three categories briefly.

The first category is Patriotic choral music, which emerged and grew under a particular historical circumstance, World War II. After the Mukden incident¹¹ On September 18th, 1931, a movement called Singing Resistance against Japan's Invasion and National Salvation (抗日救亡歌咏运动) launched throughout the nation of China. During the Anti-Japan Invasion war, countless Chinese musicians witnessed the cruelty or suffered from the war. Under such conditions, they chose to use music as their weapons, and numerous patriotic choral works were composed during this time. *Qun Zhong Ge Yong* (群众歌咏, Masses songs) was the most representative and unique choral genre that emerged from this period. It refers to a small-scale choral genre related to patriotic or anti-war topics, and it was mostly written for two voice parts. For the purpose of larger performances, the rhythmic language of this genre was usually simple and uplifting, the length was short and refined, and the melody was easy and tuneful.

¹⁰ A traditional Chinese musical form, referring the form that is longer and in sectional style.

¹¹ The Mukden incident was a false flag event staged by Japanese military personnel as a pretext for the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria. *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mukden_incident.

游击队歌

贺绿汀词曲

中速 轻快地

女高音

女低音

男高音

男低音

钢琴

p

1. 我们都是神枪手, 每一颗
2. 哪怕日本强盗凶, 我们的

The first system of the musical score for 'Guerilla Song' features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked '中速 轻快地' (Moderato vivace) and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The lyrics are: '1. 我们都是神枪手, 每一颗' and '2. 哪怕日本强盗凶, 我们的'.

子弹消灭一个敌人, 我们都是飞行军, 哪怕那山高水又深。在
弟兄打起仗来真英勇, 哪怕敌人枪炮狠, 找不到我们的踪和影。让

子弹消灭一个敌人, 我们都是飞行军, 哪怕那山高水又深。在
弟兄打起仗来真英勇, 哪怕敌人枪炮狠, 找不到我们的踪和影。让

山高水又深。
我们的踪和影。

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: '子弹消灭一个敌人, 我们都是飞行军, 哪怕那山高水又深。在弟兄打起仗来真英勇, 哪怕敌人枪炮狠, 找不到我们的踪和影。让'.

Example 1.5. He Lu Ting, "Guerilla Song," mm. 1-6.

During this period, professional Chinese musicians also composed four-part and large-scale patriotic choral music. Different from Qun Zhong Ge Yong (Masses Song), these types of patriotic music utilized more complicated compositional techniques and were more designed for professional singers. The accompanied forces were varied, such as piano, percussion, traditional Chinese instruments, and even an orchestra. *Huanghe Da He Chang* (黄河大合唱, Yellow River Cantata, 1939) by Xian Xing Hai (冼星海 1905-1945) was the most outstanding example of this large-scale patriotic choral music type. Xian Xing Hai creatively combined the materials and forms from folk music and Masses song with western contrapuntal techniques. This work is still frequently performed nowadays because of its unique historical role and high musical value. Furthermore, composers employed ancient poems to express their patriotic feelings instead of straightforward war-related texts, depending on their situations. Huang Zi's *Chang Hen Ge* (长恨歌, A Song of Everlasting Sorrow, 1932) is the first cantata in Chinese choral history. The composer only finished seven (choral) of ten movements before he died, and his student Lin Sheng Xi (林声翕, 1914-1991) in later years completed the other three movements which are for solo voice. This monumental masterwork not only filled the void of Chinese professional choral music compositions, but it is also an innovative experiment that applied excellent choral compositional techniques based on traditional Chinese music. This successful innovation inspired many later Chinese composers.

山在虚无缥缈间 (女声三部合唱)

清唱剧“长恨歌”选曲

(大众乐谱网制谱)

韦翰章词

黄自曲

Andante sostenuto

pp *rit*

女高1 *a tempo* *pp* *pp*
香 雾 迷 蒙， 祥 云 掩 拥， 蓬 莱

女高2

女中 *myscore.org*
祥 云 掩 拥，

仙 岛 清 虚 洞， 琼 花 玉 树 露 华 浓。

蓬 莱 仙 岛， 琼 花 玉 树 露 华 浓。

p *p* *myscore.org*
琼 花 玉 树 露 华 浓 蓬 莱 仙 岛

Example 1.6. Huang Zi, “Mountain in the Eternal Place,” mm. 1-15.

The second category is the choral music that inspires and absorbs the elements of ethnic folk music, which is known as Ethnic choral music (中国民族合唱作品). With the end of the war and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, musical development entered a booming era. The emergence of professional choirs and conductors required a more diverse choral repertoire from the composers. In light of the growing search for Chinese ethnic folk songs, composers were exposed to folk music with various musical styles and characteristics in this period. The idea of picking a certain folk tune and arranging a choral work was prevalent among composers soon after. Most of the works reflected folk life or local customs, but it did not negatively impact their musical value. On the contrary, Chinese ethnic choral music developed its unique style and beauty through the efforts of Chinese composers of several generations. Meanwhile, the abundant soil of ethnic folk songs provided opportunities and inspiration for composers. This choral genre has become one of the most important choral genres in China and has high academic research value.

The third category of the choral genres that emerged in this period is called Ancient songs choral music (古诗词合唱), which corresponds to ethnic choral music. This choral music refers to choral work inspired by ancient tunes or poems. After successfully exploring the path of ethnic choral music, some composers turned to ancient Chinese songs and poems. All the ancient musical works and poems became a significant source of choral composition from this period forward. The representative example is *Yang Guan San Die* (阳关三叠, Three Repetitions of Yang Pass) for mixed choir by Wang Zhen Ya (王震亚, 1922-2019). It is rearranged from the tune of an ancient Guqin¹² piece.

¹² Ancient Chinese Instrument

阳 关 三 叠

女领唱与混声四部合唱

[唐]王 维词
王震亚编曲

1=^bA $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

□ 行板

女高	$(\underline{5.} \underline{6} \underline{1} \underline{2} 2 -) \overset{mf}{\underline{6.} \underline{1} \underline{3} \underline{2} 1 \underline{2} \underline{2} - \underline{5.} \underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{3} \underline{5} \underline{5} \underline{3} \underline{2} $	渭 城 朝 雨 浥 轻 尘, 客 舍 青 青
女低	$0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ \underline{3.} \underline{4} \underline{3} \ \underline{1} \underline{2} \underline{1} \ $	
□		
女高	$1 \ 2 \ 2 \ - \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ \underline{6.} \underline{1} \underline{3} \underline{2} \ \ 1 \ 2 \ 2 \ - \ $	柳 色 新, 劝 君 更 尽 一 杯 酒, 西 出 阳 关 无 故 人。
女低	$\underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{6} \underline{1} \underline{1} \ - \ \ \underline{1} \underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{6} \ \ \underline{6} \ - \ \underline{6.} \underline{6} \underline{1} \underline{7} \ \ \underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{6} \ - \ $	
□		
女高	$(\underline{2.} \underline{1} \underline{6} \underline{1} \underline{1} \ -) \ \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \underline{6} \ - \ \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \underline{5} \underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{6} \underline{3} \ \ 3 \ - \ (\underline{2.} \underline{1} \underline{6} \underline{1} \ $	迢 行, 长 途 越 渡 关 津。
女低	$0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \underline{6} \ - \ \ \underline{6} \ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \underline{3.} \underline{3} \ \underline{3} \underline{3} \\ \underline{1.} \underline{1} \ \underline{1} \underline{1} \end{array} \right\} \underline{6} \ \ 7 \ - \ 0 \ 0 \ $	
男高	$0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \ \ \underline{6} \ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \underline{6.} \underline{6} \ \underline{6} \underline{6} \\ \underline{3.} \underline{3} \ \underline{3} \underline{3} \end{array} \right\} \underline{5} \ \ 5 \ - \ 0 \ 0 \ $	迢 行, 长 途 越 渡 关 津。
男低	$0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \ \ \underline{6} \underline{6.} \underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{1} \ \ 3 \ - \ 0 \ 0 \ $	
□		
男高	$1 \ -) \overset{mp}{\underline{3.} \underline{1} \ \ \underline{2} \ - \ \underline{3.} \underline{1} \ \ \underline{2} \ - \ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \underline{3} \ \underline{3} \\ \underline{1} \ \underline{1} \end{array} \right\} \ \ \underline{1} \ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \underline{2} \\ \underline{6} \end{array} \right\} \underline{6.} \ \underline{5} \ $	历 苦 辛, 历 苦 辛, 历 历 苦 辛 宜 自
男低	$0 \ 0 \ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \underline{1.} \underline{1} \ \ \underline{1} \ - \ \underline{1.} \underline{1} \ \ \underline{1} \ - \ \underline{6} \underline{6} \ \ \underline{6} \underline{4} \underline{3.} \underline{4} \ \\ \underline{6.} \underline{6} \underline{6} \ - \ \underline{6.} \underline{6} \underline{6} \ - \ \underline{5} \underline{5} \ \ \underline{4} \underline{2} \underline{1.} \underline{2} \ \end{array} \right.$	
□		
女高	$0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ \underline{6} \underline{1} \underline{2} \underline{1} \ \ 3 \ 2 \ 2 \ - \ \ \underline{5.} \underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{3.} \underline{5} \underline{3.} \underline{5} \underline{3} \underline{2} \ $	渭 城 朝 雨 浥 轻 尘, 客 舍 青 青
女低	$0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ \underline{3.} \underline{4} \underline{3} \underline{2} \underline{1} \underline{2} \underline{1} \underline{7} \ $	
男高	$\underline{6} \ - \ \underline{6.} \underline{5} \underline{7} \ \ \underline{6} \ - \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ $	珍, 宜 自 珍。
男低	$\underline{4} \ - \ \underline{3.} \underline{4} \underline{4} \ \ \underline{4} \ - \ \left. \vphantom{\underline{4}} \right\} 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ $	

Example 1.7. Wang Zhen Ya, “Three Repetitions of Yang Pass,” mm.1-20.¹³

All these new choral genres that emerged in this developing period built a solid foundation and provided a diverse developmental path for Chinese choral music.

¹³ This music notated by numbered Musical notation which is widely used for Chinese instrumental music.

1.2.3. Exploring Period

Along with the rapid growth of the economy and technology in China from the 1980s, people required new needs for choral music. The Ethnic and Ancient songs choral music continuously developed as small-scale genres. Moreover, there were several new choral music composition attempts in this period.

There was enthusiasm for large-scale choral music since the 1980s. The composers in this period often studied music internationally and were eager to apply the styles and techniques they had seen and learned in Chinese choral works. Different from the the earlier choral genres, the compositional techniques tended to be more progressive and diverse. The topics of the large-scale choral works were varied and can reflect everyday life, political advocacy, and social movements. With time, this kind of large-scale choral work was gradually forgotten. Performances of these pieces are rare, and the accessibility to the scores is difficult. Nevertheless, some excellent large-scale choral music from this time is still well-known and frequently performed. The epic orchestral choral work *Shi Jing Wu Shou* (诗经五首, The Five Ancient Poems, 1985) composed by Jin Xiang (金湘, 1935-2015) represents a peak of Chinese choral composition. This masterwork was written for a traditional Chinese orchestra, mixed choir, soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone solos. It consists of five movements based on five ancient poems from *Shijing* (诗经, Book of Odes).¹⁴ The composer combined exquisite modern musical composing techniques with traditional Chinese musical elements to create a marvelous ancient soundscape.

¹⁴ *Shijing*, or Book of Odes (aka Classic of Poetry, Book of Songs, etc.) is the fountainhead of the Chinese literary tradition. An anthology of 305 undated and anonymous poems that probably arose from the regional courts of the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BCE) and according to tradition was arranged by Confucius (551–479 BCE). *Oxford Bibliographies*, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199920082/obo-9780199920082-0203.xml>.

Another new attempt at choral music composing is the use of the avant-garde composition technique in small-scale choral works in the 21st century. Since the late 20th century, national choral festivals and competitions have been held in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Professional choirs and conductors urgently need new and more challenging repertoire. Under this trend, composers started to explore new possibilities for choral music. A representative work called *Tian Hu Na Mu Cuo* (天湖纳木错, Heaven Lake Namucuo, 2003) composed by Cao Guang Ping (曹光平 1942-) employs the atonal technique. It also suggested a unique performance way that all the choral members stand in several concentric circles on stages, on their knees, if possible. The singers can also move around while the performance to create different acoustics.

纳 木 错

小提琴

钢琴

サ

mp

mf

mp

mp

mf

f

♩ = 160

5/16

4

7

7

Example 1.8. Cao Guang Ping, “Heaven Lake Namucuo,” mm.1-8.

The use of soundscape effect passages can also be found in choral music composition. In the example below, the singer imitates the sound of thunder, wind, rain, and animals to create a vivid soundscape. Combined with the use of colorful harmonic language by the composers, the audience’s ears are refreshed.

57

li li li lu li li li lu li li li lu li li li

ci ci ci ci qi ci ci

(弹舌Tongue Clicking)

na na na no no no na na na no no no na na na no no no na na na

ci ci ci ci ci

tr

60

音符时值在节奏范围内自由加密
Note time values are freely encrypted in the range of rhythms

li li li lu li li li lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu

qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci

no no no na na na no no no na no no na no no na no no na no no

ci wu wu wu wu wu wu

qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci

no no no na na na no no no na no no na no no na no no

ci wu wu wu wu wu wu

Example 1.9. She Qian, “Baby Moon,” mm.57-62.

音符时值在节奏范围内自由加密
Note time values are freely encrypted in the range of rhythms

70

lu lu lu lululululu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi

口技，模仿风声 Imitation wind sound

qi ci ci qi ci ci qi ci ci chua chua chua

(自由拍打声 Flaping, 轻拍身体)

na no no na no no na no no

(摩擦声 Rubbing)

wu wu wu

无规律地自由模仿夜晚大自然的声效，时长约10秒左右。
Irregular sound effect imitation, about 10 seconds or so.

