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WEST MEETS EAST



NIU CHINESE ORCHESTRA IN HONG KONG, 1978

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

Chinese and Balinese Music
performed by the
Asian Music Ensemble, Northern Illinois University (DeKalb)

Han Kuo-huang, director

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SIDE ONE Chinese Orchestra

1. The Happy Spinning Workers (orch.) 2' 30"
By Chang Feng
2. Taiwan Suite (orch.) 6' 30"
3. Flying Kites (kao-hu & yang-ch'in) 1' 52"
4. In a Mountain Path (4 erh-hus & yang-ch'in) 2' 00"
5. Thunder in the Drought (orch.) 3' 11"
By Yen Lao-lieh
6. Spring Awakening on Mount Yangming 5' 33"
(concerto for pang-ti and orch.)
By Tung Jung-sheng;
guest soloist: Alan Thrasher

SIDE TWO Balinese Gamelan Angklung

1. Sekar Uled (Uled Flowers) 4' 25"
2. Gineman 5' 13"
3. Ngedeslemah (Sunrise), 3rd movement 4' 23"
4. Margepati (Lion Dance) 8' 09"
5. Kebyar — The Art of Love 5' 13"

Distinct from ethnomusicology research, this all-American student ensemble demonstrates ethnomusicology teaching applied to performance. The first side features Chinese pieces in chamber and orchestral arrangements and a newly composed concerto for bamboo flute, all performed on authentic instruments; the second side features traditional pieces performed on the Balinese Gamelan Angklung, a set of 16 bronze gongs and xylophones made by I Made Gableran of Blahbatu Village, Bali, Indonesia.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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WEST MEETS EAST

Annotated by Han Kuo-huang



Photo 1 - NIU Chinese Orchestra

First row (from left) : sheng (mouth organ) and hsiao (vertical flute, on lap), pang-ti (flute) and ch'u-ti (flute, on lap), yang-ch'in (hammered dulcimer), 2 erh-hu (fiddles).

Second row (from left) : chung-ruan (medium lute), 2 liu-yeh-ch'in ("willow-leaf" lutes), san-hsien (3-stringed, fretless lute), erh-hu.

Third row : lo-gu (percussion).

INTRODUCTION

Western music was introduced to the Far East by means of Christian missionaries, Western military bands, and modern education systems in the second half of the nineteenth century. When the first few groups of Asians began to learn Western music, no one expected them to be as proficient in technique and as sophisticated in interpretation as their Western counterparts of the time. But these pioneers endeavoured to achieve what seemed to them to be the best within their limits. Now, a century later, quite a number of Asian musicians who perform Western music are tough competitors

with their Western counterparts in the international music arena and are, in some cases, the winners.

In the West, interest in Asian musical cultures developed steadily since the 1950's. The Asian Music Ensemble at Northern Illinois University, along with many Indonesian gamelans and other similar non-western performing groups in Western institutions, are proof of this new trend. It may not exactly be the beginning of a reverse trend as compared with the nineteenth-century scene, but it is a sign of change of taste in the West. Like the nineteenth-century example, no one expects these new pioneers to be as proficient and sophisticated as their Eastern counterparts at this stage. However, they are one of the first groups of Western students to study Asian music on an extensive basis, and the historical significance is not to be ignored.

Founded in 1975 as part of the world music area in the Department of Music, the Northern Illinois University Asian Music Ensemble consists of a group of American students trained in the performance of Chinese, Indonesian, and other Asian musical instruments. The group has performed for scholarly conventions such as the Joint Meeting of the College Music Society and the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Midwest Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Music Educators National Conference, the Illinois Music Educators Association, the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, the Wisconsin China Council, the National Wind Ensemble Conference, etc. and institutions such as the Field Museum of Natural History, Northwestern University, University of Illinois Circle Campus, Millikin University, Eastern Illinois University, Indiana University, Purdue University, Grinnell College, Beloit College, etc. In May 1977, the group toured the East Coast and Ohio and gave concerts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, Asia House, Harvard, MIT, Cornell, Wesleyan, Rutgers, SUNY Stony Brook, Bennington, Oberlin, Kent State, Ohio University, etc. In December 1978 and January 1979, the group was invited to perform in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the first Western student group to perform Chinese music in the Far East. (See selected information at the end) This album represents the modest achievement of these new pioneers.