74

Example 1.10. She Qian, "Baby Moon," mm.70-79.

The newest choral genre in the last 10-15 years influenced by popular music. Popular choral music divides into two categories: 1. Choral arrangements of original popular songs; 2. The newly composed works is in the popular music style. The topics of popular choral music are usually related to modern daily life, which is naturally close to young people. Various performance forms and beautifully melodic and harmonic writing of popular choral music inject new blood into choral music in modern China.

1.3. Conclusion

In the past century, generations of Chinese choral musicians have created a unique Chinese choral music style. It started with learning from the western world, then combining traditional Chinese music features with modern compositional techniques. By briefly reviewing the development of Chinese choral music history and the examples, the distinct Chinese musical characteristics which come from 2000 years of its history became apparent throughout the choral music compositions. Chinese choral music has been significantly enriched, and the ways of achieving expression have been expanded remarkably. Choral music has become one of China's most important musical genres despite relatively short history of only one century.

2. INNER MONGOLIAN CHORAL MUSIC

2.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics

The Inner Mongolia area is located in the middle of north China. The name of Mongolia can be traced back to Tang Dynasty(A.D 618-907), and this name means “Eternity Fire.” The Mongolian people also refer to themselves as “People on the Horse” because of their nomadic lifestyle from ancient times. From the 5th to the 3rd century B.C., the ancestors of Mongolian people started to live in a primitive clan society inside the modern inner Mongolia area. In the 9th century many Mongolia tribes moved to the Burqan Qaldum¹⁵ area from the Ergun River¹⁶, including the immediate progenitors of Genghis Khan’s family. With the integration and unification of the tribes over hundreds of years, the Mongolian race was finally unified on the eastern steppe in 1206, known as the Mongol Khanate. Temujin was elected by the Mongolian tribes as Genghis Khan, meaning “Great Khan¹⁷ of the Ocean.”

¹⁵ The Burkhan Khaldun (Cyrillic: Бурхан Халдун) is one of the Khentii Mountains in the Khentii Province of northeastern Mongolia. The mountain or its locality is believed to be the birthplace of Genghis Khan as well as his tomb. It is also the birthplace of one of his most successful generals, Subutai. *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkhan_Khaldun.

¹⁶ The Argun or Ergune, is a 1,620-kilometre (1,010 mi) long river that forms part of the eastern China–Russia border, together with the Amur (Heilong Jiang). Its upper reaches are known as Hailar River (Chinese: 海拉尔河; pinyin: Hǎilā' ěr Hé) in China. The Argun marks the border (established by the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689) between Russia and China for about 944 kilometres (587 mi), until it meets the Amur. *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argun_\(Amur\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argun_(Amur)).

¹⁷ The word “khan” is a Mongolian word meaning: king or emperor.



Image 2.1. Geographical location of Inner Mongolia.¹⁸

The Mongols are known not only for their bravery and warfare but also for their talents in singing and dancing. The Mongolian people have created a rich and valuable musical wealth during their long history. Their love for music and dance is still present in their lives today. Many musical genres that have been handed down from ancient times are still prevalent in Mongolia today. The categories of Mongolian folk music are incredibly abundant, including folk songs, instrumental music, speaking and singing music, and dance music. Among them, folk songs occupy a significant position. They can be divided into two categories according to the style: long-tune and short-tune. The long-tune style refers to folk songs with more extended

¹⁸ Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed April 21, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Inner-Mongolia#/media/1/288552/159967>.

melody and phrasing. The rhythmic structure is typically characterized by free and irregular rhythms. Pastoral songs, homesickness songs, hymns, banquet songs, and some wedding songs belong to this category. Long-tune style is more prevalent in prairie areas.

瞿希贤编合唱

Adagio 辽阔、开朗地

S. *Adagio* 辽阔、开朗地

A. *p* 哼 m 哼 m

T.

B. *p* 哼 m

6 *mp* 翠 绿 的
cui lü di

mp 翠 绿 的
cui lü di

mp 翠 绿 的
cui lü di

Example 2.1. Long-Tune Folk Song Style.¹⁹

¹⁹ Qu Xi Xian, *Shepherd's Song* (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House).

The short-tune style refers to folk songs with short melody lines with energetic rhythmic language, and a clear-cut structure. Hunting songs, narrative songs, some banquet songs with dance lines, love songs, and wedding songs belong to this category. The short-tune folk songs are more popular among the Mongols that live in agricultural life.

42
 E - zen bid - nü erd-miin sur-guud, Eekh_ bai-ga-liin ert - nii durs-gal, Eg-shig-len tu - gekh en - khiin duu-lal,
 E - zen bid - nü erd-miin sur-guud, Eekh bai-ga-liin ert - nii durs-gal, Eg-shig-len tu - gekh en - khiin duu-lal,
 E - zen bid - nü erd-miin sur-guud, Eekh bai-ga-liin ert - nii durs-gal, Eg-shig-len tu - gekh en - khiin duu-lal,
 khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai khu-rai

45
 Mi - ni ar - diin, shu-tekh shu-tel,
 Mi - ni ar - diin, shu-tekh shu-tel,
 Mon - gol_ mor'-diin, khan-gal_ sur, Ur - miin gerch, u-khaa-nii och,
 Mon - gol_ mor'-diin, khan-gal_ sur, Ur - miin gerch, u-khaa-nii och,
full time!

48
 U-rag-shi-lakh er-chim, un-drakh khu-chin, Ten-g'riin u-naa, te-muu-lekh sa-naa, Dom-giin gil - baa, dor-niin jav-khaa,
 U-rag-shi-lakh er-chim, un-drakh khu-chin, Ten-g'riin u-naa, te-muu-lekh sa-naa, Dom-giin gil - baa, dor-niin jav-khaa,
 Ten-g'riin u-naa, te-muu-lekh sa-naa, Dom-giin gil - baa, dor-niin jav-khaa,
 Ten-g'riin u-naa, te-muu-lekh sa-naa, Dom-giin gil - baa, dor-niin jav-khaa,
mf *f* *zee.*

Example 2.2. Short-Tune Folk Song Style.²⁰

²⁰ Se Enkhbayar, *The Eight Chestnut Horses*, Music of Asia and the Pacific (Earthsongs, 1998).

Most Mongolian folk songs are sung in solo voice or unison, but there is a special type of long-tune songs which have a sustained bass line. This kind of song with the sustained bass is called “Chaoer dao.” In Mongolian, Chaoer means “echo” or “harmony,” and dao simply means sing. There are also Chaoer instrumental music and solo Chaoer for voice (known as Khoomei). All of them share an identical feature, which is that the main melody is accompanied by a sustained bass voice. This sustained bass voice is the essential characteristic of Chaoer music.

圣主成吉思汗（一）
（男声重唱）

内蒙古锡林郭勒盟·潮尔道

♩ = 46~56

(独唱) (潮) 圣主 成吉思汗

(潮尔) (噢)

347

21 世纪中国音乐学文库

创伟 业，

(噢)

演唱者：哈扎布(独唱) 萨仁格日勒(潮尔)

Example 2.3. Chaoer dao, “Harmony Sing.”²¹

²¹ Fan Zu Yin, *A Study of Multi-part Folk Songs* (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing House, 2014), 347-348.

The upper voice is mostly for a soloist. The melody shows a typical long-tune style, and the rhythm is free and continuous. The lower part can be sung by one or multiple voices, commonly applying a heavy throat voice color.

Solo vocal Chaoer (Khoomei) music is relatively simple, usually with only one phrase and sung in one breath. Nevertheless, its unique sound, with two distinct pitches or tones being produced by the same person simultaneously, makes it a rare musical and cultural phenomenon. It usually has no specific content or lyrics, but an old Khoomei singer from Inner Mongolia says it is truly the music of horse herders: “Drive the horses to the grass bank, find a high place to lay down, and look at the blue sky and white clouds... At this time, the chaoer sounded, there is nothing more beautiful and comfortable than this.”²²

²² Ibid., 353.

例 209

浩林·潮尔（一）
（一人演唱）
Sing by one Person

新疆阿尔泰山罕达嘎图
蒙古族自治乡
莫尔吉胡记谱

慢速

Overture (泛音)

Low Note (Throat) (吟)

演唱者：塔本泰

不同歌手或同一歌手在不同时间内唱的“浩林·潮尔”均大同小异。其差异只表现在泛音旋律的长短与音调华丽程度的多少，这些又是由演唱者气息量的大小(受年龄和身体条件制约)所决定的。

下例由一位较年轻些的歌手演唱，气息显然比上例长些，曲调的华彩也多些。

例 210

浩林·潮尔（二）
（一人演唱）
Sing by one Person

慢速

Overture (泛音)

Low Note (Throat) (吟)

演唱者：布林巴雅尔

① 莫尔吉胡：《浩林·潮尔之谜》，《音乐艺术》1987年第2期。

352

Example 2.4. Khoomei, Haolin Chaoer.²³

“The performances of the song “Haolin Chaoer” by different singers or the same singer at different times are quite similar, with only slight differences in the length and embellishment of the melody’s overtones. These variations depend on how much air the performer can push out, which is influenced by their age and physical condition.”²⁴

²³ Ibid., 352.

²⁴ Ibid.

Music is an essential part of Mongolians' life. They use music to express their emotions and feelings, and their reverence and gratitude for nature, animals, food, and water. At the same time, the elements surrounding them, such as the vast grasslands, the running horses, the flowing rivers, and the burning fires, are also the inspirations for their music. The unique living environment and customs of the Mongolian people have created their own distinctive folk music style. This music, like the music of other ethnic groups, is a precious cultural treasure for all mankind.

2.2. Mu Ge (牧歌, Shepherd's Song)

2.2.1. Background of the Composer

Qu Xixian (瞿希贤, September 23, 1919 - March 19, 2008) was a Chinese female composer, born in Shanghai. She was the fourth vice-chairman of the Chinese Music Association, the advisor of the Chinese Film Music Society, and the honorary president of the Children's Music Society under the Chinese Music Association. She graduated from the English Department of St. John's University in Shanghai in 1944, and from the Composition Department of the Shanghai National Institute of Music in 1948. After graduation, she worked as a lecturer in the Music Theory Department of the Peking Academy of Fine Arts, where she also studied composition with Prof. Frankel (a German professor) and Prof. Tan Xiaolin. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, she worked for a long time in the Central Conservatory of Music and the Central China Orchestra composition group. She is a diligent and prolific composer, with a wide range of subjects and diverse styles.²⁵ In her later life, she wrote: "In my life, I have experienced the heroic and tragic anti-Japanese war years, and the joyful and hopeful newly founding country years. After the 17 years of up and downs, I have also experienced a

²⁵ Qu Xixian, *Baidu Baike*, accessed April 1, 2023, https://baike.baidu.com/item/Qu_Xixian.

decade of devastation with harshly rain and crucial turbulent (Cultural Revolution), finally I embraced a new era of peaceful construction, reformation, and opening up. The vicissitudes of the Chinese history, the human sorrow and joy, nature and emotions, and the colorful life... unknowingly left more or less marks on my score.”²⁶

2.2.2. Composition Background

After the founding of modern China, a boom in the exploration of Chinese folk music emerged. Ethnomusicologists went into different ethnic regions through fieldwork, and discovered and recorded numerous ethnic folk music. These folk tunes became a unique source of inspiration for many Chinese composers at that time. *Shepherd's Song* was composed by Qu Xixian under such a trend in 1954. This a cappella choral work based on the famous east Mongolian folk song titled *Zhibang Ge* (擲棒歌, Stick Throwing Song), gained a national reputation soon after its publication. The composer profoundly captured the essence of the Mongolian long-tune music style, although she never set foot on the Inner Mongolian grasslands in her life. The topics of Qu's compositions were often related to the daily life of common people, especially in her later works. She once said that the purpose of her compositions was not for fame or reputation, but to “leave something that resonates with the people.”²⁷ For this particular work, she wrote: “1954 was the year of political stability and economic prosperity at the beginning of the country, and when Chinese choral art was in the early stage of construction. In this case, I used the folk songs of Eastern Mongolia to compose three a cappella choral works, one of which is *Mu Ge* (*Shepherd's Song*).”²⁸

²⁶ Qu Xixian, *Chinese Arts Newspaper*, accessed April 3, 2023, http://www.cflac.org.cn/ysb/2008-07/22/content_13889953.htm.

²⁷ Zeng Meiyuan, “Analysis of the choral work *Pastoral Song* by Qu Xixian,” *Northern Music* 37, no. 11 (2017):1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

2.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

This work is based on the original eastern Inner Mongolian folk song tune. The composer maintains the integrity of the tune, and transforms the tune in three variations with an introduction and coda, which leads to the form: Intro-A1-A2-A3-coda.

In terms of texture, this piece uses a combination of imitative polyphony and homophony. The harmonic language of the entire piece is not complicated, for example she uses many traditional Western harmonic techniques, such as the use of triads, the dominant to tonic chord progressions. In addition to the use of Chinese pentatonic scale in the melody line, the composer also uses many fifths in the bass and baritone parts. Chinese composers do have a preference for the harmonic sound of the fifth, there is not a reasonable explanation for this.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Shepherd's Song" (Example 2.5), measures 16-20. It consists of four staves of music. The top three staves are in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The lyrics are written in Chinese characters and pinyin below the notes. The lyrics are: 羊群像珍珠撒 (yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa). The first staff has the lyrics: 羊 群 像 珍 珠 撒 (yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa). The second staff has the lyrics: 羊 群 像 珍 珠 撒 (yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa). The third staff has the lyrics: 羊 群 像 珍 珠 (yang qun xiang zhen zhu). The fourth staff has the lyrics: 羊 群 像 珍 珠 (yang qun xiang zhen zhu). A circled note in the bass staff, corresponding to the first measure, is labeled "The use of Fifth." Below the score is the page number "-2-".

Example 2.5. Qu Xixian, "Shepherd's Song," mm.16-20.

The non-Western common cadence at the end is complemented by the soprano softly humming the fragment of the origin folk tune and resting on the seventh note of the key. It conveys a sense of incompleteness, which suggests the emptiness and endlessness of the grassland.

Example 2.6. Qu Xixian, “Shepherd’s Song,” mm.60-66.

2.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

This length of this piece is roughly three minutes. In terms of difficulty level, this piece could be sung by almost any collegiate choir, and some advanced high school choirs, although the language will be the challenging part for the non-Chinese speaking choirs without proper instructions. Here I would like to give a few suggestions regarding some situations I have encountered in rehearsals for non-Chinese speaking choirs:

Choir can add the text before completely knowing the music, especially for this slow tempo piece. As soon as the singers are familiar with the tune of the piece, the conductor should let them sing it with the original words. The sooner the singers sing the correct vowels or the vowels that are closest to the actual words, the better it will be during the later rehearsals. This will encourage forming correct muscle memory and oral accuracy.

The conductor should help the choir to build confidence in their ability to sing Chinese works from the beginning. Pronunciation does not need to be perfect at the beginning, or even at the later performance. It is more important that all singers sing the music with an understanding of the music and the text, as well as the individual emotions or feelings for the music. Instead of the endless pursuit of accurate pronunciations, which often causes stress or frustration, the singers certainly can enjoy the learning process more if the conductor understands this point. Singing Chinese is much easier than speaking Chinese, although it is considered as one of the most difficult languages in the world. Chinese is actually a language that is particularly suitable for singing, because of the pure and round vowels, and the lack of consonants at the end of the word.²⁹ The most complex tone changes in spoken Chinese will also naturally become easier by the melody in singing Chinese. Singers only need to pay attention to the vowel shaping and special consonants. In some sense, the requirements for rounding and pure vowels in Chinese are similar to in Latin.

2.2.5. Performance Practice

The sixteenth notes in this piece come from the ornaments of the original folk tune, and notated as sixteenth notes for the purpose of clarity and standardizing the notation by Chinese ethnomusicologists. This is also a common practice for other folk music notation writing. With

²⁹ In Chinese, the consonants normally located at the beginning of the words instead of the end of the word. For example: Cui, Yang, Qun, Cao, De, etc.

the understanding of this common practice, it is clear that the sixteenth notes can be flexible depending on each different work. In this particular work, the sixteenth notes of the tune can be stretched, especially in the ending phrase.

The image shows a musical score for two parts, A. (Soprano) and T. (Tenor), in 2/4 time. The key signature has four flats. Part A. begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A 'Rubato' marking is placed over a group of notes in the middle of the phrase, which are circled. The lyrics 'm' and 'm' are written below the vocal line. Part T. has a few notes at the end of the phrase.

Example 2.7. Qu Xixian, “Shepherd’s Song,” mm.1-4.

It can be hard sometimes for conductors to capture the proper style of a musical work from an unfamiliar culture. The understanding of a work’s cultural background will help conductors to make the appropriate musical decisions. Among them, tempo choice probably is the most crucial one. This work is heavily influenced by Mongolian folk music, the long-tune style to be more specific, which requires a continuous feeling of the melody line. Thus, the tempo for this piece should not feel rushed or in hurry anytime during the performance. This original folk tune has been passed down from oral tradition. It reflects the images of a herdsman standing in the high slope and expressing their emotions within all the surrounding natural environments, including the gratitude for the endless grassland, the sheep, and the cows. Furthermore, the conductor could share the translation of the text with the singers, and ask them to use their imagination. There are also various ways to help the singers feel this Mongolian long-tune style. After the singers have learned the music, and reached the performance level, the conductor could bring the singers to some open spaces such as atrium or lobby, and try to sing

this work at a distance. I believe that after understanding the content of the piece, the choir members and the conductor will have a different experience for this work. With proper tempo, and phrasing choices, this work can depict a vividly image of the beautiful grassland life.

2.3. Naiman Sharag (八骏赞, The Eight Chestnut Horses)

2.3.1. Background of the Composer

Se Enkhbayar (b.1956) is the most famous Mongolian choral composer today and the most internationally acclaimed Chinese choral composer. In 1996, the Inner Mongolia Radio and Television Art Troupe sang five of his choral works at the Fourth World Choral Festival in Sydney, Australia. The president of the World Choral Union at that time gave very high praise to his works “with vivid musical images, unique and innovative expressive techniques and profound emotions, sincere and warm, deep passion shocking.” In 2000, Inner Mongolia Youth Choir was invited to Austria to participate in the first World Olympic Choral Competition, singing his a cappella choral tone poem work *Meng gu xue* (蒙古靴, Mongolian Boots), and won the gold medal for the competition. The Inner Mongolia Youth Choir, which he co-founded, now has an international reputation. Under his positive influence on Mongolian choral music, in 2017, Inner Mongolia Children’s Choir was invited to perform at the American Choral Directors Association national conference in Minneapolis, MN, under the leadership of conductor Yalun Gerile³⁰, and performed many of his works. In the same year, he was appointed as a choral ambassador for the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM). Until today, he has composed nearly 260 solo and choral works. Most of his works are related to the historical and cultural background of the Mongolian people, as well as the nomadic lifestyle and the ecological

³⁰ Yalun Gerile, famous Chinese woman conductor. The first choral conductor who earn the Master’s degree of choral conducting in China.

environment. He presents a choral style that is different from the Western tradition, and also not simply just arrangements of the Mongolian folk music. Wu Zu qiang(1927-2022), the former president of the Chinese Music Association, commented on him, “He (Se Enkhbayar) has pushed Mongolian music, spirit and style into a new realm.”³¹

The environment in which Enkhbayar grew up and his life experiences have profoundly influenced his musical compositions. In 1965, he was born in the Batangilin Desert of the Alex League in western Inner Mongolia. His mother was a famous local folk singer, so he was exposed to folk music from an early age and developed a love for it. His entire childhood was spent in the depths of the Batangilin Desert in Inner Mongolia. As a herdsman’s son, grassland, sheep, horse, camel, and the desert were the most common things he saw in his childhood. At the age of 11, Enkhbayar had to drop out of school and became a young herdsman wandering in the desert with his sheep, due to the Cultural Revolution in China during that special historical period. During his herding days, besides humming folk songs and ditties, he also developed an interest in painting, since the sand and tree branches were his drawing board and brush. This love of painting was also reflected in his later musical compositions, such as his original choral tone poem works, which uses sound to describe the images and pictures. He joined the workforce at the age of fifteen, becoming a road repairman and later a cook to make a living. It was only later that his singing talent was valued by the local cabaret company and he became a soloist, starting his musical career. In 1977, he enrolled in the Inner Mongolia Broadcasting Orchestra as a vocal major and officially began his professional musical training there. In 1987, the composer founded the Inner Mongolia Youth Choir with two of his colleagues, music editor Hu Rile Bartel and conductor Yalun Gerile. In the early days of the choir, there were no funds, and no regular

³¹ Stuchak Qin, “A Research On Se Enkhbayar’s Mixed A Cappella Choral Work.” (Master's thesis, Minzu University of China, 2005).

rehearsal space. Furthermore, the choir members did not have mobile phones, they had to inform each other on foot or by bicycle every time they had a rehearsal plan or an important announcement. The only thing that kept them together was their love for music. Under such circumstances, composing great music for his choir became an important part of the composers' motivation. His first widely known composition, *Naiman Sharag* (The Eight Chestnut Horses, 1988), was composed for the Inner Mongolian youth choir, and it demonstrates the composer's excellent musical talent, although without complex compositional techniques. The composer was then deeply concerned with the limitations of his professional compositional technique. Although he was inspired a lot by a topic, he did not know how to start the writing and express his feelings and emotions in the way he wanted.³² Thus, at the age of 36, he entered the Mongolian State University as an undergraduate student, and studied the theory of professional composition with the famous Mongolian composer Na Jancang Norib (纳 姜仓诺日布) in 1992. Under the guidance of this teacher, Enkhbayar not only continued to learn more about traditional Mongolian music and culture, but also learned many modern compositional techniques. During his studies, he traveled all over Mongolia and experienced the rich historical and cultural treasures of the Mongolian people. This experience inspired the composer significantly and had a profoundly positive impact on his subsequent musical compositions. His choral tone poem *Önchin Botog* (A lonely Baby Camel, 1995) was written during this period. After completing his undergraduate studies at the Mongolian State University, he returned to China for several years to work and compose. After acquiring a successful compositional career, he returned to Mongolia in 2005 pursuing the master's degree of composition, and graduated in 2007.³³

³² “Yin Yue Bu Luo (音乐部落, Music Tribe),” *Inner Mongolian Television Program*, accessed April 1, 2023, www.nmtv.cn/search?search_text=色+恩克巴雅尔.

³³ Se Enkhbayar, *Inner Mongolian Online*, accessed April 3, 2023. http://www.nmonline.com.cn/nmzx/xw_lb2.asp?smallclassname=%B2%DD%D4%AD%C8%CB%CE%E.

Today, Enkhbayar is a national-level composer in China, resident composer for Inner Mongolia Radio and Television Art Troupe, executive director of the China Choral Association, vice chairman of the Inner Mongolia Musicians Association, and director of the Inner Mongolia International Cultural Arts Exchange Center Board.³⁴

2.3.2. Composition Background

Naiman Sharag (The Eight Chestnut Horses) was composed by the composer in 1988 for the Inner Mongolia youth choir he founded. In 1991, the IMYC participated in the Third Beijing Choral Festival and won three first prizes for performance, conducting and composition, among them, this work won the first prize in the composition category. *Naiman Sharag* was published by American publisher Earth Songs in 1998, along with his two other unaccompanied works, *Zeregleent Gobi* (Mirage on the Gobi Desert, 1988) and *Toig Toig* (1987). *Naiman Sharag* (The Eight Chestnut Horses) was also named as the representative work of Chinese choral music at Beijing in 2004, and since then it has been widely performed throughout China. One thing to mention, there are actually two versions of this piece, since the Mongolian language is not widely spoken in China besides Inner Mongolia. One is the original Mongolian version published by earth songs, and the other is the Chinese translated version that is widely sung in the other areas of China beside China.

2.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

This work does not draw on any preexisting Mongolian folk tunes, but is composed by the composer in imitation of the traditional Mongolian musical style. Its structure is intro-A(repeat)-B-coda.

³⁴ Ibid.

In terms of compositional technique, the work is based on the Chinese pentatonic scale, and the melody mostly moves by step or thirds, with occasional leaps. In the harmonic writing, the composer uses a large number of fourths and fifths, especially in the bass voice. There is also a significant use of parallel fifths, which are rare in traditional Western harmonic progressions. At the same time, the third is often omitted, appearing only occasionally within the same voice part division. That is because the composer valued the overall acoustic effects instead of common harmonic progressions and functions. He applied the acoustic sound of fourths, fifths, and seconds as a guide for his harmonic writing.

The musical score consists of several staves. At the top, a Bass (B) staff shows a circled passage of chords. Below it, the vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are shown with lyrics in Chinese. The Tenor (T) and Bass (B) parts have circled passages of chords. The Solo part (T.solo) is shown at the bottom. Dynamics such as *mf*, *p*, and *mp* are indicated throughout the score.

Example 2.8. Se Enkhbayar, “The Eight Chestnut Horses,” mm.11-20.

Rhythmically, this work shows a strong characteristic of Mongolian short-tune music style, with short rhythm patterns and strong sense of dynamic effects. At the same time, the composer employs a special rhythmic pattern (horse-step pattern), which acts like a rhythmic motif throughout the piece.

Example 2.9. Se Enkhbayar, “The Eight Chestnut Horses,” mm.3-7.

This special rhythm structure is inspired by the movement patterns of the horse. The composer has creatively applied this rhythm pattern to the entire piece, especially in the intro and coda section, where expressing the arrival and departure of the horses. This horse-step rhythmic pattern is also widely used in composers’ other choral works. Furthermore, Chinese scholar Shixiang Li categorize and summarize the different rhythm patterns of Mongolian folk music.³⁵

³⁵ Shixiang Li, “The Connotation of the Horse-step Rhythm in Mongolian Short-tune Folk Songs,” *Journal of Art College of Inner Mongolia University* Vol. 7, no. 4 (Oct, 2010): 76-81, doi:CNKI:SUN:NMYS.0.2010-04-016.

Table 2.1. Four Horse-step Rhythm Patterns.

Name of The Horse-step Rhythm	Notation	Meaning
Benmashi (奔马式)	♪ ♪	Describe the pace of the horse moving forward with fast speed
Daobushi (倒步式)	♪ ♪	Describe the pace of the horse moving backward
Zoumashi (走马式)	♪ ♪ ♪	Describe the pace of the horse walking in a slow speed
Yaomashi (跃马式)	♪ . ♪	Describe the pace of the horse jumping up

2.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

Naiman Sharag is of some difficulty due to its slightly complex rhythms and the ornamental notes that run throughout the piece. However, an experienced conductor will be able to give a suitable rehearsal plan. Here, I will only give a few suggestions about rehearsals.