Side One

THE CHINESE ORCHESTRA

The concept of a modern Chinese orchestra (as opposed to the ancient court orchestras and extant folk ensembles) was developed in the 1930's from two sources : the Silk and Bamboo (strings and flutes) Ensemble of central-eastern China, and the Western symphony orchestra. However, instead of the strings, woodwinds, brass, and the percussion, the four divisions of a modern Chinese orchestra are the bowed strings, plucked strings, winds, as well as the percussion. The size of the ensemble ranges from a dozen to 70 or 80 players and the repertoire ranges from old works played in unison with new instrumentation to modern composed works with some Western influences. (Han 1979: 1-40)

All pieces performed here have been arranged by me for the NIU group. Heterophonic texture and sectional (timbre) contrast are the norm of the

arrangements. Orchestral works are controlled by percussion players in performance; no conductor is used. Sources (melodies) of the pieces are given at the end of each annotation.

1. The Happy Spinning Workers (orchestra) by Chang Feng. 2'30"

A piece composed in the 1950's, the title reveals the ideology for the arts in socialist China: emphasis on the working class, promotion of production, and jubilant spirit to reflect the new society. It has been arranged in ABA form (the favorite form of many modern Chinese instrumental works) with an added percussion introduction. The melody is in 5-tone Kung mode (do, re, mi, sol, la; do = G) ending on do. The B melody is derived from the A melody. The last A section is performed in four levels of melodic stratification all based on the A melody. (Chang Hsiao-feng 1973 : 12-13)

2. Taiwan Suite (orchestra). 6'30"

An arrangement of three famous folksongs from Taiwan all of which are in the same 5-tone Shang mode (re, mi, sol, la, do; sol = A) emphasizing re and la but ending on sol. The songs are (in order of appearance) "Flipping Coins" (also known as "Tune of the Train"), "Jasmine Flowers in the Sixth Moon", and "Reminiscing". A portion of the first tune reappears with new materials at the end as a coda. A "calling" motive serves as an introduction and bridges between sections. The first and last songs can be heard in the performance of the famous Taiwanese folksong singer Ch'en Kuan-hua in "Traditional Music from Taiwan, Vol. I - Minnan Folksongs and Popular Songs". (Folkways FE 4085) (Lin and Chien 1979 : 32, 90, 36)

3. Flying Kites (kao-hu and yang-ch'in). 1'52"

A folksong in 5-tone Kung mode (do, re, mi, sol, la; do = G) ending on do. The origin of the song can be traced to a tune in the "Flower Lantern", a local theatre genre of Yu-ch'i County in central Yunnan. (Ma 1956: 223) Kao-hu is a high-pitched (tuned in G - d) two-stringed fiddle, a variant of the more popular erh-hu. Yang-ch'in is a hammered dulcimer. (Chang Yin-chao 1974: 59) (Sue Lee Pounders, Patty Foltz, yang-ch'in)

4. In a Mountain Path (4 erh-hus and yang-ch'in). 2'00"

A modern tune in 6-tone Yu mode (la, ti, do, re, mi, sol; la = D) ending on la, similar to a d minor key without the sixth pitch. The two sections have been arranged into ABA form with a short ending phrase derived from the A section. The two-stringed fiddle erh-hu (tuned in D - A) is perhaps the most popular folk instrument in China today. This piece is played by erh-hu unison (a common practice) and accompanied by the yang-ch'in. (Yu 1971 : 55) (Nancy Haimbach, Sue Lee Pounders, Joanne Pakieser, Robin Bogucki, erh-hus; Patty Foltz, yang-ch'in)

5. Thunder in the Drought (orchestra) by Yen Lao-lieh. 3'11"

A famous Cantonese instrumental piece composed by Yan Lao-lieh in the early twentieth century. Based on an older tune, Yen added many elaborations and made it a completely new work. (Chang Wen-ch'ien 1980 : 77-79) This version is partially based on a transcription heard on a recording

(Art Tune COE-5022). It includes question-answer phrases in the middle section of an ABA' structure. Unlike central China, Cantonese music uses 7-tone scale frequently. This piece is in 7-tone Chih mode (sol, la, ti, do, re, mi, fa; sol = D) ending on sol; the seventh pitch is not treated as a leading tone like in a Western scale. (Chang Hsiao-feng 1973: 18-19)