Transferring the grace notes to standard notation for choir if it is possible. Although ornaments are not very common in modern western choral writing, the use of various grace notes is an important stylistic feature of this piece, and they should not be omitted unless they causes an unsolvable problem. Due to the rhythmic inconsistency of ornaments for ensembles, the conductor could notate all the grace notes to standard notations based on the conductor's ornamentation choices, thus helping the ensemble sing more accurately for the grace notes. In some cases, the time value of ornaments is too short, the conductor could also ask the choir practice them in a very slow tempo.

This work is written in a relatively faster tempo and with lots of sixteenth notes. Thus, adding the Mongolian text after the singers have mastered the pitch and rhythm will be more benefit for them. Since the first half of the piece only used five syllables in the choir part, and three of them are repeated, the singers could sing that section with text.

2.3.5. Performance Practice

Ornamentation is an important expressive element in Mongolian folk music. It is widely used in instrumental music and the long-tune style folk songs. The composer drew from both of them in this work, so the note value of the grace notes can be varied. This work depicted a picture of eight sacred horses running on the endless grassland, by the use of various sixteenth notes throughout the piece. Therefore, the ideal tempo should either be too slow that losing the feeling of horse running, nor too fast that giving up the sense of lightheartedness. The ideal metronome mark can be choose from quartet note equal 90 to 100 depending on the preference of the conductor.

The tone color for this piece do not have a huge difference with the traditional western choral music. The only slight difference is that Mongolian choral music usually has a lower bass part range. Thus, if the singers can use more chest voice or mixed voice to get a warm tone, it will be more desirable in line with the overall sound color of traditional Mongolian music.

2.4. Önchin Botog (孤独的驼羔, The Lonely Baby Camel)

2.4.1. Background of Composer

Seeing 2.3.1 Se Enkhbayar.

2.4.2. Composition Background

This work is inspired by an ancient Mongolian tune called *The Lonely White Baby Camel* (孤独的白驼羔). This tune is believed to awaken the mother camel's maternal love to the baby camel by Mongolian people, thus nursing the baby camel which the mother camel rejected before. In Inner Mongolia today, herders still use this tune to help mother camels feed their newborn camels. The herders sometimes hum the melody softly to the female camels themselves,

or sometimes they invite professional musicians to play on the horsehead fiddle.³⁶ Inspired by this story and its melody, Se Enkhbayar became interested in creating a choral piece on this topic. Later on, the composer stated that the desire to write such a piece came from a personal experience he had years ago in a herdsman's home.

“One night I was staying at an old man's house. A baby camel came over at night and cried right at the window. I said how the baby camel came here, the old man explained to me that its mother died of hunger, because this year they have a drought here. The old said I can feed it, it just wants to eat something. Then, the old man went out and made some batter, with some milk powder inside. The baby camel became quiet after eating.

...But the day after when I arrived at the sand dunes, the baby camel saw me and start to follow me because I came out of his (the old man's) house. Once it got close and recognized I am not the old man, it run away. There was a herd of camels not very far away, so it went over there to see if there was its mother over there. It's not a baby camel that has abandoned by its mother, it's because the mother could not survive.”³⁷

The wind in the desert was blowing while the lonely camel baby camel was crying. This scene was deeply imprinted in his mind and became his source of inspiration. Enkhbayar prepared for six years to finish this masterpiece. This work is not just about maternal love, in fact, it reflects a subject of great concern to the composer, which is the ecological problems of nature. Having grown up in a traditional Mongolian herding family, the composer gained natural closeness to animals and reverence to nature. Thus, the concern for the deteriorating ecological environment are naturally reflected in his compositions. *The Lonely Baby Camel*, depicts a baby

³⁶ Horse-Head Fiddle, a traditional Mongolian two-strings instrument. It is one of the most important Mongolian instruments, and the symbol of Mongolian nation.

³⁷ “Yin Yue Bu Luo(音乐部落, Music Tribe),” *Inner Mongolian Television Program*, accessed April 1, 2023, www.nmtv.cn/search?search_text=色+恩克巴雅尔.

camel that has just lost its mother at birth. The mother was unable to find enough food due to the deterioration of the natural environment and starved to death. Therefore, leaving the baby camel alone on the unmerciful desert. Some difficulties within the composing journey was passed in the composer's messages: "But in the 1980s, I couldn't write, I didn't know where to start and how to end. It's not like a very simple piece, it has a complicated structure inside. How to express it, how to express the nature including the desert, the wind, the glass, and the dead trees. I have to let the wind, the dead poplar, let them speak (in this work). The baby camel is looking for its mother, 'Mother, where are you, where are you?' If we don't take care of nature, (love) this grassland, then we will have the same fate as this baby camel."³⁸

This choral masterpiece, which originated from the composer's personal life experience and created by his excellent musical craftsmanship, won the first place gold medal of A cappella choral competition at the Second International Olympic Choral Competition held in Busan, Korea in 2002. The jury of the organizing committee from various countries congratulated the composer greatly. They said, "You have brought the choral art in Asia to a new level." "The technique of using the human voice to portray ever-changing nature was ingenious, superb and reached the ultimate."³⁹

2.4.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

The Lonely Baby Camel is divided into three movements: Lonely, Seeking and Hoping, the piece is about 17 minutes long. The composer has the singer to imitate the sounds of the desert wind and other natural figures. For example, the alto soloist represents the lonely baby camel, and the bass part represents the cruel desert. The whole work is a subtle representation of three stages of the baby camel: loneliness, searching, and hope in each three movement. The

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Se Enkhbayar, *Inner Mongolian Online*, accessed April 10, 2023, http://www.nmonline.com.cn/nmzx/xw_lb2.asp?smallclassname=%B2%DD%D4%AD%C8%CB%CE%E.

composer uses human voices to depict the wind, the grass, and the poplar tree under a continuous storyline of the baby camel, thus, he called this work a choral tone poem. This tone poem started with the lonely baby camel is asking: Where are you, mother, where are you? And the desert cruelly replies: I don't know, I don't know. The baby camel then anxiously searches on the harsh desert and is so tired that it falls into a sleep. And the poor little camel dreamed of seeing its mother in the vast and beautiful grassland. In the last movement, the composer set Khoomei (overtone singing) part, and produced an elegant and peaceful melody that represents hope.

The composition draws a lot of elements from traditional Mongolian folk music, such as long-tune style, horse-step rhythm, glissando, ornamentation, and Khoomei, which produces a distinguished Mongolian folk music style. Moreover, the composer has boldly used many modern compositional techniques, such as imitating the sound of the wind, the use of tone clusters, dissonant chords, polychords, riff sections and shouting in the piece.

Se Enkhbayar says, “All my works are pictures, and harmony is color. The hissing wind, the desolate Gobi (dessert), the loneliness of the baby camel, how to express them in music needs to be worked out little by little and collected in life.”⁴⁰

2.4.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

It is very unfortunate that this piece has not been officially published. It has never been performed by any non-Mongolian choral group, all the choirs that have performed this work have been personally tutored by the composer. However, the DMA dissertation *A Performance Guide To Se Enkhbayar's Choral Tone Poem Önchin Botog (A Lonely Baby Camel) For SATB Soloists and SATB Chorus (with Divisions)* written by Pei Chi Lin provides a very detailed analysis of this work, as well as the guidance for various special performance requirements.

⁴⁰ Hearing Camel Bells, from Inner Mongolian Daily Paper, accessed April 10, 2023, http://szb.northnews.cn/nmgrb/html/2018-06/15/content_7719_40454.htm.

3. YUNNAN PROVINCE CHORAL MUSIC

3.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics

Three regions in China have more than 10 million population of ethnic minorities, namely Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces. Among them, Yunnan Province is the area with the largest variety of ethnic minorities. There are 25 ethnic minorities that have lived in Yunnan for generations. 15 of them, including the Hani(哈尼族), Bai(白族), Dai(傣族), Lisu(傈僳族), Wa(佤族), Lahu(拉祜族), Naxi(纳西族), Jingpo(景颇族), Bulang(布朗族), Achang(阿昌族), Pumi(普米族), De'ang(德昂族), Nu(怒族), Jinuo(基诺族) and Dulong(独龙族), are unique to Yunnan and exist only in this province. The literal translation of Yunnan is “The South of the Cloud,” while the Chinese word Yun(云) means cloud and Nan(南) means south. It is often referred as the “South of the Colorful Clouds” because of its unique minorities’ cultures and breathtaking landscapes.

Table 3.1. Proportion of Minority Population in Yunnan.

Population Range	Name of the Minority Groups
More than 1 million	Yi (彝族), Hani(哈尼族), Bai(白族), Dai(傣族), Zhuang(壮族) and Miao(苗族)
Between 100,000 and 1 million	Hui(回族), Lisu(傈僳族), Lahu(拉祜族), Wa(佤族), Naxi(纳西族), Yao(瑶族), Jingpo(景颇族), Tibetan(藏族) and Bulang(布朗族)
Between 10,000 and 100,000	Buyi(布依族), Pumi(普米族), Achang(阿昌族), Nu(怒族), Jinuo(基诺族), Mongolian(蒙古族), De'ang(德昂族), Man(满族) and Shui(水族)
Between 1,000 and 10,000	Dulong(独龙族), Gelao(仡佬族), Tujia(土家族) and Dong(侗族)

In terms of geographical situation, Yunnan is “a mountain and plateau region on the country’s southwestern frontier. It is bounded by the Tibet Autonomous Region to the northwest,

the provinces of Sichuan to the north and Guizhou to the east, and the Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi to the southeast. To the south and southeast it adjoins Laos and Vietnam, and to the southwest and west it shares a long border with Myanmar (Burma).”⁴¹



Image 3.1. Geographical location of Yunnan.⁴²

The people of Yunnan have lived in this mountainous plateau terrain since ancient times. Because of its special topographical features, it has been unsuitable for large-scale farming. Instead, the people here spent a long time living in a slash-and-burn type of primitive society. Their lives depended highly on human power and the natural resources, and their production

⁴¹ Suettinger, R. Lee and Kuo, Ping-chia. “Yunnan,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed March 5, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yunnan>.

⁴² Yunnan province, China, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed March 5, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yunnan/Manufacturing#/media/1/655000/159720>.

technology and productivity were low. The mountainous region of Yunnan covers an area of 331,100 square kilometers, accounting for more than 80% of the province's total land area. While the rest of the land consists of plateaus and basins. "The eastern part is the East and Central Yunnan Plateau, part of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, with an average altitude of about 2,000 meters, characterized by gently undulating low mountains and rounded hills, with various types of Karst landscapes⁴³.

"The western part is interspersed with high mountains and valleys, treacherous terrain, and a relative height difference of over 1,000 meters between the mountains and valleys—the strange and majestic mountain glacier landforms. The altitude of the province varies greatly, with the highest point at 6,740 meters above sea level at the junction of Yunnan and Tibet. The main peak of Meili Snow Mountain in the Nu Mountain Range in Deqin County, Kavagbo Peak; the lowest point is 76.4 meters above sea level, at the Sino-Vietnamese border river where the Nanxi River and the Red River meet in Hekou County, with a straight-line distance of about 900 kilometers and an altitude difference of more than 6,000 meters between the two places."⁴⁴ A diverse geographical environment has led to the development of diverse cultural and musical characteristics among the ethnic minorities in the region. This geographical challenges led to the diverse lifestyle, different dialects and unique musical styles of each minority group.

Almost every minority in the region has a language specific to their ethnic group, and some larger ethnic groups have their written language system. While some of the smaller tribes only have languages that are transmitted orally. Despite the differences in their languages, they all show striking fondness of music and dance. Singing is a big part of their musical life,

⁴³ Karst (/kɑːrst/) is a topography formed from the dissolution of soluble carbonate rocks such as limestone, dolomite, and gypsum. It is characterized by features like poljes above and drainage systems with sinkholes and caves underground. *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karst>.

⁴⁴ "Nature Profile: Yunan," *People's Government of Yunnan Province*, accessed March 6, 2023, https://www.yn.gov.cn/yngk/gk/201904/t20190403_96255.html.

although instrumental music is also prevalent. For these minorities, singing is not just a pastime but an integral and essential portion of their lives. They sing to give thanks to nature, to celebrate the harvest, to convey their emotions, or as a tool to record the history of their ethnic group, such as the Dong Dage.⁴⁵ In addition, the Zhuang(壮族), Dai(傣族), Buyi(布依族), Shui(水族), Gelao(仡佬族), Jingpo(景颇族), and Dong(侗族) ethnic groups which reside in the hilly areas have grand festivals centered on singing. People come to the festivals from different villages or towns dressed up in their traditional costumes. Young men and women can participate in song duets and various interactive games as an important social way. Frequently, the young person could find their loved ones in such festivals. These festivals are held at different times and occasions depending on the ethnic group, but in most cases, they are held in an open area such as a field, public community place, or a mountain during slack farming season or harvest time.

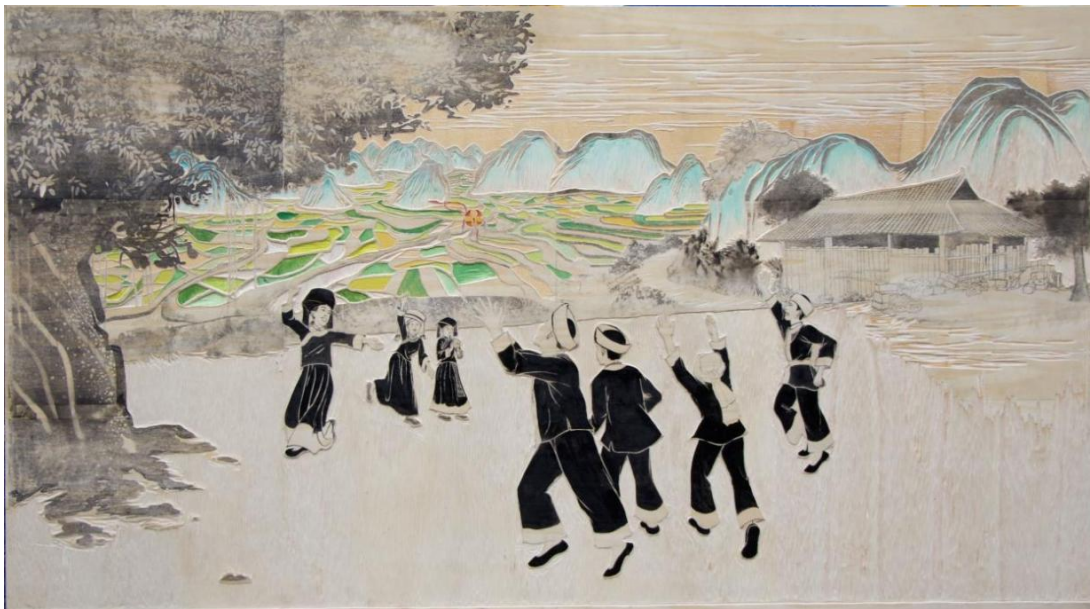


Image 3.2. Wood Engraving, Zhuang Song Fair (壮族歌圩).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ “Grand Song of Dong Ethnic Group,” *UNESCO, World Intangible Cultural Heritage*, accessed March 6, 2023, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/grand-song-of-the-dong-ethnic-group-00202>.

⁴⁶ Author: Li Lan Ying, School of Fine Arts, Minzu University of China, accessed March 6, 2023, https://www.gtn9.com/work_show.aspx?ID=631CCBE69690AA3B.

The location of villages from villages was very spread out in Yunnan Province the ancient times. However, the isolation resulting in the folk music in Yunnan is so distinguished by different ethnic culture and traditions. All ethnic minorities love to sing and dance, so music is a very important part of their lives. Whether it's a harvest celebration, a festival, a wedding, a funeral, or an ethnic group event, music is always present. 18 of the 25 minority ethnic groups in Yunnan province have multi-part folk singing traditions, which have different name and characteristics based on their unique cultures and traditions.

3.2. Tai Yang Chu Lai La (太阳出来啦, The Sun is Out)

3.2.1. Background of the Composer

Sang Ye Song born in 1942, is a famous contemporary Chinese conductor and choral educator for primary and secondary schools. His early music training was in the Affiliated High School of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music since 1955. In 1962, he entered the People's Liberation Army Academy of Arts to further his musical studies. After graduating in 1966, he has served as the orchestral conductor in the State General Government Opera Troupe and the Symphony Orchestra. In 1982, he became a resident conductor of the General Political Bureau of the China Symphony Orchestra. Later in his career, he devoted himself to the choral world, composing and educating for children's chorus. He is currently a director of the Chinese Chorus Association and deputy director of the Conducting Committee. In 2000, he led the Chinese Railway Choir to participate in the National Choral Competition and won the first prize. Between 1999 and 2001, he directed the China Agricultural University Students' Choir to participate in the Beijing University Students' Art Song Choral Competition, and both won first prize. In April 2008, he conducted the Military Art Choir, won the central television station, and organized the thirteenth Youth Song Competition. In April 2008, the Military Art Choir, under

his direction, won the Gold Prize in the 13th Youth Song Choral Competition organized by the Chinese National Television. He was the conductor of the Jinfan Choir of Dengshikou Primary School in Dongcheng District, Beijing, and won many awards nationally. From 1993 to 2008, he was the conductor of the Jinfan Choir of Zhongguancun Middle School in Beijing. As a professional conductor, he is also actively engaged in education and choral music advocacy. He has instructed various school and amateur choirs in Beijing to participate in different levels of choral competitions, which have all achieved excellent results. Over the years, the choirs he has trained and directed have presented remarkable performances in national and Beijing competitions. He has also been invited to organize multiple training courses for primary and secondary school music teachers.⁴⁷

3.2.2. Background of the Composition

Tai Yang Chu Lai La, which could translate to *The Sun is Out*, was written for four-part children or SSAA choir by Chinese composer San Ye Song in early 2010s. The melodic material comes from a strophic folk song by Chinese composer Tian Feng (based on his field researches in Yunnan province.) The text talks about how the sun awakens all lives on earth: frogs singing, swallows flying up to the sky, butterflies dancing, lambs getting out in the field...The sunshine simply puts wings to every life eager to fly. Where there is light, the whole universe is illuminated and empowered. Upon its release, this work was loved by multiple major children's choirs in China, especially after it was performed by the China Symphony Orchestra Affiliated Junior and Women's Choirs under the leadership of renowned Chinese children's chorus educator Prof. Yang Hongnian. This work became a standard of Chinese children's choir repertoire.

⁴⁷ Sang Ye Song, *Baidu Baike*, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%A1%91%E5%8F%B6%E6%9D%BE/5071281>.

3.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

San Ye Song presents a vivid musical style by using a simple harmonic language, lively rhythmic patterns, and an animated piano accompaniment part. The composer also employs the human voice to imitate percussion sound. This small and energetic piece expresses the love for light, and praise for nature. The piece is only 2 minutes and 50 seconds long and in ABBA form, of which the B section is a repeated section. In the B section, the composer combines the use of short motifs with imitative counterpoint. He sets long value note for different voices that joins beat by beat to create the effect of a tone cluster. At the same time, the settings of various dynamic and styles make the B section even more enjoyable, such as the frequent use of *sfp*, the alternation of slur and staccato, and the use of glissando.

Example 3.1. Sang Ye Song, “The Sun is out,” mm.42-45.

3.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

Tai Yang Chu Lai La is a lively choral work with a concise compositional style. The composer employs a significant amount of repetitive rhythmic patterns throughout the piece. In terms of tessitura, the composition remains relatively moderate. Overall, the difficulty level of this piece is not particularly high. The primary challenge may lie in the performance of the Chinese lyrics. In this regard, the conductor can adopt a method of separate rehearsal for the lyrics and the music. On one hand, choir members can begin by slowly reading the lyrics and then progress to read them in rhythm. Once the singers can manage the lyrics in rhythm, conductor can gradually increase to performance tempo.

18

I
II

啦, 月 亮 出 来 啦。 太 阳

la yue liang chu lai la tai tai

III
IV

叫 醒 路 边 的 小 草 和 野 花。 太 阳 啊 太 阳

jiaoxing lu bian di xiaocao he ye hua tai yang a tai yang

21

阳 出 来 啦, 月 亮 出 来

yang chu lai la yue liang chu lai

太阳出来啦, 窗前喇叭花 呀, 爬上竹篱笆。

tai yang chu lai la chuang qian la ba hua ya pa shang zhu li ba

Example 3.2. Sang Ye Song, "The Sun is out," mm.24-29.

On the other hand, selecting a neutral syllable to practice pitch and rhythm can be beneficial. Once proficiency is achieved in both aspects, the final step involves integrating the lyrics with the music. This approach helps mitigate rehearsal issues stemming from language difficulties.

3.2.5. Performance Practice

This is a simple and uplifting choral piece characterized by consistent tempo and composition techniques throughout. In its interpretation, the conductor's primary task is to maintain an appropriate tempo based on the score. The only suggestion pertains to the piano *ad lib.* at the beginning, which should not be played too quickly. This is because the piano writing in this section draws inspiration from traditional Chinese plucked string instruments such as the Guzheng⁴⁸ and Guqin⁴⁹, incorporating contrasts between high and low registers and the use of triplets. Typically, when musical motifs are repeated in the lower voice parts, the tempo should be slightly slower.

Additionally, it is important to grasp the pianissimo dynamics in the introductory piano section, allowing for brief blanks between two chords. Particularly before the emergence of a new musical theme, a breathing-like space should be provided.

⁴⁸ Guzheng, is a Chinese plucked zither. The modern guzheng commonly has 21, 25, or 26 strings, is 64 inches (1.6 m; 5 ft 4 in) long, and is tuned in a major pentatonic scale. It has a large, resonant soundboard made from Paulownia wood. Other components are often made from other woods for structural or decorative reasons. Guzheng players often wear a fingerpick made from materials such as plastic, resin, tortoiseshell, or ivory on one or both hands. *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guzheng>.

⁴⁹ Guqin, is a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument. It has been played since ancient times, and has traditionally been favoured by scholars and literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement. The guqin is not to be confused with the guzheng, another Chinese long stringed instrument also without frets, but with moveable bridges under each string. *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guqin>.

太阳出来啦

童声/女声合唱

田 丰曲
刘 麟填词
桑叶松编合唱、伴奏

Ad lib. 8-

Vivace 轻快、活泼地

6

I
II
III
IV

太阳啊太阳啊
tai yang a tai yang a

嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀 嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀 嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀
di di

气 气 嘀 咚 嘀 咚 气 气
qi qi di dong di di dong qi qi

mp

9

太阳出来啦, 太阳落下山, 月亮出来啦。
tai yang chu lai la tai yang luo xia shan yue liang chu lai la

嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀 嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀 嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀嘀
di di

嘀 咚 嘀 咚 气 气 嘀 咚 嘀 咚
di dong di di dong qi qi di dong di di

Example 3.3. Sang Ye Song, “The Sun is out,” mm.1-11.

3.3. Shui Mu Ji (水母鸡, Water Hen)

3.3.1. Background of the Composer

Liu Xiaogeng born in 1955, is the most nationally recognized choral composer in Yunnan. He graduated from the Music Department of Yunnan Arts College in 1982 and is now an associate professor of the department, executive director of the Yunnan Provincial Music Association, and deputy director of the Music Composition Committee. Liu is a highly prolific composer. His compositional output is over a thousand work, and includes symphonies, dance dramas, chorus, solo songs, and movie music. Among them, his choral compositions are deeply rooted in Yunnan's local ethnic minority musical traditions and cultures.⁵⁰ As a native Yunnan musician, he has traveled to the gathering places of various ethnic minorities in his decades-long career. He had experienced different minority music cultures and applied them to his music compositions. In 2010, he published *Yunnan Echoes*, a collection of 16 choral works based on the music and culture of Yunnan's ethnic minorities, each with its unique charms and characteristics. China's famous choral conductor and educator, Prof. Yang Hongnian, wrote a preface for this collection: "I like Mr. Liu Xiaogeng's *Yunnan Echoes* very much. This collection demonstrates the attempts and creations of Mr. Liu Xiaogeng in choral composition over the past 20 years, and it is the crystallization of Xiaogeng's heart and soul. Many of these works are popular and have been the first choice of Chinese choral works in the performances and competitions I have led abroad for many years. His works have had a relatively wide impact internationally."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Liu Xiaogeng, *Baidu Baike*, accessed October 28, 2023, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%88%98%E6%99%93%E8%80%95/609541?fr=ge_al.

⁵¹ Liu Xiaogeng, *Yunnan Echoes* (Central China Conservatory Press, 2010.)

3.3.2. Background of the Composition

Shui Mu Ji, which translates to *Water Hen* in English, refers to a water beetle which can fly and walk on the water surface. This work is originally a children's folksong from the Zhuang (壮) ethnic group. The famous native Yunnan composer Xiao Gen kept the original Zhuang dialect as the text. The composer did not just simply harmonize the tune, instead, he employed lots of modern compositional techniques, such as the use of nonsense syllables, tongue clicks, tone cluster, dissonances, glissando, and aleatoric passages. The text is very simple: Water hen, swim, swim, don't fly up to the sky, don't go far, just in our Zhuang village, swim in the fields.

3.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

Water Hen is a choral composition that draws its inspiration from a traditional Chinese Zhuang children's song. Composed by Xiaogeng, the piece integrates modern compositional techniques while retaining the essence of the original melody. Through the incorporation of techniques such as tone clusters, aleatoric passages, ad libitum piano, and non-vocal sound effects including laughter, tongue clicking, and rhythmic speak, Xiaogeng creates a rich and dynamic sonic landscape.

The composition unfolds with a striking dissonant sounds produced by the first and second sopranos. Then, the other vocal parts employ various non-music sound such as rhythmic and tongue clicks. As the piece progresses, each section enters with their respective lyrics and assigned rhythm gradually. With the performance style that gradually intensifies and accelerates, a vivid soundscape of nature is showing. The main section of the composition starts with a rhythmic piano part, following by the melodic theme of Water Hen. The composer inserts an aleatoric passage after the main theme which adds an element of unpredictability to the performance and enhancing the diversities of the musical expressions. In the final part of the

piece, melodic theme from earlier section is revisited and transposed, providing a sense of coherence and unity to the overall composition. Through this structural device, Xiaogeng brings the composition to a satisfying conclusion.

3.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

Shui Mu Ji is a choral composition that blends modern and traditional elements, necessitating corresponding adjustments and variations during rehearsal. Employing a sectional approach to rehearsal is highly suitable for this piece. Sectional rehearsal involves breaking down segments with distinct compositional styles and practicing them individually. For instance, the first section up to bar 17 can be practiced separately.

In the first five bars, where the composer utilizes alternating rhythmic textures across vocal parts, simultaneous learning by the choir is suitable to help them understand the full musical effect. The rhythmic rap section from bar six to 11 is better suited for sectional practice due to the complexity of the lyrics. An efficient rehearsal method involves grouping together parts with identical lyrics, such as having the alto part learn together with the bass part, both focusing on the alto section. Once choir members have mastered pronunciation and rhythm, they can then sing according to the score. Similarly, this approach applies to the soprano II and tenor II parts, as well as the soprano I and tenor I parts. Before combining all six parts, the conductor should gradually increase the number of vocal parts based on the choir's proficiency, starting from fewer parts and progressing to more, from easier to more difficult passages. A highly effective training suggestion is for the choir to initially sing only the three women voice parts, with men voice parts entering according to their corresponding rhythm and lyrics after mastering the practice. This approach helps establish an overall sense of the music while reducing the difficulty of practice.