6. Spring Awakening on Mount Yangming (concerto for pang-ti and orchestra) by Tung Jung-sheng; guest soloist : Alan Thrasher. 5'33"

Constructed in large-scale ABA' form, this contemporary work shows some Western concepts such as the alternation between the concertino and tutti parts along with certain accompaniment treatments, but the melodic progression and overall effects are Chinese. Sections A's are in 7-tone Yu mode (la, ti, do, re, mi, fa, sol; la = E) ending on la and Section B is in 7-tone Kung mode (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti; do = G) ending on do. Pang-ti is a short, high-pitched bamboo flute originally used in the orchestra of a northern Chinese theatre genre, Pang-tzu. Yangming Mountain is a scenic mountain in northern Taiwan. Tung Jung-sheng, professor of music in the Chinese Music Department, National Taiwan Academy of Arts, Taiwan, is a leading composer and promoter of Chinese music today. Alan Thrasher is a scholar and virtuoso performer of many wind instruments, Western and non-western; he received his Ph. D. degree from Wesleyan University (Middletown, Connecticut) with a dissertation on Chinese Music. (BCC Chinese Orchestra 1970: 20-27)

Photo 2 - NIU Balinese Gamelan Angklung



Center : kendang and rincik; left and right sides : gansas; center rear : reyong; back center : kempur, kelenang and kempli (not shown); back left and right : jagogang.

Side Two

THE BALINESE GAMELAN ANGKLUNG

Gamelan is a percussion dominated gong-chime ensemble found in Indonesia (mainly in Java, Sunda, and Bali). The four-pitched Gamelan Angklung is found in every village in the central and southern parts of the island of Bali. The name is derived from the angklung (bamboo rattles) which were used in the ensemble originally. Though the rattles have been dropped in

modern times, the name is kept to distinguish it from other types of gamelans in Bali. While most Balinese gamelans employ the pelog system (seven intervals of unequal sizes; usually five are chosen in a given piece), Gamelan Angklung employs the slendro system (five intervals of nearly equal distance). But only four pitches (roughly do, re, mi, sol, in most sets) are used. (McPhee 1937 and 1966) A less familiar five-pitched Gamelan Angklung is found in northern Bali. (Ornstein 1971) The Gamelan Angklung is very popular in the United States. About sixteen sets were accounted for in the U.S. in the late 1970's and a club, Seka Gamelan Angklung, was organized by Mantle Hood in November 1980 during the 25th Annual Convention of the Society for Ethnomusicology. The NIU Gamelan Angklung was made by I Made Gableran of Blahbatu Village in 1978. It consists of 4 gansa baringan, 4 gansa pemade, 2 jegogan (small, medium, and large metallophones), 2 reyong (8 kettles performed by 4 players), 1 kempli (time beating gong), 1 kelenang (small time beating kettle), 1 kempur (medium gong), 1 rincik (8-disc cymbals), 2 kendang angklung (small 2-headed drums), and 2 gupek kendang (large 2-headed drums).

Some of the important principles of Balinese gamelan music can be heard in the following selections: ostinato, stratification, melodic and rhythmic variations, kotekan (interlocking patterns between polos, sangsih, and kilitan parts), etc. Both old (#1-3) and new (#4-5) styles of Gamelan Angklung pieces are presented. All pieces were learned by oral tradition; no music was used.

1. Sekar Uled (Uled Flowers). 4'25"

The piece is constructed in a series of short sections most of which are repeated once: introduction (same as A), A, B (same as A except the jagogan part), C, D (in kotekan), E, F, G (syncopated), D (in kotekan), E, F, G, and Coda (continuation of syncopated phrases). A transcription of this piece can be found in McPhee's works cited above; but this performance differs slightly from his version.

2. Gineman. 5'13"

Many Balinese Gamelan Angklung pieces are constructed in two to four movements with the last being the most important one and in ostinato. This piece is a good example of this type of structure. After a rhapsodic-like opening movement, the main movement proceeds in ostinato. It ends with a short coda in kotekan. The kempur gong serves as the beginning and end of each cycle.

3. Ngedeslemah (Sunrise), 3rd movement. 4'23"

This lively piece is the last movement (in ostinato) of a three-movement work. Two kinds of kotekan are heard: interlocking between syncopated rhythms (in the beginning) and equal alternating notes (equal to four sixteenth notes, in the middle). Like the previous piece, the kempur gong serves as the beginning and end of each cycle.