水母鸡

(混声合唱)

壮族民歌
李洪思编词作曲
晓耕编合唱

Breathing **Mysterious tongue click**

田園般地 = 52 神秘地 (弹舌) = 80

S I 女高 I *solo* 嗟赛 依那柔 *tutti* 大 da

S II 女高 II *solo* 嗟赛 *tutti* 啞啞 ZUO ZUO 啞啞 ZUO ZUO

A 女低 *mf* 次次七切几 次次七切几

T 男高 神秘地 (弹舌) tongue click

B 男低 大 da 大 da 啞啞 ZUO ZUO 啞啞 ZUO ZUO

6 *accel.*

女高 I 哼啞啞 啞

女高 II 啞啞啞啞 啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞啞啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞啞啞

女低 次次七切 七 切 七切切七切七切切 次次七切七切切七 七切切七切七切切

男高 I 哼啞啞 啞

男高 II 啞啞啞啞 啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞啞啞 啞啞啞啞啞啞啞啞

男低 次次七切 七 切 七切切七切七切切 次次七切七切切七

Same text and rhythm

Example 3.4. Liu Xiaogeng, "Water Hen," mm.1-9.

Tone cluster

10

啊 呀 呀 啊 呀 呀 呀 呀 呀 呀 呀 呀 呀

啊

15

ah 啊

啊

free meter

啊

啊

啊

啊

啊

七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七 七

啊

欢快、活泼地 ♩ = 126

16

wu 哈 Laugh: ha

wu 哈

wu 哈

wu 哈

wu 哈

wu 哈

wu 哈

钢琴

mf

mf

Example 3.5. Liu Xiaogeng, "Water Hen," mm.9-19.

From bar 46 to 65, the composition employs aleatoric music writing. The primary challenge in this section lies in presenting accurate pronunciation and rhythm in time. A simple practice method involves slow-paced sectional rehearsals, with each section practicing their respective musical segments before having all voice parts singing.

由底坂柔打 嗑赛那柔由
 的的的的的的那柔由 *D.S.*

47
 A
 嗑 嗑 M 嗑 吁 吁 嗑 M 嗑 吁 吁 嗑 剥贝 M 嗑 赛 依那柔

Piano repeats this pattern throughout this aleatoric passage

Example 3.6. Liu Xiaogeng, “Water Hen,” mm.44-51.

52

S I 女高 I *solo*
喳 赛 依那 柔 迪 鲁

S II 女高 II
叮各叮 叮 M 冷叮叮叮蹦蹦叮叮叮

A 女低

T 男高 (打嘴皮)
蹦蹦 叮 叮 喳喳 叮叮

Repeated 4-5 times as needed.

58

S I 女高 I
迪鲁 哪
根据现场效果, 重复4-5次

S II 女高 II

A 女低

B 男低
啞 啞啞 啞啞 啞 啞 啞求 乞

Example 3.7. Liu Xiaogeng, "Water Hen," mm.52-63.

64

女高I
女高II
女低
男高
男低
钢琴

即兴发挥演奏

ff 刷
ff 刷
ff 刷
ff 刷

fff *p*

69

♩ = 54 柔和地

女高I
女高II
女低
男高
男低

mp 嗒赛 那由
mp 嗒赛 那由
mp 嗒赛 那有 那由
mp 嗒赛 那由 那由
mp 嗒赛 那由 那由

Example 3.8. Liu Xiaogeng, "Water Hen," mm.64-71.

The remaining sections of the composition feature more common choral writing, and the conductor can arrange rehearsal methods and schedules according to the level of the choir.

3.3.5. Performance Practice

This composition integrates elements of Zhuang ethnic folk style with modern compositional techniques. In terms of performance practice, percussion instruments such as sand hammers, triangles, small gongs, and woodblocks can be added depending on the context. The conductor may choose to incorporate these instruments as appropriate. Beside the music itself, this piece is perfect for choreography due to the dance nature for Zhuang folk music. The conductor can introduce appropriate choreography, and if feasible, incorporate accessories with Chinese ethnic style costumes such as floral headpieces, scarves, necklaces, or bracelets. Additionally, non-musical sound effects can be added to create a nature atmosphere, such as whistling at the beginning to mimic bird sounds. Overall, this composition provides the conductor with various opportunities for creative interpretation based on their understanding of the musical style, practical considerations, and possible budgets.

4. CENTRAL PLAINS AREA HAN ETHNIC CHORAL MUSIC

4.1. Historic Background and Music Characteristics

The Han ethnic group is the main ethnic group in China, formed by the long-term integration of the ancient Chinese and other ethnic groups, with a population accounting for 91.11% of the country's total population. The Han Chinese are concentrated in the most developed agricultural areas and cities in the Songliao Plain and the Yellow River, Huai River, Yangtze River, Pearl River, and other large river and river basins. Among them, in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, there is an alluvial plain with developed agriculture called Central Plain Area (Chinese: 中原, Zhongyuan), present-day Henan Province. The Chinese name Zhongyuan originally means “the middle wilderness of the world” and is the birthplace of Chinese civilization. This region had most significant number of ancient capitals in China, with more than 20 dynasties.⁵² The Central Plains has long been China's political, economic, cultural, and transportation center.

⁵²The Central Plain Area, 中原, *Baidu Baike*, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%8E%9F/1415?fr=ge_ala.



Image 4.1. Geographical location of Central Plains Area (Henan Province).⁵³

Many famous ancient philosophers were born and lived in the Central Plain Area (Henan Province). Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, and one of the most prominent philosophers worldwide.⁵⁴ Moreover, the famous Chinese thinkers Laozi, Mozi, Zhuangzi, and Han Feizi were all from the Central Plains.

⁵³ Henan Province, China, Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed April 21, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Henan#/media/1/270734/159714>

⁵⁴ His ancestral hometown was Song (Xiali, Shangqiu, Henan Province), and his main activities of Confucius were in the Central Plains although he was born in Shandong province.

This region is also the birthplace of Chinese literature. The first poetry/song collection in China, “The Book of Odes,” (Shi Jing, 诗经, B.C. 11th- 6th) has over 100 pieces originating from Henan and accounting for one-third of the total. Two of the three famous poets of the Tang Dynasty, Du Fu and Bai Juyi are from the Central Plains, which are Du Fu and Bai Juyi.



Image 4.2. Illustrated Edition of the Book of Odes Handwritten by the Qianlong Emperor, Qing Dynasty.⁵⁵

With such a highly developed cultural background in the Central Plains, its folk music is vibrant. It included folk songs, instrumental music, local opera, and dance music. Unfortunately, there is less traditional polyphonic music in this region than in minority ethnic living areas (such as the Southwest Provinces), where polyphonic folk songs are widely distributed. Since the local opera art is more popular than folk songs, the vocal entertainments for the people are dominated mainly by opera music in the densely populated areas. Folk songs are primarily distributed in remote mountainous areas and some border areas of the province, and they are mainly composed of monophonic music in Central Plains.

⁵⁵ Ancient Book Highlights (Exhibition). Taipei: National Palace Museum.



Image 4.3. Henan Opera Chen School Performance Talent Training Project Showcase.⁵⁶

Many factors form the style of folk music in a region, such as the natural environment where people live, the life and production methods of people in this environment, the customs and habits, and hobbies that people have formed in this environment for a long time. All of which have a direct influence on folk music. In the Central Plains, which stretches for more than a thousand miles from east to west and from north to south, there are significant differences in the terrain of mountains and plains and people's living habits, production methods, dialects, and various activities. Therefore, the styles of central Plain folk music can be varied. Nevertheless, in general, the folk songs of this region present common features.

⁵⁶ National Arts Endowment, *Henan University Newspaper*, August 3, 2018. <https://news.henu.edu.cn/info/1083/98359.htm>.

The scale is mainly pentatonic, with few F sharp and B flat uses. The pieces mostly end on the tonic or dominant but occasionally on the supertonic, mediant, and submediant, which differs from the western major-minor system. Regarding rhythmic language, folk songs usually present a style of regular structure and obvious beat stress. The melodic lines are often simple and catchy, with a fun text. Due to the characteristics of the local dialect, the folk songs of the Central Plains are not as nasally heavy or narrow for the tone color as with the other ethnic groups. On the contrary, diction for folk songs from here requires a more tall vocal approach, which refers to roundness, clarity, and naturalness.

In summary, the people in the Central Plain often carry a simple, spirited, and straightforward character. So, the folk music usually demonstrates a lively and cheerful style.

4.2. Man Jiang Hong (满江红, Full River Red)

4.2.1. Background of the Composer

The composer Li Bao Chen (1907-1979) wrote a choral version for the tenor and bass choir based on this text and melody in the later 20th century. Composer Li was born in a Chinese Christian family in 1907. His father was a pastor and his mother was a teacher in the Church. He started to learn piano in the church when he was seven, and was inspired to work with choral music after he saw the performance of Handel's Messiah when he was 13. Li also holds a master's degree for composition from Oberlin College, Ohio, and a Doctoral degree for Music Education from Columbia University, New York.⁵⁷

Li Bao Chen is not only an excellent composer but also a music educator with a great patriotic heart. During the war in the 1940s, Li made significant contributions to China's music education. He compiled introductory music textbooks for primary and secondary schools,

⁵⁷ Li Bao Chen, 李抱忱, *Baidu Baike*, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9D%8E%E6%8A%B1%E5%BF%B1/1046242>.

advocated extracurricular music activities such as choirs, symphony orchestras, and Chinese traditional orchestras, established conservatories, added university departments of music education, and founded the Chinese Music Society with other contemporary Chinese musicians.⁵⁸

4.2.2. Background of the Composition

Man Jiang Hong is an excellent example of choral music influenced by the ancient Chinese poem with the same name. It translates to *Full River Red* and was written for TTBB choir. The text came from the Chinese national hero Yue Fei in the 12th century and was one of the most famous patriotic poems in Chinese history. The melody came from an ancient tune and was nonated by Chinese ethnomusicologist Yang Mengliu (1899-1984).

4.2.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

The composer well expresses the poetic feelings and passions of the poem through frequent tempo, dynamic, and musical style changes, while retaining the pentatonic tonality of the original melody. Notably, the composer uses a mostly traditional Western choral writing style, such as homophonic texture, traditional harmonic language and progressions.

4.2.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

This composition exhibits a writing style akin to the anthem. Thus, for Western choir members, learning the harmony, rhythm, and melody should not be significantly difficult. The conductor can initially teach the choir the piece by one or varied neutral syllables instead of text. Once the choir members can proficiently and accurately sing the piece, the lyrics can be gradually added. Regarding pronunciation, mastering the pronunciation of Chinese lyrics can be challenging for non-native speakers, as the positioning of consonants in Chinese is opposite to that in English. In Chinese, many consonants precede vowels, which caused some obstacles for

⁵⁸ Ibid.

non-Chinese speakers. However, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for corresponding pronunciation can help the singers greatly. In fact, Chinese is not significantly different from commonly sung languages like French, German, Latin with the Pinyin notations.

Table 4.1. Sentence-to-sentence text, Pinyin, and Translation of Full River Red.⁵⁹

Original Text	Pinyin ⁶⁰	Translation
怒发冲冠,	Nu fa chong guan,	My Hair bristles in my helmet
凭栏处, 潇潇雨歇。 ⁶¹	Ping lan chu, xiao xiao yu xie.	Standing by the balcony as the rain shower stops.
抬望眼, 仰天长啸,	Tai wang yan, yang tian chang xiao,	I look up to the sky and loudly let Heaven know
壮怀激烈。	Zhuang huai ji lie.	The strength of my passions.
三十功名尘与土,	San shi gong ming chen yu tu,	My accomplishment over thirty years are mere dust
八千里路云和月。	Ba qian li lu yun he yue.	I traveled eight thousand li (0.5 Km)with the clouds and the moon.
莫等闲,	Mo deng xian,	Never taking time to rest
白了少年头, 空悲切。	Bai le shao nian tou, kong bei qie.	For a young man's hair grows white from despair.
靖康耻,	Jing kang chi,	The humiliation of the Jingkang period
忧未雪。	You wei xue.	Has not yet been wiped away.

⁵⁹ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 169-170.

⁶⁰ pinyin, is the official romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese in Mainland China, and to some extent, in Taiwan and Singapore. It is often used to teach Mandarin, normally written in Chinese form, to learners already familiar with the Latin alphabet. The system includes four diacritics denoting tones, but pinyin without tone marks is used to spell Chinese names and words in languages written in the Latin script, and is also used in certain computer input methods to enter Chinese characters. *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin>.

⁶¹ Chinese “。” equals to English “.”

Table 4.1. Sentence-to-sentence text, Pinyin, and Translation of Full River Red (continued).

Original Text	Pinyin ⁶²	Translation
臣子恨，	Chen zi hen,	The indignation I feel as a subject
何时灭。	He shi mie.	Has not yet been allayed.
驾长车， 踏破贺兰山缺。	Jia chang che, Ta pao Helan shan que.	Let us drive off in a chariot To destroy their base at Helan Mountain.
壮志饥餐胡虏肉，	Zhuang zhi ji can hu lu rou,	My ambition as a warrior Is to satisfy my hunger with the flesh of the Barbarians
笑谈渴饮匈奴血。	Xiao tan ke yin xiong nu xie.	Then, while enjoying a rest, Slake my thirst with the blood of the tribesmen.
待从头，	Dai cong tou,	Give me the chance to try again
收拾旧山河，	Shou shi jiu shan he,	To recover our mountains and rivers
朝天阙。	Chao tian que.	Then report to the emperor.

4.2.5. Performance Practice

While this composition holds similarities to the anthem, such as homophonic texture, simple rhythm language, clear phase and sections. The composer has infused elements of Chinese characteristics and styles into the writing of the piano accompaniment, melodic phrases, and variations in tempi and dynamics. To interpret this piece authentically, careful consideration must be given to the poetic content of the original lyrics. Unlike English and some other Western languages, each Chinese character and word carries a specific tone, and the writing of poetry

⁶² See footnote 59.

must follow certain tonal patterns to convey a sense of rhythm. This is why in ancient China, poetry and song were often intertwined.⁶³ The lyrics of this piece are drawn from the work of Yue Fei, a patriotic poet from the Song Dynasty. As a representative example of highest level ancient Chinese poetry, it is crucial not to break up phrases in the middle.

满江红 Man Jiang Hong
Choral Arrangement by Li Baochen (1907-1979)

The first bar is in free tempo
Text by Yue Fei (1103-1142) Breath here, then with tempo Music by Yang Yinliu (1899-1984)
Inspired by Ancient Chinese Tune

The score consists of two systems. The first system includes vocal parts for Tenor I, Tenor II, Baritone, and Bass, along with a Piano part. The lyrics are: Nu fa ch-ong guan ping lan-n chu, xiao xiao yu xie. The second system continues with lyrics: Tai wang yan, yan tian chang xiao, zhuang huai ji lie. Performance instructions include 'Keep the intensity' and 'Stagger breathing through with dim.'.

For Academic Study Purpose ©Kewen Cheng

Example 4.1. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.1-7.

⁶³ Poetry and Song often be used together as one word in Chinese, Shige, 诗歌.

Variations in dynamics should be emphasized, with each phrase generally holds a pattern of crescendo first, then diminuendo.

2

Breath here

8 **a tempo**

T. San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.

T. San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.

Bar. San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.

B. San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.

Pno.

12 *Expressivo* *mp* *pp* **a tempo**

T. Mo deng xian bai liaoshao nian tou, kong bei qie.

T. Mo deng xian bai liaoshao nian tou, kong bei qie.

Bar. *mf* *p* *f* Mo deng xian bai liaoshao nian tou, kong bei qie.

B. mo deng xian bai liaoshao nian tou, kong bei qie. Jing kang chi

Pno. **a tempo**

Example 4.2. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.8-15.

Sometimes, a complete melodic phrase consists of two short phrases. In such cases, the strongest emphasis should be placed on the second phrase. The first phrase should sing with a gradual intensity.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Full River Red" by Li Baochen, measures 21-24. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal parts are for Tenor (T.), Baritone (Bar.), and Bass (B.). The lyrics are: "he lan shan que. Zhuangzhi ji can hu lu rou, xiao tang ke yin". The piano part is marked "Pno.". The score is marked "dim. with rubato" and "A tempo, keep building the intensity" with an arrow indicating the tempo change. A large circle highlights the first two measures of the vocal parts.

Example 4.3. Li Baochen, “Full River Red,” mm.21-24.

In conclusion, when performing any choral work related to ancient Chinese poetry, conductors must not only study and prepare the musical aspects but also deeply understand the rhythm and punctuation of the lyrics themselves. This is because, in most cases, the music for ancient poetry is derived from and serves the poetry.

4.3. Hui Niang Jia (回娘家, Going Back Mother’s Home)

4.3.1. Background of the Composer

Chinese composer Meng Wei Dong was born in Beijing in November 1955. He received his composition diploma from Central China Conservatory. Meng is currently the deputy director

of the China Railway Cultural Troupe, vice chairman of the Eighth China Musicians Association, chairman of the Composition Committee, a national-level composer, and a guest professor at the School of Music of Zhejiang Normal University. Meng has created various types of musical works in the past twenty years. His principal works include the opera “Thunderstorm,” the dance drama “Spirit of the Great Wall,” as well as music from numerous movie and TV dramas, dance music, various types of instrumental and orchestral music, twenty choral works, and hundreds of solo songs in different styles. His compositional philosophy is rooted in the culture and daily life of common people, and he strives to create musical works that are popular with the general public. He has composed several well-known musical works, such as *Tong Yi Shou Ge* (同一首歌, The Same Song), included in Chinese primary and secondary school music textbooks for decades, and the theme song for China’s national television news broadcast.⁶⁴

4.3.2. Background of the Composition

Hui Niang Jia, translated as *Going Back to Mother’s Home*, is a great example of choral music influenced by the local custom and common people’s life. The custom of “Going Back to Mother’s Home” has a long history in Han Chinese culture and is still part of the traditions today. Usually, a married daughter and her husband will return to her mother’s home on the second day of the Chinese new year. The same name folk song is inspired by this tradition and written by Chinese composer Tang Ni (1936-2012). Another Chinese composer Meng Wei Dong (b.1955), wrote a SATB version based on this song. This folkloric and humorous piece tells the story of a newly married woman with her newborn baby on the way to visit her mother’s home. This young woman puts on a brand new outfit with a red flower on her hair, and brings a chicken and a duck in her hands as gifts while the newborn baby is on her back. The first scene is lovely at the

⁶⁴ Meng Weidong, *Baidu Baike*, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%AD%9F%E5%8D%AB%E4%B8%9C/7711543>.

beginning: Willows dancing in the wind, creek humming in the sunshine. Then, suddenly, the dark clouds gather, and rain pours down. This poor young lady looks around and has no place to hide. Then, the second scene is not that pleasant: her clothes are soaked in the rain, her makeup is messed up, the wind blows out her flower, and the baby starts to cry while the chicken and the duck take the chance to run away.

4.3.3. Structure and Compositional Techniques

The composer divided the piece into two parts based on this story. The first part creates a joyful atmosphere by writing an lively musical style, there is also a section that the choir imitates the sound of chicken and duck. The music style changed as the story changed in the second scene. The overall musical emotion shifts from upbeat to melancholy in the second part. Then, it finally ends with the line, “How am I supposed to see my mom like this?” The overall emotional path of the music is reflecting the storyline in this work, which excellently preserves the humorous musical characteristics of Central Plains folk songs.

4.3.4. Rehearsal Suggestions

Due to the significance of the storytelling in this piece, the precise emotional expressions and clear pronunciations are important for this piece. Throughout the rehearsal process, particular attention should be given to practicing the vowels in the lyrics separately. Folk songs from the Central Plains region typically employed round and tall vowel sounds, with a clear articulation of the consonants . An effective method can be used it that choir members can deliberately elongate each syllable’s vowel with slower tempo. Once choir members grasp the sensation of producing complete and rounded vowel sounds, normal rhythm and tempo can be reintroduced.

After mastering the basic pronunciation and pitch rhythms, it is essential for choir members to understand the meaning of the lyrics and the context of the story. The conductor can explain the story and the cultural background of this piece to the choir. The goal is inspiring choir members to interpret the music with the understanding of the story and background, rather than merely singing the pitches and rhythms.

4.3.5. Performance Practice

Due to the folk custom background of this piece, it is highly suitable for acting. If possible, the conductor should consider incorporating some simple dance or act elements based on the meaning of the lyrics and the storyline with the performance. For instance, if feasible, separate dancers can perform alongside the choir members, or visual aids such as a screen displaying images or videos corresponding to the story could also be utilized during the performance. In the absence of such resources, the conductor should focus on ensuring choir members understand the lyrics and the story's content, encouraging them to interpret the piece through facial expressions and body language as much as possible during the performance.

5. CONCLUSION

Although Chinese composers did not start composing professional choral music until the early 20th century, modern Chinese choral music boasts an abundant and diverse repertoire owing to the long history of folk music, ethnic cultures, and Chinese literature. Over the past century, choral music in China has experienced significant growth in terms of topic, style, technique, and performance practice. The richness of modern Chinese choral music holds the potential to become an excellent resource for a more diverse and inclusive choral repertoire worldwide.

According to Chinese ethnomusicologist Fan Zu Yin (樊祖荫, 1940-) in his scholarly study on Chinese Ethnic Multiple-parts Music, at least 30 ethnic groups in China have had the tradition of multi-part folk songs since ancient times. Modern Chinese composers have greatly benefited from this colorful ethnic music legacy. Unlike the Western tradition of choral music development rooted in Christianity, the development of choral music in China has been minimally influenced by religion. Instead, Chinese choral music has drawn inspiration from its rich tapestry of ethnic music and culture since its inception. Today, ethnic music and culture are integral components of Chinese choral composition. Chinese ethnic choral works, nurtured by millennia of traditional culture and unique national characteristics, possess a distinct allure. Through the efforts of modern Chinese composers, choral compositions created within this ethos contribute to the diversification of choral art worldwide.

Due to constraints of time and resources, this paper provides only a glimpse into the history of ethnic music in three representative regions and highlights the stylistic features of choral works therein. In addition to Inner Mongolia, Yunnan, and the Central Plains, choral works influenced by the ethnic music of high-altitude regions such as Tibet and Qinghai, as well

as those influenced by the rich and diverse folk songs of northern Shaanxi, and compositions inspired by the Minnan culture along the coastal areas of Fujian, also hold significant research values. These unique ethnic cultures and music, shaped by distinct geographical landscapes, customs, and centuries of historical sedimentation, not only represent musical treasures of Asia but also serve as invaluable assets to the entire global civilization.

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APPENDIX A. INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET GUIDES FOR CHINESE

PINYIN

Table A1. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Single and Compound Vowels.⁶⁵

Single Vowels	Pronunciation (IPA)	Compound Vowels	Pronunciation (IPA)
i	/i/	ai	/aɪ/
u	/u/	iai	/jæɪ/
ü	/y/	uai	/waɪ/
a	/a/	ei	/eɪ/
ia	/ia/	uei	/weɪ/
ua	/ua/	ao	/ɑʊ/
o	/o/	iao	/jɑʊ/
uo	/wo/	ou	/oʊ/
e	/ɤ/	iou	/joʊ/
ê	/ɛ/		
ie	/jɛ/		
üe	/ɥɛ/		
er	/ə/		

Note:

1. The pronunciation variants of vowels are as follows:

- a: [a], [ɑ], [æ], [ɐ]
- o: [o], [ɔ]
- e: [ɤ], [ə], [e], [ɛ]
- i: [i], [j], [ɪ], [ɪ̯], [ɨ]
- u: [u], [w], [ʊ]
- ü: [y], [ɥ]

2. Abbreviations in Pinyin:

- “ui” is an abbreviation of “uei.”
- “un” is an abbreviation of “uen” (however, when “j”, “q”, “x”, or “y” precedes “un,” it is written as “ün”).
- “ü” is written as “u” when it follows “j”, “q”, “x”, or “y.”

⁶⁵ “Han Dian: Chinese Pinyin and International Phonetic Alphabet Comparison Table.” In Baike Baike. Accessed [April 9, 2024] https://baike.baidu.com/reference/8794240/533aYdO6cr3_z3kATPbemP3xN3vFZNyo67TbW7NzzqIP0XOpX5nyFJI26dRx8PJzWwrboJ1sZN8N2e77CIUdqo.

Table A2. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Nasal Vowels.⁶⁶

Nasal Vowels	Pronunciation (IPA)	Nasal Vowels	Pronunciation (IPA)
an	/an/	iang	/jaŋ/
ian	/jæn/	uang	/waŋ/
uan	/wan/	eng	/ɛŋ/
üan	/ɥæn/	ing	/iŋ/
uen	/wæn/	ueng	/wɛŋ/
in	/in/	ong	/oŋ/
ün	/yn/	iong	/joŋ/
ang	/aŋ/		

Note:

1. When used “in”, “ing”, “ün” alone (without the consonants), they are written as “yin”, “ying”, and “yun.”
2. The letter “o” is pronounced as a monophthong [o], and cannot be pronounced as the diphthong “uo” [wo] when it’s used in bo, po, mo, fo.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Table A3. International Phonetic Alphabet for Chinese Pinyin Consonants.

Consonants	Pronunciation (IPA)	Consonants	Pronunciation (IPA)
b	/p/	j	/tɕ/
p	/p ^h /	q	/tɕ ^h /
m	/m/	x	/ɕ/
f	/f ^h /	zh	/tʂ/
d	/t/	ch	/tʂ ^h /
t	/t ^h /	sh	/ʂ/
n	/n/	r	/zʅ/
l	/l/	z	/ts/
g	/k/	c	/ts ^h /
k	/k ^h /	s	/s/
h	/x/		

Note:

Nasal codas change depending on the initial consonant of the following syllable. Examples are provided:

1. Before “b”, “p”, “m”: -n changes to [m]. Example: “miànbāo.”
2. Before “f”: -n changes to [ŋ]. Example: “fānfù.”
3. Before “g”, “k”, “h”: -n changes to [ŋ]. Example: “biàngé.”
4. Before “z”, “c”, “s”: -n changes to [ɲ]. Example: “hūnsù.”
5. Before “j”, “q”, “x”: -n changes to [ɲ]. Example: “jīnxiāo.”
6. Before “zh”, “ch”, “sh”, “r”: -n changes to [ŋ]. Example: “zhènshè.”
7. Before “y”: -n changes to [ɲ]. Example: “miányī.”
8. Before “w”: -n changes to [w̃]. Example: “wànwù.”⁶⁷

Please note that these pronunciation rules may vary depending on regional accents and dialects.

⁶⁷ San Duanmu 端木三, *The Phonology of Standard Chinese* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 74-75.

APPENDIX B. MUSIC SCORE FOR “SHEPHERD’S SONG.”

中国合唱协会编

中国合唱作品精选

牧歌



蒙古族民歌

安波记谱

海默填词

瞿希贤编合唱

Chinese Classic Choral Works

Shepherd's Song

Mongols Folk Song

Recorded by AN Bo

Lyrics by Haimo

Arranged by QU Xixian

人民音乐出版社·北京

牧 歌

无伴奏混声合唱

蒙古族民歌
安波记谱
海默填词
瞿希贤编合唱

Adagio 辽阔、开朗地

S.