4. Margepati (Lion Dance). 8'09"

According to I Wayan Sinti and I Made Bandem, two masters of Balinese music, this modern dance piece was composed by I Nyoman Kaler in 1942 for Gamelan Gong Kebyar, the modern large gamelan. Between 1960 and 1963, the

composer himself adopted it for Gamelan Angklung and transposed it modally from pelog to slendro system. (Personal conversation, 1980)

The first section of the piece is constructed like a passacaglia by using an eight-note poko (nuclear) theme (mi, sol, mi, re, do, mi, re, sol) repeated on the jagogan many times and in three speeds. On top of this theme is a series of melodic and rhythmic variations that demonstrates vividly the composer's talent. The second part changes in mood and involves kotekan. It ends with a coda in parallel thirds. My version presented here is slightly shorter (with minor changes in instrumentation) than the rehearsal version heard in the recording: "Music from the Morning of the World". (Nonesuch H-72015)

5. Kebyar - The Art of Love. 5'13"

Apparently the word "Kebyar" is borrowed from the flashy style of Gamelan Gong Kebyar. Like "Margepati", this is a modern piece displaying fast and demanding playing technique to bring out the brilliant sound of the instruments. The composer I Wayan Suweca first taught this piece in 1975 at the Center for World Music (Berkeley, California) and called it "Angklung Kebyar". In 1975 he renamed it with an English subtitle as indicated here. It consists of a rhapsodic-like introduction, an improvised bridge (kendang and rincik over a jagogan ostinato), a short question-answer prelude, and a very busy finale.



Photo 3 - Guest Balinese dancer Kurniasih in "Margepati" (Lion Dance).

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Asian Music Ensemble

Director : Han Kuo-huang

Chinese Orchestra

Group A - Liese Bender; Robin Bogucki, Jeff Bush; JoLinda Feldmann; Patty Foltz; Nancy Haimbach; Susan Kopack; Kathy MacNerland; Joanne Pakieser; Sue Lee Pounders; Dorothy Rude; Tom Zajac.

Group B - Kris Aaseby; Matt Funes; Karen Glogovsky; Sally Hall; Valerie Heinkel; Denise Kukac; Mary McCain; Mike Morross; Andy Snow; Arnold Sykes; Ed Veras; Tom Zajac.

Balinese Gamelan Angklung

Group A - Jeff Abell; Liese Bender; Robin Bogucki; Jeff Bush; JoLinda Feldmann; Patty Foltz; Rich Gortowski; Nancy Haimbach; Susan Kopack; Kathy MacNerland; Joanne Pakieser; Sue Lee Pounders; Melodie Provencher; Dorothy Rude; Damon Short; Tom Zajac.

Group B - Jeff Abell; Nancy Carson; Cathy Corrado; Dawn Fliss; Sandy Geiger; Mike Gutowski; Sally Hall; Luke Hawley; Katie Hubbell; Susan Kopack; Claudia Kuo; Denise Kukac; Mary Lou Robertson; Kathy Steigelmann; Ed Veras; Tom Zajac.

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Side One Band One and Side Two Band One were performed by Group B's and recorded in December 1980 by Martin Reiling; all other pieces were performed by Group A's and recorded in December 1978 by Tim Swan and Jeff Bush. All were recorded in the Recital Hall, Music Building, NIU, DeKalb.

Photos 1 - 3 : George Tarbay.

Cover Photo - NIU Chinese Orchestra in Hong Kong (January 1979)

First row (from left): p'i-p'a (pear-shaped lute), liu-yeh-ch'in ("willow-leaf" lute), yang-ch'in (hammered dulcimer), 2 erh-hus (fiddles).
Second row (from left): san-hsien (3-stringed, fretless lute, shown only the top), ta-ruan (large lute, shown only the top), chung-hu (medium-pitched fiddle), po (cymbals), ch'u-ti (flute), sheng (mouth organ), 2 erh-hus (fiddles).

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Han Kuo-huang received his Ph. D. degree from Northwestern University (Evanston, Il.) He is associate professor in music and director of the world music area in the Department of Music, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Il. Other faculty in the world music area are Al O'Connor (Steel Bands) and Jeff Kowalsky (African Ensemble and Indian tabla).