A.
m m

T.

B.
m m

6
翠 绿 的
cui lü di

翠 绿 的
cui lü di

翠 绿 的
cui lü di

11

草 地 上 (哎) 跑 着 白 羊,
cao di shang ai pao zhe bai yang

草 地 上 跑 着 白 羊,
cao di shang pao zhe bai yang

草 地 上 跑 着 白 羊,
cao di shang pao zhe bai yang

16

mp
羊 群 像 珍 珠 撒
yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa

mp
羊 群 像 珍 珠 撒
yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa

mp
羊 群 像 珍 珠
yang qun xiang zhen zhu

mp
羊 群 像 珍 珠
yang qun xiang zhen zhu

21

在 绿 绒 上。 无 边
zai lü rong shang wu bian

在 绿 绒 上。 无 边
zai lü rong shang wu bian

在 绿 绒 上。 无 边
zai lü rong shang wu bian

在 绿 绒 上。
zai lü rong shang

26

无 边 的 草 原 是 我 们
wu bian di cao yuan shi wo men

故 乡，
gu xiang

故 乡，
gu xiang

的 草 原 是 我 们 的
di cao yuan shi wo men di

故 乡，
gu xiang



31

故 乡,
gu xiang

mp

白 云 青
bai yun qing

mp

白 云 和 青 天
bai yun he qing tian

p

故 乡, 白 云 青
gu xiang bai yun qing

p

白 云 青
bai yun qing

36

天 我 们 的 篷 帐。
tian wo men di peng zhang

是 我 们 的 篷 帐。
shi wo men di peng zhang

天 是 篷 帐。
tian shi peng zhang

天 是 篷 帐。
tian shi peng zhang

41 *mf*

早霞 迎接我 自由地
zao xia ying jie wo zi you di

早霞 迎接我 自由
zao xia ying jie wo zi you

早霞 迎接我 自由
zao xia ying jie wo zi you

47 *mp*

歌唱, 生活 是这样 幸福
ge chang sheng huo shi zhe yang xing fu

歌唱, 幸福
ge chang xing fu

歌唱, 生活 是这样
ge chang sheng huo shi zhe yang

幸福
xing fu

53

S.I.

S.II
福 fu 欢 huan 畅! chang 呀 m 呀 m

A.
欢 huan 畅! chang 呀 m

T.Solo
啊 a

T.
幸福 xing fu 欢 huan 畅! chang 呀 m

B.
欢 huan 畅! chang

pp

pp

pp

pp

60

ppp

呀 m

ppp

ppp

呀 m

ppp

呀 m

ppp

呀 m

《牧歌》改编自内蒙古自治区昭乌达盟同名草原民歌，歌唱美丽的家乡、幸福的生活。

翠绿的草地上跑着白羊，羊群像珍珠撒在绿绒上。无边的草原是我们的故乡，白云和青天是我们的篷帐。早霞迎接我自由地歌唱，生活是这样幸福欢畅！

Shepherd's Song adapted from the grassland folk song with same title, in Juu Uda county of Inner Mongolia, this piece well depicts the beautiful hometown and happy life there.

White sheep are running around on the freshly green grassland, just like pearls spread on top of a green velvet. The rimless grassland is our homeland, while white clouds and blue sky serve as our tent. Rosy morning clouds embrace me and encourage me to sing freely. Oh life itself is indeed so delightful and enjoyable!

(英文翻译：尚媛)

APPENDIX C. MUSIC SCORE FOR “FULL RIVER RED.”

满江红 Man Jiang Hong

Choral Arrangement by Li Baochen (1907-1979)

Music by Yang Yinliu (1899-1984)
Inspired by Ancient Chinese Tune

Text by Yue Fei (1103-1142)

$\text{♩} = 60$ *ff* *mp* *p*

Tenor I
Nu fa ch-ong guan ping lan-n chu, xiao xiao yu xie.

Tenor II
Nu fa ch-ong guan ping lan-n chu, xiao xiao yu xie.

Baritone
Nu fa ch-ong guan ping lan-n chu, xiao xi-ao y - u - u - u xie.

Bass
Nu fa ch-ong guan ping lan-n chu, xiao xi-ao y - u - u - u xie.

Piano
 $\text{♩} = 60$

5 *f* *rit.*

T.
Tai wang yan, yan tian chang xiao, zhuang huai ji lie.

T.
Tai wang yan, yan tian chang xiao, zhuang huai ji lie.

Bar.
Tai w-ang yan, yang tian chang xiao, zhuang huai ji lie.

B.
Tai w-ang yan, yang tian chang xiao, zhuang huai ji lie.

Pno.
rit.

For Academic Study Purpose @Kewen Cheng

2

8 **a tempo**

T. *San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.*

T. *San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.*

Bar. *San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.*

B. *San shi gong ming chen yu tu, ba qian li lu yun he yue.*

Pno. **a tempo**

12 *Expressivo* **mp** **pp** **a tempo**

T. *Mo deng xian bai liao shao nian tou, kong bei qie.*

T. *Mo deng xian bai liao shao nian tou, kong bei qie.*

Bar. *Mo deng xian bai liao shao nian tou, kong bei qie.*

B. *mo deng xian bai liao shao nian tou, kong bei qie. Jing kang chi*

Pno. **a tempo**

3

16

mf *f*

T. chen zi hen he shi mie? Jia chang che, ta po

T. chen zi hen he shi mie? Jia chang che, ta po

Bar. chen zi he he shi mie? Jia chang che, ta po

B. *mf*
you wei xue, chen zi hen he shi mie? Jia chang che, ta po

Pno.

21

T. he lan shan que. Zhuangzhi ji cang hu lu rou, xiao tang ke yin

T. he lan shan que. Zhuangzhi ji cang hu lu rou, xiao tang ke yin

Bar. he lan shan que. Zhuangzhi ji can hu lu rou, xiao tan ke yin

B. he lan shan que. Zhuangzhi ji can hu lu rou, xiao tang ke yin

Pno.

25

rit. **allarg.**
ff

T. *xiong nu xue. Dai cong tou shou shi jiu shan he, chao tian que.*


T. *xiong nu xue. Dai cong tou shou shi jiu shan he, chao tian que.*

Bar. *xiong nu xue. Dai cong tou shou shi jiu shan he, chao tian que.*

B. *xiong nu xue. Dai cong tou shou shi jiu shan he, chao tian que.*

Pno. **rit.** **allarg.**

APPENDIX D. MUSIC SCORE FOR “GOING BACK TO MOTHER’S HOME.”



中国合唱协会编

中国合唱作品精选

回家

孙义词
汤尼曲
孟卫东编合唱

Chinese Classic Choral Works
Going Back Mother's Home
Lyrics by SUN Yi
Music by TANG Ni
Arranged by MENG Weidong

人民音乐出版社·北京

回 娘 家

混声合唱与女高音领唱

孙 义词
汤 尼曲
孟卫东编合唱

Piano introduction in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. It features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 88. The piece concludes with a dynamic shift to piano (p) and a tempo change to quarter note = 138.

Vocal and piano parts for the chorus. The vocal parts are for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.), all marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are: 啦啦啦啦啦啦 啦啦啦啦 啦啦啦啦啦啦啦啦. The piano accompaniment continues with a rhythmic pattern, marked with a forte (f) dynamic. A rehearsal mark [4] is placed at the beginning of the vocal parts.

7

啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la la la la la

p

p

10

风 吹 着 杨 柳 (么) 唻 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
feng chui zhe yang liu me shua la la la la la

啦 风 吹 唻 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la feng chui shua la la la la la

风 吹 着 杨 柳 (么) 唻 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
feng chui zhe yang liu me shua la la la la la

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 唻 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
la la la la la la la la la la shua la la la la la

f *fp*

f *fp*

f *fp*

f *fp*

mp *fp*

13

f

啦, 小 河 里 流 水 (这)
 la xiao he li liu shui zhe

啦, 小 河
 la xiao he

f

啦, 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 小 河 里 流 水 (这)
 la la la la la la xiao he li liu shui zhe

啦, 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦
 la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

mp

16

fp

哗 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦,
 hua la la la la la la

fp

哗 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦,
 hua la la la la la la

fp

哗 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦, 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 谁 家 的
 hua la la la la la la la la la la la shei jia di

fp

哗 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦, 啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 谁 家 的
 hua la la la la la la la la la la la shei jia di

f

f

fp

p

19

谁家的媳妇她走走呀走得忙?
shei jia di xi fu ta zou zou ya zou de mang

谁家的媳妇她走走呀走得忙?
shei jia di xi fu ta zou zou ya zou de mang

媳妇她走走呀走得忙呀?
xi fu ta zou ya zou de mang ya

媳妇她走走呀走得忙呀?
xi fu ta zou ya zou de mang ya

22

原来她要回娘家。
yuan lai ta yao hui niang jia

原来她要回娘家。
yuan lai ta yao hui niang jia

原来她要回娘家。
yuan lai ta yao hui niang jia

原来她要回娘家。
yuan lai ta yao hui niang jia

原来她要回娘家。
yuan lai ta yao hui niang jia

25

1.

身 穿 大 红 袄,
shen chuan da hong ao

身 穿 大 红 袄,
shen chuan da hong ao

回 娘 家。 身 穿 大 红 袄, 身 穿 大 红 袄,
hui niang jia shen chuan da hong ao shen chuan da hong ao

家。 身 穿 大 红 袄, 身 穿 大 红 袄,
jia shen chuan da hong ao shen chuan da hong ao

1.

mp *f*

28

头 戴 一 枝 花, 胭 脂 和 香 粉
tou dai yi zhi hua yan zhi hexiang fen

头 戴 一 枝 花, 胭 脂 和 香 粉
tou dai yi zhi hua yan zhi hexiang fen

头 戴 一 枝 花, 头 戴 一 枝 花, 胭 脂 和 香 粉
tou dai yi zhi hua tou dai yi zhi hua yan zhi hexiang fen

头 戴 一 枝 花, 头 戴 一 枝 花, 胭 脂 和 香 粉
tou dai yi zhi hua tou dai yi zhi hua yan zhi hexiang fen

mp *f* *mp*

31

p

她的脸 胭脂香粉 她的脸上擦。
 ta di lian yan zhi xiang fen ta di lianshang ca

她的脸 胭脂香粉 她的脸上擦。
 ta di lian yan zhi xiang fen ta di lianshang ca

她的脸上擦。
 ta di lian shang ca

她的脸上擦。
 ta di lian shang ca

34

左手一只鸡, 右手一只鸭,
 zuoshou yi zhi ji youshou yi zhi ya

左手一只鸡, 右手一只鸭,
 zuoshou yi zhi ji youshou yi zhi ya

(模仿鸡叫) 咯……
 ge……

(模仿鸡叫) 咯……
 ge……

37

身上还背着一个胖娃娃呀
shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

身上还背着一个胖娃娃呀
shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

(模仿鸭叫)嘎……
ga..... shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

(模仿鸭叫)嘎……
ga..... shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

40

唧 呀 唧 唧儿 喂。
ji yi ya yi der wei

唧 呀 唧 唧儿 喂。
ji yi ya yi der wei

唧 呀 唧 唧儿 喂。
ji yi ya yi der wei

唧 呀 唧 唧儿 喂。
ji yi ya yi der wei

43

mf

一 片 乌 云
 yi pian wu yun

mf

一 片 乌 云
 yi pian wu yun

mf

一 片 乌 云 来,
 yi pian wu yun lai

mf

一 片 乌 云 来,
 yi pian wu yun lai

mp

46

来, 一 阵 风 儿 刮, 眼 看 着
 lai yi zhen feng er gua yan kan zhe

来, 一 阵 风 儿 刮, 眼 看 着
 lai yi zhen feng er gua yan kan zhe

一 阵 风 儿 刮, 眼 看 着 山 中
 yi zhen feng er gua yan kan zhe shan zhong

一 阵 风 儿 刮, 眼 看 着 山 中
 yi zhen feng er gua yan kan zhe shan zhong

49

就要把雨下。
jiu yao ba yu xia

就要把雨下。
jiu yao ba yu xia

就要把雨下，眼看山中就要把雨下。
jiu yao ba yu xia yan kan shan zhong jiu yao ba yu xia

就要把雨下，眼看山中就要把雨下。
jiu yao ba yu xia yan kan shan zhong jiu yao ba yu xia

p

p

p

52

p

躲又没处躲，
duo you mei chu duo

p

躲又没处躲，
duo you mei chu duo

p

躲又没处躲，
duo you mei chu duo

p

没处
mei chu

p

tempo rubato

5

55 *rit.*

藏 又 没 处 藏, 身 上 还 背 着 一 个 胖 娃 娃 呀
 cang you mei chu cang shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

藏 又 没 处 藏, 身 上 还 背 着 一 个 胖 娃 娃 呀
 cang you mei chu cang shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

藏 又 没 处 藏, 身 上 还 背 着 一 个 胖 娃 娃 呀
 cang you mei chu cang shen shang hai bei zhe yi ge pang wa wa ya

躲, 没 处 藏, 一 个 胖 娃 娃 呀
 duo mei chu cang yi ge pang wa wa ya

rit.

58 $\text{♩} = 138$ *f*

哟 呀 哟 得儿 喂。
 yi ya yi der wei

哟 呀 哟 得儿 喂。
 yi ya yi der wei

哟 呀 哟 得儿 喂。
 yi ya yi der wei

哟 呀 哟 得儿 喂。
 yi ya yi der wei

$\text{♩} = 138$ *f*